

## Assessments at RPDC

At Roxbury Prep, we believe assessments are crucial to ensuring our students' academic success. All Roxbury Prep campuses hold assessments throughout the school year to help gauge learning, ensure all scholars are on track to graduate, and to allow us to provide additional academic support for students. Roxbury Prep uses both internal and external assessments to help drive our scholars' success. Roxbury Prep administers both our Interim Assessments (or IAs) and the MCAS. Below is more detailed information about each exam.

### Interim Assessments

**What are IAs?** IAs are challenging, standards-based assessments, and they count for 25% of each scholar's overall quarterly grade. While each subject test is different, there are common habits and strategies that scholars can use to be successful. Primarily, scholars should use the same strategies that they practice in class every day, such as reading with a focus question in ELA and History, using MOLE and CUBs in Math, and referring to vocabulary words in Science. During the exams, scholars are encouraged to make every minute count by showing all their work, underlining evidence, and checking to ensure that they have answered the entire question accurately and completely.

**Why does Roxbury Prep administer IAs?** The goal of these exams is to assess how well scholars have learned the skills and content from the previous six weeks of classroom instruction and are invaluable in helping staff determine what we can do better so that our scholars are on the path for grade level mastery. Additionally, IAs prepare our scholars for the state exams they will take in the spring, and long term, the SATs and other rigorous exams that serve as gateways to college admissions.

**When are IAs administered?** IAs are administered five times a year, each school year to all students at Roxbury Prep. Interim Assessments are given in October, December, January, March and June. Each round of Interim Assessments (IAs) are comprised of assessments in Literacy, Math, History, and Science, except for IA#4 which solely focuses on Math.

**If my child is absent and misses an IA, can they make up the exam?** Each IA cycle includes a round of make-up exams to ensure that all scholars can take the exams. If a child is ill on an IA day, or needs to miss the exam for any reason, families should contact the main office at 617-858-2300 to let the school know that their child will not be present for the exam.

### MCAS

**What is the MCAS?** MCAS stands for Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System. Taken by all public schools in the state of Massachusetts, the MCAS was developed to create a standard K-12 assessment that aligns to the Common Core State Standards. Each year, the MCAS assessment shows our students' current performance and pinpoints what they need to learn to be ready for the next grade level, high school and college or careers.

MCAS assessments are taken in ELA (all grades), Math (all grades) and Science (grades 5 and 8 only).

**Why do students take the MCAS?** These assessments provide a great opportunity for scholars to demonstrate their ability to read, write, craft and defend arguments, compute, evaluate, problem solve, and apply their scientific knowledge. MCAS are rigorous exams that

serve to assess students' mastery of curriculum and provide teachers with data to measure growth and student learning.

**When is the MCAS?** For middle school students across the state of Massachusetts, the MCAS is administered from April through May of each school year.

**What supports are offered at school to better prepare our students for the MCAS?** Roxbury Prep undertakes several measures to ensure all students are well-prepared for the MCAS exam. RPDC currently offer the following:

- ✓ Common Core Aligned Curriculum: Lessons and curriculum are rigorously aligned to the Common Core Standards and MCAS tested content, which means students are preparing for the MCAS each and every day! As we get closer to the MCAS, lessons include MCAS simulations on the computer to ensure students are confident navigating the online platform and using the testing tools.
- ✓ Interim Assessments: Our quarterly Interim Assessments mirror the MCAS in content, testing time, and types of questions, which helps ensure students feel comfortable and confident during the MCAS in April and May.
- ✓ Small Group Tutoring (SGT): SGT is highly targeted tutoring that takes place during the school day. Most students receive 2 hours of ELA and 2 hours of Math tutoring each week to help push them to the next level of proficiency. Students take short weekly quizzes so that teachers can track progress in real time.

**How can I help prepare my child for the MCAS?** Parents can help their child get MCAS-ready by doing the following:

- ✓ Daily, on-time attendance: The easiest way to ensure your child is ready for the MCAS is to ensure they are at school every day to take advantage of the in-school supports and receive daily instruction! Students are currently receiving small group tutoring four days per week in the afternoon.
- ✓ Daily Homework Check: Check that your student has completed all their homework! Scholars should bring home 4 pieces of homework every night.
- ✓ Look closely at your scholar's progress report and attend report card conferences to give you an opportunity to find out from your student's teachers where he or she needs to improve.
- ✓ Take a Practice Test: You and your child can access MCAS practice tests at home or on your phone by visiting <https://mcas.pearson.com/practice-tests/>

**Does my child need to pass the MCAS to move on to the next grade?** No. The MCAS assessment is meant to give parents and teachers detailed information about your child's current proficiency, but the results of the state test do not impact your student's promotion to the next grade level.

**If my child has an IEP, will he or she receive accommodations?** Yes. Students with IEP's, 504 plans, and who are English Language Learners can receive MCAS accommodations. If you have questions about your child's specific accommodations, please connect the main office so we can connect you with our IN team!