



Updated Boston Prep Competency Determination Policy - Approved December 12, 2025

Overview

In November 2024, Massachusetts voters approved Ballot Question #2, eliminating the statewide requirement for high school students to pass MCAS exams in ELA, Math, and Science/Technology/Engineering to graduate. DESE updated its Competency Determination (CD) policy, requiring schools to establish local CD policies aligned with state guidelines. This policy applies to the Class of 2026 and beyond.

At Boston Prep, our mission is to prepare students to succeed in four-year colleges and to embody, in thought and action, lifelong ethical growth. Central to this mission is ensuring that our students graduate equipped with the academic mastery, critical thinking skills, and character necessary to thrive in higher education and beyond.

In light of recent changes to the statewide graduation requirements, Boston Prep reaffirms our commitment to rigorous academic standards and has developed an updated local graduation requirements and competency determination policy to reflect this standard of excellence.

The purpose of this policy is to identify clearly the requirements students must fulfill to earn a competency determination.

Competency Determination Requirements

Satisfactorily completing coursework shall mean a student earns full credit in accordance with Boston Prep's grading policy, which requires students to earn a minimum year-end average of 70. The final grade is based on performance on regular coursework, including daily work, homework, quizzes, tests, essays, and projects; as well as performance on an interim assessment at the conclusion of each of the first three quarters and an end-of-course assessment at the end of the fourth quarter.

English Language Arts

For English Language Arts, the student must: (i) satisfactorily complete coursework in the equivalent of two years of high school English Language Arts courses. The following Boston Prep courses count toward the competency determination in English Language Arts: English I, English II, English III, and English IV, AP Language and Composition, and AP Literature and Composition. A student will show mastery in English Language Arts by either (i) demonstrating proficiency in ELA through successful completion of all course requirements. This includes reading comprehension, analytical writing, vocabulary development, research skills, and performance on interim assessments; or (ii) earning a cumulative passing average on the three (3) interim assessments and the end-of-course assessment; or (iii) earning a passing score (3+) on the AP English Language or AP English Literature College Board exam.

Mathematics

For mathematics, the student must: (i) satisfactorily complete coursework in one year of both Algebra I and Geometry. The following Boston Prep courses count toward the competency determination in

Mathematics: Algebra I, Algebra IB, Geometry, Accelerated Geometry, Geometry B. A student will show mastery in Mathematics by either (i) demonstrating proficiency in grade-level mathematics concepts and practice, including problem solving, reasoning, procedural fluency, and application, by earning a passing year-end average of at least 70; or (ii) earning a cumulative passing average on the three (3) interim assessments and the end-of-course assessment

Science

For science, the student must: (i) satisfactorily complete coursework in the equivalent of one year of Physics; or (ii) satisfactorily complete coursework in one year of Biology; or (iii) satisfactorily complete coursework in one year of Chemistry. The following Boston Prep courses count toward the competency determination in science: Pre-AP Biology, Physics, Pre-AP Chemistry, and AP Biology. A student will show mastery in science by demonstrating proficiency in scientific knowledge and practices, including conceptual understanding, data analysis, scientific inquiry, and application of core disciplinary ideas, by earning a passing year-end average of at least 70; or (ii) earning a cumulative passing average on the three (3) interim assessments and the end-of-course assessment; or (iii) earning a passing score (3+) on the AP Biology exam.

U.S. History

Beginning with the graduating class of 2027, the student must satisfactorily complete coursework in one year of U.S. History. The following Boston Prep courses count toward the competency determination in U.S. History: U.S. History I, U.S. History II, and AP U.S. History. A student will show mastery in U.S. History by either (i) demonstrating proficiency in the key themes, concepts, and historical thinking skills outlined in the MA History and Social Science Framework for US History. Mastery is evidenced by earning a passing year-end average of at least 70 through sustained performance on coursework, including analysis of primary and secondary sources, argument writing, chronological reasoning, and consent based assessments; or (ii) earning a cumulative passing average on the three (3) interim assessments and the end-of-course assessment; or (iii) earning a passing score (3+) on the AP US History exam.

Additional Requirements

In alignment with our district's mission, a student must also demonstrate successful completion of a Senior Ethics Defense, the culmination of their ethics course studies. The Senior Ethics Defense includes a written paper and an oral presentation in front of a teacher panel. Successful completion is assessed via a rubric that evaluates the student's ability to articulate and defend his/her personal code of ethics. In accordance with Boston Prep's grading policy, a student must earn an overall minimum grade of 70 on this capstone assignment.

