Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

Alternate Assessment Based on Alternate Achievement Standards for Students with Disabilities

2021 Educator’s Manual for MCAS-Alt

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
Fall 2020

This publication is available on the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website
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Overview

This manual contains information about the MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt) which measures the educational achievement of a relatively small number of students with significant cognitive disabilities who are unable to take the standard MCAS tests. The 2021 Educator’s Manual for MCAS-Alt provides guidelines and instructions for educators who are preparing alternate assessments for students who have this designation listed in their IEP or 504 plan. The knowledge and skills assessed by the MCAS-Alt are aligned with the same content assessed for other students on the MCAS tests based on the most current versions of the state’s curriculum frameworks. The 2021 Educator’s Manual for MCAS-Alt should be used in conjunction with the Resource Guide to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for Students with Disabilities to identify challenging measurable outcomes for students with significant cognitive disabilities. Both publications are available on the Department’s website.

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PART I

Recommended Timeline

New and Notable

Administrative Responsibilities and Security Requirements
Recommended Timeline and Important Dates for 2020-2021

Summer 2020

- educators may begin collecting evidence for students taking the 2021 MCAS-Alt beginning on July 1, 2020.

Fall 2020

- identify students who will participate in MCAS-Alt in each subject.
- organize folders by subject/strand in which to store work samples.
- obtain signed Consent Form(s) to Photograph or Videotape Student, as needed.
- consult the Department’s website for information on MCAS-Alt training sessions for teachers and administrators.
- register for Forms and Graphs Online.
- prepare data charts for collection of student performance data.
- complete the MCAS-Alt Skills Survey and identify prospective entry points for each student.
- develop appropriate measurable outcomes based on current versions of the Resource Guide.
- plan instruction in collaboration with general educators, as needed.
- begin collecting work samples and data on student performance.
- stay apprised of current information by reading the MCAS-Alt Newsletter which is emailed to educators (including tips and strategies, training information, logistics, and resources)

Winter/Spring 2021

January/February/March

- January 4−15: principals order MCAS-Alt material on Cognia website
- consult the Department’s website for registration information on portfolio review sessions.

March

- finish collecting, organizing, labeling, and selecting evidence for the portfolio (with the student).
- complete required forms, including Student Information Booklet (SIB).
- label all materials (photographs, videos, etc.).
- invite parents to view portfolio(s) and sign Verification Form.
- review portfolios for completeness.
- remind administrator to schedule pickup of completed portfolios through MCAS Service Center by 3:00 p.m., Wednesday, March 31.
- ship all MCAS-Alt portfolios from school no later than 5:00 p.m., Thursday, April 1. (Do not transport boxes to UPS.)

June

- preliminary results reported electronically to schools and districts in mid-June (Portfolio Feedback Forms in DropBox).
- file MCAS-Alt Score Appeals, if warranted, by 5:00 p.m. on Friday, June 25.

July

- results of MCAS-Alt Score Appeals mailed to principals (end of July).

Fall 2021

September

- MCAS-Alt Parent/Guardian Reports sent to districts.
- portfolios from previous school year returned to schools.
New and Notable for the 2021 MCAS-Alt

Please be aware of the following important updates for the 2021 MCAS-Alt:

In spring 2020, MCAS-Alt assessments were not submitted nor were they scored, due to the extended virus-related school closures and cancellation of the MCAS. As a result:

- Participation in MCAS and MCAS-Alt was not used for accountability determinations.
- Portfolios that were compiled by schools in 2019–2020, but not submitted, should be retained by schools for diagnostic purposes and maintained securely in the student’s temporary record.
- All data, work samples, and other documentation must be collected during the current school year (with the exception described below)
- Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) portfolios may include evidence collected during two consecutive school years (the current and one previous school year), as before. If STE evidence and data were collected for students in grades 4, 7, and 9 during the 2019–2020 school year, that evidence and data may be included in their STE portfolio for 2020–2021.

Spring 2021 MCAS-Alt Portfolio Submission

Portfolios must be completed and prepared for submission in time for pick-up from schools no later than 5:00 p.m., Thursday, April 1, 2021. All portfolio submissions must be submitted on or before this date—no extensions will be granted. Portfolios may not be amended, nor materials added past the deadline. Submission materials (e.g., three-ring binders, Student Information Booklets, plastic envelopes, and shipping labels) must be ordered online by school administrators between January 4–15, 2021, and will be sent to each school in late February 2021.

Information on Grade-level and Competency Portfolios

Information on the creation and submission of “grade-level” and “competency portfolios” has been compiled in the 2021 MCAS Grade-Level and Competency Portfolio Manual (posted here) and is no longer part of the Educator’s Manual for MCAS-Alt. These assessments require the creation and collection of work samples that measure the achievement of learning standards contained in the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks at a level that is comparable to a student who is taking the standard MCAS test in that subject.

Be aware of the following important information for the 2020–2021 MCAS-Alt:

MCAS-Alt Skills Survey

Educators conducting the MCAS-Alt must first complete the MCAS-Alt Skills Survey for each student in the strands/domains required for assessment before selecting entry points for the portfolio. The survey is designed to assist educators in determining a student’s current level of knowledge, skills, and abilities so that challenging and appropriate entry points can be selected. The MCAS-Alt Skills Survey may be downloaded in print form here or used with the Forms and Graphs Online application here. See pages 25-26 for details on the skills survey. Submission of a completed skills survey is required in the student’s portfolio for each required portfolio strand. Omission will result in a score of “Incomplete” in the strand.
Resource Guides to the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for Students with Disabilities

The Fall 2020 edition of the Resource Guide has been updated to include the grades PreK–12 standards listed in the 2016 Curriculum Frameworks for Science and Technology/Engineering.

- MCAS-Alt requirements for high school Biology and Introductory Physics have been updated to reflect the “next-generation” 2016 high school standards in those disciplines and a relatively new portfolio format that incorporates eight Science Practices.
- MCAS-Alt requirements for high school Chemistry and Technology/Engineering will continue to reflect the “legacy” 2001/2006 high school standards and previous “core set of evidence” requirements.

The Fall 2020 Resource Guides in the three assessed subjects (ELA, mathematics, and science and technology/engineering) must be used as the basis for all MCAS-Alt assessments and are available on the Department’s website and in the Forms and Graphs Online application.

Principal’s Manual for MCAS-Alt

The Principal’s Manual for MCAS-Alt provides support to administrators who oversee the MCAS-Alt process and the submission of the MCAS-Alt for students in their school or program.

Entry Points for ELA–Writing

The ELA Resource Guide lists the full range of entry points in the ELA–Writing strand for instructional purposes. However, only one entry point will be available for selection as a measurable outcome for each writing type, as follows:

“Use the student's primary mode of communication to express or create a writing sample that is a(n)
- opinion/argument
- narrative (including poetry)
- informative/explanatory text”

(See the ELA–Writing section beginning on page 34 for details)

Sheet Protectors and Staples

We continue to request that teachers not use sheet protectors or staples with portfolio contents. Instead, we encourage the use of dividers (tabs) between each portfolio strand to improve the efficiency of the scoring process.

Ensuring That Portfolios Are Complete

It is important to ensure that portfolios are compiled correctly and do not receive strand scores of “M” (i.e., missing or insufficient evidence) or content area scores of Incomplete so that students will receive valid and accurate feedback on their academic achievement.

In order to improve the likelihood of submitting a complete portfolio, educators are encouraged to:

- review all sections of this manual;
- review the Resource Guides, including the introductory section entitled “How to Use this Resource Guide;”
- join Department-sponsored training sessions once the schedule is posted online and listed in the MCAS-Alt Newsletter;
- review the Completeness Questions and other resources;
- review MCAS-Alt Newsletters sent by email and available online;
• check the dates listed on each piece of evidence and the accompanying data chart to ensure they are correct;
• submit additional evidence, if possible, beyond the minimum requirements.

Forms and Graphs Online

Teachers are encouraged to use the free Forms and Graphs Online application to complete all required forms, data charts, and work description labels for their students’ portfolios. For technical assistance using Forms and Graphs Online, call (866) 834-8880.

Policy on Storage and Destruction of Returned MCAS-Alt Portfolios

In September of each year (excluding 2020), MCAS-Alt portfolios are returned to schools that were submitted the previous year. The portfolio content becomes part of the student’s temporary record and must be maintained in a secure location. Information suggested by the Department on the duration for retention and destruction of returned portfolios is provided online and on page 55.

MCAS-Alt Score Appeals

A teacher or administrator who believes a discrepancy exists between the evidence and information in the scored portfolio and its preliminary score may request an MCAS-Alt Score Appeal, if a photocopy of the original portfolio has been retained by the school. If an appeal is received by the Department on or before the deadline for its submission, the portfolio strand in question will be reviewed and, if needed, rescored. Score appeals are submitted by June 25, 2021. Appeals findings are returned to schools by mail in late July. Information on submitting score appeals is available here.
Rationale and Purpose of the MCAS-Alt

The purpose of the MCAS-Alt is to assess students with significant cognitive disabilities on their knowledge, skills, and abilities based on the most current versions of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, as required by state and federal laws. Statewide alternate assessments allow the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to report the results to parents, schools, and the public on the academic performance of all students with disabilities, and to assist schools in developing challenging programs of instruction for students with significant cognitive disabilities.

The Department’s publication entitled Resource Guide to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for Students with Disabilities describes strategies for adapting and using the state’s standards to instruct and assess students who are taking the MCAS-Alt.

The purposes of MCAS-Alt are:

- to determine whether students with significant cognitive disabilities are receiving a program of instruction based on the state’s academic standards
- to determine how much of the academic curriculum a student has learned
- to include difficult-to-assess students in statewide assessments and accountability systems
- to use assessment results to provide challenging academic instruction
- to provide an alternative pathway for some students with disabilities to earn a Competency Determination and to become eligible to receive a diploma

MCAS-Alt Administrative and Security Requirements

Principals are responsible for ensuring that all educators administering the MCAS-Alt comply with the requirements and instructions contained in the 2021 Educator’s Manual for MCAS-Alt. In addition, other administrators, educators, and staff within the school and district are responsible for complying with the same requirements. School staff members who violate the test security requirements are subject to the sanctions and penalties outlined in this section. The purpose of the MCAS-Alt security requirements is to protect the validity of the statewide results.

The MCAS-Alt, if done correctly, provides educators, parents, and the state with information on the academic performance and progress of each student, and can be used by the IEP team to identify challenging academic goals for each student. Therefore, it is essential that accurate and authentic portfolio evidence be compiled and submitted that truthfully reflects the student’s performance.

A. Principals’ Responsibilities for Conducting the MCAS-Alt

Principals are responsible for the following:

- Ensure that all students with disabilities participate in MCAS in the manner prescribed by their IEP team or in their 504 plan and in accordance with participation requirements;
- Identify qualified school personnel to administer the MCAS-Alt and ensure that all staff responsible for compiling and/or submitting MCAS-Alt portfolios receives training prior to each administration, regardless of experience conducting similar assessments.
- Ensure that adequate school resources are allocated, and staff coordinated, to guarantee appropriate participation in, and timely submission of, MCAS-Alt portfolios for students with disabilities designated for alternate assessment, including the allocation of enough time for compiling data and evidence for the portfolio(s);
Monitor the alternate assessment process to ensure the student work is neither duplicated, altered, nor fabricated in a way that provides information that is false or portrays the student’s performance inaccurately;

Provide assurances through the PCPA that all information is complete and accurate for each student participating in MCAS-Alt and is properly identified on all MCAS and MCAS-Alt forms and materials, including MCAS-Alt Student Identification Booklets (SIB) and student portfolios.

Schedule a UPS pick-up through the MCAS Service Center by 3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 31, for pick-up no later than 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 1, 2021.

B. Educators’ Responsibilities for Conducting the MCAS-Alt

Educators who conduct the MCAS-Alt are responsible for ensuring that information is complete and accurate for each student participating in MCAS-Alt and is properly recorded and included in each student’s portfolio, as well as on all MCAS-Alt forms and materials, including the Student Information Booklet (SIB). The student’s teacher is also responsible for ensuring that student work samples and other evidence are neither duplicated, altered, nor fabricated in a way that provides information that is false or portrays the student’s performance inaccurately. Evidence for each student, regardless of the similarity of classroom instruction or participation in similar classroom activities, must reflect the individual student’s authentic abilities and performance. The student’s teacher is responsible for the timely submission of student portfolios with all required forms and information to their principal for review and sign-off on the Principal’s Certification of Proper MCAS-Alt Administration (PCPA) prior to the submission of portfolios to the Department.

Intentional disregard for MCAS testing and security protocols may constitute misconduct or other good cause for which an educator may face license discipline under Department regulations. If misconduct by a licensed educator is found, the Commissioner, as the Massachusetts educator licensing authority, may open a further investigation into possible license consequences.

Penalties for testing irregularities and/or misconduct may include the following:

- delay in reporting of district, school, and/or student results
- invalidation of district, school, and/or student results
- removal of school personnel from any future role in MCAS and/or MCAS-Alt administrations
- possible employment and/or licensure sanctions for licensed educators

C. Reporting MCAS-Alt Irregularities

Educators or administrators who become aware of any irregularities in the preparation or submission of MCAS-Alt portfolios must contact the Department at 781-338-3625 to report the issue. The Department may then request that the school or district investigate the matter and submit a written investigative report. The Department may also perform its own independent investigation. Once the Department has determined whether an irregularity has taken place, the Department will notify the school and district of any consequences that follow from this determination. This may include invalidation of student portfolios, and licensure sanctions or other limitations for licensed educators. Consequences imposed by the Department do not limit a local district’s authority to impose its own sanctions up to and including termination.
PART II

Assessment Participation Guidelines
Statewide Assessment Participation Requirements

All students who are educated with Massachusetts public funds, including students with disabilities, English learners, and English learners with disabilities, are required by state and federal laws to participate in statewide assessments. The MCAS-Alt must be administered to students in all grades and subjects for which standard MCAS tests are also required, according to the grade in which the student is reported in the Student Information Management System (SIMS). For MCAS-Alt assessments submitted in the 2020–2021 school year for students in grades 3–10, evidence must be based on the standards listed in the Fall 2020 Resource Guide to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for Students with Disabilities in English language arts, mathematics, and science and technology/engineering. Specific MCAS-Alt requirements for students in each grade are listed beginning on page 15.

Requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Regarding MCAS-Alt Participation

Be sure to review the memo from the Commissioner that includes an explanation of the criteria to be used by IEP teams to designate students to take the MCAS-Alt, and the criteria that should not be used for that purpose. The Commissioner’s memo and attachments are available here, including information on the “one percent threshold,” training materials for IEP teams, and a sample parent notification letter that districts are required to send to the parents of students participating in the MCAS-Alt. These are made available in response to the requirements outlined in the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

Decision-Making Tool for MCAS Participation for Students with Disabilities

The decision-making flow chart was updated for the 2019–2020 school year and is used by IEP teams to make annual decisions regarding appropriate student participation in MCAS in each content area. Revisions include the addition of specific criteria for participating in the MCAS-Alt, and those students who may be considered for a “grade-level” or “competency” portfolio. Please share this with IEP team chairpersons to guide each IEP team’s discussion and decision-making regarding statewide assessments (see online and page 13).

Guidelines for IEP Team Decision-Making: Which Students Should Take the MCAS-Alt?

This section provides guidelines for IEP team members and staff who develop 504 plans to determine how each student with a disability will participate in the MCAS assessments. The student’s IEP team (or 504 plan coordinator) should address the questions below and consider options 1, 2, and 3 in the chart that follows:

- Can the student demonstrate knowledge and skills, either fully or partially, on the standard MCAS test under routine conditions?
- Can the student demonstrate knowledge and skills, either fully or partially, on the standard MCAS test with accommodations? If so, which accommodations are necessary for the student to participate?
- If no to the above questions, see the options below to determine whether the student should take the alternate assessment (MCAS-Alt). (Note: Alternate assessments are intended only for students with significant cognitive disabilities who are unable to take standard MCAS tests, even with accommodations. Students should not be identified for alternate assessments based solely on a particular disability, a placement in a specific classroom or program, previous low achievement on the tests, or EL status.)
The student’s IEP team or 504 plan coordinator must make a separate decision for each subject scheduled for assessment. A student may take the standard test in one subject and the alternate assessment in another. These decisions may be revised each time the team convenes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of Student’s Instructional Program and Local Assessment</th>
<th>Recommended Participation in MCAS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **OPTION 1**

*If the student is*

- a) generally able to demonstrate knowledge and skills on a computer- or paper-based test, either with or without test accommodations,
  
  *and is*

- b) working on learning standards **at or near grade-level expectations**, 
  
  *or is*

- c) working on learning standards that have been modified and are **somewhat below grade-level expectations** due to the nature of the student's disability,

*Then*

the student should take the computer- or paper-based **MCAS test**, either with or without accommodations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of Student’s Instructional Program and Local Assessment</th>
<th>Recommended Participation in MCAS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **OPTION 2**

*If the student is*

- a) **generally unable** to demonstrate knowledge and skills on a computer- or paper-based test, even with accommodations,
  
  *and is*

- b) working on learning standards that have been **substantially modified** due to the nature and severity of his or her disability,
  
  *and is*

- c) receiving **intensive, individualized instruction** in order to acquire, generalize, and demonstrate knowledge and skills,

*Then*

the student should take the **MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt)** in this subject.
Further Guidance on Designating Students for the MCAS-Alt (per Option 2 above)

IEP teams should not designate a student for an alternate assessment solely because he/she:

- is frequently absent from school;
- has not received instruction in the general curriculum;
- has a particular disability (e.g., all students with intellectual disabilities should not automatically be designated for the MCAS-Alt);
- is placed in a program or classroom where it is expected that students will take the MCAS-Alt;
- has taken an alternate assessment in the past (since this is an annual decision);
- has previously failed the MCAS test;
- is an English learner;
- is from a low-income family or is a child in foster care;
- requires assistive technology or an augmentative communication system that has not been provided;
- attends a school in which the IEP team may have been influenced to designate the student for an alternate assessment in order to receive disproportionate credit for the school’s accountability rating.

