

# MCAS-Alt

Same Standards • High Expectations for ALL Students



Massachusetts Department of  
ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY  
EDUCATION

**January 2010**  
Volume 7, Issue 4  
[www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/)

This newsletter is published by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and will provide Massachusetts educators with information, advice, and support to teach the Massachusetts learning standards to students with significant disabilities, and to conduct the MCAS Alternate Assessment.

**"It is not enough to take steps which may some day lead to a goal; each step must be itself a goal and a step likewise."**

*--Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*

## In This Issue

- **What's New**
- **Reminders**
- **MCAS-Alt Timeline: *Where should you be in the process?***
- **Tip of the Month**
- **MCAS-Alt Score Appeals**
- **Administrators' Corner**

# What's New

- **MCAS-Alt Training Planned In March**

Morning and afternoon sessions will be held on the following topics:

- **Portfolios-in-Progress Review Sessions (8:30 – 11:30 a.m.)**  
Educators who are conducting the MCAS-Alt are encouraged to bring their student's portfolios and questions to a portfolio review session. Expert teachers will be available to answer questions and provide feedback on portfolio evidence.
- **Mini-Institutes: How MCAS-Alt Portfolios Are Scored (12:30 – 4:00 p.m.)**  
Teachers who attend this session will participate in a step-by-step process on how portfolios are scored and how MCAS-Alt scorers qualify to score. Participants will have an opportunity to score sample portfolio strands. Mini-institute participants are eligible to become MCAS-Alt training specialists in fall 2010.

Portfolios-in-Progress review sessions and mini-scoring institutes will be held as follows:

Tuesday, March 9 – Marlborough Best Western

Wednesday, March 10 – Taunton Holiday Inn

Thursday, March 11 – Danvers Crowne Plaza (formerly Sheraton Danvers)

Friday, March 12 – Springfield Marriott

Educators are invited to attend one or both sessions, but must register to attend each session separately. A light lunch will be provided for educators who attend both sessions. Registration can be completed online at [www.mcasservicecenter.com](http://www.mcasservicecenter.com). Click "MCAS Alternate Assessment" and then "Registration for Training." If you have questions or difficulty registering, please contact the MCAS Service Center at 800-737-5103. Informational flyers will be sent to schools in early February.

- **Obtaining Portfolio Binders and Mailing Materials**

Be sure to let your principal know the number of students in each grade who are participating in the MCAS-Alt. Between January 11 and January 22 principals are asked to order MCAS test materials online using the MCAS Enrollment Verification process. The Department will use this information to determine the number of three-ring portfolio binders, Student Identification Forms (SIF), and pre-paid mailing materials to send to schools. These materials should arrive in schools by February 22. Beginning February 23, additional materials may be ordered by calling the MCAS Service Center at 800-737-5103.

# Reminders

- **Ordering MCAS-Alt Educator's Manuals and Resource Guides**

If you have not already received a print copy of the *Resource Guide to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for Students with Disabilities* (Fall 2006 version) or the *2010 Educator's Manual for MCAS-Alt*, you may order one copy of each online at [www.mcasservicecenter.com](http://www.mcasservicecenter.com). Click "MCAS Alternate Assessment" and then "Order Manuals." Each of these publications is also available for viewing and/or downloading at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html).

- **"2010 Checking Portfolios for Completeness"**

This checklist can be used to check the completeness of each portfolio. It may be helpful to have someone use this checklist to review portfolios with you. The checklist is available at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html).

- **PowerPoint presentations** from the fall administrator and educator training sessions can be viewed at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html).

## MCAS-Alt Timeline: Where should you be in the process?

At this point in the year, you should:

- complete Strand Cover Sheets and other required forms (see the Required Forms section of the *2010 Educator's Manual for MCAS-Alt*).
- continue to collect, sort, and organize evidence for portfolios, including data charts, work samples, and, if needed, photographs and/or videos.
- label evidence as it is produced, and graph student data on a regular basis. Use Work Sample Description labels to ensure you have included all required information.
- review and apply the feedback you received during the January Portfolios-in-Progress review sessions.
- remind your principal to order MCAS-Alt materials online during the MCAS Enrollment Verification (ends January 22).

## Tip of the Month

As you review your portfolios, look closely at the measurable outcomes. Each measurable outcome should be consistent throughout the strand. Make sure that:

- the "core set" of evidence in each strand documents a single skill based on the required learning standard.
- each measurable outcome is the same on the Strand Cover Sheet and on the data chart.
- the data collected on the chart and the additional pieces of primary evidence match the measurable outcome.

## MCAS-Alt Score Appeals

An MCAS-Alt Score Appeal is the process by which the Department addresses a claim concerning perceived scoring inaccuracies for an MCAS-Alt portfolio. An MCAS-Alt Score Appeal may be filed, at the principal's discretion, any time after the electronic reporting of preliminary MCAS and MCAS-Alt results to the school in mid-June and no later than to 5:00 p.m. on Friday, July 2, 2010. **Schools must keep a photocopy of each student's portfolio at the school in order to be eligible to request an MCAS-Alt Score Appeal.**

Information on filing 2010 MCAS-Alt Score Appeals will be posted to [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/results.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/results.html) in mid-February.

## Administrators' Corner

We encourage you to:

- order MCAS-Alt materials during the Spring MCAS Enrollment Verification from January 11–22.
- check in with teachers who are conducting alternate assessments and provide support, as needed, to ensure timely completion and submission of portfolios by **April 1, 2010**.

- identify other adults in the building who can assist lead teachers in collecting evidence for portfolios.
- watch for the shipment of MCAS-Alt materials from Measured Progress that should arrive in your school by February 22.
- order additional materials, if needed, starting February 23, 2010 by contacting the MCAS Service Center at 800-737-5103 or by visiting the MCAS Service Center website at [www.mcasservicecenter.com](http://www.mcasservicecenter.com).

**We'd love to hear from you. Please [let us know](#) if there is a topic you'd like us to address in a future MCAS-Alt newsletter.**

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