

Advanced Math and Science Academy Charter (District) (0430) Charter District - FY 2026 - CD Policy and Local Graduation Requirements - Rev 0

Section 1: Competency Determination Requirements (for more information, access the [Technical Guidance](#))

In this section, you will:

- Explain how a student earns full credit and shows mastery in accordance with your district's grading policy.
- Describe how a student meets the Competency Determination requirements for each content area: English Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and U.S. History.

Submission Questions

*** General:** Satisfactorily completing coursework shall mean a student earns full credit in accordance with the district's grading policy. Describe how a student earns full credit in accordance with the district's grading policy (e.g., course grade above a 70, course grade of meeting or exceeding expectations, etc.).

In accordance with AMSA's grading policy, a student earns full credit for a course by achieving a final grade of 60% or higher and by maintaining regular attendance. Students with more than 15 unexcused absences in a course are not eligible to earn credit, regardless of their grade.

*** General:** Showing mastery shall mean a student successfully completes in accordance with the district's grading policy: (1) the final assessment for a course; or (2) a capstone or portfolio project; or (3) an equivalent measure identified in the district's Competency Determination policy. Describe how a student shows mastery in accordance with the district's grading policy.

At AMSA, a student demonstrates mastery by meeting the district's grading expectations and, where applicable, by completing equivalent measures identified in the district's Competency Determination policy.

- Coursework Completion: In general, students must earn a final course average of 60% or higher to receive credit. This final average is determined by a combination of classwork, homework, quizzes, and exams, as outlined in AMSA's grading policy.
- Final Assessments: Successful completion of a course's final assessment—whether an exam, project, or other culminating activity—serves as one pathway to demonstrating mastery.
- Capstone or Portfolio Projects: In some cases, students may show mastery by completing a capstone or portfolio project that demonstrates sustained learning and application of skills.
- Equivalent Measures in Core Subjects: For English, mathematics, science, and history, AMSA is developing equivalent measures within our Competency Determination policy. These measures will ensure that mastery is not determined by grades alone, but also by a student's demonstrated proficiency in the knowledge and skills most essential to success in these subjects.
- Attendance Requirement: In addition to academic expectations, students must maintain regular attendance. A student who misses more than 15 classes in a school year will not be considered to have demonstrated mastery, regardless of course average, unless otherwise approved through documented extenuating circumstances.

This approach balances consistency in grading with multiple, meaningful ways for students to demonstrate their mastery of content, while also reinforcing the importance of active participation and consistent engagement in learning.

*** English Language Arts:** For English Language Arts, the student must: (i) satisfactorily complete coursework in the equivalent of two years of high school English language arts courses. List the local course offerings that your district will certify as meeting the Competency Determination coursework requirement in this content area.

English 9
English 10

*** English Language Arts:** Review the skills, competencies, and knowledge that a student must demonstrate mastery of as identified in the relevant Massachusetts curriculum frameworks. Describe how a student will show mastery in English Language Arts.

English Language Arts (Grade 9)

A student must earn a final average of 60%, including classwork, homework, and exams, and not miss more than 15 classes per year.

Equivalent Measure: Students complete a 4+ page literary research essay demonstrating critical reading, text analysis, and a well-supported argument; score of 50% or higher required.

Cite strong evidence to analyze literature and informational texts
Determine and analyze central ideas and themes; summarize objectively
Analyze development of characters, ideas, and events
Interpret words/phrases in context, including figurative and connotative meanings
Examine structure, point of view, and author's choices
Write arguments with clear reasoning and evidence
Produce informative/explanatory texts to convey ideas
Write narratives with descriptive detail and organization
Use the writing process to plan, draft, revise, and edit
Conduct research using reliable sources and integrate appropriately
Engage in collaborative discussions, building on others' ideas
Evaluate and integrate information from diverse media
Present findings logically, adapting to audience and purpose
Demonstrate command of grammar, usage, punctuation, and spelling
Use precise language, academic vocabulary, and figurative language

English Language Arts (Grade 10)

A student must earn a final average of 60%, including classwork, homework, and exams, and not miss more than 15 classes per year.

Equivalent Measure: Students complete a 5+ page literary research essay demonstrating critical reading, text analysis, and a well-supported argument; score of 50% or higher required.