Please refer to the [MCAS-Alt eligibility criteria](#) in detail.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of Student's Instructional Program and Local Assessment</th>
<th>Recommended Participation in MCAS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>OPTION 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If the student is</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a) working on learning standards at, near, or somewhat below grade-level expectations and is</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) sometimes able to take a computer- or paper-based test, either without or with one or more test accommodation(s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>but</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) has a complex and significant disability* that does not allow the student to fully demonstrate knowledge and skills on a computer- or paper-based test of this duration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Then</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the student should take the computer- or paper-based MCAS test, if possible, with necessary accommodations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>However</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the team may recommend the “grade-level” or “competency” portfolio when the severity and complexity of the disability prevent the student from demonstrating knowledge and skills on the computer- or paper-based MCAS test, even with the use of accommodations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Guidance on Students with Complex and Significant Disabilities Who May Require a “Grade-Level” or “Competency” Portfolio (per Option 3 above)

When the nature and complexity of a student’s disability present significant barriers or challenges to standardized computer- or paper-based testing, even with the use of accommodations; and the student is working at or close to grade-level expectations, the student’s IEP team or 504 plan coordinator may determine that the student should participate either in the “grade-level” (grades 3–8) or “competency” (high school) portfolio in one or more subjects. More information on “grade-level” and “competency” portfolios is available in the [MCAS Grade-Level and Competency Portfolio Manual](#).
The following in unique circumstances provide examples to expand the team’s understanding of students who may be appropriate for the “grade-level” or “competency” portfolio:

- a student with a significant emotional, behavioral, or other disability, who is unable to maintain sufficient concentration to participate in standard MCAS testing, even with accommodations;
- a student with a significant health-related disability, neurological disorder, or other complex disability, who cannot meet the demands of a prolonged test administration;
- a student with a significant motor, communication, or other disability, who requires more time than is reasonable or available for testing, even with the allowance of extended time (i.e., the student is unable to complete a test session in a single school day).

Specific guidelines and requirements for “grade-level portfolios” and “competency portfolios” in each subject are located in the new MCAS Grade-Level and Competency Portfolio Manual, available on the Department’s website.
Decision-Making Tool for MCAS Participation by Students with Disabilities

The decision chart shown below may be used by IEP teams and 504 plan coordinators to make annual decisions regarding appropriate student participation in MCAS. Make separate decisions in each content area being assessed: ELA, mathematics, and science and technology/engineering.

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1 See pages 11–12 of this manual for additional details on and examples of “complex and significant disabilities.”
2 See the MCAS Grade-level and Competency Portfolio Manual for details on submission of “grade-level” and “competency” portfolios.
3 Students who take the MCAS-Alt in high school will not earn a Competency Determination in the assessed subject and therefore will not be eligible to earn a high school diploma.
PART III

Required Assessments in Each Grade
Required MCAS-Alt Assessments in Each Grade

The information in Table 1 below and on the following pages outlines the assessment requirements in each grade for students participating in the 2021 MCAS-Alt. The MCAS-Alt Skills Survey must be completed for each strand submitted. The Fall 2020 Resource Guides must be used as the basis for developing measurable outcomes that will be assessed on the 2021 MCAS-Alt.

For **English language arts** and **mathematics**, the 2021 MCAS-Alt will assess the 2017 editions of the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks in for students in grades 3–8 and 10. For **science and technology/engineering** (STE):

- in grades 5 and 8 and high school Biology and Introductory Physics, the MCAS-Alt will assess the “next-generation” 2016 high school STE standards using the portfolio format that incorporates the eight Science Practices (see pages 38-41);
- in high school Chemistry and Technology/Engineering, the MCAS-Alt will assess the “legacy” 2001/2006 high school standards using the “core set of evidence” portfolio format and requirements (see page 41).

### Table 1

**Requirements by Grade for the 2021 MCAS-Alt**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade 3</th>
<th>ELA</th>
<th>Required Portfolio Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language (based on standards in the “Vocabulary Acquisition and Use” cluster)</td>
<td>• One data chart measuring the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome on at least eight different dates, based on one standard in the “Vocabulary Acquisition and Use” cluster of the ELA–Language strand; plus • Two additional pieces of primary evidence, plus work description forms, showing the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome identified on the data chart</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading: • Literature or • Informational Text</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing (based on standards in the “Text Type and Purposes” cluster)</td>
<td>• Three different final writing samples in any text type; plus • One baseline writing sample in any text type; plus • Work description labels for each writing sample; plus • Three pre-scored writing rubrics, one for each final writing sample</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mathematics</th>
<th>Required Portfolio Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operations and Algebraic Thinking (OA)</td>
<td>• One data chart measuring the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome, on at least eight different dates, based on one entry point or access skill in the Operations and Algebraic Thinking domain; plus • Two additional pieces of primary evidence, plus work description forms, showing the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome identified on the data chart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurement and Data (MD)</td>
<td>• One data chart measuring the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome on at least eight different dates, based on one entry point or access skill in the Measurement and Data domain; plus • Two additional pieces of primary evidence, plus work description forms, showing the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome identified on the data chart</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** The title of the published text must be included, or a photocopy of the text, if teacher-created or web-based.
### ELA

**Language**  
(based on standards in the “Vocabulary Acquisition and Use” cluster)

- One data chart measuring the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome on at least eight different dates, based on **one** standard in the “Vocabulary Acquisition and Use” cluster of the ELA–Language strand; plus

- Two additional pieces of primary evidence, plus work description forms, showing the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome identified on the data chart

**Reading:**

- Literature, or
- Informational Text

- One data chart measuring the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome on at least eight different dates, based on either the Literature or Informational ELA–Reading strand; plus

- Two additional pieces of primary evidence, plus work description forms, showing the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome identified on the data chart

*Note:* The **title of the published text** must be included, or **photocopy of the text**, if teacher-created or web-based.

**Writing**  
(based on standards from the “Text Type and Purposes” cluster)

- Three **different** final writing samples in any text type; plus

- One baseline writing sample in any text type; plus

- Work description labels for each writing sample; plus

- Three pre-scored writing rubrics, one for each final writing sample

### Mathematics

**Operations and Algebraic Thinking (OA)**

- One data chart measuring the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome on at least eight different dates, based on one entry point or access skill in the Operations and Algebraic Thinking domain; plus

- Two additional pieces of primary evidence, plus work description forms, showing the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome identified on the data chart

**Number and Operations–Fractions (NF)**

- One data chart measuring the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome on at least eight different dates, based on one entry point or access skill in the Number and Operations–Fractions domain; plus

- Two additional pieces of primary evidence, plus work description forms, showing the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome identified on the data chart
### Grade 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELA</th>
<th>Required Portfolio Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language (based on standards in the “Vocabulary Acquisition and Use” cluster)</strong></td>
<td>• One data chart measuring the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome on at least eight different dates, based on one standard in the “Vocabulary Acquisition and Use” cluster of the ELA–Language strand; plus • Two additional pieces of primary evidence, plus work description forms, showing the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome identified on the data chart</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Reading:**  
  • Literature or  
  • Informational Text | • One data chart measuring the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome on at least eight different dates, based on either the Literature or Informational ELA–Reading strand; plus • Two additional pieces of primary evidence, plus work description forms, showing the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome identified on the data chart  
**Note:** The title of the published text must be included, or photocopy of the text, if teacher-created or web-based. |
| **Writing (based on standards from the “Text Type and Purposes” cluster)** | • Three different final writing samples in any text type; plus • One baseline writing sample in any text type; plus • Work description labels for each writing sample; plus • Three pre-scored writing rubrics, one for each final writing sample |
| **Mathematics** | **Required Portfolio Evidence** |
| **Number and Operations in Base Ten (NBT)** | • One data chart measuring the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome, on at least eight different dates, based on one entry point or access skill in the Number and Operations in Base Ten domain; plus • Two additional pieces of primary evidence, plus work description forms, showing the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome identified on the data chart |
| **Number and Operations–Fractions (NF)** | • One data chart measuring the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome, on at least eight different dates, based on one entry point or access skill in the Number and Operations–Fractions domain; plus • Two additional pieces of primary evidence, plus work description forms, showing the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome identified on the data chart |
| **Science and Technology/Engineering (STE)** | Evidence may be compiled over two consecutive school years in this subject (dated 7/1/19 to 4/1/21)  
**Required Portfolio Evidence**  
Choose three STE disciplines. For each discipline, select one core idea: • Complete six STE Summary Sheets (available in Appendix B), each addressing one entry point or access skill in the core idea. • Choose three (3) pieces of primary evidence and attach each piece to its corresponding STE Summary Sheet. Complete the bottom portion of the STE Summary Sheet if no evidence is attached. • Include at least three different science practices for each core idea. |
### Grade 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELA</th>
<th>Required Portfolio Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Language (based on standards from the “Vocabulary Acquisition and Use” cluster) | • One data chart measuring the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome on at least eight different dates, based on one standard in the “Vocabulary Acquisition and Use” cluster of the ELA–Language strand; plus  
• Two additional pieces of primary evidence, plus work description forms, showing the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome identified on the data chart |
| Reading: (only one)  
• Literature,  
• Informational Text,  
• Literacy in Science and Technical Subjects, or  
• Literacy in History/Social Studies | • One data chart measuring the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome on at least eight different dates, based on either the Literature or Informational ELA–Reading strand; plus  
• Two additional pieces of primary evidence, plus work description forms, showing the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome identified on the data chart  
**Note:** The title of the published text must be included or photocopy of the text, if teacher-created or web-based. |
| Writing (based on standards from the “Text Type and Purposes” cluster) | • Three different final writing samples in any text type; plus  
• One baseline writing sample in any text type; plus  
• Work description labels for each writing sample; plus  
• Three pre-scored writing rubrics, one for each final writing sample |
| Mathematics | Required Portfolio Evidence |
| Statistics and Probability (SP) | • One data chart measuring the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome on at least eight different dates, based on one entry point or access skill in the Statistics and Probability domain; plus  
• Two additional pieces of primary evidence, plus work description forms, showing the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome identified on the data chart |
| The Number System (NS) | • One data chart measuring the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome on at least eight different dates, based on one entry point or access skill in The Number System domain; plus  
• Two additional pieces of primary evidence, plus work description forms, showing the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome identified on the data chart |
### Grade 7

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Portfolio Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ELA</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Language** (based on standards from the “Vocabulary Acquisition and Use” cluster) | • One data chart measuring the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome on at least eight different dates, based on one standard in the “Vocabulary Acquisition and Use” cluster of the ELA–Language strand; plus  
  • Two additional pieces of primary evidence, plus work description forms, showing the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome identified on the data chart |
| **Reading:** (only one)      | • One data chart measuring the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome on at least eight different dates, based on either the Literature or Informational ELA–Reading strand; plus  
  • Two additional pieces of primary evidence, plus work description forms, showing the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome identified on the data chart  
  **Note:** The title of the published text must be included, or photocopy of the text, if teacher-created or web-based. |
| **Writing** (based on standards from the “Text Type and Purposes” cluster) | • Three different final writing samples in any text type; plus  
  • One baseline writing sample in any text type; plus  
  • Work description labels for each writing sample; plus  
  • Three pre-scored writing rubrics, one for each final writing sample |
| **Mathematics**              |
| **Ratios and Proportional Relationships (RP)** | • One data chart measuring the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome, on at least eight different dates, based on one entry point or access skill in the Ratios and Proportional Relationships domain; plus  
  • Two additional pieces of primary evidence, plus work description forms, showing the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome identified on the data chart |
| **Geometry (G)**             | • One data chart measuring the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome, on at least eight different dates, based on one entry point or access skill in the Geometry domain; plus  
  • Two additional pieces of primary evidence, plus work description forms, showing the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome identified on the data chart |
### Grade 8

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Required Portfolio Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ELA</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Language (based on standards from the “Vocabulary Acquisition and Use” cluster) | • One data chart measuring the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome on at least eight different dates, based on one standard in the “Vocabulary Acquisition and Use” cluster of the ELA−Language strand; plus  
  • Two additional pieces of primary evidence, plus work description forms, showing the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome identified on the data chart |
| Reading: (only one)            | • Literature,  
  • Informational Text,  
  • Literacy in Science and Technical Subjects, or  
  • Literacy in History/Social Studies | • One data chart measuring the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome on at least eight different dates, based on either the Literature or Informational ELA−Reading strand; plus  
  • Two additional pieces of primary evidence, plus work description forms, showing the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome identified on the data chart  
  **Note:** The title of the published text must be included, or photocopy of the text if teacher-created or web-based. |
| Writing (based on standards from the “Text Type and Purposes” cluster) | • Three different final writing samples in any text type; plus  
  • One baseline writing sample in any text type; plus  
  • Work description labels for each writing sample; plus  
  • Three pre-scored writing rubrics, one for each final writing sample |
| **Mathematics**                |                                                                                              |
| Expressions and Equations (EE) | • One data chart measuring the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome, on at least eight different dates, based on one entry point or access skill in the Expressions and Equations domain; plus  
  • Two additional pieces of primary evidence, plus work description forms, showing the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome identified on the data chart |
| Geometry (G)                   | • One data chart measuring the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome, on at least eight different dates, based on one entry point or access skill in the Geometry domain; plus  
  • Two additional pieces of primary evidence, plus work description forms, showing the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome identified on the data chart |
| **Science and Technology/Engineering** | Evidence may be compiled over two consecutive school years in this subject (dated 7/1/19 to 4/1/21) |
| STE disciplines:               | Choose three STE disciplines. For each discipline, select one core idea:  
  • Life Science  
  • Earth and Space Sciences  
  • Physical Science  
  • Technology/Engineering |  
  • Complete six STE Summary Sheets (available in Appendix B), each addressing one entry point or access skill.  
  • Choose at least three (3) pieces of primary evidence and attach each piece to its corresponding STE Summary Sheet. Complete the bottom portion of the STE Summary Sheet if no evidence is attached.  
  • Include at least three different science practices for each core idea. |
### High School: Grade 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ELA</th>
<th>Required Portfolio Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Language** (based on standards from the “Vocabulary Acquisition and Use” cluster) | • One data chart measuring the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome on at least eight different dates, based on one standard in the “Vocabulary Acquisition and Use” cluster of the ELA–Language strand; plus
• Two additional pieces of primary evidence, plus work description forms, showing the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome identified on the data chart |
| **Reading: (only one)**   | • One data chart measuring the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome on at least eight different dates, based on either the Literature or Informational ELA–Reading strand; plus
• Two additional pieces of primary evidence, plus work description forms, showing the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome identified on the data chart
**Note:** The title of the published text, or photocopy of the text if teacher-created or web-based, must be included. |
| **Writing** (based on standards from the “Text Type and Purposes” cluster) | • Three different final writing samples in any text type; plus
• One baseline writing sample in any text type; plus
• Work description labels for each writing sample; plus
• Three pre-scored writing rubrics, one for each final writing sample |
| **Mathematics**            | Select three different conceptual categories. For each conceptual category, submit:                                                                 |
|                            | • One data chart measuring the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome on at least eight different dates, based on one standard in the selected Mathematics conceptual category; plus
• Two additional pieces of primary evidence, plus work description forms, showing the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome identified on the data chart                                                                 |
|                            | Measurable outcomes may be based on entry points selected either from high school or from lower grade levels in related domains, according to Figure 5 on page 38. |
High School: Grade 9 or 10 Science and Technology/Engineering (STE)
(The STE portfolio may be submitted *either* in grade 9 or 10.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Science and Technology/Engineering</th>
<th>Required Portfolio Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evidence may be compiled over two consecutive school years in this subject (7/1/19 to 4/1/21)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Choice of *either*:
- Biology
- Introductory Physics
- Chemistry
- Technology/Engineering

(See pp. 39-41 for details)

Select **one STE discipline**:

1) If selecting either *Biology* OR *Introductory Physics*, use the “next-generation” STE Resource Guide and select **three (3) core ideas** in the selected discipline. For each core idea:
   - Submit six STE Summary Sheets (available in Appendix B), each addressing one entry point or access skill in the core idea.
   - Choose at least three (3) pieces of primary evidence (work samples) and attach each piece to its corresponding STE Summary Sheet. Complete the bottom portion of the STE Summary Sheet if no evidence is attached.
   - Include at least **three different science practices** for each core idea.

2) If selecting either *Chemistry* OR *Technology/Engineering*, use the “legacy” STE Resource Guide and select **three (3) standards** in the selected discipline.

