**Rob Curtin:** Good afternoon. Everybody Rob Curtin from dese and we're here today to have a conversation about the competency determination. The number one question that always gets asked - yes, you can have access to these slides. There's not a lot of them, and I'll get into that in a second. But they are very, very similar to the board slides that were up yesterday. They're a subset of those. And those are currently posted on our website. I believe one of my colleagues is going to put a link to that, so you'll have access to those slides. I am going to go through a couple of slides, and the primary task here is for me to cover some of the highlights of the recent guidance that we have released upon released about the competency determination. I've talked to a lot of superintendents, assistant superintendents over the last couple of weeks, and we think we've covered a lot in the FAQ. I do want to highlight and clarify some things, especially with some of the questions that I've be getting. However, the biggest reason we're here today is to give you an opportunity to ask the questions you have. After I go through the slides, we will have an open Q&A session. I think those are the logistical things. Yes, you'll have access to the slides. We are being recorded, and 2 ways you can ask questions. One is in the chat right now, 2 after I'm done talking through some things. You can raise your hand using the raise hand function. Please do it that way, and I will call on you to unmute yourself and ask your question verbally.

Today I'm going to put up the statutory language that that changed as a result of question 2. I'm going to go over some of the highlights of the FAQ document that we've put out (2 rounds of FAQ in one document), and then I'll take your questions and hopefully we'll have some answers for you. If we don't, we'll know that it needs to get added to the next round of FAQ.

Here is the statutory language, and let's talk through exactly what it says. I'm going to read a little bit here, even though you can all see it because I want us to be clear on what has changed and what has not. So here is the paragraph related to the competency determination. It says that the competency determination shall be based on the academic standards and curriculum frameworks for 10th graders in the areas of mathematics, science and technology, history and social science, foreign languages and English and shall represent a determination that a particular student has demonstrated mastery of a common core of skills, competency, and knowledge in these areas. And I'll stop there to say it used to say, as measured by the assessment instruments described in Section one I, which was describing the MCAS that has been crossed out. It has been replaced by the underlined language in red that you see. So, continuing on, the skills, competencies, and knowledge in the areas by satisfactorily completing coursework that has been certified by the students district as showing mastery of the skills, competency, and knowledge contained in the state’s academic standards and curriculum frameworks in the areas measured by the MCAS High School tests described again in Section one I administered in 2023, and in any additional areas determined by the board. What the basic gist is, and what we have explained (especially in the November 6th round of FAQ), is that instead of the responsibility of awarding the competency determination sitting with the State through the MCAS or one of our appeals processes, it is now being based upon a determination that a student has satisfactorily completed coursework that has been certified by the students district. So, in essence, what has happened is the State is no longer, once the law takes effect, allowed to award the competency. Determination. That responsibility falls on to the district to tell us that these students has satisfactory, completed coursework that's been certified by showing mastery of the skills and so on and so forth. I do want to focus for a second on the areas measured by the MCAS High School test described in Section one administered in 2023. Whereas at the top it mentions math, science and technology, history and social science, foreign languages and English. The high school tests administered in 2023 were in ELA, math and science. So as of right now, a student does not need to show that they've satisfactorily completed coursework in the areas of history and social science and foreign languages in order to earn the competency determination, although that may change in the future. But as of right now, it is just ELA, math and science.