Cite strong evidence to analyze complex texts
Determine and analyze central ideas, themes, and author's purpose
Evaluate development of characters, events, and ideas across texts
Interpret figurative language, nuances in word meaning, and rhetorical devices
Analyze structural and stylistic choices for meaning and tone
Write arguments with reasoning, evidence, and counterclaims
Produce explanatory texts that convey complex ideas
Write narratives using effective technique and sequencing

Conduct research integrating multiple authoritative sources
Revise and refine writing for clarity, style, and organization
Initiate and participate in collaborative discussions effectively
Evaluate speakers' arguments; integrate multiple sources of information
Present information logically with command of formal English
Demonstrate command of grammar, usage, and mechanics

*** Mathematics:** For mathematics, the student must: (i) satisfactorily complete coursework in the equivalent of one year of both Algebra I and Geometry; or (ii) satisfactorily complete coursework in the equivalent of one year of both Integrated Math I and Integrated Math II. List the local course offerings that your district will certify as meeting the Competency Determination coursework requirement in this content area.

Algebra I Grade 8 or 9
Geometry I Grade 9

*** Mathematics:** Review the skills, competencies, and knowledge that a student must demonstrate mastery of as identified in the relevant Massachusetts curriculum frameworks. Describe how a student will show mastery in mathematics.

Algebra I

A student must earn a final average of 60%, including classwork, homework, and exams, and not miss more than 15 classes per year.
Equivalent Measure: AMSA developed a comprehensive exam covering Algebra I and Geometry, administered in April of 10th grade; score of 50% or higher required.

Interpret and rewrite expressions using properties of operations
Perform operations on polynomials and understand zeros/factors
Create and solve equations, inequalities, and systems of equations
Represent/analyze linear, quadratic, and exponential functions
Compare and interpret functions algebraically and graphically
Solve word problems using algebraic reasoning and modeling
Understand functions and use function notation
Analyze transformations of functions and graphs
Summarize and interpret data using descriptive statistics
Make inferences and justify conclusions from data

Apply geometric concepts in modeling and coordinate geometry
Prove theorems on congruence, similarity, triangles, circles
Apply Pythagorean Theorem and trigonometric ratios
Engage in mathematical practices: reasoning, modeling, precision

Geometry

A student must earn a final average of 60%, including classwork, homework, and exams, and not miss more than 15 classes per year.
Equivalent Measure: AMSA developed a comprehensive exam covering Algebra I and Geometry, administered in April of 10th grade; score of 50% or higher required.

Apply properties of points, lines, angles, planes
Prove geometric theorems logically, including congruence and similarity
Use transformations (translations, reflections, rotations, dilations)
Apply Pythagorean Theorem and trigonometric ratios in right triangles
Solve problems with special right triangles and circles
Perform constructions with compass and straightedge
Apply coordinate geometry to prove relationships
Use congruence, similarity, and symmetry in problem solving
Calculate perimeter, area, surface area, volume of figures
Use probability with geometric models
Represent geometric concepts algebraically and interpret results
Engage in mathematical practices: reasoning, modeling, precision

*** Science:** For science, the student must: (i) satisfactorily complete coursework in the equivalent of one year of Biology; or (ii) satisfactorily complete coursework in the equivalent of one year of Physics; or (iii) satisfactorily complete coursework in the equivalent of one year of Chemistry; or (iv) satisfactorily complete coursework in the equivalent of one year of a Technology/Engineering course. List the local course offerings that your district will certify as meeting the Competency Determination coursework requirement in this content area.

Biology Grade 9

* **Science:** Review the skills, competencies, and knowledge that a student must demonstrate mastery of as identified in the relevant Massachusetts curriculum frameworks. Describe how a student will show mastery in science.

Biology.

A student must earn a final average of 60%, including classwork, homework, and exams, and not miss more than 15 classes per year.
Equivalent Measure: All 9th grade students must earn 60% or higher on at least 75% of the 8 major projects/labs assigned in Biology.

Describe cell structure/function, membranes, and transport
Explain photosynthesis, respiration, and energy transfer
Demonstrate DNA structure, replication, protein synthesis, heredity
Apply Mendelian and non-Mendelian genetics
Understand natural selection, adaptation, and evolution
Classify organisms; explain interdependence in ecosystems
Analyze cycles of matter/energy and human impacts
Describe human body systems and homeostasis
Interpret/analyze data from lab investigations
Apply scientific inquiry: question, design, collect data, conclude
Use mathematical/computational thinking with biological data
Engage in scientific practices: modeling, evidence-based argument

* **U.S. History:** Beginning with the graduating class of 2027, the student must satisfactorily complete coursework in the equivalent of a one-year U.S. History course. List the local course offerings that your district will certify as meeting the Competency Determination coursework requirement in this content area.

