## February 27, 2024

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Presentation was recorded and will be posted by SEPAC.

#### Agenda

- 1. What is MCAS?
- 2. Why is MCAS given?
- 3. MCAS Participation
- 4. Types of Questions
- 5. Sample Questions
- 6. High School Retakes
- 7. Students with Disabilities
- 8. MLL Students
- 9. MCAS Grading
- 10. Reporting Results
- 11. Questions from SEPAC
- 12. Educational Proficiency Plans (EPPs)
- 13. MCAS Legislation: Information from SEPAC
- 14. Q&A

#### Notes

#### • What is MCAS?

- Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System
- Used to help us understand student performance and how that compares to students across the state

#### Why is MCAS given?

- o 1993 MA Education Reform Act
- o Requires high standards that students are expected to meet.
- Specifics:
  - Test all students who are educated with MA public funds, including students with disabilities and limited English proficient students;
  - Measure students' knowledge of the material contained in the MA Curriculum Frameworks; and
  - Report on the performance of individual students, schools, and districts.

### • MCAS Participation

- Required for all students grades 3-8 and grade 10; in addition, in Reading, a science assessment is given in grade 9
- Subjects:

- English language arts (ELA): Grades 3-8, 10
- Mathematics: Grades 3-8, 10
- Science, technology and engineering (STE): Grades 5 and 8
- Biology: in Reading for grade 9 (because that is when they take Biology)
- Optional Introductory Physics: If a student doesn't pass Biology they can take opt to take the Physics MCAS in grade 10 in place of Biology
- Civics Field Test, Grade 8 (new subject)
- Each MCAS assessment contains 2 sessions
- o Passing MCAS in ELA, Math, and STE is a state requirement for graduation

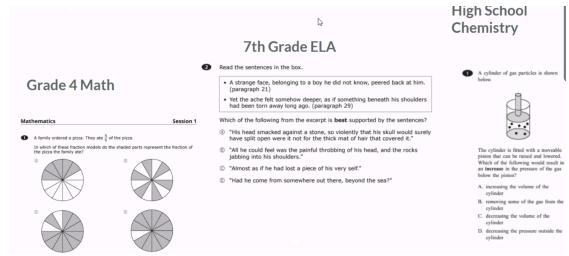
#### Types of Questions

- Multiple choice
- Multiple Select
- Short Response
- Text-Based Essay
- Technology enhanced question
- Constructed Response
- o See: https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/tdd/default.html

#### Sample Questions

- Each year the state will post example questions and practice tests
- DESE MCAS resource page: https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/parents/default.html
- Sample questions: <a href="https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testitems.html">https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testitems.html</a>

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## High School Retakes

 Students who do not pass the Biology MCAS in grade 9 can retake it twice in grades 10, 11, and 12

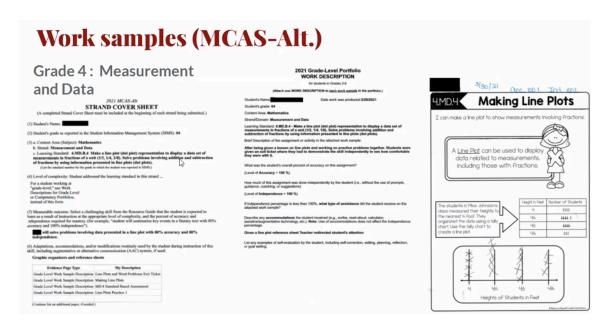
- Alternatively they can opt to take the Physics MCAS in grade 10
- Students who do not pass the ELA or Math in grade 10 can retake it three times in grades 11 and 12
- RMHS offers support for students who need to take a retest (currently during flex block)
- While retakes are rare at RMHS, students are supported and encouraged throughout the process. We know it takes some students a bit longer to reach mastery across all standards.
- There are no penalties for students who take retakes.

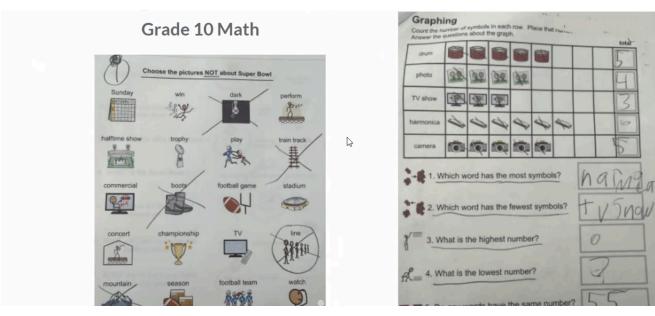
### • Students with Disabilities

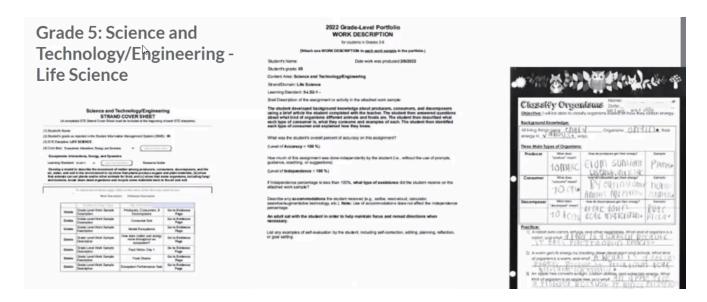
- o 3 different modes for taking
  - Routine (standard) MCAS testing
  - Test Accommodations
  - MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt)
- IEP Team decision on format
  - If a student has testing accommodations in their IEP or 504 and are utilized throughout the school day, then the team should consider if the student requires these accommodations during the MCAS assessment.

