

December 7, 2020

Updates to MCAS and ACCESS Testing Schedules and Participation Requirements

In September, DESE [announced](#) the initial testing schedule for MCAS and ACCESS tests for the 2020-2021 school year, including a special administration of the high school ELA and mathematics tests in January-February 2021 for students in grades 11 and 12, as well as for adults who need to earn their competency determination (CD) in one or both subjects.

At that time, we acknowledged that we would update our plans as needed. I am writing to you today to inform you that, in recognition of the scheduling and logistical challenges that schools and districts are experiencing, I have decided to adjust the schedules and expectations for MCAS high school testing and ACCESS testing as follows:

1. January-February High School MCAS ELA and Mathematics Tests

- Students in grade 11 (class of 2022) **will no longer participate in testing** during the January-February window. Testing for this class in ELA and mathematics is being postponed until later in the year.
- Students in grade 12 (class of 2021), as well as adult test-takers, **will remain eligible to participate** in one or both tests beginning in January to earn their CD. Please note that currently enrolled 12th grade students who were previously on track to graduate during the 2019-2020 school year do not need to take the tests, as they remain eligible for the [modified CD](#).
- The testing window for eligible students is extended through February 12, giving schools an additional week to complete testing. The full testing window will be January 14 through February 12, 2021.

2. ACCESS for ELLs

- The testing window for the ACCESS tests is being extended for several additional months. Schools will be able to administer the ACCESS tests at any time between **January 7 and May 20, 2021**.
- Results will be returned in late summer.
- Schools may assess students at any time during the window, at their discretion, but results for all students will be returned at the same time, regardless of when tests are administered during the window.

I appreciate the effort that schools and districts have made to prepare their facilities and students for testing. The statewide testing schedule will be updated shortly to reflect the changes indicated above, and I will provide more information in the coming weeks about testing schedules for the remainder of the school year.

Please contact the [Office of Student Assessment Services](#) with any questions. Thank you.