Additional Considerations

Students with disabilities

Boston Prep provides students with disabilities, including MA students receiving a publicly funded education in an out-of-district day or residential school, with an equal opportunity to meet the CD requirements through a variety of specialized supports, modifications, and, in some cases, alternative demonstration methods. Supports may include:

- IEP-aligned accommodations for instruction and assessment

- Specially designed instruction to access grade-level standards
- Alternate assessments (MCAS-Alt) where appropriate
- Adjusted pacing and reteaching
- Modified assignments or scaffolded performance tasks
- Collaboration between general education, special education, and related service providers
- Transition planning and post-secondary readiness supports

All decisions regarding assessment participation and the demonstration of competency are based on the student's IEP and determined by the IEP Team.

English Learners

Boston Prep provides English learners equal opportunity to meet the CD requirements, including specialized supports. Boston Prep uses a Sheltered English Instruction (SEI) model for English Language Development (ELD) classes, co-taught history courses, and SEI core content classes.

Boston Prep high school students take their ELD classes during an Elective block, ensuring they have access to the full range of content courses that the high school offers. Each high school ELD class (9 ELD, 10 ELD, 11-12 ELD) is offered multiple times per day to ensure schedule flexibility for ML students.

Additionally, Boston Prep offers various academic support services and accommodations, including:

- After-school tutoring (Title III program)
- Student goal-setting and progress monitoring
- Assessment supports according to the student profile, including graphic organizers, extended time, and simplified instructions.
- Classroom supports according to the student profile, including word-to-word bilingual dictionaries, graphic organizers, and extended time.

Late-Enrolling Students

Boston Prep supports late-enrolling students to meet the requirements of the competency determination through transcript reviews, summer school, and virtual learning through an online provider.

- Academic Planning: development of an individualized plan outlining remaining CD requirements and timelines
- Progress Monitoring and Check-In: Regular reviews with their advisor and the persistence team to ensure students remain on track toward
- Credit Recovery and Competency-Based Options: Opportunities to complete required content at an accelerated pace when appropriate.

Appeals Process

Students and families may appeal CD decisions. The process includes:

- Notification in writing of CD denial and right to appeal.
- Within ten (10) business days of receipt of a *Competency Determination Appeal Form* submitted by a parent or guardian, the district will schedule a hearing.

- Hearing with the Chief Academic Officer and the Senior Director of Support Services (if applicable), at which time the parent/guardian and student have the opportunity to present evidence of mastery.
- Decision communicated in writing within ten (10) business days with a final CD determination, with next steps for graduation or additional support.

Diploma Request Process for Previously Enrolled Students

Eligible students in previous classes who did not earn a diploma as a result of failing to meet the state's CD requirement may request a CD Review by completing a *CD Review Form*, available on the Boston Prep website. Upon receipt, the High School Principal, Chief Academic Officer, Director of Persistence, Senior Director of Special Education and Related Services (if applicable), and Director of Multilingual Education (if applicable) will convene to review the request, audit the transcript, and make a determination. The decision will be communicated in writing to the eligible student within ten (10) business days.

Certifications

The Boston Prep Board of Trustees approved this policy on December 12, 2025.

The policy has been shared with all students, families/guardians, and district stakeholders via email on January 7, 2026.

The policy was made publicly available in multiple languages on January 7, 2026, posted on the Boston Prep website at bostonprep.org

Boston Prep Local Graduation Requirements

Boston Prep defines a credit as mastery of course objectives in a full-year course. Courses that meet less frequently than five days per week for the full year carry 0.5 or 0.25 credits, depending on meeting frequency and duration.

Credit Requirements

A Boston Prep student must earn a total of 24 credits in grades 9-12 to meet local graduation requirements.

| Subject Area | Class of 2028 and Beyond |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Mathematics | 4 |
| English Language Arts | 4 |
| Science | 4 |
| History and Social Science | 3 |
| World Language | 2 |
| Health and Physical Education | 1 (0.25 each year) Need to pass all 4 years |
| Arts | 1 |

In addition to the credit requirements listed above, a Boston Prep student must also earn four (4) general elective credits and one (1) credit in Ethics.

Additional Requirements

Above and beyond the credit requirements outlined in the previous section, a Boston Prep student must also complete three (3) summer enrichment opportunities. All Boston Prep high school students are required to participate in high-quality summer enrichment programs that promote their personal, academic, and professional growth. Students must be involved in a program that allows them to gain skills and knowledge, as well as grow personally and ethically.

In years past, examples of qualified summer enrichment programs included: participating in an academic camp or pre-college program, completing an internship program, volunteering a minimum of 40 hours of community service, enrolling in a leadership training institute or camp, or obtaining a summer position through the SuccessLink or ABCD youth employment program, and positions in retail, sales, food industry, etc. did not count towards the summer enrichment requirement. Starting in the summer 2022, programs and job opportunities completed by students over the summer can earn the summer enrichment requirement credit, pending approval from the Director of Extracurricular & External Partners.

