

Meeting Minutes - MCAS Presentation

February 27, 2024

Presented by Sarah Hardy (Assistant Superintendent for Learning & Teaching, Jennifer Stys (Assistant Superintendent for RPS), and Allison Wright (Director for Special Education)

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?**
 - 1993 MA Education Reform Act
 - 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:

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- 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
 - 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
 - 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: <https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testitems.html>
 -

Grade 4 Math
Mathematics Session 1
1 A family ordered a pizza. They ate $\frac{5}{8}$ of the pizza.
In which of these fraction models do the shaded parts represent the fraction of the pizza the family ate?
Ⓐ 
Ⓑ 
Ⓒ 
Ⓓ 

7th Grade ELA
2 Read the sentences in the box.
• A strange face, belonging to a boy he did not know, peered back at him. (paragraph 21)
• Yet the ache felt somehow deeper, as if something beneath his shoulders had been torn away long ago. (paragraph 29)
Which of the following from the excerpt is **best** supported by the sentences?
Ⓐ "His head smacked against a stone, so violently that his skull would surely have split open were it not for the thick mat of hair that covered it."
Ⓑ "All he could feel was the painful throbbing of his head, and the rocks jabbing into his shoulders."
Ⓒ "Almost as if he had lost a piece of his very self."
Ⓓ "Had he come from somewhere out there, beyond the sea?"

High School Chemistry
1 A cylinder of gas particles is shown below.

The cylinder is fitted with a moveable piston that can be raised and lowered. Which of the following would result in an increase in the pressure of the gas below the piston?
A. increasing the volume of the cylinder
B. removing some of the gas from the cylinder
C. decreasing the volume of the cylinder
D. decreasing the pressure outside the cylinder

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

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- 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**
 - 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.
 - **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:

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Work samples (MCAS-Alt.)

Grade 4 : Measurement and Data

2021 MCAS-Alt. STRAND COVER SHEET
(A completed Strand Cover Sheet must be included at the beginning of each strand being submitted.)

(1) Student's Name: _____

(2) Student's grade as reported in the Student Information Management System (SIMS): 04

(3) a. Content Area (Subject): **Mathematics**
b. Strand: **Measurement and Data**
c. Learning Standard: **4.MD.B.4 - Make a line plot (dot plot) representation to display a data set of measurements in fractions of a unit ($\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{8}$). Solve problems involving addition and subtraction of fractions by using information presented in line plots (dot plots).**
(List the needed center for the graph in which the student was expected to solve.)

(4) Level of complexity: Student addressed the learning standard in this strand ...
For a student working at "grade-level," use Work Descriptions for Grade-Level or Competency Portfolio, instead of this form.

(5) Measurable outcome: Select a challenging skill from the Resource Guide that the student is expected to learn as a result of instruction at the appropriate level of complexity, and the percent of accuracy and independence required for mastery. (For example, "student will summarize key events in a literary text with 80% accuracy and 100% independence.")
will solve problems involving data presented in a line plot with 80% accuracy and 80% independence.

(6) Adaptations, accommodations, and/or modifications routinely used by the student during instruction of this skill, including augmentative or alternative communication (AAC) systems, if used:
Graphic organizers and reference sheets

Evidence Page Type	My Description
Grade Level Work Sample Description: Line Plots and Word Problems Exit Ticket	
Grade Level Work Sample Description: Making Line Plots	
Grade Level Work Sample Description: MED Standard Based Assessment	
Grade Level Work Sample Description: Line Plots Practice 1	

(Continue list on additional pages, if needed.)

2021 Grade-Level Portfolio WORK DESCRIPTION

(Attach one WORK DESCRIPTION to each work sample in the portfolio.)

Student's Name: _____ Date work was produced: 3/29/2021

Student's grade: 04

Content Area: **Mathematics**

Strand/Domain: **Measurement and Data**

Learning Standard: **4.MD.B.4 - Make a line plot (dot plot) representation to display a data set of measurements in fractions of a unit ($\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{8}$). Solve problems involving addition and subtraction of fractions by using information presented in line plots (dot plots).**

Brief Description of the assignment or activity in the attached work sample:
After being given a lesson on line plots and working on practice problems together, students were given an exit ticket where they had to demonstrate the skill independently to see how comfortable they were with it.

What was the student's overall percent of accuracy on this assignment?
(Level of Accuracy = 100 %)

How much of this assignment was done independently by the student (i.e., without the use of prompts, guidance, coaching, or suggestions)?
(Level of Independence = 100 %)

If independence percentage is less than 100%, what type of assistance did the student receive on the attached work sample?
Describe any accommodations the student received (e.g., scribe, read-aloud, calculator, assistive/adaptive technology, etc.). Note: Use of accommodations does not affect the independence percentage.

Given a line plot reference sheet Teacher redirected student's attention

List any examples of self-evaluation by the student, including self-correction, editing, planning, reflection, or goal setting.

3/30/21 Acc 100% Ind 80%

4.MD.4 Making Line Plots

I can make a line plot to show measurements involving fractions.