So, we have released 2 rounds of FAQ guidance. They are now in one document. Please note that there's a date with answers that have been updated. So, the most recent ones have been updated with a December 11th notation. We will continue to update these FAQs as necessary. I do think there'll be needs for additional rounds. I will say to you honestly that different issues continue to pop up, and we're trying to think about all these things as well as you are, and we've tried our best to be as comprehensive as we can right now, but undoubtedly it will require to be continuously updated. Some of you may have seen me speak or heard me speak yesterday at the Board meeting. I assume many of you have not. There are particular topics that I'd like to highlight and talk through with you to add some, perhaps some clarity or just an explanation to what's already in writing in the FAQ. You’ll notice that there's a little bit of a space here between the top 3, and then the remainder. These 3, I believe, are critically important and need to be dealt with immediately. But they're all of great importance. Okay, so 1st and most importantly, as I said yesterday at the board meeting, it's imperative that districts realize and figure out who their current 12th graders in the class of 2025 who have not earned a CD. Those students in the class of 2025 that earned a CD through the MCAS, whether that be in 2022, 2023, or 2024, up through the November retest this past fall, those students have earned the CD and are not losing the CD. I cannot say that any more clearly. You don't need to figure out how they would earn a CD. They already have it, and don't need to be part of any new process. However, there are students who have not earned a CD and will not have earned a CD up through the November retest. It is imperative that you figure out who those students are. The FAQ references an Edwin analytics report that'll tell you whether or not who those students are, because you need to figure out how those students can earn a CD in order to graduate this year. I understand and we understand that there are a lot of responsibilities here shifting to the districts. In some places this may be one or two students. In some places this may be a whole lot more than one or two students, and we understand the burden is shifting to the districts. But that's the reality that we are in right now, and I would just don't have to tell this group, I know, but please, there are students behind what's happening here amidst all the change that's happening. And it's really important that you figure out how those students might be able to earn a CD. Secondly, it's really important - we often focus on the two parts that are needed to graduate from a Massachusetts public high school, that being having the earning, the competency, determination, and meeting the local graduation requirements. There is actually a third, and that applies to students with disabilities. There is a requirement upon districts to provide FAPE, a free and appropriate public education to students with disabilities. That requirement has not changed one bit as a result of the change in the law. The concern, and I know you all will do everything that you can for students with disabilities in the district. However, you need to be careful about under the old way of doing things where MCAS served as a part of the CD, those students couldn't graduate without earning the CD through the MCAS process, it might be possible for them to do so now. For students with disabilities there is that FAPE requirement, and simply having earned the competency. Determination does not mean that that student should necessarily graduate if they have not been provided FAPE and sometimes graduation can be seen as an exit. And it's important that you understand that the requirement to provide FAPE for students with disabilities, even if they have met the competency determination. Next, we talked about our recommendations for a district CD certification process. I want to spend a fair a little bit of time here because I've gotten a ton of questions about this and most of the questions that I have gotten have run along the lines of Rob. Why do I need a separate process? I have my local graduation requirements. And if a kid meets the local graduation requirements, then they'll earn the CD, I can have just one process. I can't say this anymore. Clearly, I think it's really important that there be a separate process. The example that I gave yesterday, and some might think this is far-fetched, I think it could very well happen for students. The example I gave yesterday was, let's say, your science requirements for your local requirements include 2 years of science. And let's say, a student takes 2 years of science, and those 2 years of science are in life sciences and geology. Now, you might say that can't happen, Rob, but let's play along with me here. That might be good enough to meet your local graduation requirements, but that would not be good enough for a student to earn the competency determination, because, if you remember, back to the wording of the statute, it has to be in the tests in the subjects that were administered in 2023, which for science is biology, physics, chemistry and technology or engineering. So another example, you might have a student who takes several years of math. But let's say the highest year of math that they that they complete is algebra one. That student might have taken 4 years of math, and that might meet your local requirement, but that would not be good enough for the competency determination because it references the 10th grade standards which and which includes algebra 1 and geometry. These are recommendations that might change in the future. We don't have the authority in an FAQ to require it, but I would strongly suggest, for the reasons that I have discussed, that you work with your governing body to establish a certification process that is aligned to the wording of the statute that is publicly available to both students, families, stakeholders and that is translated in multiple languages. The other reason for this, and this is in particular, I didn't necessarily say this yesterday, but I will say it to you