MCAS-Alt Update: What’s New for 2019?
Dan Wiener
Administrator of Inclusive Assessment
Sheila Chamberlin, MCAS-Alt Teacher Consultant

Schedule for the Day

Teachers with no recent or prior MCAS-Alt experience should attend:
- Introduction to MCAS-Alt (8:30 am—12:30 pm)

Teachers with MCAS-Alt experience (8:30 am—12:30 pm) should attend:
- MCAS-Alt Update—What’s New for 2019?
  Plus, as many of these mini-sessions as you wish:
  - Raising the Bar and Debunking Myths about Portfolio Scoring
  - Science and Technology/Engineering: New requirements for grades 5 and 8
  - Competency and Grade-level Portfolios: Alternate assessments for students working at or close to grade-level

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

TODAY’S AGENDA

01 MCAS-Alt Statewide Results
02 New and Notable for 2019
03 Observations and Feedback from the MCAS-Alt Scoring Institute
04 ESSA and the MCAS-Alt
05 Dates to Remember

01 MCAS-Alt Statewide Results
MCAS-Alt Participation, Educator Training, and Score Appeals

7,951 MCAS-Alt portfolios were submitted in 2018 (a decrease of 590 from 2017).

47,053 strands were scored.

4,673 educators participated in 16 face-to-face training sessions last year.

322 MCAS-Alt score appeals were submitted last June.
- 69 were granted (21.4%); 253 were denied (78.6%)

2015-2018 MCAS-Alt: Statewide Results (All Content Areas - All Grades)

2015-2018 MCAS-Alt: Statewide Results (ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS)

2015-2018 MCAS-Alt: Statewide Results (MATHEMATICS)
New and Notable for 2019

New for 2019 (Educator’s Manual, Pp. 2–4)

- Portfolios must be submitted (i.e., shipped from your school) by 5:00 p.m. on **Friday, March 29, 2019**.
  - Order materials for each student between January 7–18, 2019.
- **2019 Educator’s Manual for MCAS-Alt**
  - Timeline and important dates moved to front of manual
  - Blank forms, work descriptions, data charts (i.e., sample completed charts and teacher-scribed work sample) moved to appendix.
  - “Unique Portfolio Requirements in Certain Subjects” section was added.
- **New Combined Writing Scoring Rubric** – One rubric for all four writing text types
  - Teachers will continue to pre-score their students’ writing samples.

New for 2019 (Continued…)

- This year, please place the **school calendar** in the inside left-hand pocket of the portfolio binder to expedite scoring.
- Revised **Competency** and **Grade-level portfolio** requirements, based on 2017 next-generation standards
- **Use the current Resource Guides to the MA Curriculum Frameworks for Students with Disabilities** (Fall 2018) for students taking MCAS-Alt in ELA and Mathematics.
- **STE Resource Guide** for grades Pre-K to 8 has been revised and must be used for the Grades 5 and 8 STE MCAS-Alt.
- **STE High School Resource Guide** remains the same as last year.

Changes to Science and Technology/Engineering (STE)
(See Educators Manual, pp. 32–35)

- Science and Tech/Eng standards were approved in April 2016.
- MCAS and MCAS-Alt will be based on the **new STE standards** in:
  - Spring 2019: Grades 5 and 8
  - Spring 2020: Grades 5, 8, and 9/10
- Fall 2018 Resource Guides available:
  - On your new MCAS-Alt flash drive
  - At [www.mcas-alt.org/materials](http://www.mcas-alt.org/materials)
  - On DESE website, at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html)
- A session will be offered later this morning on the new structure and format for **grades 5 and 8 STE alternate assessments**.
Observations and Feedback from the MCAS-Alt Scoring Institute

Frequent Comments on PFF Related to Measurable Outcome

1. At least 8 brief descriptions on the data chart did not address the skill listed in the measurable outcome.
2. At least 2 pieces of primary evidence did not address the skill listed in the measurable outcome.
3. Skill(s) listed in the measurable outcome were not addressed on at least 8 different dates.
4. Skill(s) listed in the measurable outcome were not addressed on at least 2 pieces of evidence.
5. Entry point was either excessively modified or was not found in the Resource Guide.

Tips on how to develop Measurable Outcomes

- The entry point in the Resource Guide can be used:
  o as written in the Fall 2018 Resource Guide in the subject being assessed, without making any changes.
  o with minor modifications, as long as the essential meaning and intent of the entry point is maintained. (Note: request DESE approval of unique entry points)

- If the entry point includes more than one related skill:
  o If multiple skills are connected by "and," select one or both skills to assess (e.g., “identify characteristics of plant and animal cells”). Note: Assess all selected skills on all dates.
  o If multiple skills in an entry point are connected by “or,” may select either or both skills on any date (e.g., “Match number names or numerals to objects”).

  Note: Entry points containing “and” may not be changed to “or.”

Content Confusion: Mathematics

- Ratios and Proportional Relationships:
  o “Express part-to-whole relationships…”
    (“Compare blue marbles to all marbles”)
  o “Express part-to-part relationships…”
    (“Compare blue marbles to red marbles”)

- Number and Operations–Base 10:
  “...solve one-step equations using multiplication”
  o Equations are linear not vertical, and must have an equal sign.
    for example: 5 x 7 = 35, not 6  \[ \times 2 \]
    12

Examples are provided with each entry point in the Mathematics Resource Guide.
Measurable Outcome: “Plot equivalent ratios as ordered pairs in the first quadrant of a coordinate plane…”

This sample correctly assesses the measurable outcome. However, a score of “M” would be given if the student had plotted random or unrelated ordered pairs.

