



## Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

### MCAS 2.0 Project Management Plan

On November 17, 2015, the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (Board) voted to begin development of a next generation state assessment program, to be implemented as our state-wide assessment beginning in the 2016-2017 school year. This working paper describes the project management structure, including the various committees and workgroups that will support the development effort. Contact information is provided for key project personnel.

In project documents, the new assessment program is unofficially referred to as “MCAS 2.0”, to differentiate it from the Commonwealth’s existing Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System.

#### COMMITTEES AND WORKGROUPS

##### Board Assessment Committee

The Board Assessment Committee will oversee the project, monitor its progress, discuss recommendations from the various workgroups, and make periodic reports to the full Board. Current members of the Board Assessment Committee are: Roland Fryer (chair), Pendred Noyce (vice-chair), Paul Sagan, James Peyser, and Donald Willyard. The committee is expected to meet monthly. Meetings are open to the public. Meeting dates and minutes of past meetings will be posted on the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education webpage ([www.doe.mass.edu/boe/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/boe/)).

##### Project Management Workgroup

This is an internal working group to coordinate the various DESE, DHE, and EOE units involved in the project. It is chaired by the project’s co-directors, Deputy Commissioner Jeff Wulfson ([jwulfson@doe.mass.edu](mailto:jwulfson@doe.mass.edu)) and Acting Associate Commissioner Michol Stapel ([mstapel@doe.mass.edu](mailto:mstapel@doe.mass.edu)).

##### Project Communications Workgroup

The Project Communications Workgroup will include key DESE project staff and invited representatives from the major state education associations. The purpose of the committee is to ensure that administrators and teachers in the field are kept fully informed about the project as it moves through the planning and implementation stages. Workgroup meetings and related communications activities will be coordinated by Jass Stewart ([jstewart@doe.mass.edu](mailto:jstewart@doe.mass.edu)).

##### Procurement Management Workgroup

The Procurement Management Workgroup will provide logistical support in the procurement of a testing contractor to administer MCAS 2.0, including the development of the request for proposals and the evaluation of responses. The group will consult with the state Operational Services Division to ensure compliance with all public procurement requirements. Rob O’Donnell ([rodonnell@doe.mass.edu](mailto:rodonnell@doe.mass.edu)) will chair this group.

##### Test Administration Workgroup

This workgroup will address key issues relating to test administration, including the number and length of testing sessions; whether tests should be timed or untimed; the scheduling of testing windows; options for scoring and dissemination of results; content of score reports; and schedules for phasing in computer-based testing. Michol Stapel ([mstapel@doe.mass.edu](mailto:mstapel@doe.mass.edu)) will chair this group.

#### High School Testing Workgroup

This workgroup will address a number of policies relating to the ELA, mathematics, and science tests to be administered in grades 9-12. These include the specific tests to be offered; whether certain tests will be mandatory or optional; the sequence of tests required for the competency determination beginning with the class of 2020; and the schedule for transitioning from the current high school MCAS tests. Brooke Clenchy ([bclenchy@doe.mass.edu](mailto:bclenchy@doe.mass.edu)) will chair this group.

#### ELA and Mathematics Curriculum Frameworks Refinement Panel

The Board has directed the Department to consult with K-12 educators, curriculum specialists, and others to identify possible refinements to the Massachusetts English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics Curriculum Frameworks based on lessons learned during implementation since 2011. A public webform on the Department's website will provide an opportunity for Massachusetts stakeholders to provide input on aspects of the curriculum frameworks. Panelists will be asked to review that input to recommend any needed refinements and implications for MCAS 2.0. Jacob Foster ([jfoster@doe.mass.edu](mailto:jfoster@doe.mass.edu)) will coordinate this process.

#### MCAS Accessibility Workgroup

This workgroup will address accessibility features, test administration considerations, and accommodations, particularly as they relate to students with disabilities and English language learners. Current policies for both MCAS and PARCC will be reviewed, leading to recommendations for inclusion in MCAS 2.0. Dan Wiener ([dwiener@doe.mass.edu](mailto:dwiener@doe.mass.edu)) will chair this group.

#### Digital Learning Advisory Council

The DLAC is an existing Board advisory council established by statute (St. 2012, c.379, s.7). The DLAC will be asked to monitor districts' progress toward technological readiness for computer-based testing, and to identify ways in which the state can assist in those efforts. DLAC meetings are open to the public and are posted on the DLAC's webpage ([www.doe.mass.edu/boe/sac/dlac/default.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/boe/sac/dlac/default.html)). Ken Klau ([kklau@doe.mass.edu](mailto:kklau@doe.mass.edu)) coordinates the DLAC's activities.

