



## Question 2 Explained: Massachusetts' Graduation Requirements

In discussing Question 2, the MCAS graduation requirement is often referred to as a statewide education standard, but it's actually just a graduation requirement. There's a difference between the two, and here's why it matters:

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 + Are Ready for Graduation)

Graduation requirements are set independently of educational standards. Voting Yes on Question 2 and eliminating the MCAS graduation requirement would have no impact on the high standards of our public education system.

### So what are Massachusetts' graduation requirements?

Two components determine graduation currently: credit requirements which are set by local school districts in line with the state's standards, and a competency determination assessed through the MCAS.

1. **Credit Requirements Set by Districts:** Officially, each local school district determines the number of credits needed to graduate. Most requirements align as follows:
  - 4 years of English
  - 3-4 years of Mathematics
  - 3-4 years of Science (often including biology, chemistry, and/or physics)
  - 3 years of History/Social Studies
  - Physical Education
  - Health Education
  - Electives, including world languages, the arts, and other areas of interest.
2. **Competency Determination through the MCAS:** In addition to meeting all local requirements, students are required to reach a minimum score on three MCAS tests in the 10th grade:
  - 470 in ELA
  - 470 in Mathematics
  - 470 in Biology or Physics

Students who do not meet these scores on the first attempt are required to retake the test multiple times before they are eligible for any appeals. This puts a student's diploma in jeopardy regardless of coursework, grades or other areas of demonstrated ability.

Voting Yes on Question 2 will not eliminate the MCAS test altogether, but simply reduce the score to one of many data points that can be used to determine competency and assess a student's likelihood for success.

Ending the MCAS graduation requirement will instead create a more balanced approach to accountability that allows other forms of student assessment like GPA, coursework and teacher feedback to determine graduation.

**OUR VIEW:** The MCAS graduation requirement gives too much power to a standardized test that can't fully measure a student's likelihood of success after graduation. The high-stakes nature causes harmful stress for students, and notoriously stacks the deck against students of color, English language learners, and those with learning disabilities.

Vote Yes on Question 2 to put an end to discriminatory, stressful high-stakes testing and allow more balanced and effective forms of assessment to determine graduation.