

Excerpt from School Leader's Guide to the 2016 Accountability Determinations, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education,
<http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ease/accountability/annual-reports/school-leaders-guide.pdf>

Assessment participation

In 2016, assessment participation will be calculated two ways for use in school and district accountability determinations. First, the 2016 participation rate for each subgroup in each subject area test will be calculated. If the actual 2016 participation rate is lower than 95 percent for any group in any subject, that rate will be compared to the average of the most recent two years of assessment participation data for that group and subject. The higher of the two resulting rates will be factored into the assignment of the school or district's 2016 accountability and assistance level according to the rules below. Any district or school with less than 95 percent participation for any student group on any of the assessments is ineligible for classification into Level 1 and is, at a minimum, classified into Level 2. Any district or school with less than 90 percent participation for any student group is ineligible for classification into Levels 1 and 2. School participation consequences are also applied to districts, with the potential for a district to be classified into a level independent of the level of its schools.

Participation requirements for each of the assessments are as follows: ·

MCAS and PARCC:

State law requires that all students in the tested grades who are educated with Massachusetts public funds participate in grade-level MCAS or PARCC tests that correspond with the grade in which they are reported to the Department's Student Information Management System (SIMS). This includes students with disabilities, English language learners (ELLs), and out-placed students. As such, any student who is absent for one or more test sessions will be reported as a nonparticipant and will count against the participation calculation in the aggregate and in any subgroup of which the student is a member, with one exception: for students who are in their first year of U.S. schooling, schools have the option of administering ELA MCAS or PARCC tests to first-year ELL students. However, first-year ELL students must participate in mathematics and science MCAS or PARCC tests for diagnostic purposes. Their results are not included in school and district accountability calculations. ·

ACCESS:

To comply with federal and state laws, all ELL students are required to participate in the ACCESS for ELLs English language acquisition assessment. ACCESS participation is required for all ELL students in addition to each of the MCAS or PARCC tests scheduled for their grades, regardless of the program and services they are receiving. This includes first-year ELL students, who may be exempt from ELA MCAS or PARCC testing in their first year of U.S. schooling. Any students designated in SIMS as an ELL or first-year ELL student that does not take ACCESS will be reported as a nonparticipant and will count against the participation calculation in the aggregate and in any subgroup of which the student is a member.

2016 Hold Harmless Provision and Assessment Participation

Any school with less than 95 percent participation for any student group in any subject area assessment is ineligible for classification into Level 1, and any school with less than 90 percent participation for any student group is ineligible for classification into Levels 1 and 2. The hold harmless provision does not apply to assessment participation, regardless of the assessment administered in 2016.

The DESE has not yet released the details of how the hold harmless provision will interact with assessment participation in 2017.