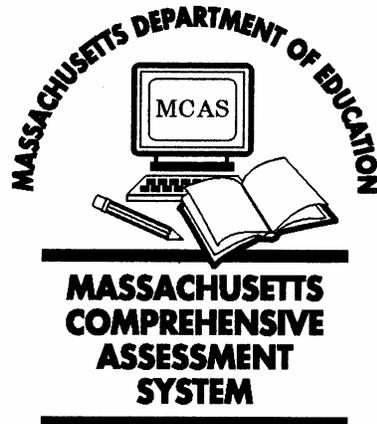


Alternate Assessment for Students with Disabilities



2008 Educator's Manual for MCAS-Alt

This publication is available on the Department of Education Web page at:
www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html.

Massachusetts Department of Education
Fall 2007



MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

This document was prepared by the Massachusetts Department of Education.
Jeffrey Nellhaus, Acting Commissioner of Education

Copyright © 2007 Massachusetts Department of Education

Permission is hereby granted to copy any or all parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes.

Please credit the "Massachusetts Department of Education."

This document is printed on recycled paper.

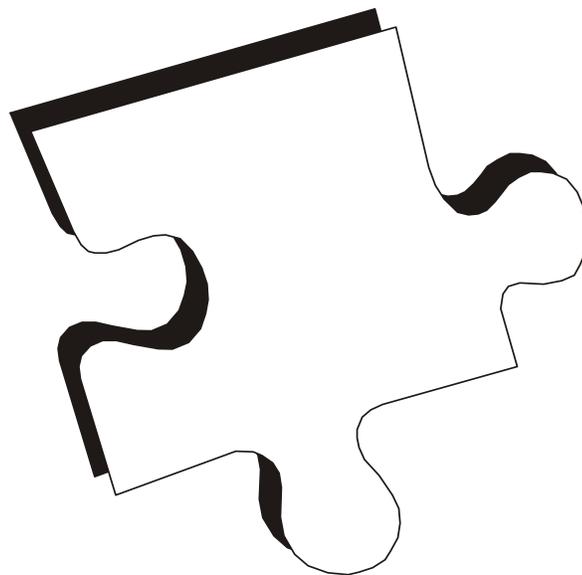
350 Main Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148-5023

781-338-3000

www.doe.mass.edu

PART III

Portfolio Evidence



Portfolio Contents

A. Required Forms

The student's MCAS-Alt portfolio must include the elements listed below. **Do not include the student's IEP**, diagnostic assessments, or other information related to the student's disability. All forms may be photocopied from originals found in the Required Forms, and/or Product Description Labels and Blank Data Charts sections of this manual, or forms may be downloaded using MCAS-Alt Forms and Graphs Online at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt.

- An **artistic cover** designed and produced by the student inserted in the front window of the three-ring portfolio binder (this is encouraged, but not required)
- **Portfolio Cover Sheet** containing important information about the student
- **Portfolio Contents Checklist** (optional) verifying the materials being submitted in the portfolio
- **Student's Introduction to the Portfolio** produced as independently as possible by the student using his or her primary mode of communication. This introduction may be written, dictated, or recorded on video or audiotape and should describe "What I want others to know about me as a learner and about my portfolio."
- **Verification Form** signed by the parent(s), guardian, or primary care provider signifying that they have reviewed their child's alternate assessment portfolio or, at minimum, were invited to do so. In the event no signature was obtained, a record of attempts made by the school to invite the parent(s), guardian, or primary care provider to view the portfolio may be substituted for this signed form.
- **Consent Form to Photograph and Audio/Videotape a Student** (a required form if electronic images or recordings are included in the portfolio). This form must be signed by the parent or guardian before electronic recordings can be made. It is not necessary to submit this consent form in the portfolio, but a signed copy must be kept on file at the school. Please do not substitute a "blanket" consent form for this purpose. This form is provided in English and Spanish in the *Required Forms* section of this manual. **Note:** Parental consent is not required for a student to take the MCAS-Alt, only to be recorded digitally, on tape, or in photographs.
- The student's **weekly schedule** that documents that he or she is enrolled in a program of instruction that includes participation in the general academic curriculum.
- **Strand Cover Sheet** related to the set of evidence that addresses a particular outcome in the required standard/strand.
- **Product Descriptions** (optional) attached to each piece of primary evidence that provide required information about each piece. Blank product description labels are provided in the *Product Description Labels/Blank Data Chart* section of this manual, or can be downloaded. If

labels are not used, then the required information must be provided on teacher-designed labels or written directly on each piece of evidence.

