



David P. Driscoll
Commissioner of Education

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Education

350 Main Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148-5023

Telephone: (781) 338-3000
TTY: N.E.T. Relay 1-800-439-2370

File
Hay
Armon

October 19, 2006

Dear Parents/Guardians of Students in the Class of 2010:

As you are aware, Massachusetts high school students are required to pass MCAS tests in English Language Arts and Mathematics in order to graduate from high school. In addition, beginning with the class of 2010, students will also have to meet an additional graduation requirement in Science and Technology/Engineering (STE). I am writing this letter to alert you of this new STE requirement.

The Massachusetts Education Reform Law of 1993 states that students must pass statewide tests in five academic areas in order to graduate from high school. Our goal is to phase these tests in over time. Last year, the Massachusetts Board of Education voted to add science and technology/engineering to the graduation requirement. To meet this requirement, **all students beginning with the class of 2010 will be required to pass an MCAS Science or Technology/Engineering (STE) test.**

If your child is in grade 9 and is currently taking a course corresponding to one of the four tests listed below, he or she will be eligible to take one of the following Science and Technology/Engineering MCAS tests in June 2007:

- Biology
- Chemistry
- Introductory Physics
- Technology/Engineering

A student who passes one of these tests will have met the state graduation requirement in science and technology/engineering and will not be required to participate in any further MCAS STE tests. The minimum passing score is 220, which is at the *Needs Improvement* performance level. If your child does not take and pass an MCAS Science and Technology/Engineering test in grade 9, he or she will be required to take an MCAS STE test in grade 10. **The Department of Education strongly encourages students to take advantage of the opportunity to take an STE test in grade 9 if they are enrolled in one of the four STE courses that corresponds with the tests.** However, parents/guardians, in consultation with teachers, guidance counselors, and principals, have the option to exclude a grade 9 student from the spring 2007 STE testing opportunity. The Department will develop a process to assist schools in documenting this decision.

If you have additional questions about the new state graduation requirements, please contact your child's school guidance counselor or principal. For more complete, technical information about high school science and technology/engineering MCAS testing, you may read a memo that was sent to schools and districts in the Commissioner's Update in July 2006 at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/2006/news/0725hsscienctest.html.

Sincerely,

David P. Driscoll
Commissioner of Education