as superintendents, charter school leaders. There have been kids that have not been able to earn a diploma because of the competency determination. And we have had that burden on us. Right? Those are kids that have met that have earned a certificate of attainment, right? Because they've met your local graduation requirements. But they haven't met the competency determination, and your fallback has always been a state requirement there. That's no longer the case. There may be kids that you are not awarding a diploma to because they haven't met the requirements as laid out in the new statute for a competency determination. My suggestion, my belief, although again, I know we’re not requiring this right now, is that you're going to want to have a policy to fall back on one that's in writing and one that has been approved by a governing body. Again, I understand. That it may not be a requirement right now, but I would strongly suggest that you undertake this process within your district and governing body. Okay, so those are 3, I believe, of the most important ones, though the others that I think are really that are important. Also, that I just want to touch on a minute before we go to Q and A. Does the what happened with question 2 have an impact on the district's ability to set local graduation requirements? Absolutely not. The district can still set its own local graduation requirements. And as a matter of fact, the CD only really goes through grade 10. I think our expectation would be that a district has graduation requirements beyond just the competency determination, because we would hope that it would cover the entire gamut of high school. Is the use of MCAS achievement as a local graduation requirement allowed? The answer to that is also, yes, okay. The MCAS, the local graduation requirements and setting those local graduation requirements are at the sole discretion of the school district. If a district wanted to have a qualifying score on the MCAS be part of the local graduation requirements you are, that is, at your discretion to do so. It cannot be part of the competency determination. But it can be part again of this with their separate processes as part of the local graduation requirements. The next one is one that I've gotten a lot of questions on, and that is the applicability of this law to former students who have not earned a competency determination under the old law. And I want to speak to this and be really clear, because I've talked to a lot of superintendents about this, and perhaps we weren't as clear as we needed to be in in our guidance. Okay, one of the roles that the Department has played in the past for many, many years is to allow former students a path to earn a CD through the MCAS. Whether that be former students, whether that be our adult learners. We cannot offer that path any longer. So, districts need to have a process to allow former students and adult learners to earn a CD in a way that's aligned with the new statute. So, the answer is, yes, it is applicable to former students who have not earned a competency determination. This is something that we've done for a long time, but we cannot award a CD any longer in the ways that we have. We've gotten a lot of questions about the future of MCAS tests, retests, and performance appeals. As far as retests go, in 2025, we are going to continue to offer retests. This is, people may not realize this, but there are students who take the retest for scholarship purposes, in other words, to improve their score for a scholarship. So, the need for a retest still exists, and we will continue to offer it. It's not necessary for a lot of students to take it for sure, but we will continue to offer it, and we will evaluate the need to continue to offer it with the same frequency that we have in the past. If districts are using an MCAS a qualifying score on the MCAS as part of a local graduation requirement, then I would think that students need to be afforded the opportunity to take the MCAS, and that would certainly go into our decision and our calculus around how frequently we're offering retests. As far as performance appeals, we will continue to adjudicate appeals up through the effective date of the law. We believe the effective date of the law will be January 3rd or 4.th It's 30 days after the certification, but after the effective date of the law we will no longer be adjudicating. Performance appeals. Those performance appeals are akin to the department awarding a competency determination aligned to an MCAS standard and we will no longer be doing that because it is not aligned with the new law. I have gotten a lot of questions about MCAS participation requirements and how we're using the accountability, the data in accountability. Nothing with the new law is changing regarding the MCAS participation requirements. MCAS participation is required by State and Federal law. Students need to participate in the assessment, and nothing is changing there. What is changing is perhaps around the whether students need to take retests, and they certainly don't need to take retests like they have in the past, but in terms of an initial and participating for the 1st time in MCAS none of those requirements have changed. And as far as the use of the data, whether that be in the accountability system or otherwise. Nothing has changed there as well. We will be using the results from the high school assessments in the accountability system, like we have in the past. Along the same lines, we've gotten a lot of questions about whether or not whether this has any impact on the seal of biliteracy or scholarship programs like the Koplik or the John and Abigail Adams scholarship. The answer is it has no impact. Again, that's a use of the data and has nothing to do with the competency determination. We will continue to use the data that we get from students participating in the MCAS to make determinations about the seal of biliteracy and scholarship programs. Those are the high-level things that I wanted to cover. And I know that we have a lot of questions coming in, so I appreciate everybody bearing with me to at least cover those things. I hope that I've added some clarity there for you.