   For each standard, submit:
   - One data chart measuring the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome on at least eight different dates; plus
   - Two additional pieces of primary evidence, plus work description forms, showing the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome identified on the data chart.
Compiling the Portfolio

Portfolio Evidence

MCAS-Alt Skills Survey
Compiling the Portfolio

A. Portfolio Contents Checklist

The student’s MCAS-Alt portfolio must include the required forms (unless noted otherwise) listed below, in addition to the portfolio evidence. Place a check next to each item included in the portfolio. All forms may be photocopied from originals found in Appendix B or may be completed using the Forms and Graphs Online application. Consent forms in English and Spanish are available in the Appendix.

- **Artistic cover** (recommended, but not required) designed and produced by the student, inserted in the front window of the three-ring portfolio binder.

- **Portfolio Cover Sheet** containing important demographic information about the student, inserted as the first page of the portfolio.

- **Student’s Introduction to the Portfolio** produced by the student using his or her primary mode of communication describing “what I want others to know about me as a learner and about my portfolio.”

- **Verification Form** signed by the parent(s), guardian, or primary care provider signifying that they have reviewed their child’s portfolio, or, at a minimum, was invited to do so. In the event no signature was obtained, the school must include a record of attempts to invite the parent(s), guardian, or primary care provider to view the portfolio.

- **Consent Form to Photograph and/or Videotape a Student**, kept on file at the student’s school, if images or recordings of the student are included in the portfolio. This consent form gives permission only for the student to be recorded digitally in photographs or video for the MCAS-Alt portfolio and is not a consent form for the student to participate in an alternate assessment. Please do not substitute a “blanket” consent form for this purpose.

- **Weekly schedule** documenting the student’s program of instruction, including participation in the general academic curriculum.

- **School calendar**, placed in the left inside pocket of the binder, indicating dates in the current school year (including summer school dates, if applicable) in which the school is in session, and days, such as snow days and professional development days, on which school was not in session. (Note: Submit the previous school year’s calendar, as well, if assessing Science and Technology/Engineering over a two-year period.)

- **MCAS-Alt Skills Survey** completed for each Strand/Domain/Discipline submitted. Place a completed print version of the survey just after the Strand Cover Sheet in each strand.

- **Strand Cover Sheet** placed at the beginning of each portfolio strand submitted. Each portfolio strand includes a set of evidence that addresses a specific measurable outcome.

- **Work Description** form attached to each piece of primary evidence, providing required information about the work sample, photograph, or video clip. If work description labels are not used, all required information must be written directly on each piece of evidence.
B. How to Create a Portfolio Strand

1. Review the section on Required Assessments in Each Grade (see pages 15-22) to determine the strands and subjects required for assessment in the student’s grade.

2. Conduct the MCAS-Alt Skills Survey (see Section C below) for each student in the required strands/domains/conceptual categories/disciplines.

3. Refer to the Fall 2020 Resource Guide in the content area being assessed and select a learning standard in the student’s grade for the strand/domain/conceptual category required for assessment in the student’s grade.

4. Determine the appropriate level of complexity for the student based on the results of the MCAS-Alt Skills Survey and select a specific entry point or access skill from the Resource Guide (see Figure 2) that seems challenging for the student.
   - **entry point:** grade-level academic content addressed at a lower level of complexity
     - Note: Most students completing an alternate assessment will be able to address entry points. Entry points are arranged from more complex (closer to grade-level) to less complex (significantly below grade-level). Teachers can select an entry point in the student’s grade or reduce the complexity by selecting an entry point from an earlier grade in the same topic or cluster.
   - **access skill:** motor or communication skill addressed during a standards-based activity.
     - Note: Access skills are appropriate for a very small number of students with the most complex and significant cognitive disabilities. Access skills address developmental milestones, such as grasping or releasing, within the context of an academic activity.

5. Develop a measurable outcome based on the entry point or access skill (see page 28)

6. Begin assessing the student on his or her acquisition of the skill. Collect evidence for the portfolio, including work samples and performance information for a data chart (see Guidelines to Create a Data Chart on page 29). Document the percent of accuracy and independence for each date on which the skill is assessed.

C. Administer the MCAS-Alt Skills Survey

The MCAS-Alt Skills Survey is a standardized component of the MCAS-Alt that must be administered by the teacher to each student BEFORE selecting an entry point or access skill in the subject required for assessment. The survey will help determine a student’s current level of knowledge, skills, and abilities so that challenging entry points or access skills can be selected in each strand. The survey will also familiarize teachers with the range of entry points in a strand/domain that may be selected for the assessment.

The results of the Skills Survey should be used as the basis for selecting an entry point or access skill listed in the Resource Guide to the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for Students with Disabilities. Although a follow-up skills survey is not required after teaching the skill, it may be helpful to conduct the survey after the skill has been taught to note progress, especially if the student will attend a different classroom the following year.

The survey lists the important skills in each strand/domain/conceptual category/discipline from least to more complex. To complete the skills survey, teachers may use the sample tasks provided on the survey, design their own simple tasks, use classroom observations, class assignments, progress reports, or locally administered assessments to determine the degree to which the student can perform each skill listed in the survey.
Submission of a completed skills survey is required in the student’s portfolio for each portfolio strand being assessed. Omission will result in a score of “Incomplete” in the strand. Instructions for administering the skills survey and applying the results are available here, if completing the survey by hand; or the survey may be completed using the Forms and Graphs Online application. A sample strand from the survey is shown in Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1**
Excerpt from the MCAS-Alt Skills Survey in ELA–Reading (for all grades)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Based on a literary or informational text read by or to the student, student can:</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Identify the main character(s) in the text.</td>
<td>0% (unable)</td>
<td>Up to 25% (nearly)</td>
<td>Up to 50% (occasionally)</td>
<td>Up to 75% (mostly)</td>
<td>Up to 100% (almost always)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Identify the setting of the text.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. State key details from the text.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Identify events (or ideas) presented in the text.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Identify the central (main) idea of the text.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Explain why or how something occurred in the text.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Identify and define unknown words in the text; or match words or phrases from the text to their meaning.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Differentiate between a fact and the author’s opinion.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Describe the author’s point of view.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Once the survey has been completed for each student in the strands/domains/conceptual categories required for assessment, teachers will review the results and select an entry point from the Resource Guide based on any skill (or a related skill) that has been checked in columns A, B, or C (i.e., that the student cannot yet perform independently at least some of the time).

If the student is unable to perform any of the skills in the survey (i.e., column A above), then the student should be considered for access skills (motor or communication skills), rather than entry points.

**D. Selecting a Skill for Assessment**

The Resource Guide for each subject is organized into strands, domains/conceptual categories, or disciplines for each grade (or grade span in STE). Standards in each grade are grouped into clusters or core ideas of related standards within each strand/domain, conceptual category or discipline.

A list of standards is provided in the Resource Guide, followed by a list of entry points in each grade or grade span that describe outcomes at successively lower levels of complexity (see Excerpt from the Resource Guide below); and access skills (available in the lowest grade or grade span listed for each strand, domain, conceptual category, or discipline).

Review the entry points at the level determined for the student based on the results of the MCAS-Alt Skills Survey. Although it is ideal to select entry points at the student’s grade level, it is also acceptable to select entry points from an earlier grade level, where available, to meet the needs of the student.
Teachers may select entry points for assessment either:

1. **as written** in the Fall 2020 Resource Guide in the subject being assessed, without making any changes.

2. **with minor modifications**, provided the essential meaning and intent of the entry point is maintained. For example, if the entry point says “Solve word problems involving the addition of fractions using manipulatives” in the Number and Operations–Fractions domain, the words “using manipulatives” may be removed, since manipulatives are not the only way to perform the skill. However, “addition of fractions” must be included.
   - Entry points as they appear in the Resource Guide may not be **excessively modified** by the teacher, since this will result in a score of Incomplete unless approval was previously obtained in writing from the Department prior to portfolio submission. If in doubt as to whether a modification of an entry point is acceptable, please contact the Department at mcas@doe.mass.edu.

3. **with multiple related skills** (i.e., the entry point includes more than one skill, such as “addition and subtraction”)
   - When two or more related skills in an entry point are connected by “and,” the teacher may select one or both skills for assessment and edit the measurable outcome to reflect one skill. For example, if the entry point says, “Group objects into fives and tens,” one or both skills may be assessed (i.e., grouping objects only into fives or only into tens). If **one of those skills is selected**, the measurable outcome must reflect only that skill. **If both skills are selected**, the measurable outcome must reflect both skills, and **both skills must be assessed during each activity and described in the brief description of each activity**.
   - If **more than one skill is listed in an entry point connected by “or”** (e.g., “Identify the meaning of words, phrases, or sentences”), then **any or all skills may be assessed on each date**.
   - Entry points containing “and” may not be changed to “or,” since this is considered excessively modifying the entry point and will result in a score of Incomplete in the strand.
E. Developing and Assessing a Measurable Outcome

Measurable outcomes are created by first selecting an entry point (or access skill for students who are unable to access the lowest-complexity entry points), as follows:

- Using the MCAS-Alt Skills Survey as a guide, select either an entry point or access skill from the Resource Guide that is challenging and appropriate for the student.
- Select the desired percent of accuracy and independence that would constitute sufficient mastery of the skill (e.g., 80 percent accuracy and 80 percent independence). These criteria are selected by the teacher for instructional purposes only and need not be attained before submission of the portfolio.
- Review the examples below to see how the entry points (bolded) have been transformed into measurable outcomes by adding the student’s name and percent accuracy and independence (italics):
  - Example 1: Pasquale will **record measurement data for multiple objects using a single unit scale** with 75 percent accuracy and 90 percent independence.
  - Example 2: Naila will **identify angles of geometric shapes as either obtuse, acute, or right** with 80 percent accuracy and 100 percent independence.
- A measurable outcome based on an access skill may require different criteria to determine accuracy, such as in the example below where the student’s ability to respond within a specific time frame (i.e., latency) is being measured.
  - Example: Jamal will **respond to material related to key details in a literary text within 15 seconds of the directive** with 75 percent accuracy and 100 percent independence
- Instructional activities should assess only the skill(s) listed in the measurable outcome. Data charts and primary evidence must document **only** the student’s performance of the measurable outcome.
- If the measurable outcome changes as a result of the student attaining mastery, then begin a new data chart.

Portfolio Evidence

A. Requirements in Each Portfolio Strand

Core Set of Evidence

Each portfolio strand requires the submission of a “core set of evidence,” which includes a minimum of a completed skills survey, one data chart and two pieces of additional primary evidence (See Figure 3). However, teachers are strongly encouraged to include more than the required minimum amount of evidence to reduce the chances of a content area being scored Incomplete.

Note: The portfolio requirements differ for ELA—Writing and all Science and Technology/ Engineering assessments (except high school Chemistry and Technology/Engineering) and are discussed in the section entitled Unique Portfolio Requirements in Certain Subjects, beginning on page 35.
B. Guidelines to Create a Data Chart

A data chart is required in each strand for ELA–Language, ELA–Reading, Mathematics, and high school “legacy” Science and Technology/Engineering. Data charts provide evidence of a student’s progress over time in mastering the skill described in the measurable outcome.

Data Chart formats

Any of the following three data chart formats may be used to collect data on the student’s performance and submitted in the MCAS-Alt portfolio. Teachers are encouraged to use the Forms and Graphs Online application to complete their data charts. Blank data charts are available in Appendix B and in Forms and Graphs Online. Sample completed data charts are available in Appendix A.

- **Field data charts** are most effective for collecting response-by-response data on many repeated tasks, trials, or activities conducted during a single session. This allows relevant information for each response to be collected while the activity is conducted. Field data charts are also effective for tasks that do not yield tangible work samples (see example on page 83).

- **Bar graphs** and/or **line graphs** are effective for documenting a student’s performance over a period of time and visually portray the student’s trend and overall performance “at a glance” (see examples on pages 81–82).

Each data chart must include:

- the student’s name, content area, grade-level standard, and measurable outcome being assessed
- percent accuracy and independence on a minimum of 8 different dates on which school is in session.
- a brief description beneath each data point that clearly describes what the student did and how the student addressed the skill, taking care to document only the specific skill listed in the measurable outcome; for example:

  - (Student) determined the meaning of ten synonyms from the context of a story (What) by completing answers on a worksheet (How).
  - ...answered six comprehension questions orally (How) after reading Missing Links (What).
  - ...completed ten 2-digit-by-1-digit multiplication problems (What) on the computer (How).
  - ...classified objects into solid, liquid, and gas categories (What) using an interactive whiteboard (How).
  - ...retold a birthday party story in chronological order (What) using a topic board (How).

Or the following brief descriptions of an activity assessing an access skill:

- (Student) moved 10 plastic coins into a piggy bank (What) as they were counted (How);
- .... imitates the action required to divide objects in half (What) using foam balls (How).
Notes:

- Activities on the first recorded date of the data chart must begin below 80 percent accuracy or 80 percent independence to indicate that the student is being taught a skill that he or she has not already mastered.
- Percentages for multiple activities conducted on a single date should be combined and averaged for the data chart.
- Do not include activities on the data chart during which the student performed zero percent accuracy and zero percent independence.

Collecting Data on the Student’s Performance

Collecting data on a student’s performance is an essential part of good instruction and ongoing assessment. Instructional data can help educators make valid and objective decisions about what to teach based on what the student has or has not already learned, and documents vital information on the effectiveness of the instruction provided.

Data can be collected either during routine classroom instruction, during tasks and activities set up specifically for assessing the student, or during real-life activities in the school or community. Record data only for skills that are based directly on the measurable outcome. When unrelated or multiple skills are included on the same data chart, the data will be inconclusive, and the chances of scoring Incomplete will increase.

It may take time to find a method that feels comfortable and to establish a consistent routine for collecting data. When data are collected systematically, summarized clearly, and analyzed objectively, educators can maximize their instruction and provide high-quality evidence for the portfolio. This will also increase the likelihood of the student’s success in learning the specific skill.

Instructional approaches should be individualized, even if similar activities are taught in a group setting, and the resulting data should be unique to the student. When designing instruction for data and/or evidence collection, consider the following:

- Which accommodations and accessibility features would support the student to perform as independently as possible?
- Which instructional adaptations or modifications are needed?
- Does the data change depend on where and when the instruction occurs?
- Does the data change based on who is delivering the instruction?
- Does the level of student engagement change with the use of various materials during instruction?

If the student’s data chart indicates that he/she is not making effective progress toward meeting the original measurable outcome, or has made very rapid progress in learning the skill, consider the following possible adaptations:

- the complexity of the skill may need to be altered, a new measurable outcome established, and a new data chart created. Data charts must each reflect data collection on only one measurable outcome.
- the activity format or materials may need to be altered.
- the method of instruction may need to be altered.
C. Additional Primary Evidence

In addition to a data chart, at least two additional pieces of **primary evidence** must be included that document the student’s performance of the skill (measurable outcome) selected for assessment. The pieces of primary evidence (work samples) may be included as data points on the chart or may be submitted separately and *not* included on the data chart, at the teacher’s discretion. Primary evidence should provide tangible documentation of the student’s performance of the skill listed in the measurable outcome.

**Each piece of additional primary evidence must include the following information**, either on a work description attached to the evidence (available in Appendix B or in the [Forms and Graphs Online](https://formsandgraphs.com)) application or written directly on each piece of primary evidence:

- student’s name
- date of completion of the activity
- percentage of accuracy of the student’s performance of the skill(s) identified in the measurable outcome (i.e., percent of correct versus incorrect responses)
- percentage of independence (i.e., percent of independent non-prompted versus non-independent prompted responses)
- a brief description of the task or activity in which the student demonstrated performance of the specified skill in the measurable outcome.

The following types of primary evidence may be included in the portfolio:

- **Work samples** produced by the student showing:
  - the student’s authentic performance;
  - percentages of accuracy and independence calculated based on the total number of tasks;
  - a brief description of the activity on an attached work description or STE Summary Sheet;

- **Photographs** that document the skill listed in the measurable outcome and clearly show an image of the final product of instruction, including:
  - a summary of the percentages of accuracy and independence
  - a clear photograph if an actual work sample is either:
    - three-dimensional
    - temporary in nature (e.g., a model or presentation)
    - too large, fragile, or perishable to include in the portfolio
  - a sequence of steps leading to a final product that cannot be included in the portfolio (e.g., a pattern of shapes created by a student using manipulatives)

- **Video samples** that clearly show images that:
  - document the student performing the measurable outcome
  - are no more than three minutes in length
  - include a transcription of the audio portion, if difficult to understand
  - are submitted on a clearly labeled flash drive with a completed Video Description form (See Appendix B)
  - is securely attached within the portfolio binder

* Remember to obtain prior **written consent** from the parent, guardian, or student (if 18 years or older) before including photographic or video images of the student in the portfolio. If a student’s peers are shown in an image or video, consent must also be obtained for those “incidental” images of students. **Consent forms** for these purposes are provided in Appendix B and in [Forms and Graphs Online](https://formsandgraphs.com) and must be kept on file at the school.
Digital evidence in any of the following formats: Word, PowerPoint, .pdf, .txt, or .jpg (JPEG) documented on a flash drive

Teacher-scribed work samples for students who cannot produce written work or whose handwriting is illegible (see the example in Appendix A and online). These can be used to document:
- a series of trials conducted during a single session;
- the student’s responses (i.e., levels of accuracy and independence) for each item/trial; or
- detailed information describing the materials, context of the activity, and expected responses.

