

## Preparing for the MCAS in English

### Content/Scope/Skills covered on MCAS

- The State Standards in English Language Arts include a student's knowledge and understanding of reading, language, literature, and composition. In addition, informational text such as articles, internet information, and diaries are also included in the non-fiction standards.
- Literature Standards set the expectation that "students will demonstrate understanding of the dynamics, nature, structure and history of the English language." Literature Standards set the expectation that "students will learn to write with clarity, coherence, and personal engagement."
- English classrooms have taught curricula that infuse the standards into daily lessons. Students have been taught the necessary skills via texts in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade curricula. They have been given, multiple practice applications via tests, quizzes, exams and composition assignments reflecting MCAS rubrics for assessment for both the Open Response and Long Composition portion of the exam.
- The MCAS English Language Arts assessment is done over two blocks of time. During the first day of testing on March 31<sup>st</sup> your child will be assessed on his/her composition skills. Students will be asked to compose the rough and final drafts of a literary analysis. The ELA sessions on April 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> are assessments that reflect the student's reading knowledge and comprehension of literature, language, and thinking skills via multiple choice, and open-ended questions.

### How to help students prepare

- Review the basic structure of literary analysis essay.
- Review the testing strategies covered in class on how to read an analysis question.
- Review the rubrics for scoring Open Response and Long Composition.
- Be aware of time management in rough and final drafts. Voice plays a major role in scoring.
- Correct grammar, spelling, and word choice, and a clear organization of ideas are necessary.
- Review class notes on poetic and literary terms, basic structures of literature, and strategies in reading a passage.
- Read the directions and the italics before reading the passage.
- Remain focused and on task throughout the testing.
- Give them a nutritious breakfast after they have had a good night's sleep!

## Preparing for the MCAS in Science

### Content/Scope/Skills covered on MCAS:

- All ninth and tenth grade students currently enrolled in Biology and Honors Physical Science are expected to take the science MCAS test in June. The Biology high school standards include: Chemistry of Life, Cell Biology, Genetics, Anatomy and Physiology, Evolution and Biodiversity, and Ecology. The Introductory Physics standards include: Motion and Forces, Conservation of Energy and Momentum, Heat, Waves, Electromagnetism, and Electromagnetic Radiation. Scientific Inquiry skills are included in all science MCAS standards.
- The Science and Technology/Engineering Curriculum Frameworks may be viewed in detail on the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) web site: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html>
- Framework standards have been addressed in all ninth and tenth grade courses. MCAS questions have been incorporated in regular quizzes and tests. A comprehensive review of the content will be conducted in the week prior to the MCAS test.

### How to help students prepare:

- Please encourage your student to participate fully in the coursework and review. Attendance and participation are essential for success. Some after school review sessions are also available.
- Practice tests questions are available through the DESE at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/2007/release/>. Open response questions and grading rubrics are also available at: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/student/>.
- You could help your child by reviewing practice tests and notes from science classes. A thorough reading of these notes may refresh his/her memory regarding the science content contained in the MCAS multiple-choice questions and open response questions.