US History I Grade 10

* **U.S. History:** Review the skills, competencies, and knowledge that a student must demonstrate mastery of as identified in the relevant Massachusetts curriculum frameworks. Describe how a student will show mastery in U.S. History (beginning with the graduating class of 2027).

U.S. History I

A student must earn a final average of 60%, including classwork, homework, and exams, and not miss more than 15 classes per year.
Equivalent Measure: All 10th grade students complete a timed Document-Based Question (DBQ) at midyear on the U.S. Constitution; score of 50% or higher required.

Explain political, social, cultural, and economic foundations of the colonies
Analyze causes, events, and consequences of the Revolution
Evaluate the Articles of Confederation, Constitution drafting, and ratification debates
Interpret principles of the Constitution: federalism, separation of powers, checks/balances
Explain development of political parties and early national policies
Analyze impact of westward expansion on Native Americans, slavery, and sectionalism
Evaluate causes and consequences of 19th-century reform movements
Use primary/secondary sources to construct arguments with evidence
Analyze historical documents for purpose, context, perspective
Write essays, including DBQs, with claims supported by evidence
Demonstrate historical thinking: cause/effect, change/continuity, perspectives
Participate in discussions and presentations on historical themes
Engage in civic reasoning by connecting past events to current issues

Section 2: Additional Requirements

In this section, you will:

- **List any other requirements of your Competency Determination policy in addition to those outlined in Section 1.**

Submission Questions

* In addition to the coursework and mastery requirements outlined in the previous section, please describe any other requirements of your district's Competency Determination policy (learning experiences, coursework, etc.).

None

Section 3: Additional Considerations

In this section, you will:

- Provide additional information on the implementation of your Competency Determination policy for specific student groups including students with disabilities, English learners, and late-enrolling students.

Submission Questions

* Students with Disabilities:

- Describe how your district provides students with disabilities, including Massachusetts students receiving a publicly funded education in an out-of-district day or residential school, equal opportunity to meet the CD requirements, including any specialized supports, modifications, or alternative demonstration methods used as part of the policy.

Equal Opportunity for Students with Disabilities to Meet Competency Determination (CD) Requirements
Our district is committed to ensuring that all students, including students with disabilities and Massachusetts students placed in publicly funded out-of-district day or residential schools, have equitable opportunities to meet the state's Competency Determination (CD) requirements.

Individualized Supports and Accommodations
Students receive accommodations and modifications as outlined in their IEPs or 504 Plans. These may include extended time, small group or individual testing settings, assistive technology, use of graphic organizers, alternative response formats, or other supports that allow students to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.

Alignment with Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks
All instruction, including specialized instruction and supports, is aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks to ensure students are taught the same standards as their peers.

Specialized Instruction and Intervention
Students may receive targeted intervention, specialized instruction, and individualized scaffolding to support mastery of required content. Our MTSS model ensures access to both core curriculum and intensive supports as needed.

Alternative Demonstration of Mastery: Portfolio Review
When appropriate, students may demonstrate mastery through a portfolio review. The portfolio includes coursework such as unit assessments, projects, and classwork aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Students also participate in an oral review with faculty to reflect on and explain their learning, providing another way to demonstrate mastery of essential skills and knowledge.

	Collaboration with Out-of-District Schools For students placed in publicly funded out-of-district day or residential schools, our district collaborates with the receiving school to ensure alignment with CD requirements. This includes monitoring curriculum delivery, reviewing student progress, and confirming that accommodations, modifications, and portfolio-based assessments are implemented consistently. Ongoing Review and Monitoring IEP and 504 teams regularly review student progress toward CD requirements and adjust supports or demonstration methods as needed. The district maintains oversight to ensure that students in any setting have equal access to meet state graduation standards.
* English Learners: • Describe how your district provides English learners equal opportunity to meet the CD requirements, including any specialized supports or considerations. • If your district indicated in Section 1 that certain ESL courses meet the ELA coursework requirement of the CD, describe how you will determine which students this may apply to and how grade-appropriate ELA standards are integrated into the ESL courses that you certify as meeting the requirement.	Equal Opportunity for English Learners to Meet Competency Determination (CD) Requirements Our district is committed to ensuring that English Learners (ELs) have equitable access to curriculum, instruction, and assessments required to meet CD requirements. Individualized Supports and Accommodations ELs receive accommodations on state and local assessments in accordance with DESE guidelines. Supports may include bilingual dictionaries, extended time, small-group settings, and scaffolds that allow students to demonstrate content knowledge without being unfairly limited by language proficiency. Alignment with Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks All ELs receive instruction aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Content teachers and ESL staff collaborate to ensure ELs participate in grade-level coursework with appropriate scaffolds that support rigorous expectations. Integration of ESL and ELA Standards ESL instruction is aligned with WIDA English Language Development Standards and integrates grade-appropriate ELA standards. ESL and ELA teachers collaborate to design lessons and assessments that support both English language development and mastery of ELA competencies. Determining ESL Courses that Meet ELA Requirements