D. Calculating Accuracy and Independence

The overall percent of accuracy and independence must be documented for each activity on the data chart and in the additional pieces of primary evidence. Upon completion of each activity, the teacher must calculate the overall percentage of accuracy and independence based on all activities conducted on that date. Percent accuracy and percent independence are recorded for each date on the data chart, or on a work description label (or written directly on the evidence) for each piece of additional primary evidence. The score for the portfolio strand will be calculated based on an average of the percentages of accuracy and independence in the final one-third time frame for all activities conducted.

The percent of accuracy for each activity must indicate the percent of correct responses in relation to the number of total responses (e.g., 8/10 correct = 80%). Teachers must score each activity by marking responses on the work samples that are incorrect so scorers can verify the overall percentage of accuracy. Teachers may not correct the student’s incorrect responses and submit these as accurate responses.

The percent of independence for each activity must indicate the percent of independent responses in relation to the number of total responses (e.g., student was given prompts on 3 out of 15 questions; therefore 12/15 responses were performed independently=80% independent). An independent response occurs when the student responds to an instructional demand without the use of prompts or assistance that would guide them to a response. Teachers should mark all prompted responses on the work samples to assist in verifying and calculating the overall percentage of independence.

Cues and Prompts versus Accommodations

- Accommodations provided to the student are not considered “prompts” for calculating independence (e.g., use of a text reader, scribe, or calculator) because they allow the student to respond independently during the activity. Directives that refocus the student on a task (e.g., “pick up your pencil” or “focus on your work”) should also not be considered prompts in the calculation of independence.

- Prompts that guide or assist the student to give a correct response are considered non-independent responses in the calculation of independence. Any prompted response is therefore 0 percent independent, regardless of the type of prompt used with the student during an activity. The use of a “weighted scale” or “prompt hierarchy” that bases the percentage of independence on the kind of prompt given (e.g., visual versus gestural) may not be used for calculating the percent of independence.

- Hand-over-hand assistance is always considered a prompted, non-independent response.

Figure 4 illustrates the method used to calculate accuracy and independence for an instructional activity. After each response, the teacher indicates whether the student’s response was correct or incorrect (accuracy), and whether the response was independent or prompted (independence).

Measurable Outcome: The student will answer comprehension questions based on informational text with 80% accuracy and 100% independence.
Brief description: Student orally responded to five comprehension questions about “Tornadoes,” a text read aloud in class.

Figure 4

How to Calculate Accuracy and Independence for a Series of Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question Number</th>
<th>Accurate or Inaccurate</th>
<th>Independent or Prompted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Question 1</td>
<td>Correct response (+)</td>
<td>Verbal prompt (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 2</td>
<td>Incorrect response (-)</td>
<td>Verbal prompt (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 3</td>
<td>Correct response (+)</td>
<td>Gestural prompt (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 4</td>
<td>Incorrect response (-)</td>
<td>Verbal prompt (-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question 5</td>
<td>Correct response (+)</td>
<td>No prompt (-)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall Percent: (3/5 correct) 60% accurate (1/5 independent) 20% independent

E. Evidence of Self-Evaluation

Self-evaluation activities document the student’s choices, decisions, and preferences before, during, and after instruction, including evidence that the student performed any of the following activities:

- reflecting on his or her performance; for example, the teacher can ask the student:
  o What did we do during this activity? What did I learn?
  o What did I do well? What am I good at? Was this too easy?
  o How could I do better? Where do I need help?
  o What should I work on next? What would I like to learn?
- planning and goal setting
- using a “K-W-L” chart or questionnaire (What I know, what I want to learn, what I learned)
- choosing an activity, materials to use, or next steps in an activity
- selecting a problem-solving strategy
- monitoring his/her own progress or use of a strategy (e.g., by checking off each step as completed)
- deciding when to continue or end participation in an activity (e.g., “more” or “all done”)
- identifying and correcting (or editing) his/her own responses
- graphing his/her own performance or progress on a chart, table, or graph
- determining his/her own score using a rubric
- selecting work for his/her own portfolio

Note: Simply placing a sticker or stamp on the primary evidence or on the work description label (in the section marked self-evaluation) does not constitute self-evaluation. Similarly, selecting a “motivator” or reward do not constitute self-evaluation.

F. Evidence of Generalized Performance

Generalized performance reflects the student’s application of knowledge and/or skills in other learning situations, and using different instructional approaches and activity formats, including any of the
following instructional elements:

- media and materials (e.g., using art materials, written text, manipulatives, digital devices)
- activity formats (e.g., participating in classroom projects, small-group discussions, paired research, science investigations)
- presentation formats (e.g., using oral, written, or multimedia approaches)
- response format (e.g., handwritten, word-processed, oral, creation of a visual display, video)
- application of skills in community settings (e.g., at the grocery store)

Documenting how the student addressed the measurable outcome in the brief description of the activity will determine the score for Generalized Performance.

G. Supporting Documentation

Supporting documentation consists of portfolio products that show or describe the context of the learning activity, but not the student’s actual performance or final product. Examples may include:

- photographs or videos that show the setting, instructional approach, or materials, but not the final product of a student’s performance;
- reflection sheets or other documentation of self-evaluation activities;
- templates, organizers, manipulatives, screen shots from a computer program, etc.

H. Unique Requirements in Each Subject

This section describes the collection of evidence for portfolio strands in certain subjects that do not conform to the “core set of evidence” approach described on pages 29-32.

ELA–Writing

Primary Mode of Communication

In preparing writing samples for the portfolio, students should use their primary mode(s) of communication to convey thoughts, express ideas, and demonstrate knowledge and skills, which may include any of the following formats:

- handwritten
- using a word processor or similar device
- dictating to a scribe (with verbatim transcription)
- assistive technology, such as an augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) device or other symbol-based communication system, voice output device (with supporting documentation to show the context of the activity and choices made by the student), or use of word prediction, speech-to-text, or text-to-speech
- A Braille writer or ASL or another sign system

The ELA–Writing strand must include the following components:

- **One entry point (see below)** based on the text type being assessed.
- **One baseline writing sample** that is dated prior to the final writing samples and is either an outline, completed graphic organizer, or draft in any text type (“text types” are described below and on the following page)
- **Three final writing samples** in any text type, each based on a different topic, picture, or assignment that demonstrates the student’s expressive communication skills and uses the student’s primary mode of communication (see page 34).
Writing samples will be based on one of the following **entry points** (or on access skills listed either in the Resource Guide or in Forms and Graphs Online):

> “Use the student's primary mode of communication to express or create a writing sample that is a(n)
> 1. opinion/argument
> 2. narrative (including poetry)
> 3. informative/explanatory text”

- **An ELA–Writing scoring rubric** for each final writing sample, with scores indicated by the teacher according to the descriptions listed for each score point on the rubric.
  - Use one scoring rubric for each writing sample, regardless of writing type.
  - Do not score the baseline writing sample

- **Self-evaluation** listed either on the work description or directly on each writing sample. Self-evaluation is not included in the Writing scoring rubric.

- **Date of completion** of the writing sample, listed on the pre-scored Writing scoring rubric.

- **Students who communicate at a pre-symbolic language level** should be assessed based on the **access skills** listed in the ELA Resource Guide. The portfolio strand for a student addressing access skills must include three (3) final writing samples; documentation of how the student addressed the access skill; and the percent of independence by the student in the creation of the writing sample.
  - For a student working on access skills, the writing sample must be a tangible (i.e., permanent) product created by the teacher, paraprofessional, related service provider, or peer(s) that documents the student’s responses (and percent of independence) during the creation of the writing sample. (e.g., a student who is non-verbal and has no verifiable expressive, symbolic communication skills visits a farm. Adults point to various animals, share objects that represent the animals (fur, feathers), and/or imitate their sounds. Upon returning to school, the teacher creates a writing sample consisting of the student’s responses to errorless questions about his or her participation in the field trip, documenting the student's independence in responding (e.g., What animal did you see? Who went on the trip with you?))

- **No data charts** are required in the ELA–Writing strand.

- **Narrative writing samples** may **not** include summarizing, describing, depicting, or sequencing of **bathroom-related activities**, which will **not** be scored nor included in the minimum requirement of three final writing samples.

- **Writing samples** must reflect the student’s expressive communication. Samples that document only **motor skills** (e.g. letter formation, tracing, scribbling) will not be scored.

Any combination of the following writing types may be submitted:

1. **Opinion (grades 3–5)/Argument (grades 6–8 and 10):** stating a claim, opinion, preference, or analysis based on a text or topic, citing reasons and evidence from a text, where possible.

2. **Informative/Explanatory text:** conveying or explaining facts, information, or ideas on a topic, including descriptions from a text.

3. **Narrative:** Prose that tells a story based on real or imagined events from a text or personal experience. The narrative can be fiction, drama (script), a personal reflection, or an event sequence; OR poetry that uses figurative language (e.g., similes, metaphors), imagery, sounds of words (e.g., rhyme), meter, and/or repetition to express emotion or tell a story.
Pre-scoring Each Final Writing Sample

Prior to submission, teachers will score each of their student’s **three final writing samples** using the state-provided ELA–Writing Scoring Rubric (see page 80) and include the completed (i.e., pre-scored) rubric with each final writing sample. **Do not score the baseline sample but do** include the percentage of independence in the baseline work description.

**Students should:**

- produce each writing sample as independently as possible, including all text revisions based on suggestions and guidance from (but not rewritten by) the teacher; or the sample should be marked as having been completed by the teacher, if that is the case.

**Teachers should:**

- carefully review the score-point criteria in the writing rubric and determine the characteristics that are reflected in the writing sample to be scored. Teachers may also wish to focus their writing instruction in the areas that would result in a more favorable score in the future.
- be aware that the scores submitted on the writing rubrics must reflect the responses generated by the *student*, not the work of nor corrections or text provided by the teacher. MCAS-Alt scorers will verify the scores submitted by the teacher and may lower a score if it does not accurately reflect the work of the student.
- reflect the revisions made by the teacher in the percentage of independence.
- scribe verbatim what the student has dictated if the student is dictating a response. The scribe may assume capital letters, spelling, and basic punctuation, but may not change or embellish what was dictated.
- base the percent independence for each final sample *either* on the number of prompts per word, per sentence, or per paragraph, at the teacher’s discretion, depending on the length and complexity of the writing sample (see example in Figure 4 below).
- consider submitting evidence from other content areas as ELA–Writing samples, such as the student’s open-responses to comprehension questions in the ELA–Reading strand or in Science and Technology/Engineering.
- Review the example in Figure 4 to gain a better understanding of how to score a student’s level of independence on a writing sample.
ELA–Reading

The ELA–Reading strand focuses primarily on the comprehension of text, including the understanding of words, phrases, and sentences in the context of a text, rather than in isolation. Evidence in this strand must be based either on informational or literary text, at the teacher’s discretion, but may not include both.

Each piece of primary evidence and each brief description on the data chart must refer by name to the text from which words, phrases, or excerpts were selected for assessment, including either:

- the title of the published text; or
- a brief photocopied sample of the text (excerpt) if it is:
  - teacher-created,
  - taken from a digital source (e.g., a website such as TeacherspayTeachers or EdHelper),
  - an untitled worksheet, or
  - if the text title does not make clear whether the text is informational or literary.

In those cases, submit a brief excerpt of the text; do not submit the entire text and do not submit only the cover.

Mathematics (Grade 10)

Using Entry Points from Earlier Grades in Related Domains for Students in Grade 10

For each student taking the grade 10 MCAS-Alt in mathematics, educators are required to assess one measurable outcome in each of three high school “conceptual categories” selected by the teacher. The teacher may select entry points from lower grade levels in related domains, as shown in Figure 5. MCAS-Alt requirements in grade 10 mathematics are described on page 21 of this manual.
Science and Technology/Engineering (STE)

STE portfolios for students in grades 5 and 8 (all disciplines) and high school Biology and Introductory Physics will be based on the 2016 Massachusetts Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) Curriculum Framework using the portfolio structure and requirements described below. High school Chemistry and Technology/Engineering will continue to be based on the “legacy” 2001/2006 standards. Separate versions of the STE Resource Guides (‘next-generation’ and ‘legacy’) are available here.

Features of the 2016 STE Standards and Entry Points

- The STE disciplines remain unchanged in the 2016 framework from previous versions.
- The 2016 framework emphasizes the use of science practices that promote student engagement in scientific inquiry and engineering design skills, in addition to the content within each discipline.

The eight science practices are:

1. Asking (Scientific) Questions and Defining Problems
2. Planning and Carrying Out Investigations (to gather data and perform experiments to answer a scientific question)
3. Using Mathematical and Computational Thinking (to answer scientific questions)
4. Analyzing and Interpreting Data (to recognize patterns and analyze and organize data)
5. Developing and Using Models (to think about and make sense of an experience and make predictions, using 2-D and 3-D representations, constructions, displays, illustrations, and simulations)
6. Constructing Explanations and Designing Solutions (to explain phenomena and use evidence to support explanations)
7. Engaging in Argument from Evidence (to support a claim and critique competing arguments)
8. Obtaining, Evaluating, and Communicating Information (to research, record, evaluate, and present information from scientific texts and digital sources)
- Science practices are grouped in the STE Resource Guide according to the following scheme:
  - Practices #1–2 are included under the heading “Investigations and Questioning.”
  - Practices #3–4 are included under the heading “Mathematics and Data.”
  - Practices #5–8 are included under the heading “Evidence, Reasoning, and Modeling.”

- Each STE entry point and access skill combines science content with a science practice in the Resource Guide (See Figure 6).

**Figure 6.**
Excerpt from the High School STE Resource Guide

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### Collecting Evidence for the Spring 2021 STE Portfolio

- The “next-generation” portfolio structure and format encourages the instruction and assessment of science units, rather than simply isolated science skills.

- Evidence may be collected over two school years (i.e., the current and one prior school year).

- All STE portfolio strands in high school Biology or Introductory Physics, must use the “next-generation” STE assessment format described below, and must be based on the Fall 2020 Resource Guide in STE.

- All STE portfolio strands in high school Chemistry and Technology/Engineering will continue to use the “legacy” portfolio format and structure (i.e., one data chart and two pieces of evidence) based on the “legacy” standards and entry points found in the Resource Guide in those disciplines.

### STE Portfolio Format and Structure: Grades 5 and 8

The format described on the following pages is intended to encourage the teaching of a unit of science instruction based on a core idea.

**Step 1: Choose any three (3) of the following disciplines** for each student’s STE portfolio:

- Earth and Space
- Life Science
- Physical Science
- Technology/Engineering
**Step 2:** Conduct the STE Skills Survey available [here](#) (downloadable paper format) and in [Forms and Graphs Online](#) (digital format) to determine the grade-span for each science practice at which to select entry points for the student.

**Step 3:** For each discipline, select one core idea (topic) that will challenge and engage the student.

For each core idea:

**Step 4:** Select six (6) entry points or access skills. A total of at least three (3) different science practices must be addressed within the six selected entry points or access skills. If entry points seem too complex or challenging at the grade level of the student, select entry points from earlier grade-level clusters in the same core idea. (Use the Skills Survey information to assist with selection)

**Step 5:** Complete one STE Summary Sheet for each of six entry points or access skills. Include the following information on the top portion of each STE Summary Sheet. (Teachers are encouraged to complete this form using Forms and Graphs Online).

- student’s name and grade
- core idea (one for each discipline)
- entry point or access skill addressed
- numbered science practice for each entry point or access skill
- percent accuracy and independence
- date (if activity was done over multiple days, use the date of completion)
- detailed description of the activity (material, instructional approach, activity)

**Step 6:** Attach at least three pieces of primary evidence (i.e., work samples, photographs, or digital evidence) to each corresponding completed STE Summary Sheet.

- If evidence is attached to a completed STE Summary Sheet (see page 79), be sure to include:
  - percent of overall accuracy and independence from the attached piece of evidence.
  - a description of the activity, including what student was asked to do and how they did it.
  - Document any examples of self-evaluation (page 33)
  (Note: All six entry points or access skill may be submitted as evidence.)

- If evidence is NOT attached to its STE Summary Sheet, complete the bottom portion of the STE Summary Sheet with the following information:
  - the questions or tasks and the student’s responses
  - percent of accuracy and independence for each task or response
  - a description of the activity, including the assignment, procedure, and materials used
  (Note: Evidence that is not attached may include large, fragile, or temporary products, such as a model or the results of an investigation.)

**STE Portfolio Format and Structure: High School (either in grade 9 or 10)**

**Step 1:** Choose one (1) of the following “next-generation” STE disciplines:

- Biology OR Introductory Physics
Step 2: Conduct the MCAS-Alt STE Skills Survey (available here as a downloadable file, or in Forms and Graphs Online in digital format) to determine the grade-span at which to select entry points in each science practice for the student.

Step 3: Select three (3) core ideas within the chosen discipline from the next-generation STE Resource Guide that engage and challenge the student.

For each core idea:

Step 4: Select six (6) entry points or access skills. A total of three (3) different science practices must be addressed within the six selected entry points or access skills. If entry points seem too complex at the grade level of the student, select entry points from earlier grade-level clusters in the same core idea. Use the information in the STE Skills Survey to assist with selection.

Follow Steps 5 and 6 above for each of the three core ideas.

OR

Step 1: Choose one (1) of the following “legacy” disciplines for each student’s STE portfolio:

- Chemistry OR Technology/Engineering

Step 2: Conduct the MCAS-Alt Skills Survey in the discipline, (downloadable paper format here) and in Forms and Graphs Online to determine the level of complexity at which to select entry points for the student.