B. Primary Evidence

Specific evidence of the student's performance (i.e., primary evidence) must be provided in the portfolio for each content area required for assessment. Primary evidence may include any of the following:

1. **Data charts:** graphs, charts, or tables that measure the student's accuracy and independence in performing tasks related to a skill or outcome in the strand being assessed. Data charts may also summarize the student's performance (i.e., accuracy and independence) on a specific date on several work samples that all address the same skill or outcome.

Note: Data charts **must show that the student has attempted to learn a new skill**, and therefore will *not* be counted as scorable primary evidence when they indicate that a student's performance started at 80-100% accurate *and* 80-100% independent and remained at these levels through the entire data collection period.

See the section on Guidelines for Collecting Data on Student Performance for detailed information on data charts.

2. **Work samples:** items produced by the student during routine instruction, either in the classroom, other school settings, the community, or at home. Work samples provide direct evidence of a student's performance of a standards-based skill or targeted outcome. *Work samples may be scribed by teachers*, in cases where a student typically does not produce paper-and-pencil or other tangible products for the portfolio.
3. **Video clips:** count as primary evidence when they clearly show direct evidence of the student's performance of during one or more standards-based activities. Video clips must be no more than **three minutes in length**. Cassettes and/or DVDs must be clearly labeled with the student's name and SASID and securely attached to the portfolio in a plastic sleeve, binder, or envelope. *Video Description Forms* (or a separate sheet of paper with the information listed on this form) must be included with all videos.

Videos may be submitted either on a **VHS cassette, VHS-compatible mini-cassette (VHS-C), or on a standard DVD**. Other formats will not be scored.

Written consent must be obtained from the parent, guardian, or student (if over 18 years of age) before videotaping a student. If a student's peers are shown in the tape, consent must also be obtained for those students. Consent forms for these purposes are provided in the required forms section of this manual.

4. **Photographs** only in the following cases:
 - when the photo clearly portrays a product that is either three-dimensional, temporary in nature (for example, an exhibit or display), or too large or fragile to include in a portfolio
 - when the photo clearly shows the end-product of an instructional activity
 - when the photo clearly shows the steps, or sequence of steps, in an instructional activity for which a tangible product could not be included in the portfolio (for example, a student arranging a pattern or sequence of objects on a table).

Photographs that document setting, context, or instructional approach, but do not clearly portray a work sample or the end product of instruction, will be considered *secondary* evidence and will contribute to the score in the *Generalized Performance* rubric area.

5. **Audio clips** only in the following cases:

- the student is addressing a skill or outcome related to communication, use of language, or participating in discussion, recitation, or other oral activities; or
- the student gives verbal, rather than written, responses as a necessary and routinely-used instructional accommodation.

Audiotape cassettes and CDs are limited to **three minutes in length**, clearly labeled with the student's name and SASID, and securely attached to the portfolio in a plastic sleeve, binder, or envelope. *Video Description* forms, or a separate sheet of paper listing the information on the form, must be included. If the audiotape is difficult to decipher, a written transcription must be provided.

C. Secondary Evidence

Secondary (or supporting) evidence provides additional descriptive information on (1) the setting and context in which the learning activity occurred, (2) student self-evaluation of his/her performance, or (3) other information from the teacher, parent, other adult, or peer. Secondary evidence should be included, where needed, to adequately describe the student's performance, and must be clearly labeled with the student's name and date of completion.

Secondary evidence may include the following **optional** submissions:

1. **Narrative description** by the teacher or parent describing how the task or activity was conducted and/or what the student was asked to do.
2. **Photographs** of the student engaged in specific tasks or relevant classroom or community activity. Photographs are especially useful in showing the context of the instructional activity. Except as noted above, photographs are considered secondary evidence.
3. **Audiotape** of the student engaged in specific tasks or relevant classroom or community activities. Except as noted above in the audio, audiotapes are considered secondary evidence.
4. **Reflection sheet or self-evaluation** designed by the teacher documenting the student's awareness, perceptions, and self-assessment of work he or she has created, and the learning that occurred as a result. For example, a student's response(s) to questions such as:
 - *What did I do well? What am I good at?*
 - *What did we do? What did I learn?*
 - *How could I do better? Where do I need help?*
 - *What should I work on next? What would I like to learn?*

Placing **stickers** on primary evidence does *not* indicate self-evaluation unless there is evidence that the student has made a choice in his or her selection. The use of open-ended self-evaluation activities and questions is encouraged, as described above.

