Sample Parent Notification Letter

[Please provide the following letter to the parent/guardian of each student taking the basic MCAS-Alt (i.e., not the “grade-level” or “competency” portfolio) in grades 4 and higher. This letter may be copied on school or district letterhead and signed either by the principal, superintendent, or administrator of special education.]
Dear Parent/Guardian:

Your child’s IEP team has recommended that he or she take the MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt) in the coming year, rather than the standard MCAS test, in the following subject(s):

______________________________________________________________________________

The team has agreed that your child is working well below grade-level expectations and is unable to show knowledge and skills on the standard MCAS test, even with accommodations.

Your child’s teacher(s) will collect samples of his or her schoolwork and other information throughout the school year and present these materials in an MCAS-Alt portfolio that shows how well he or she is meeting goals in the subject(s) listed above. The portfolio will be sent to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in late March or early April where it will be reviewed and scored to let you know whether your child has made progress on his or her academic goals. His or her achievement will be measured based on different achievement levels than the standard MCAS test. Next year, the IEP team will review the decision to continue assessing your child on the MCAS-Alt, or whether to switch to the standard MCAS test with accommodations.

We want you to be aware that participation in an alternate assessment may eventually delay or affect your child’s ability to complete the state’s requirements for a high school diploma, because the MCAS-Alt assesses learning standards that are below the expectations needed to earn the Competency Determination. You can learn more about graduation requirements on the Internet at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/graduation.

Your child’s teacher can answer your questions about MCAS and MCAS-Alt, or you may call the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Office of Student Assessment at 781-338-3625.

Thank you for your attention to this important information.

Sincerely,