

**APPENDIX W**  
**MCAS-ALT ACHIEVEMENT STANDARDS AND**  
**DESCRIPTORS**

# Grade-Level and Alternate Academic Achievement Standards and Descriptors

For each student who takes the standard MCAS tests, one of the following *grade-level academic achievement standards (levels)* will be reported in each content area.

## Grades 3–10 (MCAS “Next-Generation” Grade-Level Academic Achievement Standards for ELA, Mathematics, and High School Biology and Introductory Physics):

- **Not Meeting Expectations**—Students performing at this level did not meet grade-level expectations in this subject. The school, in consultation with the student’s parent/guardian, should determine the coordinated academic assistance and/or additional instruction the student needs to succeed in this subject.
- **Partially Meets Expectations**—Students performing at this level partially meet grade-level expectations for knowledge, skills, and understanding. These students may need coordinated assistance and/or additional instruction to succeed at the next grade level.
- **Meeting Expectations**—Students performing at this level meet grade-level expectations for knowledge, skills, and understanding, and are academically prepared to succeed at the next grade level.
- **Exceeding Expectations**—Students performing at this level exceed grade-level expectations for knowledge, skills, and understanding, and are academically well prepared to succeed at the next grade level.

## High School Chemistry and Technology/Engineering (MCAS “Legacy” Grade-Level Academic Achievement Standards):

- **Needs Improvement**—Students demonstrate a **partial understanding of grade-level subject matter** and solve some simple problems.
- **Proficient**—Students demonstrate a solid understanding of challenging grade-level subject matter and solve a wide variety of problems.
- **Advanced**—Students demonstrate a **comprehensive understanding of challenging grade-level subject matter** and provide sophisticated solutions to complex problems.

For each student who takes the MCAS-Alt, one of the following *alternate academic achievement standards (levels)* will be reported in each content area.

## Grades 3–10 (Alternate Assessments Based on Alternate Achievement Standards)

- **Awareness**—Students demonstrate **very little understanding** of standards and core knowledge topics contained in the Massachusetts curriculum framework for the content area. Students require extensive prompting and assistance, and their performance is mostly inaccurate.
- **Emerging**—Students demonstrate a **simple understanding that is below grade-level expectations** of a limited number of standards and core knowledge topics contained in the Massachusetts curriculum framework for the content area. Students require frequent prompting and assistance, and their performance is limited and inconsistent.
- **Progressing**—Students demonstrate a **partial understanding that is below grade-level expectations** of selected standards and core knowledge topics contained in the Massachusetts curriculum framework for the content area. Students are steadily learning new knowledge, skills, and concepts. Students require minimal prompting and assistance, and their performance is basically accurate.
- While not technically an achievement level, a score of **Incomplete** will be given if **insufficient evidence and information was included** to allow an achievement level to be determined.



## Alternate Academic Achievement Standards

The state's alternate academic achievement standards (*Awareness, Emerging, Progressing*) and their descriptors reflect the collaboration, input, and professional judgment of numerous stakeholders who have affirmed that these achievement levels represent the highest possible standards achievable by students taking the MCAS-Alt; and that these standards are appropriate and aligned to ensure that a student who meets those standards is on track to pursue productive post-secondary education, vocational training, and/or competitive integrated employment.