5. **Letters of support** or notes from employers, counselors, after-school program supervisors, community service providers, peers, or others.

D. Labeling of Evidence

All evidence must include the following information, either on a *Work Description* form attached to each piece (found in the Product Description Labels/Blank Data Chart section of this manual); on a separate piece of paper listing this information; or written directly on each piece:

- student's name
- date of completion of the activity
- percentage of accuracy of the student's performance (or number of correct responses)
- percentage of independence (or frequency of cues and prompts provided)
- a brief description of the activity, which may include relevant information on the setting, instructional approach, name of adult or peer who assisted the student, and other information needed to demonstrate the context of the learning activity.

Required Evidence in Each Strand

Students taking MCAS-Alt must submit a portfolio that includes, at minimum, the primary evidence listed below for each strand (or General Standard in ELA) required for assessment in that grade. It is advisable to **include more than the minimum requirement** in each portfolio strand to reduce the chance that a portfolio will be scored *Incomplete*.

The following evidence must be included in each strand of the portfolio:

- **One Data Chart**

A completed **data chart must be included** that measures the **student's accuracy and independence in performing tasks on at least five different dates** based on a single skill or outcome in the learning standard being assessed.

Data charts must show that the student attempted to learn a new skill. Therefore, data charts will not be scored when they indicate that the student's performance started and remained at 80-100% accurate **and** 80-100% independent throughout the entire data collection period.

Data charts must appear in one of the following formats, examples of which are provided in the Guidelines for Data Collection section of this manual:

- field data chart
- bar graph
- line graph

Blank data charts are provided in the Product Description Labels/Blank Data Chart section of this manual, and are also available at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/. Detailed information on setting up and using data charts can be found in the section of this manual entitled Guidelines for Collecting Data on Student Performance.

- **Two Pieces of Primary Evidence assessing the same skill/outcome as the Data Chart**

At least two pieces of **primary evidence** other than a data chart (see #2-5 in the section on Primary Evidence above) must also be included in each strand of the portfolio. Primary evidence included in a strand must document the student’s performance of **the same skill or outcome identified on the data chart** in that strand. The data chart and two pieces of primary evidence, all of which document the same skill or outcome, form the “core set of evidence” required in each portfolio strand.

Note: Work samples in the portfolio may be included, but are not required, as points on the data chart.

In cases where the student produces little or no tangible work, the following may be substituted for the data chart and two pieces of additional evidence:

- One field data chart
- One bar or line graph that summarizes the same data shown on the field data chart
- One additional piece of primary evidence (other than a data chart)

- **Secondary evidence** (optional): see the section on Secondary Evidence above

Guidelines for Collecting Data on Student Performance

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

At least one instructional data chart is required in each strand in the student's 2008 MCAS-Alt portfolio, consisting either of a *field data chart*, *line graph*, or *bar graph*.

Each data chart must:

- **measure the student's accuracy and independence in performing tasks on at least five different dates based on a single skill or outcome in the learning standard being assessed.**

NEW! Beginning in the 2008-2009 school year, the minimum number of required data points will be increased from five (5) to eight (8).

- be clearly labeled with the student's name, date of each activity, whether each task was performed accurately (correctly), and how frequently cues and prompts were provided to the student.
- provide a brief description of each activity during which data was collected, such as the setting in which it occurred; approach or format of the activity; materials used; and any staff who assisted the student.
- **show evidence that the student was taught a new skill. Therefore, a data chart will not be considered scorable primary evidence if it indicates that a student performed at a level of 80-100% accuracy and 80-100% independence throughout the data collection period.**

Blank data charts are provided in the Product Description Labels and Blank Data Chart section of this manual and may be used as is, or adapted by the teacher. Examples of completed data charts appear at the end of this section.

Introduction

Collecting data on student performance is an essential part of good instruction and ongoing assessment. Instructional data helps educators make valid and objective decisions about what to teach based on what the student has, or has not, already learned, and documents vital information on the effectiveness of instruction already provided. **To be most useful, data should indicate the current level of a student's performance on a given task or activity, as well as document his or her improvement over time.** Observable results should be recorded from the perspective of the original goal or intended outcome for the student.