If you give me one second, I'm actually going to stop the share and I'm going to open up the chat and go through the questions. I'm going to go through the chat questions and then I'm going to go through the and then I'll open it up for people that want to ask questions verbally. Perhaps I'm not having explained things as well on your chat. So happy to add some clarification there. And for those, when I do open that up you will use the raise hand function.

First question is, can you please explain why the class of 2025 cannot earn a CD. By attaining the required score on a spring. MCAS. In the past we have used this for students who have transferred from private schools as the reason why students cannot earn in the class of 2025 cannot earn a CD through the MCAS is because the law has changed pretty simply. As of early January, the law does not allow students to earn a competency determination through MCAS any longer.

Now, a high school principal is wondering the purpose of offering MCAS bio, moving forward. So, the answer here is you know, it's one of the assessments that was offered in the spring of 2023, and the law is clear that students that's a subject that people want to, that people can earn the CD in terms of MCAS participation. It's one of the tests that we have created and will continue to offer as a way for people to fulfill the science participation requirement.

If a student took the June science MCAS and did not pass, are they required, encouraged, prohibited, from taking the February retest, and they did not pass. If the student did not pass the June science, MCAS. They are not prohibited. I don't believe I don't think there's any need for them to take the science, MCAS, because they can't do it. They cannot earn a CD. By taking the upcoming February retest. I want to say that as clearly as I can, we will not award any more competency determinations through the use of MCAS.

How does the district requirement to accommodate former students who have not earned a CD. And are currently not enrolled square with homeschooled students at the High School level. So, there's a lot of complexity here. But the point is this, if district, if students come back to you and say I met all the local requirements, and the reason I didn't get a promo was because I did not earn the competency determination, those students need to be afforded a path to be able under the new law, so they would not be, it would not be a retroactive graduate. They would still be a 2025 graduate. But under the new law, their coursework might have satisfactorily demonstrated the mastery and the skills, and so on and so forth. This is a function that we used to play. I don't. I think it was not very well known for our adult learners and former students. They had an opportunity to earn the competency determination. So, the that was a function that we played okay. And now districts are going to be able to are going to have to be able to offer afford students a path to the competency determination under the new law.

If MCAS, if participation rates in MCAS drop significantly, which seems like a real possibility. How will DESE respond? So, I've gotten a lot of this question, right? The kids aren't going to take the MCAS. I want to say this. I understand what you're all saying, and obviously, you know, understand where you're thinking that I don't have evidence of that yet. So, I'm not going to as a matter of fact, you know, we had 11,000 kids show up for the November retest right the day after the law passed and if we need to adjust the way we think about accountability, we might consider that, although I will tell you, the 95% participation requirement is a federal requirement. So I don't think there's a heck of a lot we can do about it, but we would certainly see what happens. I prefer to see what happens and believe in students and coming to school, and they're going to come to school that day, and they're going to take the test like they would take any other assessment. But we will certainly have to wait. Wait and see what happens, I just don't know. I can't predict that right now.

Is the course load that districts will need to certify for CD. The same courses that would have been prerequisites for the MCAS. Specifically, are we certifying biology, physics? 2 years of Ela and Math? Or are we being asked to certify courses through the 12th grade. So, this is an interesting question, one that leads me to bring up a good point here, and that is, you're not certifying through the 12th grade for sure, because the statute is through. Says something about the 10th grade. Okay? But also, importantly, here is, it doesn't say courses. I do want to bring everybody that point right? It's kind of one of the interesting things about this. It says coursework. How that coursework has satisfactorily demonstrated mastery. So it doesn't. This is where the district policy is going to come into place. And yes, it's going to look different across the board for all of you. And that's just the world we're that we're living in now. Okay. But this is why it's important. I really. And again, I know we're not requiring it. But this is why it's really important, I think, for everybody to put a policy on paper. Have it be voted on so that it's understood what the requirement is around the competency determination for students and families.