Step 3: Use the “legacy” Resource Guide to select three (3) standards in the selected discipline.

Step 4: For each standard, submit the following:

- One data chart measuring the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome on at least eight different dates; plus
- At least two additional pieces of primary evidence, plus work description forms, showing the student’s achievement of the measurable outcome identified on the data chart
- Document all examples of self-evaluation.
PART IV

Scoring Portfolios and Reporting Results
Scoring the MCAS-Alt

A. Scoring Student Portfolios

MCAS-Alt portfolios are scored by trained and qualified scorers whose performance is closely monitored by the Department to ensure that the score of each portfolio is accurate. All portfolios with missing or incomplete information, with evidence that is determined to be unmatched to the required Massachusetts curriculum framework standards for a student in that grade, or that includes evidence for a student who is performing at or close to grade-level expectations, will receive an additional round of review by expert scorers to ensure that results are accurate.

Through verification of the standards being assessed in the Resource Guide to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for Students with Disabilities and the application of a universal scoring rubric, the evidence of the student’s performance is evaluated and scored against research-based criteria on how students with significant cognitive disabilities learn and demonstrate knowledge and skills. The MCAS-Alt Rubric for Scoring Portfolio Strands was developed with assistance and feedback from hundreds of teachers and a statewide advisory committee. The criteria for scoring portfolios are listed and described on the following pages, and are detailed in the 2019 Guidelines for Scoring Student Portfolios.

The scoring of MCAS-Alt portfolios reflects the level at which a student learns, understands, and applies the knowledge and skills outlined in the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks. The MCAS-Alt portfolio measures progress over time, as well as the highest achievement attained by the student on the assessed standards, and incorporate the frequency of the use of cues, prompts, and other assistance provided to the student in determining an overall score.

B. MCAS-Alt Rubric for Scoring Portfolio Strands

The MCAS-Alt Rubric for Scoring Portfolio Strands is shown on page 45, with an explanation of each rubric area on pages 46–50.

The Rubric for Scoring Portfolio Strands is used to generate scores in each portfolio strand based on each rubric area: Level of Complexity (1–5), Demonstration of Skills and Concepts (M or 1–4), and Independence (M or 1–4). Scores are also generated for Self-Evaluation (M, 1, or 2) and Generalized Performance (1 or 2). A score of “M” means there was insufficient evidence or information to generate a numerical score in a rubric area.

Trained and qualified scorers examine each strand of the portfolio and apply the following criteria in order to produce a score in each rubric area, based on the evidence found in the portfolio:

- **level of complexity** at which the student addresses standards in the Massachusetts curriculum framework in the subject being assessed, either at grade-level, through entry points, or through access skills
- **completeness** of all portfolio materials
- **demonstration of skills and concepts (accuracy)** of the student’s responses to questions, or of his or her performance of specific tasks
- **independence** of the student in responding to questions, demonstrating knowledge and skills, or performing tasks
- **self-evaluation** during or after each task or activity (e.g., reflection, self-correcting, goal-setting)
C. Using the Scoring Rubric to Guide the Development of Student Portfolios

Portfolios must include evidence that the student has learned challenging academic skills and is able to perform those skills accurately and independently. Evidence taken together should address all areas of the MCAS-Alt Rubric for Scoring Portfolio Strands, including self-evaluation and generalized performance. However, a single piece of portfolio evidence cannot, by itself, provide evidence of student learning in every rubric category. A variety of portfolio products must be submitted that support and complement one another. The Department encourages submission of additional products beyond the minimum required for the “core set of evidence,” in the event that some evidence is not scorable.

The MCAS-Alt Rubric for Scoring Portfolio Strands (see following pages) serves several purposes:

- to inform educators and parents of the criteria that will be used to evaluate portfolios
- to score portfolios
- to guide teachers in planning and designing standards-based instruction that yields high-quality products for the student’s portfolio and engages each student.
# MCAS-Alt RUBRIC for Scoring Portfolio Strands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Complexity</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio strand reflects little or no basis in, or is unmatched to, curriculum framework learning standard(s) required for assessment.</td>
<td>Student primarily addresses motor and communication “access skills” during instruction based on curriculum framework standards in this strand.</td>
<td>Student addresses curriculum framework standards that have been modified below grade-level expectations in this strand.</td>
<td>Student addresses a narrow sample of curriculum framework standards (1 or 2) at grade-level expectations in this strand.</td>
<td>Student addresses a broad range of curriculum framework standards (3 or more) at grade-level expectations in this strand.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demonstration of Skills and Concepts (Accuracy)</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The portfolio strand contains insufficient information to determine a score.</td>
<td>Student’s performance is primarily inaccurate and demonstrates minimal understanding in this strand (0–25% accurate).</td>
<td>Student’s performance is limited and inconsistent with regard to accuracy and demonstrates limited understanding in this strand (26–50% accurate).</td>
<td>Student’s performance is mostly accurate and demonstrates some understanding in this strand (51–75% accurate).</td>
<td>Student’s performance is accurate and is of consistently high quality in this strand (76–100% accurate).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Independence</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The portfolio strand contains insufficient information to determine a score.</td>
<td>Student requires extensive verbal, visual, and physical assistance to demonstrate skills and concepts in this strand (0–25% independent).</td>
<td>Student requires frequent verbal, visual, and physical assistance to demonstrate skills and concepts in this strand (26–50% independent).</td>
<td>Student requires some verbal, visual, and physical assistance to demonstrate skills and concepts in this strand (51–75% independent).</td>
<td>Student requires minimal verbal, visual, and physical assistance to demonstrate skills and concepts in this strand (76–100% independent).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self-Evaluation</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of planning, self-correction, task-monitoring, goal-setting, and reflection was not found in the student's portfolio in this content area.</td>
<td>Student infrequently plans, self-corrects monitors, sets goals, and reflects in this content area — only one example of self-evaluation was found in this strand.</td>
<td>Student plans, self-corrects monitors, sets goals, and reflects in this content area — multiple examples of self-evaluation were found in this strand.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Generalized Performance</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student demonstrates knowledge and skills in one context or uses one approach and/or method of response and participation in this strand.</td>
<td>Student demonstrates knowledge and skills in multiple contexts or uses multiple approaches and/or methods of response and participation in this strand.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Expanded Version of the MCAS-Alt Rubric for Scoring Portfolio Strands

### 1) LEVEL OF COMPLEXITY

To what extent is the portfolio evidence aligned with the standards required for assessment in this subject?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio strand reflects little or no basis in, or is unmatched to, curriculum framework learning standard(s) required for assessment.</td>
<td>Student primarily addresses motor, and communication “access skills” during instruction based on curriculum framework standards in this strand.</td>
<td>Student addresses curriculum framework standards that have been modified below grade-level expectations in this strand.</td>
<td>Student addresses a narrow sample of curriculum framework standards (1 or 2) at grade-level expectations in this strand.</td>
<td>Student addresses a broad range of curriculum framework standards (3 or more) at grade-level expectations in this strand.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What each score means in this rubric area:

1. The evidence in this strand documents instruction that is either unrelated or unmatched to the Massachusetts curriculum framework standards required for assessment. Either the standards being assessed were not required in the portfolio of a student enrolled in the grade or the evidence does not document the student’s participation in a standards-based activity. If a score of 1 is given in Level of Complexity, other rubric areas will not receive a score.

2. The evidence indicates that the student is being exposed to the academic curriculum but is not yet addressing academic content and skills in this subject. He or she is working on communication, and/or motor skills (“access skills”) during instructional activities based on curriculum frameworks assessed in that grade, which may include exploring methods, tools, and materials in the content area.

3. The evidence indicates that the student is addressing academic content and skills based on curriculum framework standards in this strand, but standards have been modified to a lower level of complexity (i.e., below grade-level expectations) compared with standards addressed by a typical student in this grade. Modified standards are called “entry points” and are described in detail in the Department publication Resource Guide to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for Students with Disabilities.

4. The evidence indicates that the student is addressing academic content and skills based on a small number of curriculum framework standards (1 or 2) at grade-level expectations, either in a “grade-level” or “competency” portfolio. A student submitting an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards cannot score LOC=4.

5. The evidence indicates that the student is addressing academic content based on a broad range of curriculum framework standards (3 or more) at grade-level expectations, either in a “grade-level” or “competency” portfolio. A student submitting an alternate assessment based on alternate achievement standards cannot score LOC=5.

**NOTE:** A score of 5 in this rubric area is required for a student to be considered for a score of Partially Meets Expectations or higher (or Needs Improvement or higher for a legacy portfolio); and in high school, for a student to earn a Competency Determination. The student must submit portfolio evidence according to the guidelines described in the [MCAS Grade-Level and Competency Portfolio Manual](https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/altmanual.html).
2) **DEMONSTRATION OF SKILLS AND CONCEPTS**

How accurate was the student’s performance of the skills and concepts being assessed?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>The portfolio strand contains insufficient information to determine a score.</td>
<td>Student’s performance is primarily inaccurate and demonstrates minimal understanding in this strand (0–25% accurate).</td>
<td>Student’s performance is limited and inconsistent with regard to accuracy and demonstrates limited understanding in this strand (26–50% accurate).</td>
<td>Student’s performance is mostly accurate and demonstrates some understanding in this strand (51–75% accurate).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary:**

This rubric area measures the degree to which the student gave the correct or desired response(s) during a task or activity. Teachers must provide the student’s percentage of accuracy on (or attached to) each piece of primary evidence, and for each data point on the data chart. The percent of accuracy for points on the data chart is calculated by averaging the percentage(s) of accuracy on all tasks and activities performed by the student in the assessed strand or standard on a single date.

**What each score means in this rubric area: the “final 1/3 time frame”**

Each strand, with the exception of ELA−Writing and “next-generation” STE, will be scored for Demonstration of Skills and Concepts by first identifying the “final 1/3 time frame” on the data chart. If fewer than twelve data points are listed on the data chart the final three points will be calculated. An overall average accuracy percentage will be calculated by the scorer based on the percentage of accuracy for all data points during or after the final 1/3 time frame of the data chart. Based on the average percentage of the data points and evidence in the final 1/3 time frame, the overall score for Demonstration of Skills and Concepts (i.e., 1–4) in the strand is determined using the scoring rubric above.

A score of “M” (missing or insufficient evidence) will be given in both Demonstration of Skills and Concepts and in Independence when the following primary evidence is not included in the strand:

- **one data chart** (labeled correctly) documenting the student’s performance of the measurable outcome on at least eight different dates that shows the student’s overall (i.e., average) accuracy and independence for each date; the percentage must begin below 80 percent for either accuracy or independence or both. A brief description must be provided for each data point describing what the student was asked to do and how he/she addressed the measurable outcome.

- **two additional pieces of primary evidence** (labeled correctly), such as work samples, videos, or photographs, that document the student performing the same skill as the data chart.

A score of “M” will also be given for primary evidence that is not labeled either directly on the evidence or on attached work description labels with the student’s name, date of completion, percentage of accuracy, and percentage of independence.

NOTE: See the combined Writing Rubric in Appendix C for information on Demonstration of Skills and Concepts for the Writing strand.
3) INDEPENDENCE
How much support and direct assistance does the student require to demonstrate knowledge and skills?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The portfolio strand contains insufficient information to determine a score.</td>
<td>Student requires extensive verbal, visual, and physical assistance to demonstrate skills and concepts in this strand (0–25% independent).</td>
<td>Student requires frequent verbal, visual, and physical assistance to demonstrate skills and concepts in this strand (26–50% independent).</td>
<td>Student requires some verbal, visual, and physical assistance to demonstrate skills and concepts in this strand (51–75% independent).</td>
<td>Student requires minimal verbal, visual, and physical assistance to demonstrate skills and concepts in this strand (76–100% independent).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary:
This rubric area measures the frequency with which cues and prompts (either verbal, visual, gestural, or physical) were used to assist the student in responding to a task, activity, or assignment. The percent of independence for a single point on a data chart is calculated by averaging the percentage(s) of independent responses on all tasks and activities performed by the student on a single date based on the measurable outcome. 

*Any prompt given to the student during an instructional activity will count as a non-independent response* and the percentage of independence calculated as 0%.

Scoring in this rubric area: the “final 1/3-time frame”
Each strand will be reviewed by the scorer for Independence who will identify the “final 1/3-time frame” on the data chart (or the final three points, if fewer than twelve points are listed on the chart). An average score will be calculated for independence based on the percentage of independence for all data points during or after the final 1/3-time frame of the data chart. Based on the average of the data points and evidence, the overall score in the strand is then determined using the scoring rubric above.

A score of “M” (missing or insufficient evidence) will be given in both Demonstration of Skills and Concepts and in Independence when the following primary evidence is not included in the strand:

- **one data chart** (labeled correctly) documenting the student’s performance of the measurable outcome on at least eight different dates that shows the student’s overall accuracy and independence for each date; the percentage must begin below 80 percent for either accuracy or independence or both. A brief description must be provided for each data point describing what the student was asked to do and how he/she addressed the measurable outcome.
- **two additional pieces of primary evidence** (labeled correctly), such as work samples, videos, or photographs, that document the student performing the same skill as the data chart.
4) **SELF-EVALUATION**

How aware is the student of his or her performance, and how often does he or she make decisions or choices that affect the performance?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of planning, self-correction, task-monitoring, goal-setting, and reflection was <strong>not found</strong> in the student's portfolio in this content area.</td>
<td>Student infrequently plans, self-corrects monitors, sets goals, and reflects in this content area — only <strong>one example</strong> of self-evaluation was found in this strand.</td>
<td>Student frequently plans, self-corrects monitors, sets goals, and reflects in this content area — <strong>multiple examples</strong> of self-evaluation were found in this strand.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary:**

Self-evaluation, or “thinking about learning,” measures how well and how frequently the student:

- reflects on his or her performance
- plans and sets goals
- chooses an academic/standard-based activity or next steps in the activity
- selects a problem-solving strategy
- uses a “K-W-L” chart or questionnaire (What I know, what I want to learn, what I learned)
- monitors his or her progress or use of a strategy (e.g., checks off steps as each is completed)
- decides when to continue or end participation in an activity
- self-corrects as necessary
- determines own score using a rubric

Evidence of **self-evaluation** must be clearly labeled with the student’s name and date and may be included on the work description label. If it is included on a piece of primary evidence directly, then it should be briefly described by the teacher (for example, “student corrected his/her incorrect answer,” or “student chose this piece of work for the portfolio”).
5) **GENERALIZED PERFORMANCE**

How frequently does the student demonstrate knowledge and skills in different contexts, and during instruction that uses multiple approaches and formats?

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student demonstrates knowledge and skills in <strong>one</strong> context or uses <strong>one</strong> approach and/or method of response and participation in this strand.</td>
<td>Student demonstrates knowledge and skills in <strong>multiple</strong> contexts or uses <strong>multiple</strong> approaches and/or methods of response and participation in this strand.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary:**

Students with significant cognitive disabilities often have difficulty **generalizing** skills in new settings and situations. This area measures the use of effective classroom strategies for ensuring that students are able to retain and transfer what they have learned (*National Alternate Assessment Center*, 2005).

Generalized Performance reflects the number of **instructional approaches and activity formats** through which the student acquires and demonstrates knowledge and skills, including any of the following elements of instruction:

- **media and materials** (using art materials, written text, manipulatives, computer)
- **activity formats** (classroom projects, small group discussions, paired research, experiments)
- **presentation formats** (oral, written, multimedia)
- **method of response** (handwritten, word-processed, oral, creation of a visual display, on a video)
- **application of skills and/or knowledge** in community settings

**Scoring Information:**

The score for Generalized Performance will not be increased based on changes in the **setting** or **people** who assist the student.

The score in Generalized Performance will always be at least 1, since portfolio evidence will always demonstrate at least **one** approach or context.

**Age-appropriate instructional materials:** When the evidence in the portfolio indicates that materials used during instruction were inappropriate to the student’s chronological age, the Generalized Performance score in the strand will be lowered to 1.
Calculating the Overall Achievement Level in the Content Area

To determine the overall achievement level in a content area, each portfolio strand in the content area is scored separately using the Rubric for Scoring Portfolio Strands. Subscore is assigned to each strand by applying the score combinations shown in Table 2 below. An overall achievement level is then determined based on calculating the average of all subscores in the assessed strands of a content area and rounding to the nearest achievement level. Scores in Self-Evaluation and Generalized Performance are not included in the calculation of the overall achievement level.

