



Boston Public Schools

**Request for Policy  
Flexibility During COVID-19  
Pandemic**

Dr. Brenda Cassellius, Superintendent

# Policies for temporary flexibility

We are requesting temporary flexibility of the following BPS policies during SY2020-21:

- 1) Promotion / Retention Policy  
*Includes attendance and assessment requirements*
- 2) Graduation Policy
- 3) Advanced Work Class

[Temporary flexibility of policies for SY 20-21](#)

## Promotion & Retention

### Current Policy

- [Promotion Policy](#) implemented by [CAO-01 Circular](#) (2008)
- Students are promoted to the next grade level based on earning a passing grade in identified classes and earning a passing score on identified assessments

### Key Changes

- Pause the current policy for one year
- Final sign off of retention by school leader
- Students with academic concerns receive a personalized Student Success Plan
- Summer learning provided to students whose parents request consideration for retention
- Summer school, tutoring or other supplemental learning may be required

### Relevant Data

- 1,117 students were identified to be retained between June and October 2020, compared to 1,984 students the prior year.
- Black and Latinx male students, as well as SWD and ELs, account for a disproportionate share of retentions.

## June to October 2020 Student Retentions by Race/Ethnicity and Sex

Race/Ethnicity	Sex	Percent of Retentions
Asian	Female	1.3%
	Male	2.0%
Black	Female	16.3%
	Male	22.6%
Latinx	Female	19.1%
	Male	29.5%
Nat. American	Female	0.0%
	Male	0.1%
Other	Female	0.5%
	Male	1.3%
White	Female	2.7%
	Male	4.6%

## Attendance

### Current Policy

[Promotion Policy](#) (containing attendance requirements) implemented by [ACA-18 Circular](#) (2019)

- A student must attend school for at least a half-day to be marked “present” (~3 hrs)
- A student with 3+ unexcused absences in a term or 12+ unexcused absences for the school year will be graded “No Credit” and referred to Student Support Team (SST)
- Principals bear final responsibility for improving attendance in their schools and ensuring staff compliance
- Teachers record attendance daily

### Key Changes

[SY20-21 Protocol for Reopening Student Attendance](#)

- DESE summer memo on attendance clarified that normal attendance expectations and policies apply for SY20-21
- Teachers are required to take attendance for remote and in-person students daily
- Teachers should identify alternative methods to determine asynchronous attendance; new DESE structured learning time requirements require daily synchronous learning

### Relevant Data

- The average daily attendance rate (ADA) for SY20-21 is 90%, which is slightly lower than previous years
- ADA ranged from 91.9% to 92.9% between 2014-15 and 2019-20

Grade	Avg. Daily Attendance Rate
K0	85%
K1	89%
K2	90%
1	92%
2	94%
3	94%
4	94%
5	94%
6	92%
7	92%
8	92%
9	88%
10	84%
11	82%
12	80%
SP	82%

Race	Avg. Daily Attendance Rate
Asian	96%
Black	88%
Latinx	88%
Other	90%
White	95%

## Assessment

### Current Policy

[Promotion Policy](#) (implemented by [CAO-2 Circular \(2008\)](#))

- Students must pass certain benchmarks in ELA and Math to be promoted to the next grade level and earn a passing grade
- Students who do not meet at least one benchmark in required grade levels must attend a summer program
- Students in grades 11 and 12 who have not passed MCAS should attend a summer program

### Key Changes

- For SY20-21, schools are expected to administer a common ELA and Math assessment in each grade level at least twice
- Schools may use a district-supported assessment (MAP Fluency, MAP Growth, BPS Interims) or choose their own assessment

### Relevant Data

- MAP Fluency and MAP Growth Reading: Across grades K2-11, 23,257 students (53%) participated across 99 schools in the Fall window.
- BPS Interims: 29% of BPS students in grades 2-11 participated in ELA Interim 1 across 62 schools and 33% of BPS students in grades 2-11 participated in Math Interim 1 across 64 schools.

