

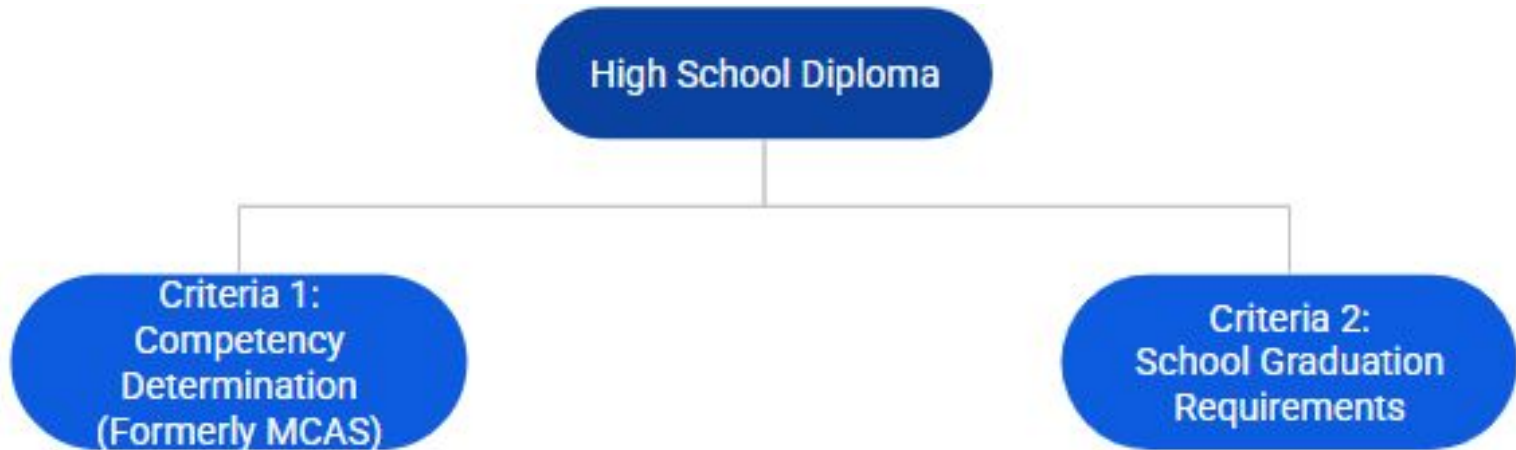


Competency Determination

Background: What is Competency Determination

- Competency Determination (CD) is a state level requirement for high school graduation that ensures students have mastered a core set of skills and knowledge aligned to 10th grade standards.
- Following the passage of Ballot Question 2 in November of 2024, MCAS can no longer be used for CD.
- Last year, the Somerville School Committee passed a *temporary one year* CD requirement, while we waited for more guidance from the state.
- Over the summer, we received new guidance from DESE and have met with admin from the District, SHS, and Full Circle to work on developing a new local CD policy based on the guidance.
- This year, all districts are required to develop a new local CD policy based on new DESE guidance, and that policy must be approved by the School Committee by December 31, 2025.

Background: State Requirements for High School Diploma



Shift in Language in Massachusetts State Law [M.G.L. c. 69, § 1D \(i\)](#)

Before November 2024 Ballot Question Two	Current Language
<p>“The Competency Determination shall be based on the academic standards and curriculum frameworks for tenth graders in the areas of mathematics, science and technology, history and social science, foreign languages, and English, and shall represent a determination that a particular student has demonstrated mastery of a common core of skills, competencies and knowledge in these areas [as measured by the 10th grade ELA, Math and Science MCAS Exams.]”</p>	<p>The “competency determination” shall be based on the academic standards and curriculum frameworks for tenth graders in the areas of mathematics, science and technology, history and social science, foreign languages, and English, and shall represent a determination that a particular student has demonstrated mastery of a common core of skills, competencies and knowledge in these areas, as measured by the assessment instruments described in section one I <u>by satisfactorily completing coursework that has been certified by the student’s district as showing 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 described in section one I administered in 2023, and in any additional areas determined by the board.</u> Satisfaction of the requirements of the competency determination shall be a condition for high school graduation.</p>

Updated Competency Determination Requirements

As described in the new regulations, the CD represents two accomplishments: showing a mastery of skills in English language arts, mathematics, and science; and the satisfactory completion of relevant coursework aligned to the standards measured by the high school English language arts, mathematics, and science MCAS assessments administered in 2023.



Show Mastery

To show mastery, a student must successfully complete in accordance with the district's grading policy:

1. The final assessment for a course; or
2. A capstone or portfolio project; or
3. An equivalent measure identified in the district's CD policy.

Satisfactorily Complete Coursework

To satisfactorily complete coursework, a student must earn full credit in accordance with the district's grading policy in the courses listed in the table on the next slide.

Coursework Requirements

Table 1: Coursework Requirements

Content Area	Coursework Requirements	Notes
English Language Arts	The equivalent of two years of high school English language arts courses.	To satisfy this course requirement, the English Language Arts courses must be taken in grades 9-12.
Mathematics	The equivalent of one year of both Algebra I and Geometry courses, or the equivalent of one year of both Integrated Math I and Integrated Math II. Whether to follow an Algebra/Geometry or Integrated Math I/II course sequence is determined by the district, but the equivalent length of the courses must still be met.	Middle school math courses may be certified by the district as meeting the coursework requirement for the mathematics component of the CD. Districts must confirm that the course aligns to the high school Algebra I/Geometry/Integrated Math I/Integrated Math II standards as listed in the 2017 Massachusetts Mathematics Curriculum Framework.
Science	The equivalent of one year of any one of the following disciplines: Biology, Physics, Chemistry, or Technology/Engineering.	To satisfy this course requirement, the science course must be taken in grades 9-12.
U.S. History (beginning with the graduating class of 2027)	The equivalent of a one-year United States history course.	To satisfy this course requirement, the U.S. History course must be taken in grades 9-12.

Policy must also have:

- Considerations for students with **disabilities and English learners**;
- Considerations for **late-enrolling students**;
- A description of the limited instances in which the district may use **MCAS scores** to determine competency;
- The process by which a **student can appeal** the district's decision to award or deny a CD; and,
- The process by which a current or former student may **request a transcript review**

Points for consideration

- Students **who met the CD standard** in English language arts, mathematics, and/or science prior to January 3, 2025 (i.e., students who earned a CD through a regular or retest administration of the MCAS, or through a DESE appeal process) **retain that benefit.**
- Our goal is to craft a policy that **meets the requirements while allowing for appropriate adaptability in the future.**
- We are drafting a policy that has a **progression** starting with the class of 2026 as to not make sudden shifts in practice.
- The state is currently considering revising graduation requirements. *That is different than CD, but may impact practice in future years.*

Next Steps

- At our next Full School Committee Meeting (11/3), the District will share a drafted policy.



Competency Determination