



## Question 2 Explained: Massachusetts' Education Standards

One of the most important things to understand when considering Question 2 this November is this: **The MCAS is just one way of assessing students, it is not an education standard in and of itself.**

There are two foundational pillars to ensure accountability in Massachusetts' public education system:

- Educational Standards (The Curriculum for How to Best Prepare Students for Success)
- Graduation Requirements (The Means to Ensure Students Have Met the Standards Before Graduation)

Voting Yes on Question 2 will eliminate the MCAS graduation requirement – but it will NOT do away with the test altogether or have ANY impact on the commonwealth's actual education standards.

### So what are Massachusetts' first in the nation education standards?

They're laid out very clearly in the [DESE Curriculum Frameworks](#).

These standards set the foundation for all education in Massachusetts. Educators develop lesson plans, classroom assessments and reporting on student progress in alignment with these curriculum frameworks and are held accountable on those activities to ensure the best education possible for students across the Commonwealth.

What's important to note: the MCAS only assesses students on the ELA, Math and one area of Science. The state standards cover so much more:

### Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks

<a href="#">English Language Arts (ELA) and Literacy</a>	<a href="#">Mathematics</a>	<a href="#">Science and Technology/Engineering</a>	<a href="#">History and Social Science</a>
<p>Sets standards for reading, writing, speaking, and listening. It emphasizes critical thinking, close reading of both literary and informational texts, and effective communication.</p> <p>The ELA framework prepares students for the literacy demands of</p>	<p>Outlines expectations for high school students to develop deep mathematical understanding and problem-solving skills.</p> <p>The mathematics framework prioritizes logical reasoning, precision, and abstract thinking, all of which are essential for advanced academic and career paths</p>	<p>Designed to develop scientific literacy and foster a deep understanding of the natural and technological world. It covers four primary disciplines:</p> <p>The framework emphasizes scientific inquiry, critical thinking, and the use of evidence to explain and predict phenomena, which</p>	<p>Equips students with a deep understanding of human history, societies, governments, and the interconnectedness of global events. It focuses on both U.S. and world history and promotes civic engagement.</p> <p>The framework fosters an understanding of historical context and encourages</p>

college, the workforce, and civic life.		is essential for careers in STEM fields.	students to be active and informed citizens.
<p>Key Components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Reading:</b> Students are expected to read a variety of texts, including classic literature, contemporary fiction, historical documents, and scientific articles. They should be able to analyze themes, structures, and meanings of texts, and use evidence from reading to support their arguments and interpretations.</li> <li>• <b>Writing:</b> Writing assignments include argumentative, informative/ explanatory, and narrative forms. The framework emphasizes the writing process—planning, drafting, revising, editing, and publishing—ensuring that students can effectively organize and communicate their ideas.</li> <li>• <b>Speaking and Listening:</b> Students should be able to engage in discussions, present ideas clearly, and listen critically to others' perspectives. This involves both formal presentations and collaborative conversations.</li> <li>• <b>Language Skills:</b> A focus is placed on grammar, vocabulary acquisition, and language mechanics to improve students' overall communication abilities.</li> </ul>	<p>Key Components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Number and Quantity:</b> Students learn about the properties of numbers, including real and complex numbers, and how they apply to real-world situations.</li> <li>• <b>Algebra:</b> High school algebra focuses on functions, equations, and inequalities. Students explore how to manipulate algebraic expressions and understand the relationships between variables.</li> <li>• <b>Geometry:</b> Geometry concepts include shapes, sizes, and the properties of space. The framework emphasizes the use of proofs and the application of geometric concepts to solve problems in both pure and applied contexts.</li> <li>• <b>Functions:</b> Understanding different types of functions (linear, quadratic, exponential, etc.) and their applications is crucial. Students learn how to represent relationships using graphs, tables, and equations.</li> <li>• <b>Statistics and Probability:</b> High school students analyze data, interpret statistical models, and learn to make informed decisions based on probability concepts.</li> </ul>	<p>Key Components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Biology:</b> Students study the characteristics and processes of living organisms, genetics, ecosystems, evolution, and biodiversity.</li> <li>• <b>Chemistry:</b> Chemistry focuses on the properties of matter, chemical reactions, atomic theory, and the role of energy in chemical systems.</li> <li>• <b>Physics:</b> Physics includes the study of forces and motion, energy, waves, electricity, and magnetism, preparing students to understand physical phenomena and apply these concepts to real-world situations.</li> <li>• <b>Technology/Engineering:</b> This includes engineering design, systems analysis, and technology's role in solving complex human problems. Students learn to apply principles from physics, chemistry, and math to create solutions and innovations.</li> </ul>	<p>Key Components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>U.S. History:</b> Students study key periods in American history, including the founding of the country, the Civil War, the Civil Rights Movement, and the development of modern U.S. society. The curriculum includes the analysis of founding documents, constitutional principles, and major events in American political, social, and cultural development.</li> <li>• <b>World History:</b> The framework covers major global civilizations and their interactions from ancient times to the present. It highlights themes such as imperialism, revolutions, global conflict, and the development of democratic institutions.</li> <li>• <b>Civics and Government:</b> A major focus is placed on civic learning, where students study the structure and function of government, the Constitution, and the role of individuals in democratic society.</li> <li>• <b>Economics:</b> Students are introduced to basic economic principles, including supply and demand, the functioning of markets, and the role of government in the economy.</li> </ul>