A Line Plot can be used to display data related to measurements, including those with fractions.

The students in Miss Johnson's class measured their heights to the nearest $\frac{1}{4}$ foot. They organized the data using a tally chart. Use the tally chart to create a line plot.

Height in Feet	Number of Students
$\frac{1}{4}$	1111
$\frac{1}{2}$	11111
$\frac{3}{4}$	1111
$1\frac{1}{4}$	111

Heights of Students in Feet

Grade 10 Math

Choose the pictures NOT about Super Bowl

Sunday

win

dark

perform

halftime show

trophy

play

train track

commercial

boots

football game

stadium

concert

championship

TV

line

mountain

season

football team

watch

Graphing

Count the number of symbols in each row. Place that number in the box.

Answer the questions about the graph.

	drum	photo	TV show	harmonica	camera	total
drum	5					5
photo		4				4
TV show			3			3
harmonica				6		6
camera					5	5

1. Which word has the most symbols? **harmonica**

2. Which word has the fewest symbols? **TV show**

3. What is the highest number? **6**

4. What is the lowest number? **3**

5. Which words have the same number? **55**

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Grade 5: Science and Technology/Engineering - Life Science

Science and Technology/Engineering STRAND COVER SHEET
(A completed STE Strand Cover Sheet must be included in the beginning strand STE envelope.)

(1) Student's Name: _____
(2) Student's grade or highest in the Student Information Management System (SIMS): 5
(3) STE Envelope LIFE SCIENCE
(4) Core Area: **Ecological Interactions, Energy, and Dynamics**

Learning Standard: 5-LS2-1- _____
Performance Goal: _____

Develop a model to describe the movement of matter among producers, consumers, decomposers, and the air, water, and soil in the environment to show that plants produce oxygen and water molecules. (6) Write that animals can eat plants and other animals for food, and (7) show that some organisms, including fungi, mushrooms, break down dead organisms and recycle some nutrients back to the soil and soil.

Item	Item Description	Item Description	Item Description
1	Grade Level Item Sample Description	Producers, Consumers, & Decomposers	Go to Evidence Page
2	Grade Level Item Sample Description	Consumer Diet	Go to Evidence Page
3	Grade Level Item Sample Description	Model Ecosystem	Go to Evidence Page
4	Grade Level Item Sample Description	How does matter and energy move throughout an ecosystem?	Go to Evidence Page
5	Grade Level Item Sample Description	Food Webs (Day 1)	Go to Evidence Page
6	Grade Level Item Sample Description	Food Chains	Go to Evidence Page
7	Grade Level Item Sample Description	Ecosystem Performance Task	Go to Evidence Page

2022 Grade-Level Portfolio WORK DESCRIPTION
for students in Grades 3-8
(Attach one WORK DESCRIPTION to each work sample in the portfolio.)

Student's Name: _____ Date work was produced: 2/8/2022

Student's grade: 55
Content Area: Science and Technology/Engineering
Strand/Domain: Life Science
Learning Standard: 5-LS2-1- _____

Brief Description of the assignment or activity in the attached work sample:
The student developed background knowledge about producers, consumers, and decomposers using a brief article the student completed with the teacher. The student then answered questions about what kind of organisms different animals and foods are. The student then described what each type of consumer is, what they consume and examples of each. The student then identified each type of consumer and explained how they they they.

What was the student's overall percent of accuracy on this assignment?
(Level of Accuracy = 100 %)

How much of this assignment was done independently by the student (i.e., without the use of prompts, guidance, coaching, or suggestions)?
(Level of Independence = 100 %)

If independence percentage is less than 100%, what type of assistance did the student receive on the attached work sample?
Describe any accommodations the student received (e.g., written, mechanical, calculator, assistive/adaptive technology, etc.). Note: Use of accommodations does not affect the independence percentage.

An adult sat with the student in order to help maintain focus and remind directions when necessary.

List any examples of self-evaluation by the student, including self-correction, editing, planning, reflection, or goal setting.

Classify Organisms
Date: _____ and _____

Objective: I will be able to classify organisms based on how they obtain energy.

Background Knowledge:
All living things are organisms. Organisms obtain their energy in various ways.

Producer	Consumer	Decomposer
100% accurate	100% accurate	100% accurate

Practice:
1) A rabbit eats carrots, lettuce, and other vegetables. What kind of organism is a rabbit, and what energy is it obtaining from its food?
It is a herbivore that obtains energy from plants.

2) A worm gets its energy by breaking down dead plant and animal. What kind of organism is a worm, and what energy is it obtaining from its food?
It is a decomposer that obtains energy from dead plants and animals.

3) An apple tree converts sunlight, carbon dioxide, and water into energy. What kind of organism is an apple tree, and what energy is it obtaining from its food?
It is an autotroph that obtains energy from sunlight.

o Test Accommodations

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

● MLL Students

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

● MCAS Grading

- o Use of Scoring Rubrics
- o Scorer Training
- o Scoring High School Constructed-Response Questions
- o 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
- o Results are reviewed by the District Data Team each fall for achievement and growth.

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