



Boston Public Schools

MassCore Graduation Requirements

November 6, 2024



Current Policy

In May 2021, Boston School Committee voted to adopt DESE's MassCore framework as a universal graduation requirement for BPS students, beginning with the class of 2026.

This policy supports the high quality academic foundation and experience we believe all students should have upon graduation.

Policy Excerpt:

Adoption of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Recommended Course of Study [MassCore] as Boston Public Schools' Graduation Requirement

... Accordingly, it is imperative that we adopt standards aligned graduation requirements across the district that will promote and ensure rigor and excellence in our schools, resulting in the elimination of opportunity and achievement gaps and ensuring that every student graduates prepared for life after high school. ...





Background

- This policy standardized graduation requirements across all high schools.
- The policy vote happened four months before most high school students would return to in-person school for the first time since March 2020.
- Other districts use the MassCore framework as a guide, but not necessarily as a policy for graduation.

MassCore Program of Study

SUBJECT	UNITS
English Language Arts	4 Units
Mathematics	4 Units
Science	3 Units of lab-based science
History and Social Science	3 Units
World Language	2 Units
Physical Education	Must be taught every year
Arts	1 Units
Additional Core Elective Courses	5 Units

**A unit represents a full academic year of study or its equivalent in a subject that covers all the standards contained in a specific Curriculum Framework.*



Since the 2021 vote...

Equitable Literacy and High Quality Instructional Materials

We have implemented HQIM, including ESL curriculum, and Equitable Literacy across the district, raising the standards within each class taught toward graduation

87% of schools have adopted High Quality Instructional Materials

Course Catalog Review and Scheduling Technical Assistance

We conducted a full review of our course catalog, syllabi, and course codes in Aspen to ensure accurate tracking of student progress. District office staff review and consult with school leaders on schedule development.

Schools are far more aligned in offering the same course codes for the same courses

Additional Staffing Allocation

In FY22, schools identified staffing gaps that were prohibiting them from meeting MassCore. Most of those FTEs were in Physical Education, World Language, and the Arts.

Over 50 FTEs across 30 schools allocated (approximately \$6 million)

Expansion of Early College, Innovation and CTE Pathways

Early College, Innovation, and Career & Technical Pathways are proven strategies to increase engagement, graduation rates, and post-secondary success

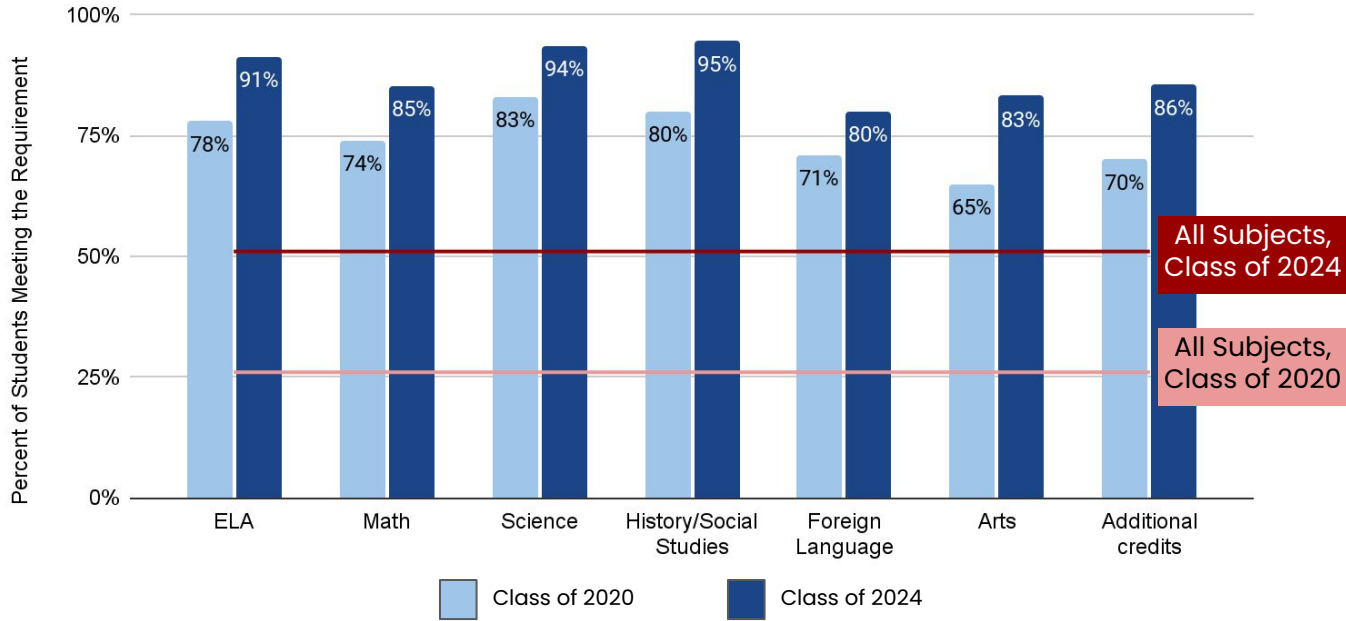
10 Early College, **6** Innovation and **4** CTE pathways added (students in CTE & Innovation pathways are already expected to reach MassCore)



