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[Home](#) > [Marching on...update! WPS 3-1-25](#)

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There are a number of events and meetings for you to consider this month to learn more about the work that the Robinson School Building Committee (RSBC) has been doing and the request for funding to conduct a Feasibility Study with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA). Upcoming informational presentations, an open forum, short guided tours, and FAQs can be accessed in the following ways:

- March 3, 2025- A presentation will be made during the regular School Committee meeting
- March 11, 2025- The RSBC will be presenting at the Cameron Senior Center @ 2:00pm
- March 12, 2025- An Open Forum will be held at the Robinson School at 7:30PM with the opportunity to take short guided tours between 6:30-7:30
- March 15, 2025- Additional drop-in guided tours will be offered from 10:30AM -1:00PM
- March 22, 2025- A short presentation will be given during the Annual Town Meeting starting at 9:00AM @ Westford Academy
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are available and can be found on the website: <https://www.westfordk12.us/district/news/robinsonmsba>

March madness would not be complete without the beginning of the MCAS season. Now, I understand there may still be some confusion as to why MCAS exams would still be taking place this spring in light of last fall's ballot question that removed the MCAS exams as the primary avenue for students to earn their required Competency Determination for their diploma. Well, although it is no longer a graduation requirement, it is necessary for all districts in Massachusetts to participate to ensure we meet the requirements for both Federal and State accountability.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) is the federal law requiring states to administer standardized assessments to measure student progress. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) continues to use MCAS results to determine school and district accountability status. For now, MCAS is still the process necessary for us to meet those obligations and remain compliant with the law. While they no longer meet that CD requirement, all of these assessments typically taken in grades 3-10 contribute to our overall accountability as a public school district. As we have done previously, we will continue to provide supportive, stress-reducing testing environments for our students. The vast majority of our students work diligently and enthusiastically throughout the year. The MCAS exams are just a stop along the way and provide one set of data for us to consider as we reflect on our practices to help students achieve their academic goals. But yes, in short, they are still taking place and students should still exhibit their best efforts as they still have a potential impact on our schools and our district as a whole.

In terms of the Competency Determination (CD) moving forward, we will be sharing our recommendations for the School Committee to consider during their March 17th meeting. The result of the ballot question now leaves local districts responsible certifying specific coursework that must be completed by the student which shows “mastery of the skills, competencies, and knowledge contained in the state academic standards and curriculum frameworks in the areas measured by the MCAS high school tests (...) administered in 2023.” In other words, we need to articulate which specific courses students need to pass in order to earn their CD. So, our recommendation will detail which math, ELA, and science courses address the curriculum standards assessed on 2023 MCAS exams.

Not that all of the above mentioned events aren't loads of fun already, I thought it would be nice to end this update with a truly joyful, fun upcoming opportunity for everyone to be aware of in case they wanted to participate or support. On Tuesday, March 11, 2025 the Mobile Polar Plunge for Special Olympics will be taking place at Westford Academy in the afternoon. All of the information is available on this flyer: **[Westford Academy Polar Plunge for Special OlympicsFlyer \(3\) \(1\).pdf](#)**

Cheers!

Chris

Christopher Chew, Ed. D

Superintendent

Westford Public Schools

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