Will DESE assist with model CD certification process languages for districts to start from. So, this is a good question. I think there's a possibility of that moving forward, however, for the most important thing right now, which is the class of 2025. I don't believe that's something that will be prepared for you in time for you to deal with those students. And I understand that you know that might not sound great. But there is an element of time here, and there's an element of if there might be kids like literally, that you need to put into a course next semester right in in coming up and decide whether or not they have. If they haven't met those standards, and we certainly aren't going to have a district certification process there. The other thing is frankly for us to consider is, you know, and we just haven't done this yet. But the law pretty much shifts this to a local determination, and it might be that we put out something as an example, but I don't know how much further we would go in that in terms of recommended or anything along those lines.

So let me clarify. There's a question here about what I said about the MCAS as a local graduation requirement. Again, this is 2 separate processes, the competency determination and your local graduation requirements. They are not the same thing. What we said is, you cannot use, we don't believe you can use the MCAS as part of the competency determination. The statute is pretty clear there, right? It literally struck out assessment. What we've said in the in the in the in the FAQ is the local graduation. Requirements are at the sole discretion of your district and are separate and apart from that statute. And we've gotten the question about whether a qualifying score on the MCAS could be used as a part of the local graduation side. Okay, want to be really clear there, and the answer to that is, yes.

Will there be any changes to MCAS alt. No, we will continue to offer the MCAS Alt to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

I'd like to advocate for DESE to continue offering robust, retest opportunities. That's certainly part of our thinking. So, we will continue to do that.

Will EPPs be a thing moving forward? And clarification for students with on EPPs is a great question. If you would like to have a locally administered Epp as a condition of your graduation, that is again at your discretion. However, the state mandated EPP is a path to the competency determination through basically a state process. And so those EPP, so the EPP process, in effect, no longer exists.

So, there's a question here about students with significant cognitive disabilities. Okay? And this is sort of what I was getting at a little bit when I talked about students with disabilities. Okay, we, you know, there were students with significant cognitive disabilities that were unable to earn the competency determination when we were using the MCAS and it's possible, hopefully not, but it's possible just to say it, that there would be students with significant cognitive disabilities that will not be able to earn the CD under a new district certification process. That's certainly possible. And it's a role that we played that is. Now you're playing. Frankly, okay, I've gotten questions about whether simply meeting the conditions of the IEP can earn certificates, students a competency determination. And the answer to that is, if the language in the IEP aligns with the new statute, then yes, but if it is simply about meeting life skills or meeting transition skills that does not align with the language in the statute, as it relates to the assess, the standards and curriculum frameworks related to the 10th grade tests.

The February retake is still happening. But again, not for students that are attempting to earn a CD. Because we cannot again award a CD.

The former student explanation is confusing. So former students can take whatever assessment makes up a CD or no. Again, this is not about an assessment. Okay, this is students who might have met your local requirements. But the reason they couldn't get a diploma for you is because they hadn't earned their CD right. In other words, they hadn't earned a CD, through the MCAS prior. Those students in theory, could come back to you and say, the new law allows you to look at the coursework that I did back in whatever year and award a CD. So that whatever your District certification process is, it needs to account for the fact that this might be students in previous classes, that the only reason they didn't graduate was because of the they didn't earn a CD.

Will there be any adjustments to the qualifying for the seal by literacy? No,

**Lori Gallivan:** Thank you. So I just want to excuse me. Touch on something you just said that essentially, basically, the Epp process through dese is going away. That's correct date of the law as well. Right? So what about the kids that are on our CD list right now, that say, need an Epp for English qualified, you know, pre qualified. But need an Epp, can we get those done before the law goes into place for those kids?

**Rob Curtin:** Yeah. So if they have not earned the competency determination right now, students that were on an Epp have not earned the competency determination until they completed the Epp right? So basically in place of that Epp process, and maybe it's the same process, right? Maybe you can. Maybe the completion, whatever the terms were of the Epp. But the Epp was usually forward, looking right about which courses somebody needed to take, about which assessment somebody needed to complete. This is going back and looking at coursework. The new certification process is looking at where their coursework was met to demonstrate competency on the high school tests. So you can. The Epp is, you know, you could let it go. And and if that's going to be your district process, but I think that's beyond the Epp is what is beyond what the new law says needs to be done.

