CPS Competency Determination (CD) Policy

Determination of Satisfactory Completion of Coursework and Demonstration of Mastery

A determination of competency shall include: demonstrating a mastery of skills in English Language Arts (ELA), mathematics, science, and US History; and the satisfactory completion of relevant coursework aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.

Students will demonstrate **satisfactory completion of relevant coursework** by earning credits from a list of pre-approved courses. All such pre-approved courses, including those specifically for students with disabilities and English learners, will be aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and the priority standards for the relevant content areas. Satisfactory completion shall mean earning full credit in a course with a **final grade of 60 or higher**. The final grade may be represented on the transcript as a "P" or a letter grade of D- or higher.

Demonstrating mastery shall mean that a student has passed a final assessment, capstone project/portfolio, or benchmark assessment that has been identified by the Cambridge Public Schools as assessing the priority standards for a given subject area at the appropriate grade level. Students who do not show mastery of skills on their first attempt will be given additional opportunities in the same or future courses.

Content-Specific Competency Determination Requirements

The following articulates the credits required in each content area, and the demonstration of mastery.

- 20 credits in high school **English Language Arts (ELA)**, satisfactorily completing coursework in the equivalent of (i) English-9 and (ii) English-10. Students will demonstrate mastery of skills by passing a final assessment, capstone project/portfolio, or benchmark assessment that has been identified by the Cambridge Public Schools as assessing priority ELA/Literacy standards at the appropriate grade level.

- 20 credits in high school **mathematics**, satisfactorily completing coursework in the equivalent of (i) one year each of both Algebra I and Geometry; or (ii) one year each of both Integrated Math I and Integrated Math II. Students will demonstrate mastery of skills by passing a final assessment, capstone project/portfolio, or benchmark assessment that has been identified by the Cambridge Public Schools as assessing the priority standards at the appropriate grade level.

- 10 credits in either **Physics, Chemistry, or Biology**. Students will demonstrate mastery of skills by passing a final assessment, capstone project/portfolio, or benchmark

assessment that has been identified by the Cambridge Public Schools as assessing the priority standards in Physics, Chemistry or Biology.

- 10 credits in United States **History**. Students will demonstrate mastery of skills by passing a final assessment, capstone project/portfolio, or benchmark assessment that has been identified by the Cambridge Public Schools as assessing the priority standards at the appropriate grade level.

Considerations for Students with Disabilities

All pre-approved courses, including those specifically for students with disabilities, will be aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and the priority standards for those content areas. The Cambridge Public Schools may develop an alternative method for demonstrating mastery for an individual student based on the student's disability, modifications, and accommodations. This alternative method will be in alignment with the measures of mastery of the priority standards for the particular subject area at the appropriate grade level.

For students placed in approved out-of-district schools, CPS will review their transcripts and/or report cards to complete a "Progress Toward Graduation" assessment of their transfer credits. This process will include reviewing prior courses for alignment with CPS Competency Determination related coursework. CPS will award components of the CD requirements in a particular subject area based on their transcript and/or report card.

Considerations for English Learners

English Learner (EL) students at the Beginning and Developing (Intermediate) stages of English Language Proficiency (ELP), as defined by ACCESS for ELs, may be placed in Sheltered English Instruction (SEI) content courses, including SEI US History, SEI Mathematics, and SEI Science, each of which will be fully aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. These courses will be specifically designed to embed the linguistic and academic scaffolds essential for students navigating grade-level content while simultaneously acquiring English. Students will demonstrate mastery of the content of each course by passing a final assessment, capstone project/portfolio, or benchmark assessment that has been identified by CPS as assessing the priority standards for each respective course.

Students at English Language Proficiency (ELP) levels 1-3 may complete up to two English as a Second Language (ESL) courses (levels 1-3) to count toward ELA credit. In addition to providing students with rigorous English language development, the ESL 2 and 3 curriculum units will be aligned to ELA grade-level Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Students at ELP 4 or higher will be enrolled in a general education ELA class. Students will demonstrate mastery of skills by passing a final assessment, capstone project/portfolio, or benchmark assessment that has been identified by CPS as assessing priority standards at the appropriate level of English proficiency.

Late-Enrolling Students

For students who enroll in CRLS after grade 9, transcripts and/or report cards will be reviewed to complete a "Progress Toward Graduation" assessment. This process will include reviewing prior courses for alignment with Competency Determination-related coursework. Components of the Competency Determination requirements will be awarded in a particular subject area based on transcripts and/or report cards.

At the discretion of the Principal, late-enrolling students may earn a Competency Determination by attaining a score of "Meeting Expectations" or "Exceeding Expectations" on the relevant high school MCAS assessment; or meeting the standard for a substituted equivalent that the relevant department certifies satisfies the same academic standards.

Appeals Process

Competency Determinations will be awarded by the Principal based on CPS policy. A student or parent/guardian may contact the Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education to appeal the Principal's determination that the student has not met the requirements of a specific Competency Determination. The student and/or family will submit relevant transcripts, report cards, measures of proficiency and/or additional documentation. The Assistant Superintendent of Secondary Education will review all relevant documentation and may approve the appeal (awarding the Competency Determination) or present the case to the Superintendent and/or the Superintendent's designee, who may consult with relevant CPS school- and/or district-based administrators.

Diploma Request Process for Previously-Enrolled Students

Students from the graduating classes of 2003-2024 may request the issuance of a retro-diploma. The process should follow the underwritten steps:

1. A mechanism will be established for former students who, due to previous MCAS requirements, did not earn a diploma at the time of graduation and wish to request a review of their records for the purpose of earning a diploma.
2. Once such a request has been received, the CRLS Registrar will review the former student's academic records to verify that:
    a. The Competency Determination is met through successful completion of the following courses, at minimum: Two English, two Math, and one Science.
    b. The former student has attained 224 total credits in all the appropriate distributional areas, as they were defined at the original year of graduation.
3. Once it has been verified that the applicant has met the above criteria, the Registrar will forward the information to the CRLS Principal for final approval.
4. Once approved, the applicant's transcript will be revised to indicate that the applicant has successfully met the graduation requirements.
5. The applicant will be notified of their status and will be issued a diploma.

Adopted: December 16, 2025