MassCore Requirements by Subject Area

- The percentage of students meeting MassCore requirements by subject area has improved for all subject areas from the Class of 2020 to the Class of 2024
- Students meeting the arts requirement had the largest increase (+18), and students meeting the foreign language requirement had the smallest increase (+9).

Percentage of Students Meeting MassCore Requirements By Subject Area



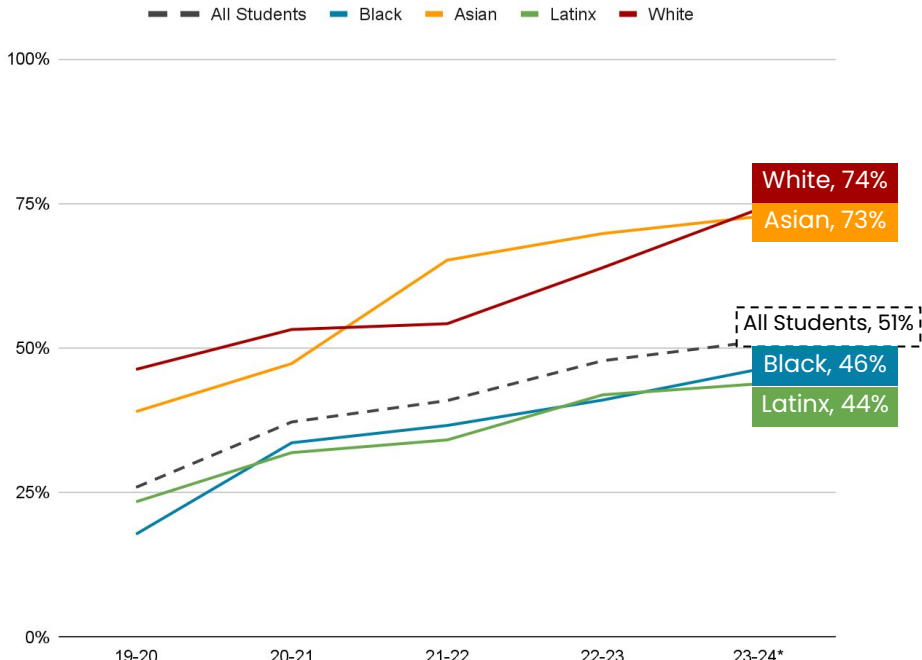
*Data for SY23-24 is considered preliminary until published by DESE



BPS MassCore Completion Rates

- MassCore completion rates have increased for students in all race groups since 2020.
- Rates for Asian students increased the most (+34 percentage points), followed by Black (+29) and White students (+28).
- Latinx students had the smallest increase at 20 percentage points.