If ESL courses are certified as meeting the ELA coursework requirement of the CD, eligibility is determined on a student-by-student basis. ESL staff, ELA teachers, and administrators review student progress, ACCESS results, and course content. Only ESL courses that integrate grade-appropriate ELA standards and are taught by licensed staff are certified.

Alternative Demonstration of Mastery: Portfolio Review

For ELs requiring additional support, the district may use a portfolio review. The portfolio includes essays, unit assessments, projects, and classwork, supplemented by an oral review with faculty. This provides multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate mastery while continuing to develop English proficiency.

Ongoing Monitoring and Review

EL progress is reviewed regularly through ACCESS results, classroom performance, and progress monitoring. Instruction and supports are adjusted as needed to ensure equitable access to meeting CD requirements.

*** Late-Enrolling Students:**

- Describe how your district will evaluate eligibility for the Competency Determination among late-enrolling students, including the use of transcript reviews, course-taking opportunities, or in limited cases qualifying MCAS score-exception. In your response, explain how your policy ensures compliance with state requirements related to equivalent course length, relevant coursework, and demonstration of mastery.

Not applicable to AMSA as all students must be enrolled during the Grade 9 year.

Section 4: Appeals Process

In this section, you will:

- **Explain your district's appeals process.**

Submission Questions

* Describe the process through which a student or parent/guardian may appeal to the district a district's determination that a student has not met the requirements of the Competency Determination. Include timelines, responsible personnel, and how decisions are communicated.

Appeals Process for Competency Determination (CD) Requirements

If a student or parent/guardian wishes to appeal the district's determination that the student has not met the requirements of the Competency Determination, the following process will be used:

Appeals Panel

An Appeals Panel will review all requests. The panel will include the Academic Department Chair, the Principal, and the student's teacher of record. If the student has an IEP, the Special Education Liaison will also participate. If the student is an English Learner, the Director of ELL will also participate.

Filing an Appeal

A written appeal may be submitted by the student or parent/guardian to the Principal within **10 school days** of notification that the student has not met the CD requirements. The appeal must include the reason for the request and any supporting documentation (e.g., student work samples, medical or extenuating circumstances, evidence of mastery not reflected in the determination).

Review Process

The Appeals Panel will conduct a **full record review**, examining the student's academic record, portfolio evidence, coursework, assessments, and any other relevant materials. The panel will meet within **15 school days** of receiving the written appeal. If appropriate, the panel may also request an interview with the student to clarify evidence of mastery.

Decision and Notification

The Appeals Panel will reach a decision within **5 school days** of its review meeting. The decision will be documented in writing and communicated to the student and parent/guardian by the Principal. The communication will explain the panel's decision and outline next steps, including additional supports if the appeal is denied.

Escalation to the Executive Director

If the student or parent/guardian disagrees with the Appeals Panel's decision, a written request for further review may be submitted to the Executive Director within **5 school days** of the panel's decision. The Executive Director will conduct a review of the full record, may request additional information, and issue a final written decision within **10 school days**. This decision will be communicated directly to the student and parent/guardian and is considered final at the district level.

Recordkeeping

All appeal documentation and decisions will be maintained in the student's educational record and reported to DESE as required.

Section 5: Certifications

In this section, you will:

- Complete several certifications regarding the approval and posting of your Competency Determination policy.

Submission Questions

- ☐ * I certify that the policy has been approved by the governing board of the district.
- ☐ * I certify that the policy has been shared with all students, families/guardians, and district stakeholders.
- ☐ * I certify that the policy has been made publicly available in multiple languages.

* Provide the URL where your policy is posted on your website.