Data can be collected either during routine classroom instruction or during tasks and activities set up specifically for the purpose of assessing the student. Portfolio products resulting from instructional data collection may include the following:

- **Recording Student Responses**

Each time an activity, task, or trial is conducted that is related to a particular skill, responses can be recorded on a data chart. If a bar or line graph is used, all data recorded on a single date should be summarized at the bottom of the chart. **Data must be collected on at least five different dates, although more than five dates is preferable, in order to determine whether progress has been made, and when the skill has been mastered. On each date, the data must indicate whether a correct response was given (percent of accuracy) and whether the student required a cue or prompt (percent of independence).**

- **Charting Performance on Work Samples**

A large number of related work samples (typically, 10 or more) may be summarized on a graph or chart to show progress toward a targeted or desired outcome. Student work samples created in the classroom, at home, or during other school or community-based activities can be summarized on a chart, provided all are based on the same skill or measurable outcome.

Note: Work samples that are included in the portfolio may also be included as points on a data chart, but this is not required.

- **Narrative Observations**

Written observations or brief narrative descriptions by the teacher may be useful in recalling the nature of the activity and how it was conducted, in order to provide a similar context the next time. Notes can be written directly on the data sheet or directly on each work sample (Work Description Label). The most effective observations are brief and specific (e.g., “Jason used a complete sentence to answer a question for the first time today,” rather than “Jason spoke better today”).

Narrative observations by themselves are not as precise as performance data and therefore are considered *secondary* evidence that supports the actual performance data.

Getting Started

It may take time to find a method of collecting data that is comfortable and suits each educator’s style. Whatever approach is used, certain decisions must be made regarding the process of data collection. Key steps in the process are described below.

Step 1. Clearly define the desired outcome related to learning standards in the subject.

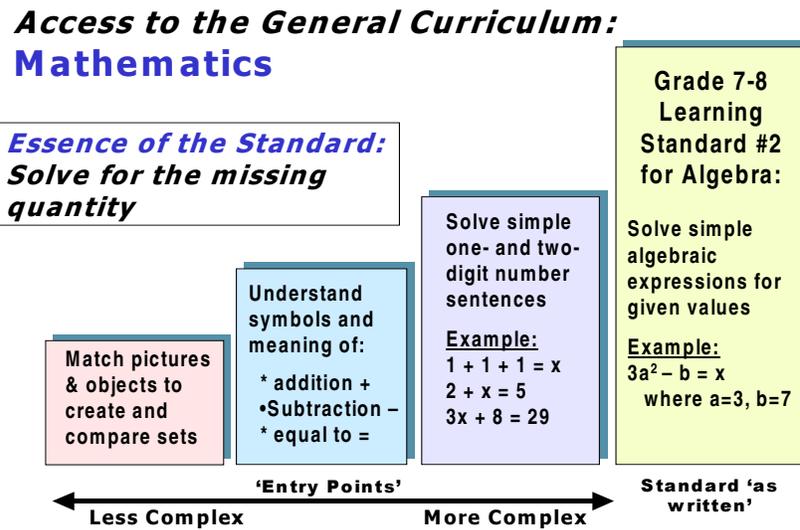
Begin by asking the following questions:

- What knowledge and skills based on the general education curriculum must be taught?
- What will the student be able to do as a result of instruction in this content area?
- How will the level of complexity be adapted for each student? Pre-testing will help identify an appropriate level of difficulty that challenges the student, and identify a baseline performance from which to proceed. Figure 1 illustrates how students in grades 7-8 might address the same grade-level algebra standard at varying levels of complexity.

The Department’s *Resource Guide to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for Students with Disabilities* can be used to determine curriculum goals that sufficiently challenge each student, as shown in Figure 1 on the following page.

Most students with significant disabilities will be able to access the essence of each learning standard by addressing one of several *entry points* listed in the *Resource Guide*. **However, a small number of students with the most complex and significant disabilities may not yet be ready to address academic content, even at the lowest levels. These students may need to focus on goals that allow them to explore tools, materials, and academic content through targeted social, communication, and/or motor skills (“access skills”) practiced during academic activities. For example, a student might practice pushing an electronic switch on cue to indicate whose turn is next during a science activity, or assist a teacher by handing out materials during a math activity, or focus on a story read aloud for increasing periods of time.**

Figure 1
How all students can access the learning standard for Algebra



Step 2. Write the outcome in measurable terms.

