



english for **NEW
BOSTONIANS**

ESOL for Parents and Caregivers Curriculum: Companion Guide for Parents of Students in Grades 7-12

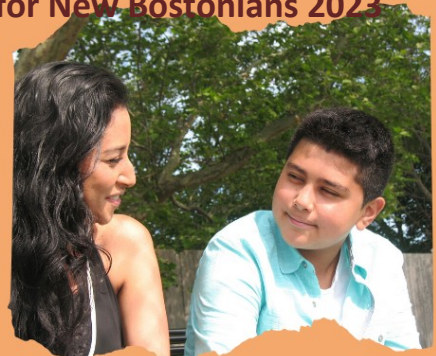
Unit 2: MCAS

Activities:

- #1: MCAS Overview for High School
- #2: How Can High School Parents Help? (b)
- #3: What is an Educational Proficiency Plan?

Developed by Susan Klaw

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About English for New Bostonians

English for New Bostonians (ENB) invests in the future of our region by fostering a high-quality ESOL system that prepares immigrants to pursue their educational, economic and civic aspirations. Through grant making, training teachers, and building public awareness, ENB expands the number of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) seats, improves program quality across agencies, customizes curricula to diverse subpopulations, and leverages private and public resources. Founded in 2001 by the Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement (MOIA), immigrant leaders, and local foundations, ENB now involves several city departments, approximately 20 public and private funders, and numerous community organizations.

About the ESOL for Parents and Caregivers Initiative

Through ESOL for Parents and Caregivers, ENB guides ESOL providers and immigrant-rich schools in building partnerships to facilitate parent engagement in schools, enabling parents/caregivers to improve their English and digital literacy skills, navigate school systems, and understand expectations and opportunities for school involvement and ways to optimize children's learning. At the same time, ESOL for Parents helps adults prepare to pursue their own educational and employment goals, while supporting children's learning – aiming to eliminate multigenerational poverty.

About Susan Klaw

Susan Klaw has directed, taught in, and developed original curriculum materials for Boston-based parent ESOL programs since 1991. She has delivered extensive training locally and nationally on various aspects of Family Literacy and been named a "Literacy Champion" by the Massachusetts Literacy Foundation, Parent Educator of the Year by the Children's Trust Fund, and Adult Educator of the Year by the Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Education.

About the ESOL for Parents and Caregivers Curriculum

The Curriculum (on ENB website and available free of charge) gives ESOL teachers background materials, lessons and activities designed to help immigrant parents learn English and become more effectively involved in their children's education. Selecting curriculum units and lessons relevant to their classes, ESOL teachers can orient immigrant parents to the U.S. school system and provide practical skills such as interpreting report cards, participating in teacher conferences, advocating for children, and supporting children's learning at home. While some information is Boston specific, much can be used in any locale. ENB can assist in adapting materials for school districts. Additionally, ENB offers a Companion Middle/High School Guide, as well as a Digital Learning Guide to support online instruction.

Using the ESOL for Parents and Caregivers Curriculum

All materials are intended to be downloaded and widely used. Please cite English for New Bostonians and credit English for New Bostonians on all reproductions. We welcome feedback and stories on how you and your students are using the ESOL for Parents and Caregivers Curriculum!

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or visit us online at www.englishfornewbostonians.org*

ACTIVITY #1: MCAS OVERVIEW FOR HIGH SCHOOL

Note to teachers: MCAS (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System) tests are taken every year by all public and charter school students in Massachusetts in grades 3-8 and in grade 10. The MCAS unit in this Companion Guide was designed for parents of high school students. If your students have younger children, there is an MCAS unit in the [primary curriculum¹](#) you can use that is built around the 3rd Grade MCAS tests. See Topic 1, Navigating BPS, Unit 4, MCAS.

For beginning level students, the content in this activity is too difficult in English. Try to arrange a workshop with someone from the school to explain the MCAS in native language. Students can also use the online version of the BPS guide which has a section on MCAS and students can translate the text into their first language.

<https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/familyguide>

Background on MCAS for teachers: MCAS tests are given in Mathematics, English Language Arts (ELA) and Science and Technology/Engineering (STE). Passing the 10th grade MCAS is a requirement for graduation, although MCAS scores do not affect promotion in lower grades. **This requirement is in place through the 2022-2023 school year but it may be revisited for the 2023-24 and beyond.**

Rationale:

The MCAS tests are very important because all students in public and charter schools take them every year in grades 3-8 and in grade 10. Passing the 10th grade MCAS tests in ELA, Math, and STE, is a high school graduation requirement.