Table 2
Calculating a “Subscore” in Each Portfolio Strand

A subscore is calculated for each portfolio strand based on the score combinations shown below using the Rubric for Scoring Portfolio Strands. Then, each subscore is combined to yield an overall score in the content area.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Complexity = 1</th>
<th>Level of Complexity = 2</th>
<th>Level of Complexity = 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstration of Skills &amp; Concepts</td>
<td>Demonstration of Skills &amp; Concepts</td>
<td>Demonstration of Skills &amp; Concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Independence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>In</td>
<td>In</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>In</td>
<td>In</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>In</td>
<td>In</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>In</td>
<td>In</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:**
"M" means that required information was either missing or insufficient to determine a score.

| In | Incomplete |
| Aw | Awareness |
| Em | Emerging |
| Pg | Progressing |

**Level of Complexity=4 and 5** refer to “grade-level” and “competency” portfolios, which are detailed in the *MCAS Grade-Level and Competency Portfolio Manual* available online [here](#).
Including MCAS-Alt Results in Reporting and Accountability

A. Achievement Levels

For each student who takes the MCAS-Alt, one of the following achievement levels will be reported in each content area of the portfolio:

Grades 3–10 (Alternate Assessments Based on Alternate Achievement Standards)

- **Incomplete**—Insufficient evidence and information was included in the portfolio to allow an achievement level to be determined in the content area.
- **Awareness**—Students demonstrate very little understanding of standards and core knowledge topics contained in the Massachusetts curriculum framework for the content area. Students require extensive prompting and assistance, and their performance is mostly inaccurate.
- **Emerging**—Students demonstrate a simple understanding that is below grade-level expectations of a limited number of standards and core knowledge topics contained in the Massachusetts curriculum framework for the content area. Students require frequent prompting and assistance, and their performance is limited and inconsistent.
- **Progressing**—Students demonstrate a partial understanding that is below grade-level expectations of selected standards and core knowledge topics contained in the Massachusetts curriculum framework for the content area. Students are steadily learning new knowledge, skills, and concepts. Students require minimal prompting and assistance, and their performance is basically accurate.

Grades 3–10 (MCAS “Next-Generation” Grade-Level Achievement Standards for ELA, Mathematics, and High School Biology and Introductory Physics):

- **Not Meeting Expectations**—Students performing at this level did not meet grade-level expectations in this subject. The school, in consultation with the student's parent/guardian, should determine the coordinated academic assistance and/or additional instruction the student needs to succeed in this subject.
- **Partially Meets Expectations**—Students performing at this level partially meet grade-level expectations for knowledge, skills, and understanding. These students may need coordinated assistance and/or additional instruction to succeed at the next grade level.
- **Meeting Expectations**—Students performing at this level meet grade-level expectations for knowledge, skills, and understanding, and are academically prepared to succeed at the next grade level.
- **Exceeding Expectations**—Students performing at this level exceed grade-level expectations for knowledge, skills, and understanding, and are academically well prepared to succeed at the next grade level.

High School Chemistry and Technology/Engineering (MCAS “Legacy” Grade-Level Achievement Standards):

- **Needs Improvement**—Students demonstrate a partial understanding of grade-level subject matter and solve some simple problems.
- **Proficient**—Students demonstrate a solid understanding of challenging grade-level subject matter and solve a wide variety of problems.
- **Advanced**—Students demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of challenging grade-level subject matter and provide sophisticated solutions to complex problems.
B. **Alternate Achievement Levels**

The state’s alternate achievement standards reflect the collaboration, input, and professional judgment of numerous stakeholders who have affirmed that those achievement levels represent the highest possible standards achievable by students taking the MCAS-Alt; and that those standards are appropriate and aligned to ensure that a student who meets those standards is on track to pursue productive post-secondary education, vocational training, and/or competitive integrated employment.

C. **School and District Results**

*Portfolio Feedback Forms* containing preliminary school and district performance-level results are posted to DropBox Central on the Department’s [Gateway Portal](#) in mid-June. Final results are available online in the fall and reflect changes made due to discrepancies reported to the Department and the findings of MCAS-Alt score appeals filed in late June. Students’ portfolios are returned to schools in mid-September.

MCAS-Alt school and district reports include an achievement level for each student attending a school or program in a district, as well as for those students who reside in the district and attend publicly funded out-of-district placements, such as educational collaboratives or approved and unapproved private special education schools.

To meet federal requirements for reporting aggregated and disaggregated results of statewide assessments for *all* students, the results of MCAS-Alt are included in school, district, and statewide reports of MCAS results as achievement levels only. The *alternate achievement levels* of *Incomplete, Awareness, Emerging*, and *Progressing* will be included in the *lowest* MCAS achievement level for school and district reporting.

D. **Parent/Guardian Reports**

The contents and format of the MCAS-Alt Parent/Guardian Report were updated in 2019. In September, districts receive shipments of MCAS-Alt Parent/Guardian Reports that provide a detailed description of a child’s score in each area of the scoring rubric and an overall achievement level in each subject. Districts are responsible for sending a parent/guardian report to the home of each student who took the MCAS-Alt. If the student is also reported as an English learner, a copy in the student’s home language must also be sent. Print copies of the translations of the report “shell” in the state’s ten most frequently spoken languages are provided in the shipment of MCAS-Alt Parent/Guardian Reports. Translated report “shells” are also available [online](#) in ten languages.

E. **Including MCAS-Alt Results in School and District Accountability**

MCAS-Alt results will be included in the accountability system, together with the results of students who took the standard MCAS tests. Details on the state’s accountability system are available [here](#). Accountability determinations for schools that administer “next-generation” MCAS tests in grades 3–8 and 10 will be based on a combination of indicators, including:

- average scaled MCAS scores in ELA, mathematics, and science and technology/engineering (this replaces Composite Performance Index points used previously)
- [an assigned MCAS-Alt scaled score equivalent](#) (see following page)
- average student growth percentile (SGP) in ELA and mathematics
- progress toward attaining English language proficiency for students reported as English learners
- percentage of chronically absent students
Table 2 shows the score scale for next-generation MCAS tests.

### Table 2

**“Next-Generation” MCAS Tests**

**Scaled Score Ranges**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard MCAS Achievement level</th>
<th>Scaled Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not Meeting Expectations (NM)</td>
<td>440-469</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partially Meeting Expectations (PM)</td>
<td>470-499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting Expectations (M)</td>
<td>500-529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exceeding Expectations (E)</td>
<td>530-560</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The use of average scaled MCAS scores as an accountability indicator necessitates assigning an average “equivalent” scaled score to the results of students who took the MCAS-Alt in each subject as shown in Table 3.

### Table 3

**“Next-Generation” MCAS Scaled Score Equivalents Assigned to MCAS-Alt Scores in ELA and Mathematics in Grades 3–10 and STE in Grades 5 and 8**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MCAS-Alt achievement level, based on alternate achievement standards</th>
<th>Assigned MCAS Scaled Score Equivalent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Incomplete (INP)</td>
<td>455</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Awareness (AWR)</td>
<td>470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerging (EMG)</td>
<td>485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Progressing (PRG)</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
F. Policy on Storage and Destruction of Returned MCAS-Alt Portfolios

In September of each year, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) returns scored MCAS-Alt portfolios to the school that submitted them in the spring. Once returned, an MCAS-Alt portfolio becomes part of a student’s temporary record and must be kept by the school in a secure location. Under the Massachusetts Student Records Regulations, a temporary record contains everything that is not in the transcript and that is “clearly of importance to the educational process.” Principals or their designees are required to periodically review temporary student records and to destroy portions that are “misleading, dated, or irrelevant.” Prior to destroying these records, schools must give parents and eligible students written notice of the intent to destroy records, and of parents’ rights to receive copies of these records before they are destroyed (603 CMR 23.06(2)).

Regardless of the obligation to review and periodically purge temporary records of “misleading, dated, or irrelevant” documents, schools must destroy students’ temporary records no later than seven years after the student transfers, graduates, or withdraws from public school (i.e., a student’s temporary records must be destroyed within seven years after the student exits). However, schools may destroy “misleading, dated, or irrelevant” documents prior to this time by providing written notice to the student and his/her parent of the approximate date of destruction of the record and of their right to receive these materials in whole or in part prior to their destruction.

The Department recommends the following time periods for schools to retain MCAS-Alt portfolios after the Department has returned them to the schools, based on the general view that, over time, the importance of the portfolios to the educational process diminishes and ultimately becomes dated and irrelevant:

- grades 3–8 ELA and Mathematics portfolios: two years after return of portfolios to school
- grades 5 and 8 Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) portfolios:
  - three years after grade 5 STE portfolios are returned to school
  - two years after grade 8 STE portfolios are returned to school
- high school ELA, Mathematics, and STE portfolios: two years after the student exits public education

After the recommended time period, if the student is no longer in the district, or if the parent doesn’t want the portfolio after receiving notice of the approximate date of destruction and the parent’s right to receive these materials, the school may destroy the portfolio.

Despite these recommendations, schools and districts should be aware of circumstances in which it may be prudent to retain MCAS-Alt portfolios longer than the recommended time periods and treat the destruction of MCAS-Alt portfolios for specific students on a case-by-case basis. However, in all cases, records must be destroyed within the seven-year period described above.

Please Note:

Districts are reminded that the district must furnish a copy of the portfolio to the eligible student or parent upon request, per (603 CMR 23.07(2)).

Additionally, when a student is transferring from one Massachusetts district to another, the Department recommends that the previous district send the student’s current and/or most recent MCAS-Alt portfolio to the new district.
APPENDIX A

Examples of Completed Forms

- Data Charts: Line Graph, Bar Graph, Field Data
- Teacher-Scribed Work Sample
- Sample Completed Portfolio Strands are available online here
LINE GRAPH  (instructional data summarizing the student's performance on each date)
COMPLETE ALL INFORMATION BELOW. AT LEAST EIGHT (8) DIFFERENT DATES ARE REQUIRED.

Student Name: Sample Student
Content Area/Strand: English Language Arts/Language

Measurable Outcome: Student will identify words/pictures/symbols that have the opposite meaning as a given word (antonym) with 80% accuracy and 80% independence.

Accuracy: 
Independence: 

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date (m/d/y)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10/15/20</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/19/20</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/21/20</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/22/20</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/23/20</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/26/20</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/28/20</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/30/20</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/2/20</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/3/20</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Brief Description (What was student asked to do and how did he/she do it?)
- Identified words that have the opposite meaning as a given word by completing a worksheet where he had to cut/paste text/pictures and match to antonym.
- Worked 1:1 with the teacher to identify words that have the opposite meaning as a given word by matching word/picture cards to antonym word/picture cards.
- Worked 1:1 with the teacher to identify words that have opposite meanings as a given word doing a worksheet where he drew a line connecting pictures/text with opposite meanings.
- Identified words that have the opposite meaning as a given word by matching puzzle pieces together that have antonyms on each puzzle piece.
- Identified words that have the opposite meaning as a given word by doing a file folder matching pictures/text with opposite meanings.
- Identified words that have the opposite meaning as a given word by doing a file folder matching pictures/text to an antonym.
- Identified words that have the opposite meaning as a given word by working 1:1 with the teacher to do a worksheet/circling the correct antonym from a field of three.
**DATA METHOD 2: BAR GRAPH**

*Instructural data summarizing the student's performance on each date.*

**COMPLETE ALL INFORMATION BELOW. AT LEAST EIGHT (8) DIFFERENT DATES ARE REQUIRED.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name:</th>
<th>Amy Farrah Fowler</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content Area/Strand:</td>
<td>English Language Arts/English Language Arts - Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning Standard:</td>
<td>L.4.5b Recognize and explain the meaning of common idioms, adages, and proverbs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Measurable Outcome:**

Amy will show/express the meaning of common idioms with 80% accuracy and 100% independence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date (m/d/y)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/11/20</td>
<td>A 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/18/20</td>
<td>I 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/21/20</td>
<td>A 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/28/20</td>
<td>A 60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/1/20</td>
<td>A 50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/8/20</td>
<td>A 75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/13/20</td>
<td>A 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/5/20</td>
<td>A 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/9/20</td>
<td>A 83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/19/20</td>
<td>A 90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Brief Description**

(What was student asked to do and how did he/she do it?)

- **9/11/20**
  - Baseline: Student was given 10 idioms and asked to express their meaning either aloud or by drawing.

- **9/18/20**
  - Student was given 4 idioms and asked to express their meanings aloud.

- **9/21/20**
  - Student was given 5 idioms after reading Amelia Bedelia book. She was asked to express the meaning of the idioms on a worksheet.

- **9/28/20**
  - Student was given 10 silly sayings and 10 idioms. She was asked to express the meaning of the idioms by matching the silly sayings to the idioms.

- **10/1/20**
  - Student was given 10 silly sayings and 10 idioms and she was asked to express the meaning of the idioms by matching the silly sayings to the idioms.

- **10/8/20**
  - Played a game about idioms with peers. Data is on indication of expressing meanings on her turn only. 6 opportunities were given.

- **10/13/20**
  - During partner work, each student was given idioms and asked to express the silly and real meaning in pictures, drawings and words on a template, individual data taken.

- **11/5/20**
  - After being read the idiom, student would express the meaning on the whiteboard. Small group activity, individual task and taken by paraprofessional.

- **11/9/20**
  - Student went through 12 flash cards that had idioms written on them. She had to express their meaning out loud.

- **11/19/20**
  - Student was given a quiz on idioms. She had to match the "silly statement" with the actual meaning of the idioms by drawing a line between two columns. (10 idioms)
Data Method 1: Field Data Chart

Complete all information below.

**Student Name:** Rosie Riverter

**Content Area/Strand:** English Language Arts - Language

**Learning Standard:** L.8.4a Use context (e.g., the overall meaning of a sentence or paragraph; a word’s position or function in a sentence) as a clue to the meaning of a word or phrase.

**Measurable Outcome:** will attend visually, aurally, or tactually to materials related to vocabulary acquisition within 15 seconds with 80% accuracy and 60% independence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date (mo/day/yr)</th>
<th>10/7/20</th>
<th>11/12/20</th>
<th>11/19/20</th>
<th>11/23/20</th>
<th>12/1/20</th>
<th>12/2/20</th>
<th>12/3/20</th>
<th>12/4/20</th>
<th>12/9/20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accuracy and Independence</strong></td>
<td>+ / P</td>
<td>+ / P</td>
<td>+ / I</td>
<td>- / P</td>
<td>- / P</td>
<td>+ / P</td>
<td>+ / P</td>
<td>+ / P</td>
<td>- / P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>for each trial</strong> (see KEY):</td>
<td>- / P</td>
<td>- / P</td>
<td>+ / I</td>
<td>+ / P</td>
<td>+ / P</td>
<td>- / P</td>
<td>+ / I</td>
<td>+ / I</td>
<td>- / P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>% Accuracy:</strong> SUMMARY for this date</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>% Independence:</strong> SUMMARY for this date</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Brief Description** (What was student asked to do and how did he/she do it?):

During a literacy group, was read chapter 8 (Margalo) in Stuart Little. A story box of objects was used to represent vocabulary from the text. During a literacy group, was read chapter 10 (Springtime) in Stuart Little. A story box of objects was used to represent vocabulary from the text.

During a literacy group, was read chapter 11 (The Automobile) in Stuart Little. A story box of objects was used to represent vocabulary from the text. During a literacy group, was read chapter 13 (Ames' Crossing) in Stuart Little. A story box of objects was used to represent vocabulary from the text.

During a literacy group, was read chapter 15 (Heading North) in Stuart Little. A story box of objects was used to represent vocabulary from the text. During a literacy group, was read chapter 17 (The Shadow) in Peter Pan. A story box of objects was used to represent vocabulary from the text.

During a literacy group, was read chapter 1 (Peter Breaks Through) in Peter Pan. A story box of objects was used to represent vocabulary from the text. Data was taken on whether the student attended within 15 seconds of being shown the object.
Example of a Teacher-Scribed Work Sample  
(Additional examples are available at www.mcas-alt.org/materials)

**Grade Level:** 7th Grade  
**Content Area (Subject):** Math  
**Strand:** Ratios and Proportional Relationships  
**Learning Standards:** 7.RP.A.2 Recognize and represent proportional relationships between quantities.

**Measureable Outcome:** will turn on technology used to demonstrate ratios and proportional relationships by pressing an access switch to turn the page of a teacher made story on the computer about ratios and proportions with 80% accuracy and 100% independence. will turn on the technology within 15 seconds of a directive.

**Brief Description:** During a math work session, turned on technology by pressing an access switch to turn the page of a teacher made book on the computer within 15 seconds of a directive. The book taught about ratios and proportional relationships by showing her a series of farm animals using the phrase “for every” to talk about how many of each appendage each animal had. (ex: for every cow there are 4 legs)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Trial Number</th>
<th>Page Number</th>
<th>Did she turn on technology by pressing her switch to activate the reading?</th>
<th>Latency In seconds</th>
<th>What was the ratio on the page?</th>
<th>+/-</th>
<th>I/P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>15+ seconds</td>
<td>For every pig there is one tail</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>4 seconds</td>
<td>For every pig there is one tail</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>14 seconds</td>
<td>For every sheep there are 2 ears</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>15+ seconds</td>
<td>For every cow there are 4 legs</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>15+ seconds</td>
<td>For every cow there are 4 legs</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>10 seconds</td>
<td>For every cow there are 4 legs</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3 seconds</td>
<td>For every duck there is 1 beak</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1 second</td>
<td>For every goat there are 2 horns</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>11 seconds</td>
<td>For every horse there are 4 legs</td>
<td>+</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Accuracy:** 67%  
**Independence:** 89%
APPENDIX B

Blank Forms for the MCAS-Alt

- Portfolio Cover Sheet
- Strand Cover Sheet/STE Strand Cover Sheet
- Parent/Guardian Verification Form (English and Spanish)
- Consent to Photograph (English and Spanish)
- Work Sample/ELA–Writing/Video Descriptions
- ELA–Writing Scoring Rubric
- STE Summary Sheet
- Blank Data Charts (Line Graph, Bar Graph, and Field Data)
2021 MCAS-Alt

PORTFOLIO COVER SHEET
(This page must appear as the first page of the portfolio.)