**Anne McKenzie**: Rob. Hey, Rob? Sorry about that. I if it's okay, I have a few. I'll try to just fire through them. So I think if I'm not mistaken that the CD requirement associated with MCAS began the class of 2,003, anybody from the class of 2,003 onwards. That approaches Hopkins Academy and says, reason I didn't get a diploma was because of the MCAS is there which you probably already pointed this out to me. Does the State have a comprehensive list of all those students who did not meet CD. Since 2003 by district? So one, I could check that. What they're telling me is accurate, and we'd also do our own transcript check. One. You nodded your head. That yes, since 2,003 wondering if there's a comprehensive list and then afford a former student a path to CD, so I'm trying to work out what that actually means in practice. So I'm certainly not going to enroll the 25 year old in my geometry class. I'm assuming that I could hand them a final exam and figure out a way to have it proctored. I'm assuming I could put them in a keystone course trying to figure out who pays for that. I'm just thinking out loud of the things that are coming up for me right now that you might have ideas about.

**Rob Curtin**: I think it can be a little more simple than that, Annie, right? And instead of affording them a path right could be as simple as going back and looking at their coursework. I'm not saying you have to do anything proactively. You could have somebody in the class of 2,019 that maybe you have belief that they passed a certain class and therefore completed coursework that demonstrates that mastery. I'm not saying you have to re-enroll a kid in school.

**Anne McKenzie**: Even if I would have to make sure then, that the policy that the school committee passed because some of those courses might be different if I'm talking. That somebody showed.

**Rob Curtin**: Yeah, you're gonna have to. That's for sure. Yeah, you're going to there's some work there that's going to have to be done for sure.

**Anne McKenzie**: You're 2 different things, right? So. But I see what you're saying. That is much simpler. So thank you for that. But it's certainly in my policy would want to make sure there was some sort of caveat, for if required, those courses previously. And can I assume that for a home school student now, because homeschool. I just approved the plan, and once the plans approved, I've said you've got the right curriculum, that's it. They don't have to do anything but that right? I mean, how how does it work for homeschool?

**Rob Curtin:** Yeah. So yeah, so they if you're awarding a diploma, if you want to award the competency determination to anyone. This is not whether this is, I think, what I'm saying is this is not whoever you you're going to be awarding the competency determination. Right? You're going to be certifying that that's happened. It's the same for everybody, basically. And have they completed the coursework that is aligned to the 10th grade high school test to be that demonstrates that they've satisfactorily completed that coursework. I'm not trying to oversimplify it. But basically, anybody from here on. In that you give a diploma to has had has to meet the new language of the law that hasn't already earned a CD. I guess.

**Anne McKenzie:** Thank you. Yeah, thank you.

**Beth Anderson Phoenix She/Her/Ella:** Thanks, Rob, and it's just one more on the strain that you were answering before about CD. Versus graduation requirements. So just for my just for understanding. If a student met the conditions of the CD.

**Rob Curtin:** Yep.

**Beth Anderson Phoenix She/Her/Ella:** But the district wanted to keep a school a certain score for the MCAS exam. Right? As a graduation requirement.

**Rob Curtin:** Yes.

**Beth Anderson Phoenix She/Her/Ella:** With the student. The student would not graduate from that district, but could potentially transfer and graduate from another district, or just try. No, I know that those things should be coherent with one another, but I'm just. I'm just.

**Rob Curtin:** Yeah, I mean, I think that's a possibility. But I would say this, Beth, the graduation requirements across the 340 districts that have high schools right now vary greatly. So I would think that's actually a possibility now. But it's and I don't think that's changed.

**Beth Anderson Phoenix She/Her/Ella:** Okay. Thank you.

**Sarah Stuntz**: I'm good. Thank you so much. I just want to make sure when we're talking about performance appeals that that is the same thing as the portfolio, and so those are one in the same. So, there is no more portfolio submission that will even be possible.

