

Summary of Massachusetts House Bill No. 01938

An Act to Expand Access to the MCAS Appeals Process

Presented by State Representative Elizabeth A. Malia

Why this Bill is an Improvement Over the Current MCAS Appeal Process

- Provides all students with expanded access to the appeals process
- Mandates the use of multiple sources of data in appeals
- Ensures that parents and students will be informed of their right to appeal

Major Features of the Bill

- Any student is eligible to file an appeal who has failed the MCAS or MCAS Alternative Assessment at least one time
- Multiple sources of information pertaining to the student's knowledge or skill in the subject area will be included in the appeal process, including work samples and other evidence of academic achievement
- No minimum attendance is required to file an appeal
- Parents and students must be notified of their right to an appeal
- If requested by the student or parent, every school district must provide an advocate to help assist students in the appeal process
- Every school district must have a coordinator for the appeals process
- The Commissioner shall grant the appeal for any student if there is preponderance of evidence that the student has attained the minimum required knowledge and skills for a high school diploma in MCAS related subjects
- The Commissioner must submit a report annually that includes the total number of appeals filed and the disposition of each appeal

House Bill No. 01938 will expand access to the appeals process and rely on multiple data sources. It will provide students with a fair appeals process by which they can demonstrate their knowledge and skills. Each year, approximately 3,000 high school seniors, including 2,000 students with disabilities, fail to pass the MCAS. The Bill will provide these students with an opportunity to demonstrate that they have attained the academic competencies required for a high school diploma.