1) Student’s Name: _____________________________________________________________

2) State-Assigned Student Identifier (SASID): 1 0 ____________

3) Student’s grade as reported in the Student Information Management System (SIMS): ________

4) School, Educational Collaborative, or Program attended by the student:
____________________________________________________________________________

5) District-School Code:  ____________ – ____________ (See http://profiles.doe.mass.edu)

6) Address of School or Program: __________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

7) Student’s sending district, if program is outside the district in which the student lives:
______________________________________________________________________________

8) Contact Information:
   Teacher’s Name: ____________________________

   School telephone and email: ____________________________

9) Content area(s) included in this portfolio (check all that apply):
   ☐ English Language Arts   ☐ Mathematics   ☐ Science and Technology/Engineering

10) Will this student take a standard MCAS test in any content area in spring 2021?
     If yes, in which content area(s)?

     ☐ English Language Arts   ☐ Mathematics   ☐ Science and Technology/Engineering
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): __________

3) a. Content Area (Subject): _______________________________________________________
   b. Strand: ____________________________
   c. Learning Standard: ____________________________________________________________
      (List the standard number for the grade in which the student was reported in SIMS)

4) Level of complexity: Student addressed the learning standard in this strand…
   [ ] through an “access skill” practiced during academic instruction
   (Resource Guide, Page____)
   [ ] through an “entry point” (Resource Guide, Page____)

   (For a student working at “grade-level,” use the Work Description for Grade-Level or Competency Portfolios, 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”).

   The student will…
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________
   ____________________________________________________________

6) Adaptations, accommodations, and/or modifications routinely used by the student during instruction of this skill, including augmentative or alternative communication (AAC) system, if used:
   ____________________________________________________________

Primary Evidence Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Required Evidence:</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Accuracy</th>
<th>Independence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. MCAS-Alt Skills Survey in this strand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Data chart showing measurable outcome listed above</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Evidence #1 based on same measurable outcome:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Evidence #2 based on same measurable outcome:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2021 MCAS-Alt

Science and Technology/Engineering (STE)
STE STRAND COVER SHEET

(A completed STE Strand Cover Sheet must be included at the beginning of each STE discipline)

1) Student’s Name ______________________________________________________________ 

2) Student’s grade, as reported in the Student Information Management System (SIMS) ________

3) STE Discipline: __________________________________________________________________

4) Core Idea: _____________________________________________________________________

Below, list each STE Summary Sheet included in the portfolio (six are required):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practice # (1–8)</th>
<th>Evidence Attached (Y/N)</th>
<th>STE Summary Sheet Description</th>
<th>Self-Evaluation (Y/N)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I have completed the MCAS-Alt Skills Survey in STE, using (check one):

_____ Forms and Graphs Online

_____ Paper-based format

I have printed and included a copy of the completed STE Skills Survey in the portfolio.
2021 MCAS-Alt

Parent, Guardian, or Primary Care Provider
VERIFICATION FORM

Student’s Name: _____________________________________________________________

School/District: ____________________________________________________________________

Please check below:

_____ I HAVE BEEN GIVEN AN OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW THE CONTENTS OF MY
CHILD’S PORTFOLIO. Date: _____________________
Signature of Parent, Guardian, Primary Care Provider, or Student (if over 18 years of age)

_____ PARENT OR GUARDIAN DID NOT VIEW THE PORTFOLIO BUT WAS INVITED TO DO
SO ON THE DATES LISTED IN THE SPACE BELOW.

OPTIONAL: Comments may be provided by the parent, guardian, or primary care provider regarding the
child’s MCAS-Alt portfolio (continue on reverse side if necessary):

_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________________

Please encourage parents to contact the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education directly with
comments/questions at mcas@doe.mass.edu.

This form must be included in the student’s MCAS-Alt portfolio.
2021 Evaluación MCAS Alterna

Padre, Guardián, o Proveedor de Cuidado Principal
FORMA DE VERIFICACIÓN

Nombre del Estudiante: __________________________________________________________

Escuela: ______________________________________________________________________

Marque abajo:

_____ YO HE TENIDO LA OPORTUNIDAD DE REPASAR EL CONTENIDO DEL PORTAFOLIO
DE MI HIJO/A.

Firma del Padre, Guardián, or Proveedor de Cuidado Principal, or estudiantes de 18 años, y fecha

_____ EL PADRE O GUARDIÁN NO REVISÓ EL PORTAFOLIO, PERO FUE INVITADO A
HACERLO EN LAS FECHAS INDICADAS ABAJO.

OPCIONAL: Comentarios del padre, guardián, or proveedor principal sobre el portafolio de MCAS
(continuar en el otro lado si es necesario):

________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________

Anime a los padres a ponerse en contacto con el Departamento de Educación Elemental y Secundaria
directamente con comentarios o preguntas de MCAS a mcas@doe.mass.edu.

Este formulario debe ser incluido en el portafolio del estudiante.
2021 MCAS-Alt

CONSENT FORM
to Photograph and Audio/Videotape a Student
(Please keep on file at school)

To Teachers:
Please share the attached Consent Form with the parent(s) or guardian of a student participating in the MCAS-Alt for whom photographs, videotape, or audiotape will be submitted. Informed consent by the parent/guardian is required for this specific use. If consent is not obtained, electronic images and recordings of the student may not be created or submitted in the portfolio.

Please keep a signed copy of this Consent Form in the student’s file. It is not necessary to include this form in the portfolio.

Consent is necessary only for the creation of electronic images or recordings of the student. The signed IEP signifies consent by the parent to have the student participate in the MCAS-Alt.
2021 MCAS-Alt

CONSENT FORM

to Photograph and Audio/Videotape a Student

(Please keep on file at the school)

To Parents or Guardians:

State and federal laws require all students in Massachusetts to participate in the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), the state’s student assessment program. Massachusetts gives MCAS tests in three subjects: English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science and Technology/Engineering. A student’s IEP team determines whether a student with a disability should take standard MCAS tests, either with or without test accommodations, or whether the student requires an alternate assessment. The MCAS-Alt provides a method for assessing the academic performance of students with significant cognitive disabilities who are unable to take standard MCAS tests, even with accommodations.

Description of the MCAS-Alt: During the school year, your child’s teacher will collect educational information documenting your child’s achievements. The teacher will compile this information in a portfolio and send it to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education where it will be reviewed and scored by qualified scorers. Portfolios are scored in April and May and will be returned to your child’s school in the fall. Your child’s portfolio must remain in his or her file at the school until he or she no longer attends the school.

Components of the MCAS-Alt: Your child’s MCAS-Alt portfolio will include some or all of the following:

- Samples of student work: a collection of your child’s best classroom work demonstrating his or her performance at different times during the year.
- Photographs, videotape, or audiotape: documentation of your child participating in classroom activities and assignments through video or audio recordings, or photography.
- Performance tasks: a record of your child’s participation in tasks and classroom activities related to the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks, such as listening, communicating, and using objects and materials appropriately.
- Your child’s weekly school schedule: a schedule of the academic courses taken by the student.
- Other documentation: your child’s introduction to the portfolio, and a verification letter signed by parents stating that they have reviewed their child’s portfolio or were invited to do so.

Submission of the Portfolio: In late March, your child’s teacher will submit your child’s portfolio to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to be scored. In all, no more than 20 people outside your child’s school will view this material, including staff from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the state’s test contractor, and professional scorers under formal agreement with the Department trained for the purpose of scoring alternate assessments.

Confidentiality of Your Child’s Student Records: The information submitted as part of the MCAS-Alt constitutes student record material that is confidential under state and federal law. The people who review and score the information will be instructed regarding the confidentiality of the material. Your child’s name and other identifying information will not be released to third persons other than those with whom the Department has contracted for purposes of implementing the MCAS-Alt. Portfolios are returned to your school and must be kept on file as part of your child’s temporary record.
Revocation of Consent: You may revoke your consent to allow your child to be recorded, photographed, or video-taped for purposes of the MCAS-Alt at any time and for any reason. However, your child will still be required to participate in the MCAS-Alt.

Obtaining More Information about the MCAS-Alt: If you have any questions about the MCAS-Alt or your child’s participation, please contact the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education at 781-338-3625 or by email at mcas@doe.mass.edu.

This Consent Form must be signed by one or both of the child’s parents or guardians. Consent signifies agreement to your child being recorded on video, audio, or photography for purposes of the MCAS-Alt.

Within thirty days of receiving this form, sign and return it to your child’s teacher or principal.

Statement of Consent:

I have read and understand all of the information in this Consent Form. I knowingly and voluntarily allow my child’s school to release information about my child:

_________________________________________________________________________________
(child’s name)

…who is a student attending:

_________________________________________________________________________________
(name of school and district)

I will allow my child to be photographed, videotaped, or recorded for purposes of the MCAS-Alt and for my child’s school to release information about my child that is created and collected pursuant to the terms of this agreement to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and Cognia for review by trained professionals. I understand that I may withdraw my consent at any time, with no penalty, by contacting my child’s teacher, Cognia, or the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Signature of Parent or Guardian: ______________________________________________________

Date: __________________________
2021 Evaluación MCAS Alterna

FORMA DE PERMISO
Lineas Directivas para Obtener Permiso de los Padres o Guardián
Para poder tomar Videos, Audiograbanación o Fotografías del Estudiante

Para los Maestros:
Favor compartir la Forma de Permiso incluida con los padres o guardián de cualquier estudiante que está participando en la Evaluación MCAS Alterna durante el año escolar actual. Se requiere permiso para que un estudiante sea fotografiado o grabado para este propósito. Si no se obtiene permiso, no se podrán crear imágenes electrónicas y grabaciones del estudiante.

Favor notar
No es necesario obtener permiso para que un estudiante participe en la Evaluación MCAS Alterna, solamente para crear imágenes electrónicas o grabaciones del estudiante, y para ciertos componentes de los archivos confidenciales del estudiante.
Para Padres o Guardián:

Como usted sabe, las leyes estatales y federales requieren que todos los estudiantes en Massachusetts participen en la evaluación MCAS (Sistema de Evaluación Comprehensiva de Massachusetts, por sus siglas en inglés), el programa de exámenes para estudiantes del estado. Massachusetts administra exámenes MCAS en tres áreas: Artes de Lenguaje en Inglés, Matemáticas, y Ciencias y Tecnología/Ingeniería. El Equipo del Plan Educativo Individual del estudiante determina si un estudiante con impedimentos debe de tomar el exámen estándarizado MCAS, sea con o sin acomodos, o si el estudiante requiere una evaluación alterna. La Evaluación MCAS Alterna demuestra un medio para examinar el desempeño académico de estudiantes que no pueden participar en exámenes estándarizados MCAS, por causa de su discapacidad, aún con acomodos.

La participación de su hijo/a en la Evaluación MCAS Alterna constituirá cumplimiento del requisito, para que él o ella sea examinado/a a través de MCAS en el área en la cual se ha determinado anteriormente, que su hijo/a requiere una evaluación alterna.

Descripción Corta: La Evaluación MCAS Alterna requiere que durante el año escolar actual, el maestro de su hijo/a, a lleve a cabo ciertas actividades en el salón de clase con su hijo/a y recogerá información que refleje el desempeño educacional de su hijo/a. El maestro de su hijo/a recopilará esta información en un portafolio, y proveerá la información al Departamento de Educación Elemental y Secundaria para ser repasado por un equipo de repaso y personal específico de Medidas de Progreso (Cognia), el contratista de evaluaciones alternas del estado. El Equipo que repasa el portafolio incluye profesional anotadores entrenados/as, personal del Departamento y sus agentes contratistas. Los portafolios serán revisados y calificados durante la primavera por calificadores entrenados, para asegurar consistencia.

Componentes de la Evaluación MCAS Alterna: La Evaluación MCAS Alterna de su hijo/a consistirá de todos o algunos de los siguientes:

1. Ejemplos de Trabajo del Estudiante: Colección de ejemplos del mejor trabajo de su hijo/a demostrando el nivel en la cual su hijo/a está trabajando;
2. Fotografías, grabaciones de video o audio: Documentación de la participación de su hijo/a en actividades del salón de clase y asignaciones a través de grabaciones de videos, audios, o fotografías;
3. Trabajos Escolares: La participación de su hijo/a con el maestro en tareas y actividades en el salón de clase relacionados al Currículo tales como escuchando, comunicándose y usando objetos y materiales en el salón de clase;
4. Horario Semanal Escolar de su hijo/a: Esto demuestra los cursos académicos que toma su hijo/a.
5. Otra Documentación: Una introducción al portafolio creado por el estudiante; una carta firmada por los padres diciendo que ellos han repasado el portafolio de su hijo/a, o por lo menos fueron invitados a hacerlo; y cualquier carta o cartas de apoyo provistas por los compañeros, empleadores, miembros de la comunidad, etc.
Sometimiento del Portafolio para Repasar y Calificar: A principios de abril, el maestro de su hijo/a someterá el portafolio del estudiante al Departamento para ser repasado por calificadores entrenados. En conjunto, no más de 20 personas fuera de la escuela de su hijo/a mirarán este material, todos ellos, sea personal del Departamento de Educación Elemental y Secundaria o personal contratista de exámenes del estado bajo acuerdo formal con el Departamento que están entrenados para el propósito de calificar evaluaciones Alternas.

Confidencialidad de los Archivos de su Hijo/a/Estudiante: La información creada y recogida como parte de la Evaluación MCAS Alterna constituye material de archivo del estudiante y es confidencial bajo la ley estatal y federal. Aquellas personas que constituyen el equipo de repaso de portafolio y quienes estarán repasando y evaluando la información con su consentimiento serán informados respecto a la confidencialidad del material. El nombre de su hijo/a y otra información que lo identifica no se dará a terceras personas fuera de las que el Departamento ha contratado para el propósito de creación y implementación de la Evaluación MCAS Alterna. Los portafolios son regresados a su escuela y deben permanecer archivados como parte del record temporero de su hijo/a.

Revocación del Permiso: Usted puede revocar su permiso para permitir que su hijo/a sea fotografiado y estar en video o audio para propósitos de la Evaluación MCAS Alterna en cualquier momento y por cualquier razón. Su decisión en hacerlo no afectará la relación entre usted o su hijo/a con la escuela o con el Departamento de Educación Elemental y Secundaria. Sin embargo, seguirá siendo requerido que su hijo/a participe en la Evaluación MCAS Alterna.

Obteniendo Más Información Acerca de la Evaluación MCAS Alterna: Si usted tiene alguna pregunta acerca de la Evaluación MCAS Alterna, o la participación de su hijo/a, favor comunicarse sea con el Departamento de Educación Elemental y Secundaria al tel: 781-338-3625 o por correo electrónico a mcas@doe.mass.edu.

Esta forma de permiso debe ser firmada por uno o ambos de los padres o guardianes del niño/a. Permiso significa estar de acuerdo que su hijo/a sea fotografiado o video grabado o audio grabado para propósito de la Evaluación MCAS Alterna.

Dentro de treinta días de recibir la forma, debe de ser firmada y devuelta al maestro del niño/a o Principal. El original debe de ser incluido en el portafolio de la Evaluación MCAS Alterna para someterla al Departamento, con una copia duplicada en el archivo temporal del estudiante.

Declaración de Permiso:

Yo hé leído y yo entiendo toda la información en esta Forma de Permiso. Yo conscientemente y voluntariamente autorizo a la escuela de mi hijo/a dar la información acerca de mi hijo/a:

___________________________   en ___________________________________________________.
(Nombre del niño/a)        (Nombre de la escuela y dirección)
a ser fotografiado, estar en video o audio grabado para propósitos de la Evaluación MCAS Alterna y para que la escuela de mi hijo/a dé la información acerca de mi hijo/a que es creada y recogida en términos de este acuerdo al Departamento de Educación Elemental y Secundaria de Massachusetts y Cognia para ser repasada por profesionales entrenados. Yo entiendo que puedo retirar mi permiso en cualquier momento, sin ninguna penalidad, comunicándome con el maestro/a de mi hijo/a, Cognia o el Departamento de Educación Elemental y Secundaria de Massachusetts.

Firma del Padre/Madre o Guardián: _____________________________________________
Fecha: _____________________________________________________________________
CONSENT FORM
For Incidental Photographing and Video Recording
of a Student
(Please keep on file at the school.)

To Parents or Guardians:
This year, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will work with your son or daughter’s school to conduct the MCAS-Alt. Your child’s teacher will be among those who use alternate assessments with a small number of students with significant cognitive disabilities who cannot take the standard MCAS tests, even with test accommodations.

One or more students in your child’s class will participate in the MCAS-Alt during the 2019–2021 school year. During this process, your child’s teacher may find it necessary to use cameras and/or tape recorders to obtain educational information on these students in order to determine how well they perform certain activities. It may be necessary for your child’s teacher to record the voice or image of the participating student when other students are present in the room. Therefore, there may be limited occasions during which your child may appear incidentally in videotapes and/or photographs or during which his/her voice may be recorded on audiotape. Your child will not be identified by name, nor would any student information or other materials be shared with others outside the school or district for this purpose. We request your consent to allow your child to appear in videotapes and photographs in this limited way. Thank you very much.