**Rob Curtin**: Yeah, all the things that basically, you know, rolled up to us, awarding the competency determination are not happening anymore.

**Sarah Stuntz**: Gone. Okay, great, thank you. And that's effective. Now, or is there time.

**Rob Curtin**: Yeah, well, we the you know, I'm going to hesitate a little bit here. Our understanding is that the effective date of the law is going to be January 4th so we're gonna adjudicate whatever we have before then. But you know, after that we will not be adjudicating any more appeals.

**Sarah Stuntz**: Okay. Thank you.

**Kim Dickson**: Sorry. In addition to all my 1 million questions that I put in the chat. I do have a junior who came to us from like Spain? Does he have to take the test at least once in order to do anything? Or can I look at his coursework or offer coursework in one of the 2023 standards to push him through.

**Rob Curtin**: Yeah. So our participation requirements have not changed. And I believe if it's an 11th grader, I believe the answer to that is, yes, they need to participate. But it's not it's not related to the competency determination any longer. They need to participate in the test.

**Kim Dickson**: Thank you.

**Ferny Reyes:** Yeah. Just have a quick question about sort of like, you know, previously, obviously, the State handled. CD, like for students that we determine the CD. For is there like a mechanism reporting mechanism reporting mechanism that we're going to have to submit to? Or, yeah, just because.

**Rob Curtin:** That's a great question, and one that'll probably go in the next round because I've gotten a little bit. So basically, here's what it is by telling me that the student graduated going forward right? If you tell me the student has graduated, you're telling me that they earn the competency determination because they need to earn the competency determination and meet your local requirements. If you tell me they got a certificate of attainment you're telling me they met your local requirements, but didn't meet the competency determination requirements. And if they're still enrolled, you're telling me that they might have done one or the other. But they're still with you.

**Ferny Reyes**: Great. Thank you.

**Rob Curtin**: Now, I want to be clear about something. I want to reserve the right to collect more information about this whole thing as we move forward. But right now, that's the mechanism that we're using. I don't see any other hands up. So I'm going to run through a couple more questions here. There's a lot not sure if we're going to get through all of them. But I'm gonna there's a couple can a family opt out opt a student out of MCAS at the high school level. Now. okay, this is not something that's changed. As a result of question 2. There is no opt into the MCAS, and there is no opt out of the MCAS. The students are required to take it. There's no such thing as opting out of the MCAS.

Can coursework from other districts be locally certified if they cover similar content? So, this is an interesting one. I would say that the answer is, that's a local determination, I would say. The answer is probably yes, right, but you'd have to figure out a way to be able to confirm that which could be challenging. But again, it needs to be aligned to the standards and curriculum frameworks in those assessments, and but I think that certainly, if you can, if there's a way to confirm that, and you can certify, and you can certify the coursework, I think could be hard, but I think it could be possible.

Can locals waive the CD requirement for the current seniors? No. I hadn't been asked that one before, but that's unequivocally. No, the CD is a requirement to graduate from high school, so you need to award the CD. If you're going to award a diploma.

Can you discuss CD in relation to both current and past students who took the MCAS alt, yeah. I mean the kids that took the MCAS Alt. You know they. And if those students don't have the CD. The MCAS alt was not a way to earn the CD. Because it was below by definition is below. It is below grade, standard grade level, right? That's being covered in the Alt. Those students are part of that district certification path that I talked about like they're just like everybody else. In order to get the competency determination, they need to have coursework that you can certify demonstrates competencies in the high school test from 2023

With the law changing has DESE considered pushing back the testing window. We have not. It's something we can continue to evaluate. But it's not something that we've had the time to think about yet.

Do former students have to meet only Ela Math and science? Or does it include foreign language, history, and social science? They only need to do English math and science, because again, it's tied to right now the tests that were administered in 2023, which is English math and science.

Can we use MCAS as diagnostic tool to identify students for remediation. Sure, again, that falls into the use. There's no reason why you can't still use it in in that regard.

