



## **Boston Public Schools CitywideParent Council**

### **Statement regarding MCAS plans for 2021**

The Citywide Parent Council includes parents who have varied views on the values of standardized testing in ideal circumstances. Many parents feel that the MCAS should be abolished permanently. Some think it is a useful metric for seeing how the state curricular standards are being met. Some people think a comprehensive assessment should measure other skills. The larger discussion of whether the MCAS should be administered at all in normal years is a heated political topic, and many BPS parents are actively engaged.

Within that context, there is consensus among parents that this year will not be ideal circumstances for the MCAS and that some alternate plan should be developed for the spring. Most parents who have expressed opinions to the Citywide Parent Council have indicated they are in favor of a moratorium on the exam for the year, or at a minimum a moratorium on graduation requirements or school sanctions associated with the exam. The only reason some parents indicated that they might favor an implementation of the exam was for informational purposes about just how much learning was lost due to the pandemic conditions and where we will need to direct additional resources to make up for the lack of school in the past year.

There is general consensus that administering the test remotely would be extremely challenging and stressful for families. Many students would likely not be able to complete it, and even among those who could, there would be significant distractions, interruptions, technical glitches, and other environmental factors that would make results unlikely to reflect how well they would normally do on a test, even at the same level of overall preparation. While that might be an interesting point of information for researchers, most parents are skeptical that that discrepancy is really something we want to be measuring at the cost of a significant number of instructional days traded for preparation and testing days this year. There is also concern about the amount of planning time that would be used up for figuring out simply how to administer it.

Additionally, there is general consensus that if tests are administered and it is possible to measure the learning gap, there should follow a process for adjusting the curriculum and standards to make sure that subjects not covered/learned are addressed in the coming years at each grade level.

Lastly, there are questions and concerns we hope will be addressed about how a lack of effective MCAS testing will impact the Adams state university scholarships, as well as the Boston-specific topic of how either administering the test or not would affect the exam school admissions procedure in Boston in the coming years.

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