

**MCAS-Alt Back-to-School Update**

**September 2024**

This newsletter is published by DESE to provide Massachusetts educators with information, guidance, and support as they teach students with significant cognitive disabilities and conduct the MCAS Alternate Assessment (the MCAS-Alt).

This back-to-school update includes some important announcements and reminders for administering the MCAS-Alt to students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.

1. **Fall 2024 Training Opportunities Are Now Posted**

Educators administering the MCAS-Alt and administrators overseeing the MCAS-Alt test administration should review and attend necessary virtual trainings. Descriptions of each training and registration information is located on the [MCAS-Alt Fall Training Flyer](https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/training-flyer.pdf).

1. **Participation Criteria for the MCAS-Alt**

School staff will **no longer** be required to upload the completed [Alternate Assessment Participation Tool](https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/essa/participation-tool.pdf) to the Security Portal. However, schools must retain a copy of the Alternate Assessment Participation Tool to ensure that IEP teams are correctly designating only eligible students to the alternate assessment ([SE 5](https://www.doe.mass.edu/psm/resources/tfm-toolkit.docx)).

1. **Grade 8 Civics Domain Assessment**

Students in grade 8 that are designated for the MCAS-Alt must complete the Civics domain assessment this year. The required components of the Civics domain alternate assessment are described on pages 28–30 in the [2025 Educator’s Manual for MCAS-Alt](https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/edmanual.docx).

1. **Reminders for the 2025 MCAS-Alt**

 MCAS-Alt submission date: **Friday, March 28, 2025**

* See the **recommended timeline** on page 2 of the [2025 Educator’s Manual for MCAS-Alt](https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/edmanual.docx) for a list of important dates projected for the MCAS-Alt in the coming school year.
* The updated **Fall 2024 Alternate Academic Achievement Standards to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks (The Resource Guides**) are [available](https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html).
* The [**MCAS-Alt Skills Survey**](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/skills-survey.docx) is a required component of the MCAS-Alt.
1. **Apply to Become an MCAS-Alt Training Specialist**

**DESE is looking for MCAS-Alt training specialists for the 2024**–**2025 school year. If you’re interested in supporting and guiding other educators to correctly administer the MCAS-Alt and would like to assume a higher-profile role, please complete the** [application](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/24MCASALTTSNEWAP) **(available now through October 11). This volunteer position will require approximately 3–5 full days either out of your school (review sessions) or in virtual meetings (training, review sessions, and orientation).**

**Please note: Applicants currently employed by a district will require an administrator to approve their application before submission.**

1. **MCAS-Alt Forms and Graphs**

The [**MCAS-Alt Forms and Graphs**](https://profile.measuredprogress.org/MCAS-Alt/login.aspx) application used by educators to complete the MCAS-Alt will be available in mid-September. Educators must register for a new account for the 2024–2025 school year.

**Thank you for your attention to this important information.**

Published bi-monthly during the school year by the [Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt).

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