

High School Graduation, MCAS, and Accommodations

While we modify our curriculum to meet the instructional needs of our students, LPS has also adjusted our curriculum to be better aligned with the Mass Core Curriculum guidelines recently revised by the state and to meet individual school system course requirements. This includes, for example, additional years of Science. Students will receive a Learning Prep School Certificate of Completion as long as they meet all of our graduation requirements. Many post-graduate programs accept our diploma for entrance into their programs. However, I hope the information that follows clarifies some of the changes for students seeking a diploma from their public schools.

To receive a CD diploma from Learning Prep and a public school diploma, rather than a Certificate of Completion, students must meet individual school system course requirements as well as reach new threshold scores for MCAS. While the scoring categories have not changed (Failing, Needs Improvement, Proficient, Advanced), and students that have received a 220 (Needs Improvement) or better on Grade 10 English/Language Arts and Mathematics MCAS have still 'passed' MCAS, the **CD diploma** requirements have been raised to **Proficient**, or 240 in **ELA and Mathematics**. In addition, students must **score 220** or higher on one of the **science** tests. (We administer the Biology and Engineering tests which can be taken beginning in grade 9.)

Students scoring less than 220 will continue to have the option of taking the **ELA and Math retests** twice each year. Some students decide to take only the March test, feeling they will be better prepared; but others want to take it each time it is offered. There is no limit to the number of times they can take the test.

In the past students scoring above 220 but below 240 were not eligible to take the retests because the highest possible score was 238. It is now possible to receive a 240 on these tests; therefore, those students, especially **seniors** in this category, may wish to take the test again this March.

The state currently offers the **Biology test** in the beginning of Feb. for those who have not yet passed a science test. We offer a review to students in January to those that took the Biology test previously but did not pass. It is not always possible to get the review into their schedules so some student will take the test in June. If students do not pass the Feb. test, they may take it again in June. This year only, **for graduating seniors**, there will be an additional opportunity to take the test again on April 14.

Students in grades 9 and above taking either Biology or

Engineering/Technology classes will take the appropriate test in June. Students in science classes other than these who will take the Biology test again in June, a review will take place in May in their classes.

The PILOT History/Social Science content test is U.S. History is not being given due to budget constraints. There are plans to test students in History beginning next year, 2011.

Educational Proficiency Plans and Graduation

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has a new initiative that will support students in meeting the CD graduation requirements. The Department's goal is: to help students stay engaged in their education after passing MCAS, but not scoring Proficient or above; and to ensure that students continue to make growth towards proficiency. Once a student meets the EPP goals, they may receive their CD diploma.

The school will create an **Educational Proficiency Plan** or **EPP** for each student scoring 220 or above, but below 240, in Language and Math. As long as they continue to take courses, show gains in learning through testing, they will be eligible for CD Diploma, rather than a Certificate of Completion. The plan will include:

- A review of a student's strengths and weaknesses in the content area.
- A list of the courses the student will take and successfully complete in years following passing of MCAS tests to move towards proficiency .
- A description of the assessment(s) the school will use to determine a student's progress towards meeting those grade level standards.

Once a student taking the retest scores 240, they no longer need an EPP.

This year's **testing schedule** for Grades 8-12 follows. The dates for Grade 10 tests are specifically set by the state. We have some leeway with grade 8 and schedule their tests around the Grade 10 tests. While the elementary/middle school schedule is similar, you must contact them or refer to the school calendar for their specific schedule.

If you have any questions about MCAS testing for students in Grades 8-12, you may reach our testing coordinator, Sharon Risso at school at extension 454. Questions regarding Elementary and Middle School students should be directed to Gail O'Mara, Principal of those schools.