Student’s Name: ____________________________________________________________

Name of School/ District: ____________________________________________________

Teacher’s Name: _____________________________________________________________

Signature of Parent or Guardian: _______________________________________________

Date: _____________________________________________________________________
Para los Padres o Guardián:
Este año el Departamento de Educación Elemental y Secundaria una vez más llevará a cabo la Evaluación MCAS Alterna en salones de clase del a través del estado. El maestro de su hijo/a estará entre aquellos que usan evaluaciones alternas con un número pequeño de estudiantes con discapacidades significativas que no pueden tomar exámenes MCAS estandarizados, aún con acomodos de exámenes.

Uno o más estudiantes en la clase de su hijo/a participarán en la Evaluación MCAS Alterna durante el año escolar 2020–2021. Durante este proceso, el maestro de su hijo puede encontrar necesario el usar cámaras y grabadoras para obtener información educacional en estos estudiantes, para determinar cómo desempeñan ciertas actividades. Puede ser necesario para el maestro de su hijo/a el grabar la voz o imagen del estudiante, participando y envuelto en actividades de rutina en el salón de clase con otros estudiantes presentes en el salón. Por lo tanto, pueden haber ocasiones limitadas en la cual su hijo/a puede aparecer en grabaciones y/o fotografías, o su voz en grabaciones, aunque solamente incidentalmente. Su hijo/a no será identificado/a por nombre, ni se compartirán los archivos de su hijo/a con otros fuera de la escuela o distrito escolar para este propósito. Nosotros pedimos su permiso en que su hijo/a aparezca en videos y fotografías de esta manera limitada. Muchas gracias.

Nombre del Estudiante: ______________________________________________________________

Nombre de la Escuela/Distrito Escolar: __________________________________________________

Nombre del Maestro: __________________________________________________________________

Firma del Padre/Madre o Guardián: _____________________________________________________

Fecha : ____________________________________________________________________________
2021 MCAS-Alt

WORK SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

(Complete and attach one label to each work sample in the portfolio or write this information directly on each piece. Do not use this label for data charts or videotapes.)

Name: __________________________

Subject: □ ELA □ Math □ STE

Date (m/d/y): _______________

Strand: __________________________

ACCURACY: ___ %

INDEPENDENCE: ___ %

Learning Standard: __________________________

Measurable Outcome: __________________________

Self-Evaluation: (Must be completed by, or scribed at the direction of, the student; evidence of student choice must be shown)

Briefly describe what the student was asked to do and how he/she did it:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

(Continue on reverse side if necessary.)
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS - WRITING (BASELINE)
WORK SAMPLE DESCRIPTION
(Complete and attach one label to each Writing work sample or write this information directly on each piece.)

NAME: ___________________________ DATE: __________________

Independence: ________% Measurable Outcome: ______________________

Text Type: [ ] Narrative [ ] Informative/Explanatory [ ] Opinion/Argument

Briefly describe what the student was asked to do:
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
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(Continue on reverse side if necessary)

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS - WRITING (FINAL)
WORK SAMPLE DESCRIPTION
(Complete and attach one label to each Writing work sample or write this information directly on each piece.)

NAME: ___________________________ DATE: __________________

Independence: ________% Measurable Outcome: ______________________

Text Type: [ ] Narrative [ ] Informative/Explanatory [ ] Opinion/Argument

Briefly describe what the student was asked to do:
____________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________
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(Continue on reverse side if necessary)

Self-Evaluation:
(Must be completed by student or scribed at the direction of student; evidence of student choice must be shown.)
Complete one form for each submitted video segment. Insert this page in the portfolio. Videos must be submitted on a standard DVD or flash drive or it will not be scored.

Name: ________________________________  Content Area: ____________________________  Strand: ____________________________

**Description of Each Video Sample in this Strand:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample #1 (TITLE):</th>
<th>Self-Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Date (m/d/y): _________________</td>
<td>(Must be completed by student or scribed at the direction of student; evidence of student choice must be shown)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning Standard: ____________________________</td>
<td>____________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>Measurable Outcome: ____________________________</td>
<td>____________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>Briefly describe what the student did and how they did it:</td>
<td>____________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accuracy %</td>
<td>Independence %</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Sample #2 (TITLE):</th>
<th>Self-Evaluation</th>
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<td>Date (m/d/y): _________________</td>
<td>(Must be completed by student or scribed at the direction of student; evidence of student choice must be shown.)</td>
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<td>Learning Standard: ____________________________</td>
<td>____________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>Measurable Outcome: ____________________________</td>
<td>____________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>Briefly describe what the student did and how they did it:</td>
<td>____________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accuracy %</td>
<td>Independence %</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
2021 MCAS-Alt

Science and Technology/Engineering (STE)

STE SUMMARY SHEET

Directions: Complete and submit one summary sheet for each selected entry point or access skill in the core idea (total of 6 summary sheets for each core idea). Document at least three different science practices among the six summary sheets. Select and attach three pieces of primary evidence to its corresponding STE Summary Sheet.

Student’s Name: ______________________________ Date (m/d/y): __________

Grade: ________ Discipline (Strand): ____________________________________________

Core Idea: ____________________________ Science Practice (#1–8): _____

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>□ Entry Point</th>
<th>List the Entry Point or Access Skill here:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Grade Span: ____________________________</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Brief Description of Activity (including materials, instructional approach, and how the student addressed the entry point or access skill):

Self-Evaluation:

SUMMARY for this activity: Accuracy: _____ % Independence: _____ %

☐ EVIDENCE IS ATTACHED (Check if YES)

(NOTE: Evidence must be attached to at least three of the six STE Summary Sheets.)

If evidence is NOT ATTACHED, complete the section below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question/Task/Item</th>
<th>Expected Student Response</th>
<th>Actual Student Response</th>
<th>Acc. (+/-)</th>
<th>Ind. (I/P)</th>
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(Continue on additional page, if necessary)
**SCORING RUBRIC for ELA–Writing**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level of Complexity</strong></td>
<td>Writing sample not submitted or unmatched to requirement.</td>
<td>Student addressed Writing through “access skills.”</td>
<td>Student addressed Writing through “entry points.”</td>
<td>Student addressed Writing at “grade-level.”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Expression of Ideas and Content</strong></td>
<td>Writing sample not submitted; or contained insufficient information to determine a score; or written in a language other than English; or could not be read or understood</td>
<td>No main idea (informative), point of view (opinion), event sequence (narrative), or focus (poetry); or was unclear or off-topic; or used single word, picture, or symbol to express ideas; or all text provided by teacher</td>
<td>Writing sample related to assignment only minimally; included no or only one detail or description; or used picture sequence to express ideas; or used no figurative language or poetry form (poetry)</td>
<td>Main idea (informative), point of view (opinion), or event sequence (narrative) was evident; limited use of facts, details, and/or descriptions; sometimes repetitive and/or off-topic; limited use of figurative language (poetry)</td>
<td>Main idea (informative), point of view (opinion), or event sequence (narrative) was clearly expressed; three or more accurate and relevant facts, details, or descriptions included; used vivid imagery and figurative language appropriately (poetry)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Knowledge of Conventions</strong></td>
<td>Writing sample not submitted; or contained insufficient information to determine a score; or written in a language other than English; or could not be read or understood</td>
<td>Little or no original text; or used pictures or isolated words; or could not be understood due to errors in grammar and/or usage</td>
<td>General meaning could be understood, though use of grammar was limited and/or contained errors or run-on sentences; or lacked poetry form (poetry)</td>
<td>Complete sentences with some errors; grammar was effective; correct noun-verb agreement; some evidence of poetry form (poetry)</td>
<td>Meaning was clear, with rare or no errors in grammar and overall usage; poetry form used appropriately (poetry)</td>
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<td><strong>Text Structure</strong></td>
<td>Writing sample not submitted; or contained insufficient information to determine a score; or written in a language other than English; or could not be read or understood</td>
<td>Used single words, pictures, symbols without text; or all text provided by teacher</td>
<td>Sentence fragments (phrases) or one complete sentence used to express ideas; produced two related lines (poetry)</td>
<td>At least two complete sentences were used to express ideas; produced up to four related lines (poetry)</td>
<td>A paragraph of at least three related, well-constructed sentences was used to express ideas; more than four related lines (poetry)</td>
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<td><strong>Use of Vocabulary</strong></td>
<td>Writing sample not submitted; or contained insufficient information to determine a score; or written in a language other than English; or could not be read or understood</td>
<td>Vocabulary was unrelated to assignment; or all text was provided by teacher</td>
<td>Vocabulary was related to assignment, but word choice was limited and/or sometimes inappropriate</td>
<td>Vocabulary was functional and relevant; used basic common words, with some descriptive language</td>
<td>Vocabulary was clear and precise; used descriptive language, modifiers, connecting words and/or phrases</td>
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<td><strong>Independence</strong></td>
<td>Writing sample not submitted; or contained insufficient information to determine a score; or written in a language other than English; or could not be read or understood</td>
<td>Student required extensive, almost continuous prompts to complete writing sample (0-25% independent)</td>
<td>Student required frequent prompts to complete writing assignment (26-50% independent)</td>
<td>Student required some prompts to complete writing assignment (51-75% independent)</td>
<td>Student required no, or very few, prompts to complete writing assignment (76-100% independent)</td>
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Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System
2021 Educator’s Manual for MCAS-Alt
DATA METHOD: 1

LINE GRAPH  (instructional data summarizing the student’s performance on each date)

COMPLETE ALL INFORMATION BELOW. AT LEAST EIGHT (8) DIFFERENT DATES ARE REQUIRED.

Student’s Name: 
Content Area/Strand: ____________________ Learning Standard: _______________
Measurable Outcome: ___________________________________________________________

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Date (m/d/y)

Brief Description (What was the student asked to do and how did he/she do it?)
DATA METHOD 2: BAR GRAPH  
(instructional data summarizing the student’s performance on each date)

COMPLETE ALL INFORMATION BELOW. AT LEAST EIGHT (8) DIFFERENT DATES ARE REQUIRED.

Student’s Name: ____________________________

Content Area/Strand: ____________________________

Learning Standard: ____________________________

Measurable Outcome: ____________________________

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Date (m/d/y)

Brief Description
(What was student asked to do and how did he/she do it?)

KEY

% Accuracy:

% Independence:
DATA METHOD: 3

FIELD DATA CHART (student performance of a series of tasks, or collection of work samples, related to measurable outcome)

COMPLETE ALL INFORMATION BELOW. AT LEAST EIGHT (8) DIFFERENT DATES ARE REQUIRED.

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<tr>
<th>Student’s Name:</th>
<th>Content Area/Strand:</th>
<th>Learning Standard:</th>
<th>Measurable Outcome:</th>
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Accuracy and Independence for each trial (see KEY):

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<td>% Accuracy:</td>
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Brief Description (For each data point, what was student asked to do and how did he/she do it?)
Why It’s Important to Include Students with Disabilities in MCAS

Frequently Asked Questions About the MCAS-Alt
Why It’s Important to Include Students with Disabilities in MCAS

Since 1998, students with disabilities in Massachusetts have been included in MCAS for the following reasons:

**It’s the law.** State and federal laws require the participation of all students in statewide assessments to measure their academic performance. The alternate assessment ensures that students with the most intensive disabilities have an opportunity to “show what they know” and receive instruction at a level that is challenging and attainable based on the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks.

**Students who are tested are those who get taught.** Students with disabilities have become more “visible” in their schools as a result of taking the MCAS and the MCAS-Alt and have a greater chance of being considered when decisions are made to allocate staff and resources to improve their academic achievement.

**As a result of participation in MCAS, learning has improved as expectations are raised.** Evidence indicates that students with disabilities learn more than expected when they are given opportunities to engage in challenging instruction with the necessary support. Indeed, the achievement of students with disabilities on MCAS, and the rate at which these students meet state and local graduation requirements, has steadily increased.

**Participation in MCAS helps to determine whether, and how much, students with disabilities are learning.** In the past, it was not always possible to determine what had been taught and whether special education had been successful with a student; nor was it possible to compare outcomes among students and across programs, schools, and districts.

**Standards-based instruction is for all students.** All students are capable of learning at a level that engages and challenges them. One important reason to include students with significant cognitive disabilities in standards-based instruction is to explore their capabilities. While “daily living skills” are critical for these students to function independently, academic skills are also important. Standards in the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks are defined as “valued outcomes for all students.” Why, then, should separate standards be used with some students, and not others? And who, if anyone, should decide which students should receive instruction based on academic standards and which students should not?

**State graduation requirements apply to all students, even those taking MCAS alternate assessments.** All students without exception are required to meet the Competency Determination standard on the ELA, mathematics, and a high school science and technology/engineering discipline assessment in order to be eligible to earn a high school diploma. However, students who take alternate assessments are those with significant cognitive disabilities and therefore, and therefore, the number earning a Competency Determination will likely remain low in relation to the number of students who meet the Competency Determination requirement on the standard MCAS tests.

For additional information and participation guidelines, please visit the Department’s [MCAS Alternate Assessment website](#).

For additional information on meeting graduation requirements, please visit the Department’s [Massachusetts Graduation Requirements website](#).
Frequently Asked Questions About the MCAS-Alt
(The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education receives many inquiries like the ones below concerning the MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt).)

Why assess students with disabilities on the alternate assessment?
Rationale: Students with disabilities are required by law to participate in MCAS in order to assess their achievement of content knowledge and skills found in the state’s curriculum frameworks. This means students with disabilities must take MCAS tests, either with or without accommodations, or an alternate assessment if they cannot take the tests due to the severity of their disabilities.

One important reason for requiring alternate assessments is to measure the academic performance of students with the most significant cognitive disabilities. Before 2001, academic learning was not measured or reported for these students. Since taking alternate assessments, students have become more “visible” in their schools and have a greater chance of being considered when decisions are made to allocate staff and resources for their instruction and learning.

There is more to the alternate assessment than “passing” the test. The alternate assessment gives honest, accurate, and detailed feedback that can be used to identify challenging goals and instruction for each student. The evidence submitted in a portfolio ensures that students with the most intensive disabilities have an opportunity to “show what they know” and to receive instruction at a level that is challenging and attainable.

Portfolios require some effort. How can teachers manage the portfolio process efficiently?
Rationale: The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has made school administrators aware of the need to coordinate this process in schools and to meet regularly with teachers who conduct alternate assessments to identify resources for teachers who need assistance. The Department encourages all adults who work with a student to be involved in developing his or her portfolio.

At statewide teacher training sessions held during the fall and winter, the Department emphasizes the need for teachers to begin collecting student work early in the school year and to complete all required forms and cover sheets well in advance of the submission deadline. Teachers report that after the first year of creating student portfolios, they find the process much easier, and they have developed strategies to organize and manage this task more efficiently. They have made the process of alternate assessment a part of their daily instruction and use it to plan instruction, identify educational goals for students, write progress reports, and share information with parents. Thousands of teachers have conducted alternate assessments and are assisting each other in the process. Teachers find that alternate assessments help them document their students’ progress and performance to focus their time and attention where it is most needed.

We encourage teachers to request assistance from the Department if they need it. Training is available to help teachers who are new to the process.

How do we know that alternate assessments truly reflect what students have learned?
Rationale: If teachers follow instructions outlined in the most current version of the Educator’s Manual for MCAS-Alt, they can be assured the alternate assessment will receive the score it deserves based on the evidence submitted. Teachers should become familiar with the scoring rubric in the Educator’s Manual to make certain the work samples and data charts address each rubric category. Each year, written feedback is provided directly to the teachers who directly assessed their students. This feedback is intended to assist teachers to improve the quality of assessments the following year.
Why teach and assess the same standards for students with significant cognitive disabilities?

**Rationale:** One reason to include students with significant cognitive disabilities in standards-based instruction is to fully explore and expand their capabilities. Performance expectations for these students have traditionally been quite low and data on their current levels of achievement are needed before determining which knowledge and skills to teach next. Standards are defined as “valued outcomes for all students.” Why, then, would some students be designated for standards-based instruction while others are not?

All students are capable of learning at a level that engages and challenges them. Teachers who have incorporated standards into their instruction cite unanticipated gains in students’ achievement and understanding. Teachers have moreover become excited about new teaching possibilities as they use the curriculum resources provided by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education to improve and enhance their instructional practices.

An additional advantage to this approach is that many social, communication, motor, self-help, and other daily living skills can be addressed during activities in which standards are taught, as outlined in the Department’s publication entitled the Resource Guide to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for Students with Disabilities. The Resource Guide is available online.

Why is the graduation rate low for students taking the alternate assessment?

**Rationale:** All students without exception are required to meet the Competency Determination standard by earning a specified minimum score on English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science and Technology/Engineering MCAS tests. No student will be denied a high school diploma simply on the basis of taking an alternate assessment if he or she can achieve a score equivalent to that of a student who met the CD requirement on the required high school tests.

Massachusetts allows students (including students with disabilities) to meet the graduation requirement in one of several ways: by passing the required tests or retests; by submitting an MCAS Performance Appeal; or by submitting a “competency portfolio” that demonstrates a level of performance equivalent to a student who has achieved a passing score on the MCAS tests. Since 2001, thousands of students with disabilities have met the state’s graduation requirement in at least one subject through one of these pathways. As students gain greater access to academic instruction and teachers become more proficient at documenting their students’ achievement, this number may increase further.

The alternate assessment based on alternate academic standards is intended for students with significant cognitive disabilities, and as a result, the number of those students who earn a Competency Determination will likely remain low.

For additional information, updates, materials, and participation guidelines, please visit the Department's MCAS Alternate Assessment website.

For additional information on Graduation Requirements, please visit the Department’s Graduation Requirements website.