MassCore Completion by Race



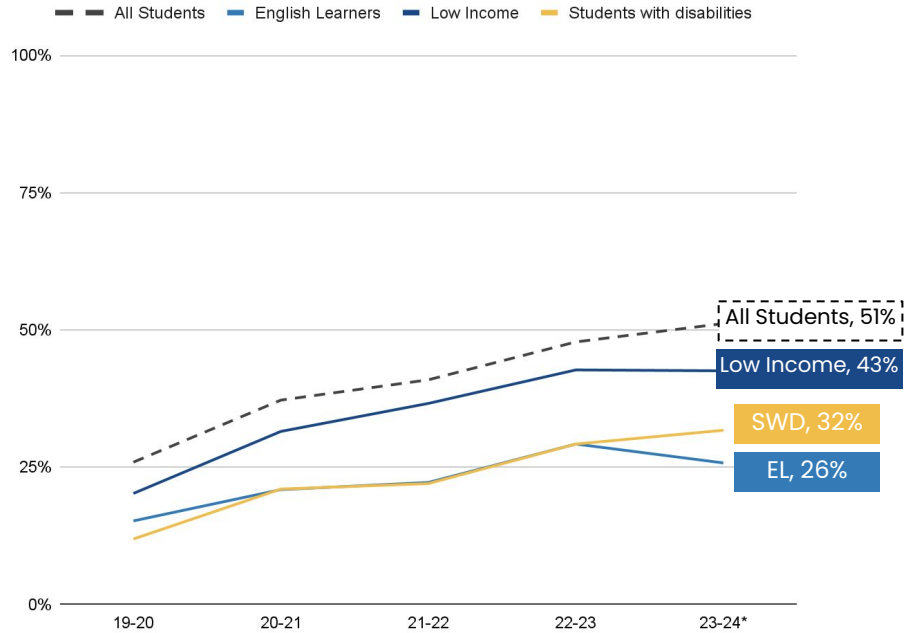
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BPS MassCore Completion Rates

- MassCore completion rates have increased since 2020 for students with disabilities, English learners and low income students.
- All three groups of students had rates of increase lower than the all students increase:
 - All Students (+25)
 - Students with Disabilities (+20)
 - English Learners (+11)
 - Low income (+22)

MassCore Completion by Student Group



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Implementation: What We've Learned

Challenge	Strategies
<p>Bell Schedules: More than half of BPS high schools run 6 period schedules. This is typically done to give students more time within each course to get deeper into content. However, a 6 period day only allows 24 units of study over 4 years, and 22 of those units have to be compliant with the MassCore framework.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working with schools to understand desire to shift to 7 period day and mitigation strategies to support students to be able to complete MassCore• Establish working groups with school leaders and other stakeholders to create an equitable and rigorous pathway to graduation, particularly for our multilingual learners and students who have resource room on their IEPs.
<p>Scheduling for multilingual learners and students with disabilities: Multilingual learners and students who have resource room on their IEP have additional course requirements that inhibit their ability to complete the MassCore requirements in four years.</p>	



Implementation: What We've Learned

Challenge	Strategies
<p>Alternative Education: Our students in alternative education frequently enter their school at age 17+ with less than 2 years of high school credit. A narrow pathway to graduation may result in more students dropping out.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing a proposal for Alt ed schools to ensure over-age and under-credited students have a pathway to graduation• Working with our alternative education schools to build their capacity to serve younger students, multilingual learners, and students with disabilities.
<p>Post-Pandemic Recovery: When this policy was adopted in May 2021, we did not anticipate the level of social-emotional support that students would need in order to successfully reintegrate back into in-person learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Schools are scheduling and staffing themselves to implement intervention blocks, high dosage tutoring, and increase SEL supports



Appendix





Sample ELD 1 6-Period Schedule

	Grade 9 - ELD 1	Grade 10 - ELD 2	Grade 11 - ELD 3	Grade 12 - ELD 4
P1	ESL 1	ESL 2	ESL 3	Core ELA Course/ Embedded ESL Instruction
P2	ESL 1	ESL 2	Core ELA Course	Math 12 or Additional Core Math Course
P3	Math 9 or Algebra I	Math 10 or Geometry	Math 11 or Algebra II	1 semester PE, 1 semester Art
P4	Physics or Other Lab Science	Biology or Other Lab Science	Chemistry or Other Lab Science	Required Elective
P5	World History	US History	Ethnic Studies	Required Elective
P6	1 semester PE, 1 semester Art	World Language	World Language	Required Elective

***This student will be missing 2 years of PE and 1 elective even if they pass every class on their schedule.



Progress Towards MassCore Definition

DESE defined expected credit accumulation towards MassCore

Expected by the end of:	ELA Units	Math Units	Science Units	History/ Social Science Units	Foreign Language Units	Arts Units	Additional Units	Total MassCore Units
Grade 9	1	1	1	1			1.5	5.5
Grade 10	2	2	2	2			3	11
Grade 11	3	3	3	3	1	0.5	3	16.5
Grade 12	4	4	3	3	2	1	5	22