Student Objectives:

- Students will understand learn basic facts about the MCAS

Materials:

- Handout: *10th Grade MCAS—An Overview*
- YouTube Video: Abington High School Student-I was so proud that I passed the MCAS, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sNjvtLN1Clk>
- Next-Generation Grade 10 MCAS Tests: Information for Students and Families — Spanish version, reprinted from : www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/parents
- Handout: *Talk to Your Teen about the MCAS*

¹[English for New Bostonians ESOL for Parents and Caregivers.](#) ²

Activity Outline:

1. *Explain objectives.*
2. *Do a quick brainstorm: What do you know about the MCAS? Have your children taken MCAS tests before?*
3. *Write on board phrases: Pass the MCAS and High School Graduation Requirement. Discuss meaning and explain that high school students in Massachusetts must pass the MCAS in order to graduate. They take it first in 10th grade, and then if they don't pass, they can take it again in 11th grade and in 12th grade.*
4. *Show (or have students watch on their phones) a sweet one minute DESE video "[I Was so Proud I passed the MCAS](#)" on YouTube. It is the story of a young Brazilian girl who passes the MCAS on her third try, having only been in U.S. schools for three years. This will reinforce that students get several chances to take and re-take the MCAS.*
5. *Distribute the handout 10th Grade MCAS—An Overview. Have students look at the heading and see if they can figure out what **overview** means. If you wish, show them some other common compound words like homework or housework.*
6. *Have students look at the scoring rubric on the MCAS Overview handout. Discuss the concept of expectations. Have parents share one thing they expect of their teenagers. Point out that in this context, meeting expectations means showing that you know what you are supposed to know as a 10th grade student. Meeting Expectations is what 10th graders need to do to "pass" and be able to graduate.*
7. *Read the handout aloud together as a group and then have parents read it to themselves and answer "check your understanding" questions. These could be done in class, individually, with partners, or as homework. Review the concept of main idea before students try to answer the comprehension questions.*
8. *Distribute to Spanish speaking students the Spanish handout: Next-Generation Grade 10 MCAS Tests: Information for Students and Families. Encourage them to read and discuss the materials with their high school children.*
9. *Homework: Have students talk to their teens about the MCAS tests.*

Handout: MCAS Overview for High School

All students in Massachusetts public and charter schools must take the MCAS tests. They are very important tests. MCAS tests are given in grades 3-8 and in grade 10. There are tests for the following subjects: Mathematics, English Language Arts, and Science and Technology/Engineering. English Language Arts is usually called **ELA**. Science and Engineering/Technology is usually called **STE**.

One of the reasons the tests are important is that high school students **must** pass the MCAS in order to graduate from high school. They take it first in 10th grade and then if they do not pass, they can take the test again many times. The tests are given every year beginning in February. There are two days of tests for each subject because the tests are long. Students take the tests on computers and they do not have to finish in a certain time.

Here is how the new tests are scored. If a student is **Meeting Expectations**, it means the student knows what they are supposed to know at their grade level.

Score	Performance level
530-560	Exceeding Expectations
500-530	Meeting Expectations
470-500	Partially Meeting Expectations
440-470	Not Meeting Expectations

If 10th graders do not pass the MCAS, they can take the test again two times in 11th grade and two times in 12th grade.

Students who are EL's (English learners) who are in their first year in schools in the U.S. **do not** have to take the ELA tests. But they **do** have to take the Math and STE tests.

Parents want to know what they can do to help their children do well on the MCAS. Here are some ways they can help:

- Parents should know when their child will take the tests.
- They should make sure their child goes to bed early the night before the tests.
- Parents should make sure their children eat a healthy breakfast.
- Parent should make sure their child is not absent the day of the tests.

Check Your Understanding

What is the main idea of the overview on the MCAS you just read? Circle the correct answer.

- A. MCAS scores are divided into four performance levels: exceeding expectations, meeting expectations, partially meeting expectations, not meeting expectations.*
- B. High school students must pass the MCAS in order to graduate.*
- C. All students in grades 3-8 and grade 10 must take the MCAS.*

Read the sentences. Write T (true) or F (false)

- __1. If an English learner is in her first year in a MA school, she does not have to take the ELA MCAS.*
- __2. Students start taking the MCAS in first grade.*
- __3. High school students must pass the MCAS in order to graduate.*
- __4. Parents should allow their children to go out to the movies the night before the MCAS test.*
- __5. 10th grade students only get one chance to pass the MCAS.*

Complete the sentences.