#### Test Content Review Panels

Panels of classroom educators and curriculum specialists will be convened to assist the Department in reviewing test items for grade appropriateness and alignment to the curriculum frameworks. There will be separate panels for each grade and subject area. These panels are expected to begin work in summer 2016, after the selection of a testing contractor. More information will be provided at that time.

#### MCAS Technical Advisory Committee

The MCAS Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) is an existing group of outside assessment experts who continually review the MCAS test designs to ensure that the results are valid. The design of the MCAS 2.0 assessment will be subject to the same level of scrutiny by the TAC. Michol Stapel ([mstapel@doe.mass.edu](mailto:mstapel@doe.mass.edu)) chairs the TAC.

#### School and District Accountability and Assistance Advisory Council

The AAAC is an existing Board advisory council established by statute (G.L. c.15, s.1G). The AAAC will be asked to review and advise on the transition to MCAS 2.0 results in the state's school and district accountability system. AAAC meetings are open to the public and are posted on the AAAC's webpage ([www.doe.mass.edu/boe/sac/sda/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/boe/sac/sda/)). Matt Pakos ([mpakos@doe.mass.edu](mailto:mpakos@doe.mass.edu)) is the liaison between the MCAS 2.0 project staff and the AAAC.

#### History and Social Science

Following the recommendations of the recently convened Working Group on Civic Learning and Engagement, the Board has directed the Department to update the 2003 Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Framework, and

to add a history and social science component to the MCAS assessment. A proposed timetable for these activities will be presented to the Board this winter. The history and social science tests will not be included in the initial MCAS 2.0 roll-out in spring 2017, but will follow the updating of the framework. A workgroup will be established at a later date to review and evaluate options for these tests. Dave Buchanan ([dbuchanan@doe.mass.edu](mailto:dbuchanan@doe.mass.edu)) will be coordinating the framework review and update process.

#### PARCC Consortium

Massachusetts will remain a member of the multi-state PARCC consortium, in order to have continued access to test items developed by the consortium and to allow for cross-state comparisons of student performance. The consortium's governing board currently consists of the chief state school officers of the member states. Bill Bell ([wbell@doe.mass.edu](mailto:wbell@doe.mass.edu)) will coordinate staff support to the Commissioner on matters relating to consortium governance.

### **EDUCATOR PARTICIPATION**

The MCAS 2.0 project needs the advice and counsel of our public school teachers and school administrators. In particular, we are currently looking for volunteers to participate on the Test Administration workgroup; the High School Testing workgroup; the MCAS Accessibility workgroup; and the ELA and Mathematics Curriculum Frameworks review panels. Interested educators should send an email to [MCAS2.0@doe.mass.edu](mailto:MCAS2.0@doe.mass.edu) with your contact information; the workgroup you are interested in; your experience and current employment; and any other relevant information. We are especially interested in volunteers who are familiar with the state's curriculum frameworks and have expertise in best practices for classroom instruction and large-scale assessment.

Please note that the Test Administration workgroup and the High School Testing workgroup will both have a number of meetings in late January and February to support the development of the testing contract request for proposals. Educators interested in serving on either of these groups should submit their applications no later than January 20. Applications for the MCAS Accessibility workgroup and the Curriculum Frameworks review panels may be submitted through February 1.

Higher education faculty will also be involved in many of the workgroups and review panels. Sue Lane ([slane@bhe.mass.edu](mailto:slane@bhe.mass.edu)) in the Department of Higher Education will coordinate their participation.

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

All members of the public are invited to attend the Board Assessment Committee monthly meetings. These meetings will include reports from all of the workgroups and advisory committees, as well as discussion of the major test design decisions. We will also shortly be creating an MCAS 2.0 project webpage on the DESE website, where project documents and related informational materials will be posted.

Although the workgroups will be staffed primarily by educators, there will be some opportunity for parents and members of other stakeholder groups to participate in those meetings. If you have a particular interest in joining any of the committees or workgroups, please send an email to [MCAS2.0@doe.mass.edu](mailto:MCAS2.0@doe.mass.edu). Please include your contact information, your background and/or organizational affiliation, the committee or workgroup you are interested in, and any other relevant information.

Finally, we will be soliciting student input through the State Student Advisory Council.

### **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

We welcome your comments and questions. Please feel free to contact any of the Department staff listed above. General inquiries can also be sent to [MCAS2.0@doe.mass.edu](mailto:MCAS2.0@doe.mass.edu).

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