## Participation by Grade Level

Grade	MAP Fall	ELA Interim	Math Interim
K2	70%	N/A	N/A
1st	74%	N/A	N/A
2nd	79%	27%	32%
3rd	73%	41%	46%
4th	76%	48%	54%
5th	73%	51%	53%
6th	69%	39%	46%
7th	44%	32%	34%
8th	42%	30%	31%
9th	18%	7%	13%
10th	13%	11%	12%
11th	9%	9%	15%

## Participation by Race

Race	MAP Fall	ELA Interim	Math Interim
Asian	53%	22%	25%
Black	50%	31%	33%
Latinx	50%	30%	34%
Other	60%	30%	35%
White	60%	26%	32%

## Graduation

### Current Policy

[Graduation Policy](#) (implemented by [CAO-01 Circular](#) (2008)); Students are required to satisfy the MA State Competency Determination (CD) requirements by passing the MCAS in ELA, Math, and Science

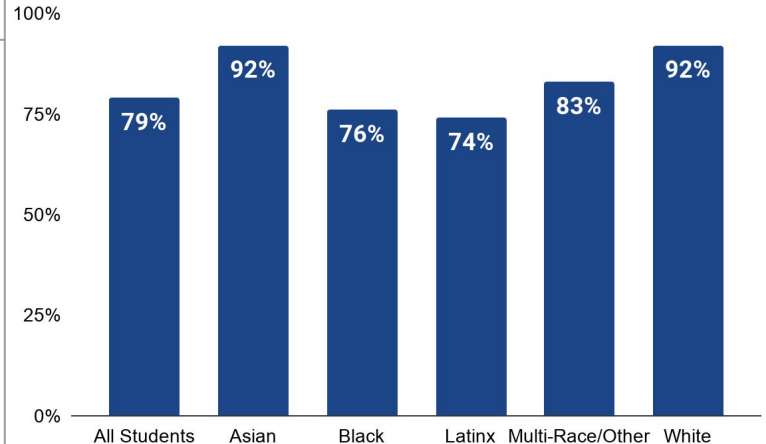
### Key Changes

- In Spring 2020, BESE authorized an emergency waiver for the CD requirement by which students may demonstrate competency in a tested subject through district certification of student completion of an aligned course. BESE will be voting on 1/26 to extend the modified process to the class of 2021.
- 12th grade students who earned “incomplete” for Term 3 are guaranteed the opportunity to participate in summer remote learning and improve their Term 3 grade

### Relevant Data

- 79% of the current senior class (Class of 2021) have satisfied all CD requirements
- 14 MCAS appeals have been submitted so far this year, with planned submission of 50 more in February. Additional appeals may be submitted through the spring.

### Percentage of Class of 2021 Who Have Met the Competency Determination Requirements by Race



## Advanced Work Class (AWC)

### Current Policy

#### [AWC Policy](#)

- Eligibility for AWC is determined by the student's scores on the TerraNova assessment, which is offered in the fall to all 3rd grade students. It is also offered on select weekend test dates during the fall for students in grade 4 and grade 5 without previous TerraNova scores.

### Key Changes

- Pause the current test requirement policy for one year impacting five schools — Condon, Jackson-Mann, Murphy, Ohrenberger, and Quincy Lower
- School leaders will select from two pathway options for 4th grade AWC assignment. No new students will be assigned in the grade 5 and 6 classes.
  - All students within the 4th grade will access AWC program rigor including access to a World Language and curriculum support
  - Parents of students currently enrolled in an AWC school can opt into AWC up to the number of seats available. If requests exceed seat availability, schools will make the decision on AWC enrollment.
- Launch a working group to look at long-term recommendations in light of declining demand and enrollment and equity considerations

### Relevant Data

- The number of students entering AWC in 4th grade has declined by over half in the last seven years, from 303 in SY14-15 to 116 in SY20-21, for which there was 141 applicants
- Fewer than 20 students per year enroll in AWC from outside the district, and the majority of students enrolling in AWC come from the same school (53%).
- Over 90% of the 116 students entering AWC in 4th grade this year are enrolled in three schools: Murphy K-8, Quincy Elementary, and Ohrenberger

For SY20-21, 453 students received invitations and **116 enrolled** in 4th grade AWC. 60% of invitations went to White and Asian students. 71% of students enrolled are White and Asian.

SY20-21 4th Grade AWC