- 1. If a student scores 490 on the ELA (English Language Arts) portion of the MCAS, this means they are in the _____ performance level.*
- 2. If a student is Meeting Expectations in math, this means they scored between ____ and ____.*
- 3. It is important your child not be _____ the day of the MCAS tests.*

Handout: Sistema Integral de Evaluación de Massachusetts (MCAS, en inglés)²

Pruebas MCAS de 10mo Grado de Próxima Generación en Artes del Idioma Inglés y Matemáticas: Información para Estudiantes y Familias:

Sobre las pruebas MCAS de 10mo Grado de Próxima Generación en Artes del Idioma Inglés (ELA) y Matemáticas

- *Las pruebas MCAS de próxima generación son una versión actualizada de las anteriores pruebas MCAS, y se proporcionan en computadora, en lugar de en papel (a menos que los estudiantes tengan necesidades especiales que requieran una prueba en papel). Los estudiantes de 3er a 8vo grado han tomado las pruebas de próxima generación desde el 2017.*
- *En la primavera del 2019, los estudiantes de 10mo grado (la clase de 2021), serán la primera promoción en tomar las pruebas de próxima generación de secundaria en ELA y Matemáticas.*
- *Las pruebas de próxima generación tienen diferentes rangos de calificaciones y niveles de logro que las anteriores: la nueva escala es de 440 a 560 puntos, y los nuevos niveles de logro son "Excediendo las Expectativas," "Cumpliendo las Expectativas," "Cumpliendo Parcialmente las Expectativas" y "No Cumpliendo las Expectativas."*
- *La calificación mínima necesaria para aprobar la MCAS de próxima generación será establecida en un nivel equivalente al resultado de aprobación de las MCAS anteriores para los estudiantes nuevos de este año, y para los que ahora están en su segundo año (miembros de las clases de 2021 y 2022).*

¿Los estudiantes **aún tienen que aprobar** las pruebas para graduarse?

Sí, los estudiantes deben aprobar las pruebas MCAS de 10mo grado de próxima generación en ELA y Matemáticas, al igual que las pruebas MCAS anteriores en Ciencia y Tecnología / Ingeniería, como uno de los requisitos para obtener un diploma de secundaria.

¿Son las pruebas de próxima generación **más difíciles** que las pruebas anteriores?

Los estudiantes pueden considerar que las pruebas de próxima generación son más difíciles, pero el resultado de umbral para aprobar será establecido a un nivel equivalente al umbral de aprobación de las pruebas MCAS anteriores, por ahora. **Para los estudiantes en las clases de 2021 y 2022 (aquellos que están en su primer y segundo año en la primavera de 2019), el umbral de aprobación de las pruebas de próxima generación permanecerá en un nivel equivalente al umbral de aprobación de las pruebas MCAS anteriores.**

Los estudiantes pueden aprobar las pruebas MCAS de próxima generación de ELA y Matemáticas en una de dos maneras:

² Massachusetts Department of Education, *Next-Generation Grade 10 MCAS Tests: Information for Students and Families — Spanish version*

- obtener un resultado en las pruebas de próxima generación que sea comparable con un resultado de Dominio o más alto en las pruebas MCAS anteriores; o
- obtener un resultado en las pruebas de próxima generación que sea comparable con Necesita Mejorar en las pruebas MCAS anteriores, y cumplir con los requisitos de un [Plan de Dominio Educativo](#).

¿Podrán retomar la prueba los estudiantes que no la aprueben la primera vez?

Sí, aún habrá dos oportunidades de retomar la prueba por año, en ambas materias, de forma que los estudiantes puedan retomar las pruebas en los grados 11 y 12, o más allá si es necesario.

¿Podrán los estudiantes calificar para la [Adams](#) Scholarship (Beca Adams) o el [Koplik Certificate of Mastery](#) (Certificado de Maestría Koplik)?

Sí, las calificaciones de 10mo grado de los estudiantes aún pueden otorgarles la Adams Scholarship, o ayudarles a cumplir los requisitos de elegibilidad para el Koplik Certificate of Mastery.

¿Hay **pruebas de práctica** disponibles para ayudar a los estudiantes a prepararse para las pruebas?

Sí, hay [pruebas de práctica](#) y otros recursos disponibles para los estudiantes, familias y educadores (ver a continuación).

Última Actualización: 19 de marzo de 2019

Handout: Talk to your Teen about the MCAS

Directions: *Talk to your teenager about the MCAS. You can ask the questions in your home language, but in class you will share the answers in English.*

1--What grade is your child in? _____

2--Have they already taken MCAS? Yes or No _____

If Yes,:

How were the tests?

Which subject was hardest? (Math, ELA, Ste)_____

Did you pass? _____

Do you have to take them again? _____

If NO:

Do you know when the tests are? _____

Are you nervous about taking them? _____

Have your teachers talked about the tests? _____

ACTIVITY #2: HOW CAN HIGH SCHOOL PARENTS HELP?