BPS Graduation Requirements for Class of 2025

Pathway I	Pathway II
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take and pass four English (or ESL) courses• Take and pass three history courses, including U.S. History 1 & 2• Take and pass four math courses• Take and pass three lab science courses, including at least two of the following: biology, chemistry, physics• Take and pass two years of the same world language courses• Take and pass two semester courses in the arts• Take and pass four semester courses in PE• Take and pass one semester course in health• Take and pass one semester course in computers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take and pass four humanities courses, which meet current standards for English and U.S. History 1 & 2• Take and pass four math courses• Take and pass three lab science courses, including at least two of the following: biology, chemistry, physics.• Take and pass two years of the same world language courses• Take and pass two semester courses in the arts• Take and pass four semester courses in PE• Take and pass one semester course in health• Take and pass one semester course in computers

Pathway III: A school can develop its own list of required courses that meet state standards and are approved by the Boston Public Schools.



MassCore Progress for Class of 2026

Students have multiple opportunities to accumulate credit, making it hard to predict who will meet all MassCore requirements by the end of senior year. However, two years into implementation for the class of 2026:

- 42% of students in the class of 2026 are considered making progress in all subject areas towards meeting MassCore.

Student Group	% Making Progress in All Areas
All Students	42%
Asian	75%
Latinx	33%
Black	34%
White	75%
Economically Disadvantaged	42%
Non-Economically Disadvantaged	43%
Students with Disabilities	29%
Students without Disabilities	45%
English Learner	11%
Former English Learner	59%
Never English Learner	54%
ELD 1	0%
ELD 2	5%
ELD 3	13%
ELD 4	27%

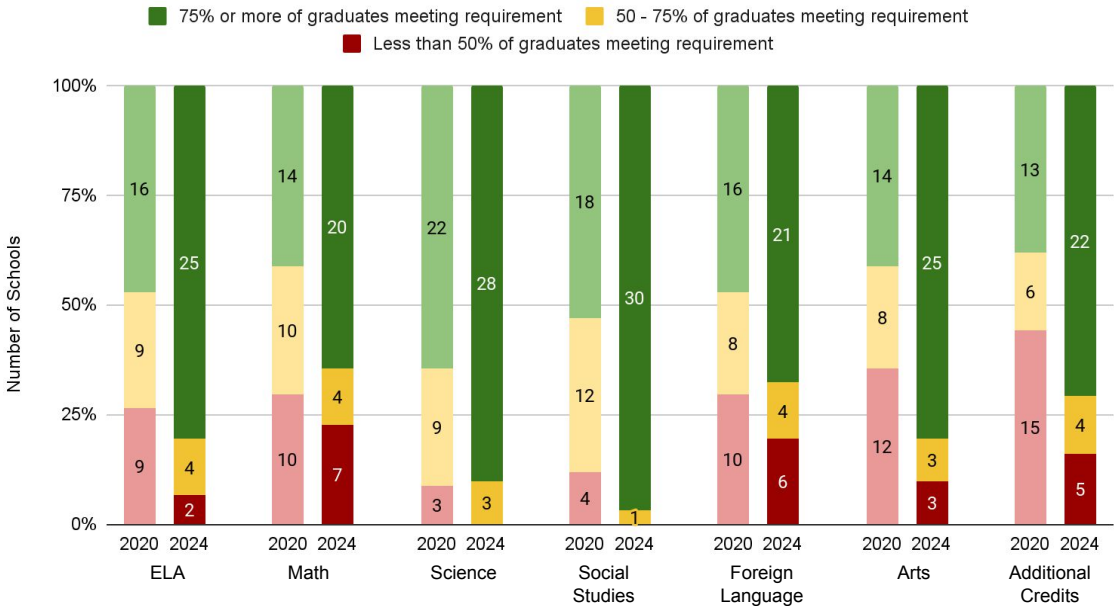
Making progress towards MassCore is defined as completing 2 ELA, 2 Math, 2 Science, 2 Social Studies and 3 additional credits by the end of grade 10, as aligned with DESE identified progress expectations (see appendix)



School-Level MassCore Data

- This graph shows the number of schools, color-coded by the percentage of graduates meeting MassCore requirements in each of the subject areas.
- The number of schools with 75% or more of graduates meeting MassCore requirements in each of the subject areas has increased from the Class of 2020 to the Class of 2024.

Number of Schools Meeting MassCore Requirements by Subject Area



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