

New Competency Determination for NPS

PLEASE NOTE:

IN LIGHT OF ACTING COMMISSIONER RUSSELL'S REMARKS ON Thursday, 1/23/25, ADDITIONAL DESE GUIDANCE MAY IMPACT THE NEXT DRAFT OF THIS PROPOSAL. *The Massachusetts Education Reform Law of 1993, G.L. c. 69, § 1D, requires that all students meet the Competency Determination (CD) standard in Math, ELA and Science to earn a diploma in MA. The new statute says:*

"The "competency determination" shall be based on the academic standards and curriculum frameworks for tenth graders in the areas of mathematics, science and technology, history and social science, foreign languages, and English, and shall represent a determination that a particular student has demonstrated mastery of a common core of skills, competencies and knowledge in these areas, by satisfactorily completing coursework that has been certified by the student's district as showing mastery of the skills, competencies, and knowledge contained in the state academic standards and curriculum frameworks in the areas measured by the MCAS high school tests described in section one I administered in 2023, and in any additional areas determined by the board."

Transition (Current members of the NPS Class of 2025 and Class of 2026)

Students who have already earned their MA Competency Determination (CD) in Math, ELA, AND Science will have no changes to their graduation requirements. This applies to the large majority of our NPS students in the Classes of 2025 and 2026.

Students in the Newton Public Schools graduating classes of 2025 or 2026 who have not yet earned their CD in Math, ELA, and/or Science will now earn their CD in the necessary subject area through local certification. There are three general categories of students who do not yet have a CD in a particular subject area:

- Students who have not yet taken a specific MCAS test.
- Students who have not yet passed a specific MCAS test and have not yet earned a CD through another DESE process (appeals and MCAS-Alt Competency Portfolios).
- Students who have an Educational Proficiency Plan (EPP) in Math and/or ELA.

Local certification will be determined by satisfactorily completing coursework that has been certified by the student's district as showing mastery of the skills, competencies, and knowledge contained in the state academic standards and curriculum frameworks in the areas measured by the MCAS high school tests.

Local Certification of Competency for the Class of 2025¹

Completion of the MCAS test with a passing score (parallel to prior state expectation)

AND/OR

English Language Arts	Mathematics	Science
• Full credits earned in the equivalent of at least two years of English taught at the high school level	• Full credits earned in the equivalent of at least two years of Math taught at the high school level	• Full credits earned in one science course at the high school level. • The science course can be a course in: ○ Physics ○ Biology ○ Chemistry ○ Technology/Engineering

Definition of “high school level”:

- NPS courses: Courses that are taught using standards from the current high school MA Curriculum Frameworks.
- Courses in other states: Courses that are taught using the sending state’s high school standards.
- Courses in other countries: Courses taught in high schools.

Local Certification for the Class of 2026

To Be determined as we await any news from the Governor's Task Force in coordination with what we learn from the 2025 certification process.

YOG 2027 and beyond

To be determined, depending on guidance from DESE and BESE and emergent Portrait of a Learner portfolio and assessment expectations

For Prior Students who did not complete the Competency Determination When Enrolled in the Past

We propose that a district committee of educators at the high school level is formed to review the transcripts of students who apply for review and have already left school without obtaining a diploma. Once the committee is formed, and depending on the outcome of DESE and the Governor’s work / committees, the committee will affirm the standards for competency determination/course mastery certification on a case by case basis.

¹ Please note, DESE may dictate which courses count and NPS may name specific courses for this purpose. TBD in the coming month.