(Can be used/adapted for use with beginning level students)

Note to teachers on activity timing: *High School MCAS tests are given beginning in February. Unlike in grades 3-8, high schools around the state are instructed to give the tests on two specific days, with two alternate make up days available to them. To find these dates for a given year, search “10th grade MCAS test administration dates.” Ideally, this activity would be done in February, before 10th graders begin taking their MCAS tests. However, given that MCAS testing will continue through May, if the unit is started later, it is still relevant. If the class is situated in a particular high school, get a copy of any MCAS calendars and/or notices the school has sent home to parents.*

Rationale:

An important role parents can play in the MCAS process is to make sure their children are in school, on time, well rested, well fed, and with a positive attitude on the days of the tests.

Student Objectives:

- *Parents will be able to name at least three things they can do to help their children do well on the MCAS.*

Materials:

- *Handout: How To Help Your Child Do Well on the MCAS*

Activity Outline:

1. *Explain objectives.*
2. *Opening discussion: Do you know when your child is going to take an MCAS test? What can parents do to help their children do well on the MCAS? List student ideas on the board.*
3. *Distribute Handout: How to Help Your Child Do Well on the MCAS. Read it together as a group. Ask questions and give examples for each tip to make sure students understand the suggestions. For #3 “Make sure your child is not absent on the day of the tests,” explain that there are makeup test days, but that the child will not get to take the tests with his or her classmates and teacher, and therefore not do as well on the test.*

Follow-Up:

- *If you did not use the the handout: Talk to Your Teen About the MCAS from the previous activity—Overview to the MCAS--assign it as homework.*

Handout: How to Help Your Child Do Well on the MCAS

1. *Post the dates of the tests on your fridge.*
2. *Make sure your child goes to bed early the night before the tests*
3. *Make sure your child is not absent on the day of the tests.*
4. Make sure your child is on time for school the day of the tests.
5. Make sure your child eats a healthy breakfast the day of the tests.
6. Remind your child how important it is to do the best they can.
7. When you get the MCAS scores in the fall, make sure you look at the report closely. Talk to your teenager about whether she or he did well enough to “pass” the MCAS graduation requirement. If the answer is No, schedule a meeting with your child’s guidance counselor or advisor.

ACTIVITY #3: WHAT IS AN EDUCATIONAL PROFICIENCY PLAN?

Note to teachers: *To graduate from high school, students must earn a **Competency Determination (CD)** in ELA, Math and STE, as well as meet course work and attendance requirements. An Educational Proficiency Plan, or **EPP**, is an alternative way for students who do not get a passing score on their MCAS, to earn their CD.*

Rationale:

Parents should be aware of whether their children did well enough on the 10th grade MCAS to pass and earn their CD, or whether they have an EPP and what that means.

Student Objectives:

- *Students will be able to name two facts they have learned about EPP's.*
- *If students have children in 11th or 12th grade, they will be able to say whether their child has an EPP or passed the MCAS.*

Materials:

- *Handout: Educational Proficiency Plan FAQ's*

Activity Outline:

1. *Opening discussion: Does anyone in the class have an 11th or 12th grader? A recent high school graduate? How did they do on the MCAS? Did they have to take it more than once? Did they have an EPP? Write Educational Proficiency Plan on the board. Explain it is referred to as EPP. Remind parents that passing the MCAS is a high school graduation requirement. Explain that EPP is an alternative way for students who don't do so well on the MCAS to meet the requirement.*
2. *Distribute Handout: Educational Proficiency Plan FAQ's. Take a minute to explain what FAQ's are, as this is something parents may encounter in other texts or websites.*
3. *Go over these FAQ's slowly, giving as many concrete examples as you can. Tell students you know this is complicated.*
4. *To check for understanding, divide students into pairs. Have one student ask the question from the handout and have the other try to answer the question in their own words.*
5. *If students have 11th or 12th graders and they don't know how that child did on the MCAS and whether they have an EPP, their homework would be to talk to their teen*

ager and bring in the answers to those questions for the next class.

Follow-Up:

- *Invite a guidance counselor or advisor from the school to come talk with parents about the different ways students can meet MCAS requirements.*

Handout: Educational Proficiency Plan FAQ's

What is an Educational Proficiency Plan?

*An Educational Proficiency Plan is called an **EPP**. It is another way to help students meet the MCAS graduation requirements.*

What kind of plan is it?

It is an individual plan for each student who did not score high enough on the 10th Grade MCAS to meet the Competency Determination (CD) standard. The plan says:

- which courses a student must take and pass in 11th and 12th grade to improve in areas they are weak in*
- which tests the student will take each to assess their progress*

Do all students have EPP's?

No. Only students who did not score high enough on the MCAS to earn their Competency Determination are on EPP's.

If a student passes their EPP courses and assessments, will they earn their Competency Determination or CD?

They must also take the MCAS and at least be in the Partially Meeting Expectations performance level.

Can students fail their EPP?

Yes. Students fail their EPP by not completing their required courses and assessments. Then they will not earn their CD and will not be able to get a high school diploma.