Competency Determination

Introduction

One of the requirements for graduation in Massachusetts is a determination of competency in subjects previously covered by the MCAS. In addition to other requirements for graduation, students must have been determined by the district to have achieved mastery of the common core of skills, competency, and knowledge in said areas, and satisfactorily completed coursework that has been certified by the student's district as showing mastery of the skills, competencies, and knowledge contained in the state academic standards and curriculum frameworks.

Competency Determination

A determination of competency shall include:

Demonstrating a mastery of skills in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science; and the satisfactory completion of relevant coursework aligned to the standards measured by the high school English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science MCAS assessments administered in 2023.

An additional requirement for mastery in US History will apply to the graduating class of 2027, and beyond.

To show mastery, a student must successfully complete, 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 CD policy.

A student enrolled in the Webster Public Schools will be determined to have satisfactorily completed coursework and earned full credit in accordance with the district's grading policy and the requirements outlined below:

Content Area	Coursework Requirements	Notes
English Language Arts	Full credit earned in the equivalent of two years of high school English Language Arts courses. • English 1 or equivalent • English 2 or equivalent	To satisfy this course requirement, the English Language Arts courses must be taken in grades 9-12.
Mathematics	Full credit earned in the equivalent of two years of high school Mathematics courses. • Algebra 1 or equivalent • Geometry or equivalent	Middle school math courses may be certified by the district as meeting the coursework requirement for the mathematics component of the CD. • Districts must confirm that the course aligns to the high school Algebra I/Geometry standards as listed in the 2017 Massachusetts Mathematics Curriculum Framework.
Science	Full credit earned in the equivalent of one year of high school science in any of the following disciplines:	To satisfy this course requirement, the science course must be taken in grades 9-12.

	• Biology • Chemistry • Physics • Technology/Engineering	
United States History (Beginning with the graduating class of 2027)	The equivalent of a one-year United States history course. • US History 1 • US History 1	To satisfy this course requirement, the US History course must be taken in grades 9-12.

Aligned Courses

English Language Arts

- **English 1 -** This comprehensive course builds upon students' prior knowledge and skills in the four aspects of language use: reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Students analyze a wide variety of genres of literature with expository, narrative, and argumentative writing often linked to reading selections. Vocabulary, word usage, the mechanics of writing, and grammar are integrated throughout. Students also learn to cite sources and avoid plagiarism. Themes explored in this course include belonging, adventure, self-esteem, and identity. The core novel studies in this course may include Steinbeck's Of Mice and Men and Orwell's Animal Farm. Poems, short stories, and informational texts are analyzed and used for building vocabulary and to appreciate a deeper understanding of literary elements and artistic integrity.
- **English 2 -** This 10th Grade English class offers a variety of reading and writing experiences. Building off of the skills learned in English 1, students are expected to read an assortment of grade-level texts with growing independence. Students will be exposed to fiction and nonfiction texts ranging from ancient to modern times, and multicultural authors. Units are either thematic or novel based. Thematic units offer a multi-genre approach to a single theme, such as Persistence of Memories. Novel studies will focus on the symbols and themes within the individual novel. Students will express their understanding of topics by engaging in projects, creative writing, and expository writing.

Mathematics

- **Algebra 1 -** In this course, students will focus on four critical areas: (1) Developing fluency writing, interpreting and translating among various forms of linear equations and inequalities and using them to solve problems, (2) Interpreting, translating and analyzing different representations of linear, quadratic and exponential functions, (3) Becoming facile with algebraic manipulations and using linear, quadratic and exponential functions to model phenomena, and (4) Interpreting quantitative and categorical data and models. Throughout the course the students learn how to apply mathematical concepts in real-life situations.
- **Geometry -** In this course, students will focus on six critical areas: (1) Developing a foundation for the development of formal proof and using it to prove theorems using a variety of formats, (2) Applying dilations and proportional reasoning to build a formal understanding of similarity, (3) Developing explanations of circumference, area and volume formulas, (4) Applying the Pythagorean Theorem and continuing their study of quadratics with parabolas, (5) Proving theorems about circles and studying the relationships among parts of a circle, and (6) Extending their work with probability and using it to make informed decisions. Throughout the course the students learn how to apply mathematical concepts in real-life situations.

Science

- **Biology -** This course is designed to offer students coverage of all of the current Massachusetts Biology Curriculum Frameworks, as well as to prepare students for the Biology MCAS. Topics covered include the following four disciplinary core ideas: (1) from molecules to organisms: structures and processes, (2) ecosystems: interactions, energy, and dynamics, (3) heredity: inheritance of variation of traits, and (4) biological evolution: unity and diversity. The lab component of this course is designed to expose students to the MA Science and Engineering Practices

including developing and using models, constructing explanations, engaging in argumentation from evidence, obtaining, evaluating, and communicating information, using multiple types of models including mathematical models to make predictions, developing explanations, analyzing, and communicating ideas and making claims based on evidence. This is a lab based course.

