



An Act expanding opportunities to demonstrate academic achievement

MTA Legislative Agenda, 2021-2022

Lead Sponsors: Sen. Jo Comerford (D- Northampton) | Rep. Jim Hawkins (D-Attleboro)

Eliminates the high-stakes nature of the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) and promotes alternative assessment methods.

High-stakes testing has harmed our public schools for far too long. The emphasis on high-stakes standardized testing has numerous negative consequences: narrowing the curriculum, creating a need to “teach to the test,” reinforcing cultural bias and socioeconomic disparities, and creating a punitive and negative environment for school improvement, goal setting and evaluation. Students and families have spoken, and they want less testing and more learning.

Passing this bill will eliminate the high-stakes nature of MCAS by lifting the graduation requirement. It also changes the school evaluation process by de-emphasizing the MCAS test, expanding locally determined input, and factoring in the sufficiency of state and local education funding. The bill creates a grant program that supports local school district planning for creative, locally determined school goal setting, evaluation and assessment. Finally, the bill provides support to the Massachusetts Consortium for Innovative Education Assessment (MCIEA) to administer the grant program and develop a report based on this program recommending changes that could benefit school districts across the Commonwealth.

Passing An Act expanding opportunities to demonstrate academic achievement means:

- Students will have several pathways to demonstrate that they have met the mastery standard for competency determination, including passing a standardized test.
- Providing alternative pathways for special needs students to graduate.
- Including parent, student and educator surveys in the evaluation process.
- Creating the opportunity to expand the school curriculum and focus on teaching – not testing.

**For more information, please contact the MTA Government Relations Division
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