Are we certifying graduates through a digital process. For right now, if you tell me that they've graduated, that means that you are certifying that they've earned the competency determination.

Is there a deadline for the local CD. Requirement to be approved by school committee and submitted to dese. So right now, we're not actually requiring that you submit it to us, I will say I think it's at least a possibility in the future that we will be requiring that. But right now we're not right now. It's a recommendation. Again, it's good to have everything in writing. It's good to have a policy. I also think it could serve as some cover for all of you, right? Like, if there's reasons why that you're not awarding the competency determination to some students, you're going to want to have a policy in place to be able to point back to

How does a district quote unquote, certify that passing specific coursework shows mastery? This is like the you know the big question right now. This is on you. Unfortunately, and there may be a time when we define our board define some of the terms in here. But right now that is a local decision, and how they certify that the student has completed satisfactory, completed the coursework that demonstrates mastery

Given the incredibly poor timing of this, can the State waive the CD requirement this year? The answer to that is, no. We can't waive laws. Regulations can be waived. If there's a provision in the regulations, laws cannot be waived. This is a law

Will the parent letter for those students taking the MCAS all be updated? So this is a good question. We are going through the process right. Now, I'd ask you to be patient. We're trying to do this as quickly as possible is updating all of our documentation updating everything on the website. There's a tremendous amount of work that has to be done. We're trying to do it as quickly as possible.

To be clear, a local grad requirement can be, MCAS related. But the local CD requirement cannot rely on MCAS. That's a perfect way of saying it. That's absolutely correct.

If the district requires a passing grade on the MCAS. Isn't that a violation of the new law, or invite legal challenges? You know that's a question for your attorneys, for sure, but the law is clear, it cannot be part of the competency, determination, requirement, local graduation requirements are at the discretion of the local school district

Will DESE be approving new CD plans as of right now. No, reserve the right that could change

The language now states mastery of the skills, competencies, knowledge. How does DESE define mastery. I'm reading this question for this last sentence. I find this to be very different term than meeting expectations. I would agree with you. That is a that is certainly different. The standard to earn a competency. Determination is different. It's just different now than it was based upon the qualifying score in the MCAS

Thought you said a district could still choose to use MCAS CD. Local discretion. I did say that for not for the competency determination, though, for the local graduation requirements. Like, I'm trying to be as clear as I can here on these 2 processes. You can do it on the local side. You cannot do it on the CD side.

For students who have not passed the options have not passed the MCAS. What's the options for the school? It's what we've talked about this district certification process that you are need to adopt

For students who have not received diplomas due to not passing MCAS as district now have to offer courses. This is kind of I was responding to Andy's. I don't believe that's the case. If you have access to the coursework that can demonstrate what you need to demonstrate, then I don't believe you have to offer courses. But if you choose to re-enroll a student or an adult program, for example, I don't think there's that's there's nothing that says that can't happen. But I don't think it's a requirement at all

For alternative high school students serving come from a wide range of high school settings, does transcript credit from other high schools verify successful completion of CD. Requirement. This is a tough one. As I said before, I think you need to be able to. If you're awarding the CD and you're awarding a diploma in this new world. You need to be able to attest that the student has satisfactory, completed coursework relative to the high school test from 2023. That's the standard. And unfortunately, I guess, depending on your perspective. Unfortunately, you know, that's a local decision at this point.

Okay, we got a lot of the questions. I haven't gotten to all of them. A lot of them are the same, but we will look at them. We will have them all, and go on a and offer another round of FAQ for ones that we haven't previously addressed

We are coming up on 4 o'clock. I want to thank you all for the time I want to thank. I've talked to a lot of you already. I've texted with a lot of you already. Most people know how to get in touch with me. If you don't, somebody knows how to get in touch with me or email me, what have you please reach out. We're trying to be as responsive as we can. I understand the burden of responsibility here is shifted greatly, and want to try to assist you through that process as best we can. So be, being 4 o'clock. Here I am going to. We will take all the questions, but I thank you very much for your time, and if there's ways we can help, of course, please feel free to reach out.