- **Chemistry -** The emphasis in this introductory course is on real world applications and the qualitative aspects of chemistry, covering traditional topics such as the study of matter, acid/bases, elements, compounds and mixtures. This introductory chemistry course requires careful experimentation, critical thinking and problem solving and is recommended for college preparation but may also be of interest to any student who wishes to know more of everyday chemistry applications. This is a lab based course.
- **Physics -** Physics presents the concepts of classical mechanics, wave theory, energy and electromagnetism. The student will learn how each of these are present in their everyday lives, and the effect on the student and the world. Skill in analytical thought, numerical calculation, measurement techniques, and laboratory investigatory skills are among the benefits of taking this course. This course is one that is highly recommended and often required for the prospective engineering student or science major. This is a lab based course.
- **Introduction to Engineering Design (IED) -** Through hands-on projects, students are exposed to professional communication and collaboration methods, design ethics, and technical documentation. Students use industry standard 3D solid modeling software to design and document their solutions to design problems and challenges. They then communicate their design solutions to peers and members of the professional community. Designed for 9th or 10th grade students, the major focus of IED is the design and its application.
- **Principles of Engineering (POE)** - This survey course exposes students to major concepts they'll encounter in a post-secondary engineering course of study. Topics include mechanisms, energy, statics, materials, software control, and kinematics. They develop problem-solving skills and apply their knowledge of research and design to create solutions to various challenges, document their work, and communicate solutions. This course is designed for 10th through 12th grade students. This is a lab based science.
- **Computer Integrated Manufacturing (CIM) -** Students learn about various aspects of computer integrated manufacturing, including building components, design, and computer milling software. In addition, students use 3D design software and drafting software to design and document manufacturing-based solutions. Students will interact with individuals in the field, and the outcomes of this course are designed with career placement in mind. This course is designed for 11th and 12th graders.

<u>Social Studies</u>

- **United States History 1 -** United States History 1 examines the political, social and economic development of the United States from The American Revolution to its role in the First World War. Topics examined include the origins of the American Revolution and Constitution as well as the expansion of democracy and territory during the early 19th Century. Students will also examine the economic, political and social changes of the Antebellum Era as well as the role slavery played in the outbreak of the Civil War. Finally, students will describe industrial growth of the United States in the decades following the Civil War as well as the social, political and economic challenges facing the nation at the turn of the 20th Century. Throughout the course, students will examine various topics from different viewpoints in order to understand how there can be different interpretations of the past. Students will be expected to participate in a number of activities such as multiple writing assignments, projects, presentations and debates throughout the year. They will also be expected to complete research assignments in which skills in identifying and citing reliable sources will be developed.
- **United States History 2 -** United States History 2 examines the political, social, and economic development of the United States from the Post World War 1 era to the turn of the 21st Century. The course begins by examining the economic and social changes of the postwar period and the impact of the Great Depression. Students will be expected to participate in a number of activities such as multiple writing assignments, projects, presentations and debates throughout the year.

Students will also explore America's growing role in the world as demonstrated by their participation in World War 2, the Cold War, and the war on terror. Finally, a great deal of the course will be on how American society and racial problems certain groups of people face. Students will also be expected to complete research assignments in which skills in identifying and citing reliable sources will be developed.

Additional Considerations

Students with Disabilities

The Webster Public Schools must both provide a Free and Appropriate Public Education to students with disabilities and must also determine that the student has met the competency determination and local graduation requirements prior to graduating that student. Students with disabilities who have been placed in out-of-district placements must meet the requirements of the competency determination policy of the placing school district. Discussion of the competency determination must be a part of the IEP Team's transition planning.

English Language Learners

The Webster Public Schools shall, on a case-by-case basis, determine the appropriate courses necessary for English Language Learners to both achieve language proficiency and meet the competency determination requirements.

Late-Enrolling Students

Students who enroll in a Massachusetts public high school after their ninth-grade year may be granted a determination of competency by the Webster Public Schools in one or more of the following ways:

- Transcript review
- Additional course requirements
- A qualifying MCAS score of at least meeting or exceeding expectations achievement levels on the relevant high school MCAS assessment; or by meeting the standard for a substituted equivalent that the district certifies satisfies the same academic standards.

Appeals Process

Current students and/or parents/guardians may appeal the determination of competency in accordance with the following district procedures:

The Webster Public School District shall provide an internal appeals process for students or families who believe that a Competency Determination (CD) was improperly withheld. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Principal within thirty (30) school days of notification that a student has not met CD requirements. Appeals may include supporting documentation such as transcripts, course grades, final assessments, or portfolio/project work.

- Principal Review- The Principal will review the student's transcript, course records, and any submitted evidence to determine whether the student has demonstrated mastery and satisfactorily completed the required coursework
- For students with disabilities, the Principal will consult with the Director of Student Services or for Multilingual Learners, the Principal will consult with the EL Director / Asst Superintendent
- The Principal will issue a written decision within ten (10) school days of receiving the appeal
- Final appeal to Superintendent: If the appeal is denied by the Principal, the student or parent/guardian may submit a final written appeal to the Superintendent within ten (10) school days of the Principal's decision. The Superintendent will review the documentation considered by the Principal, along with any additional evidence

submitted, and issue a written, final decision within fifteen (15) school days. The Superintendent's decision shall be final at the district level.

For any students enrolled in the Webster Public Schools in the classes of 2003 through 2024 that did not earn a diploma, may also appeal the decision. Webster Public Schools will offer a path towards attainment of the competency determination, per the updated statute. This will include a transcript review to determine if the student met the coursework and credits required for graduation at Bartlett High School, but did not meet the MCAS CD.

LEGAL REFS:	DESE Graduation Requirements and Related Guidance DESE Graduation and Transition Planning for Students with IEPs DESE Competency Determination Guidance and Policy Submission Process 603 CMR 30.00 M.G.L. c. 69, § 1D
CROSS REFS:	Student Handbook IKF Graduation Requirements
SOURCE:	MASC - 2025

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