#### o MCAS-Alt

- Portfolio of samples of work
- Entry point may be different
- 1% statewide participate in MCAS-Alt
- Students graduate with a Certificate of Attendance (rather than a Diploma)
- Portfolio includes a coversheet, work, and evaluation
- Parents can view portfolio and sign off before it is sent to the state
- Examples of MCAS-Alt Portfolio:







#### o Test Accommodations

- Computer-based or paper-and-pencil MCAS
- Align with...
- Graduate with a Diploma

#### MLL Students

- Multilingual learners (formally known as English Language (EL) students)
- 1<sup>st</sup> year of enrollment in the US they do not have to take the MCAS
- Word to word translation dictionary is given
- Other accommodations can be given

### MCAS Grading

- Use of Scoring Rubrics
- Scorer Training
- Scoring High School Constructed-Response Questions
- Graders
  - Graded by people who are trained and assessed in their ability to score students within a certain range; pretty rigorous process to ensure students are given a similar score for the same type of writing.
  - Sarah Hardy has experience being a grader.
  - In most recent years MA has hired professional scorers. But they have and may continue to still have teachers grade.

## Reporting Results

- o Families receive MCAS reports in the Fall
- Results are reviewed by the District Data Team each fall for achievement and growth.

- The District Data Team also examines results by demographic group (race, income, disability status, MILL status, etc)
- District wide results are shared each Fall at a school committee meeting
- The District leadership team reviews MCAS data and the plan for dissemination of results at the school level
- Each school provides an overview
- Questions from SEPAC

# **Questions from the SEPAC**

Does it get recorded how many times you take the MCAS? The record of assessments is held by DESE, and schools have access to it through a secure portal which at RMHS only the principal and MCAS coordinator have access to. The district also has access to this information. If a student transfers to another public school their record follows them. It is linked to their State ID Number or SASID.

Are there any consequences/effects/penalties for retakes? None.

Who gets access to MCAS scores and retakes? School Principals, MCAS coordinator, district administrators. Also, English / math / science department leaders are given the results because they work with the principal to support students if they did not pass, and also celebrate those that did well. Individual scores are only shared with these staff if a student was not successful to allow us to devise a support plan for students to pass. The admin team and school counselors are also aware of students that have yet to pass any MCAS.

Do colleges get access to MCAS scores and records of retakes? No, colleges do not care about MCAS scores unless it is for scholarship purposes, ex. John and Abigail Adams Scholarship.

What if you never pass the MCAS? If a student does not pass the three required MCAS at the high school level, English, math, STE they do not earn their Competency Determination and hence will not get a diploma. If they meet all other local requirements the student can be given a certificate of completion, but this is not the same as a diploma. There are some cases where the district can submit an appeal, for a student in an extreme situation. There are different types of appeals and students must fit into one of these categories and usually the Department requires a student to attempt each MCAS at least three times before they are granted an appeal. Here is a link that explains more: https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcasappeals/default.html. If a student is attending school at an out of district placement the out of district placement administers the MCAS.

- Educational Proficiency Plans (EPPs)
  - Schools take time to see if additional supports are needed for those who have not met requirements
- MCAS Legislation: Information from SEPAC
  - The school cannot speak to any bills but SEPAC has provided some information

# MCAS Legislation: Information from SEPAC

- Are there any active bills to eliminate MCAS as a requirement for graduation? (Bill H.495 and Bill S.246...aka "Thrive Act")
- What is the Thrive Act (i.e. Bill H.495 and Bill S.246? What is their status? (currently active and referred to the Joint Committee on Education). Click HERE for additional information
- Are there any other active bills in support of MCAS accommodations for students with special needs?
  (Bill H.430 and S.324 currently active and referred to the Joint Committee on Education)
- Are there any other bills in support of alternative access to higher education for disadvantaged students? (Bill S.834 is currently active and referred to the Joint Committee on Education)
- How do you communicate your support of legislation change? (meet with or send letters to your local legislators; Reading Senators and Representatives have monthly office hours in town)
  - House Minority Leader Bradley H. Jones, Jr. (R-North Reading) has district office hours in Reading, which will continue to be held on the second Friday of every month at the Reading Public Library, located at 64 Middlesex Avenue. The first office hours for 2024 will take place on Friday, January 12 from 10:15-11:15 a.m. at the library. Additional office hours are scheduled for the same time and location on February 9; March 8; April 12; May 10; June 14; July 12; August 9; September 13; October 11; November 8; and December 13. Meetings are on a first come first serve basis.

#### Q&A

- Instead of retaking the Biology MCAS can students take the Physics MCAS as an alternative? Yes
- o **Is the Civics MCAS optional or an alternative for anything?** State requirement for 50% of all 8<sup>th</sup> graders to take the Civics MCAS; each school designates who takes the Civics MCAS but for ease of management, all 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in Reading will take the Civics MCAS
- o Is there an option to opt out of the Civics MCAS? No