Content Confusion: English Language Arts

Language:

- Context Clues
  - Identify the meaning of a word using sentence-level context as a clue.
  - Not just fill-in-the-blank.

Reading:

- Identifying key details is not the same as identifying the main idea of a text.
  - Key details support the main idea.
- Story elements include: characters, setting, plot, problem/conflict, and resolution. (elements do not include key details or sequencing events).
- Assess only one text type (i.e., either literary or informational text).
- Brief descriptions should reflect the text type listed in the measurable outcome.
- Include titles of the text or a photocopy of a section of the text (if downloaded or teacher-created).
  - Okay to include a separate, attached list of texts used on each date.

Entry Point

1. Identify the main idea in an informational text.
2. Determine the meaning of general academic words in an informational text.
3. Give examples of opinions in an informational text?
ELA-Writing: The pre-scored rubrics should accurately reflect the student's contribution to the work sample

Summary

- Carefully review entry points and choose one that is appropriate and challenging for the required strand.
- Verify that instructional activities assess the skill in the entry point, and the intended content in the strand/domain being assessed.
  - If in doubt, check with a content specialist or search for meaning and examples online.
- Make sure brief descriptions and evidence clearly reflect the skill listed in the measurable outcome.
- Assess what you say you will assess in the measurable outcome.
- DESE staff and MCAS-Alt Teacher Consultants are available to answer any questions you may have after the presentations.

What About the ESSA “1% Cap” on MCAS-Alt Participation?

- Beginning in 2016-2017, ESSA placed a statewide cap of 1 percent of all students in MCAS-required grades who can take the MCAS-Alt
  - 1% does not include students who take Grade-level or Competency portfolios.
  - MA received a one-year waiver of the cap, but we must show progress lowering the number taking the MCAS-Alt.
- This was an opportunity to revisit and refine our decision-making on who takes the MCAS-Alt. During team meetings, ask:
  - Can the student take standard MCAS assessments, especially new online tests, with accessibility features and accommodations?
  - Can the student submit a "grade-level" or "competency" portfolio instead?
- Important information available at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/essa/.
**Which Students Should Take MCAS-Alt?**

A student with a *significant cognitive disability* who is....

- Working on learning standards that have been *substantially modified* due to the severity of the disability, *and* is

- Receiving *intensive, individualized instruction* in order to acquire, generalize, and demonstrate knowledge and skills, *and* is

- Unable to demonstrate knowledge and skills on a standardized paper or online test, even with accommodations,

... should take the **MCAS-Alt** in that subject.

*(Teams decide annually in each content area)*

---

**Criteria that should not be used to designate a student for the MCAS-Alt**

A student should not take MCAS-Alt based *solely* on whether he/she:

- has previously failed the MCAS test;
- has taken an alternate assessment previously (since this is an annual decision);
- has not been provided instruction in the general curriculum;
- was absent from school excessively;
- has a specific disability (e.g., all students with intellectual disabilities should not automatically take the MCAS-Alt);
- Attends a program where it is expected that students will take the MCAS-Alt;
- is an English learner (EL);
- is from a low-income family or is a child in foster care;
- requires use of an alternative augmentative communication system
- attends a school in which the IEP team was unduly influenced to designate the student for MCAS-Alt in order to receive more credit for school accountability.
Fall Training Sessions

- **Educators** (8:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.):
  - Oct. 1, 2, 10, 11, 15, 16, 22, 23
- **Administrator Overviews** (1-3 p.m.):
  - Oct. 15, 16, 22, 23

“Portfolios-in-Progress”
(half-day review sessions):

- Oct. 1, 2, 10, 11, 15, 16, 22, 23
- Jan. 8 (Danvers), 9 (Marlboro), 17 (Taunton), 18 (Springfield)
- Feb. 27 (Taunton), 28 (Danvers), March 5 (Marlboro), 6 (Springfield)

Portfolio Submission

- **Educators**
  - Schedule UPS pick-up by 3:00 p.m., Thursday, March 28, 2019
- **Portfolios must be submitted** by 5:00 p.m., Friday, March 29

Other Important Dates

- **Order MCAS-Alt materials**: Jan. 7–18
- **Submission materials received in schools** during last week in February.
- **Preliminary results** posted mid-June
- **MCAS-Alt Score Appeals deadline**: 5:00 p.m., June 22, 2019

Contact Information

- **MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education – Student Assessment** (781-338-3625)
  - Dan Wiener, Administrator of Inclusive Assessment
  - Debra Hand – dhand@doe.mass.edu
  - General Inquiries – mcas@doe.mass.edu
- **Measured Progress**
  - MCAS Service Center – 800-737-5103
  - Kevin Froton – froton.kevin@measuredprogress.org
  - Mark Peters- Peters.mark@measuredprogress.org

MCAS Web Page

- [MCAS Web Page](https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/)
- [MCAS News archive](https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/ABOUT/NEWS/)
- [Feedback/Questions](https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/ABOUT/FEEDBACK/)
- [Student Assessment Updates](https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/ABOUT/UPDATES/)

Questions?

Thank you for coming!