

"There are no secrets to success. It is the result of preparation, hard work, and learning from failure." - Colin Powell

FRCS Faculty and Students Prepare for the Start of the MCAS Season

It's that time again! March not only brings springtime but also the beginning of the MCAS season. The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) was implemented as a result of the Education Reform Law of 1993, requiring that it be designed to:

- test all public school students, including students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency
- be administered annually in selected grades;
- measure performance based on the learning standards in the *Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks*;
- report on the performance of individual students, schools, and districts; and
- serve as one basis of accountability for students, schools, and districts (for example, students must pass the grade 10 MCAS tests or retests in order to become eligible to earn a high school diploma)

In addition, the MCAS tests fulfill the requirements of the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law. NCLB requires annual assessments in reading and mathematics for students in grades 3-8 and high school. Students also must be tested annually in science in an elementary school grade, a middle school grade, and a high school (9-10) grade.

All students in grades 3 through 8 and 10 will be taking tests in English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science/Technology & Engineering, and History/Social Studies over the next three months. Limited English Proficient students also must take MEPA tests (reading, writing, speaking and listening).

Because students in testing grades are required by law to complete the MCAS, it is essential that students attend school and arrive on time, especially on testing days. There are many things you can do at home to help your child prepare for the MCAS including helping them to maintain a calm and positive attitude about the tests. Other tips include:

Supporting Your Child Throughout the Year

- Make sure your child gets enough sleep, eats properly, and gets to school on time. Regular attendance is one predictor of academic success.

- Encourage your child to read. Parents and siblings can share good books and discuss main characters to reinforce positive reading habits.
- Record important dates on your home calendar and in your child's agenda book that include testing dates.
- Set times each day for study and homework.
- Provide your child with a quiet, well-lit, comfortable space to study which includes supplies like paper, pens, pencils, calculators, rulers, a dictionary and a thesaurus.
- Check your child's homework.

Preparing for Test Day

- Make sure that your child is well rested and eats a protein rich, healthy breakfast.
- See that your child arrives at school on time.
- Comfort counts. Send a sweater if it is a cool day. Dress in layers for a warm day.
- Encourage your child to do the best work possible and to have a positive attitude.
- Encourage your child to listen/read carefully to all test directions and to ask questions if any are unclear.
- Encourage your child to check answers if time permits.
- Your child should bring a book to read in case she or he finishes early.

***Parent's PLACE, www.pplace.org*

The chart below lists our upcoming ELA testing dates. All other MCAS tests, to be administered in May and June, will be published on the website and in an upcoming *Digest*.

Good luck to all of our test-takers!

Grade	Composition	Reading Comprehension
3		April 2, 6, 8
4	March 31	April 2, 6, 8
5		April 2, 6, 8
6		April 1-2
7	March 31	April 1-2
8		April 1-2
10	March 31	April 1-2