<u><b>Digital Literacy and Computer Science</b></u>	<u><b>Foreign Language</b></u>	<u><b>Arts</b></u>	<u><b>Physical Education</b></u>	<u><b>Vocational and Technical Education</b></u>
<p>Outlines the essential skills and knowledge students need to thrive in a digital world, integrating digital literacy and computer science into the curriculum to prepare students for future academic and career opportunities.</p> <p>The framework aims to empower students to navigate the digital landscape confidently, foster innovation and creativity, and develop the skills needed for successful participation in a technology-driven society.</p>	<p>Sets proficiency targets that align with national standards for language learning, focusing on communication, cultures, connections, comparisons, and communities.</p> <p>The foreign language framework aims to build students' proficiency in both the language and cultural understanding, fostering global competence.</p>	<p>Outlines the standards for arts education across four primary disciplines: Dance, Music, Theater, and Visual Arts. It aims to foster creativity, critical thinking, and cultural literacy among students.</p> <p>The arts framework seeks to enhance artistic expression, develop critical skills, promote collaboration, and connect arts education to students' lives and communities.</p>	<p>Establishes standards and guidelines to promote physical literacy and lifelong healthy habits among students. It emphasizes the importance of physical activity, fitness, and overall well-being.</p> <p>The framework aims to foster a positive attitude toward physical activity, promote lifelong health and fitness, and equip students with the skills and knowledge necessary to lead active and healthy lives.</p>	<p>Sets standards and competencies necessary for students to succeed in vocational and technical fields. It aims to prepare students for both immediate employment and further education in various industries.</p> <p>The framework prepares students for the demands of the modern workforce, providing the skills, knowledge, and experience necessary for successful careers in vocational and technical fields.</p>
<p>Key Components:</p> <p><b>Digital Literacy:</b> Focuses on developing critical skills for using technology effectively and responsibly. Includes understanding digital tools, online communication, information literacy, and digital citizenship.</p> <p><b>Computer Science:</b> Introduces fundamental concepts of computer science, including programming, algorithms, and data structures. Encourages problem-solving, logical reasoning, and</p>	<p>Key Components:</p> <p><b>Communication:</b> Students learn to engage in conversations, understand and interpret spoken and written language, and present information, concepts, and ideas in the target language.</p> <p><b>Cultures:</b> Language learning is integrated with the study of the cultures associated with the language. This includes understanding cultural practices, products, and perspectives.</p>	<p>Key Components:</p> <p><b>Dance:</b> Focuses on performance technique and expression, creating choreography, analyzing and critiquing performances and relating dance to other disciplines and life experiences.</p> <p><b>Music:</b> Teaches singing and playing instruments to develop technical skills, as well as composing original music pieces, analyzing music structures and evaluating performances to understand music's cultural significance.</p>	<p>Key Components:</p> <p><b>Physical Activity:</b> Regular participation in physical activities and sports. Promotes understanding of the importance of staying active for health and wellness.</p> <p><b>Fitness:</b> Focuses on developing personal fitness through aerobic activities, strength training, flexibility, and endurance. Teaches students how to set and achieve personal fitness goals.</p> <p><b>Motor Skills:</b> Develops fundamental motor skills</p>	<p>Key Components:</p> <p><b>Technical Skills:</b> Focuses on developing specific skills related to various trades and technical fields, such as manufacturing, construction, healthcare, and information technology. Emphasizes hands-on experience through lab work, simulations, and real-world applications.</p> <p><b>Academic Integration:</b> Incorporates academic subjects (e.g., mathematics, science, and English) into vocational training to ensure a well-rounded</p>

<p>computational thinking.</p> <p><b>Technology in Learning:</b> Emphasizes the use of technology to enhance learning across all subject areas. Supports collaborative projects and creative expression using digital tools.</p> <p><b>Safety and Ethics:</b> Educates students on safe online practices, privacy, and the ethical use of technology. Promotes understanding of the impact of technology on society and individual rights.</p>	<p><b>Connections:</b> The framework encourages students to use language to connect with other academic disciplines, such as history, science, and the arts.</p> <p><b>Comparisons:</b> Students are encouraged to compare linguistic and cultural aspects of the target language with their own, deepening their understanding of language and culture.</p> <p><b>Communities:</b> Language skills are meant to be applied outside the classroom in local and global communities.</p>	<p><b>Theater:</b> Develops performance skills and character portrayal, directing, playwriting and creating original scripts, as well as design for set, costumes, and lighting.</p> <p><b>Visual Arts:</b> Students learn to produce original artworks, respond to art, by analyzing and interpreting works, connect and relate visual arts to other disciplines and societal issues, and present through curating and exhibiting pieces.</p>	<p>(e.g., running, jumping, throwing). Encourages proficiency in specialized skills for specific sports.</p> <p><b>Social and Emotional Development:</b> Promotes teamwork, cooperation, and sportsmanship through group activities and team sports. Encourages positive social interactions and emotional well-being through physical education.</p> <p><b>Health Education:</b> Integrates knowledge about topics including nutrition, safety, and injury prevention. Supports understanding of how physical activity contributes to overall health.</p>	<p>education. Promotes critical thinking and problem-solving skills applicable in the workplace.</p> <p><b>Career Exploration:</b> Utilizes internships, job shadowing, and industry partnerships to understand workplace expectations and the skills required in different professions.</p> <p><b>Safety and Ethics:</b> Teaches safety protocols and ethical standards specific to each trade or profession. Promotes awareness of workplace rights and responsibilities.</p> <p><b>Certification and Credentials:</b> Prepares students for industry-recognized certifications and credentials that enhance employability and career advancement.</p>
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**OUR VIEW:** Putting so much emphasis on a single test undermines the Commonwealth's high education standards, forcing teachers to teach test-taking skills instead of infusing critical thinking and individualized learning into classrooms. The MCAS graduation requirement therefore actually *undermines* the high standards that Massachusetts is known for.

Vote Yes on Question 2 to return the focus to teaching to Massachusetts' high standards, not a high-stakes test.

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