For data to be useful, goals must be stated in measurable terms that address the criteria for a successful performance. Measurable goals allow teachers to track student performance and progress relative to the learning standard being assessed. Three discrete steps have been identified in developing measurable outcomes (Lignugaris/Kraft, Marchand-Martella, and Martella, 2001):

- a. **First, identify the *behavior or skill* to be measured.**
 What skill will the student address? Behaviors and/or skills can be taken from the student's IEP or adapted from the curriculum taught to other students in the same grade (for example, Jamie will read sight words correctly).

- b. **Then, identify the *conditions* for learning the skill.**
 How will the student participate in the activity? Determine whether the student needs an adaptation, modification, or accommodation. Presentation of materials and information may need to be adapted to suit individual learning needs, or the method of response by the student may require adjustment to suit his or her communication skills (for example, when presented with sight words paired with pictures, Jamie will sign each word correctly using ASL).

- c. **Finally, identify the *criteria* for mastering the skill.**
 When and how will you know if the student has mastered the skill? For each outcome, criteria for success should be based on a numerical proportion (3 out of 5) or percentage (60%) of the total observations of the targeted skill. In addition, it is useful to determine success over at least three, and preferably more, teaching sessions to be sure the student has truly mastered the skill (for example, when presented with five sight words paired with pictures, Jamie will sign each word with 80% accuracy on at least three occasions).

Another criterion might be to identify the degree to which the student will perform the skill independently, rather than accurately (for example, when presented with sight words paired

with pictures on at least three occasions, Jamie will sign each word independently in four out of five opportunities).

Step 3. Determine where and with whom instruction will occur.

List the activities in which instruction will occur, with whom they will occur, and the performance data that will be collected.

Step 4. Determine the method of *systematic instruction*.

Systematic instruction ensures that learning is the result of deliberate planning and does not occur by chance. Skills will be acquired and generalized by the student most effectively when systematic instruction is used across multiple settings and activities. Two methods of systematic instruction are described below.

a. Time Delay

When a prompt is given during an activity, the student is expected to respond correctly within a predetermined amount of time. Three approaches to time delay are used.

- *Zero-second time delay* is effective for teaching a skill for the first time. The teacher prompts the student and provides the correct response simultaneously. Then, the student is asked to provide the correct response independently. For example, Brian is shown a flashcard of the number 10 while the teacher says, “Brian, this is number ten. What number is this?” The teacher then waits for Brian to repeat the answer.
- *Progressive time delay* is used to determine whether the student has already learned the skill. The teacher prompts the student, without giving the answer, and increases the wait time successively before giving the correct response, (i.e., one-second delay the first time, two-second delay the second time, etc). For example, Brian is shown a flashcard of the number 10. The teacher waits one second for Brian to respond before giving him the correct response. In the next session, the teacher waits an additional second for Brian to respond before giving him the correct response.
- *Constant time delay*, in which wait time remains constant throughout, (e.g., a constant three-second time delay before providing Brian the correct response).

b. System of Least Prompts

For each step of an activity, the student is expected to respond correctly within a predetermined number of seconds, after which successive prompts are introduced, beginning with the least intrusive. If the student responds correctly without a prompt, he or she proceeds to the next step of the activity. If the student does not respond correctly, the least intrusive prompt (i.e., verbal) is given to the student. The teacher again awaits the student’s response within the predetermined time frame. This process continues, using successively more intrusive prompts each time (i.e., verbal, gestural, then physical) until the student responds correctly or when all prompts are utilized and the student has not responded correctly.

Step 5. Set up a system for recording data on the student’s performance.

Measure only one skill or outcome on each chart. The chart should be simple to use and allow for routine collection of data. Teachers can design their own data collection sheet or use one of the three blank charts provided in this manual. The chart should be clear and understandable to others, with all necessary information included and labeled (see Figure 2):

- student’s name and dates on which performances occurred
- content area, strand, learning standard, and measurable outcome

- accuracy of performance and whether prompts were used (both are necessary for data charts to be useful to the teacher and scorable for the MCAS-Alt)
- a key describing the symbols or system used on the chart to note accuracy and type and/or frequency of prompts, e.g., verbal, visual, and/or physical
- labeled rows and columns for tables; labeled vertical and horizontal axes, for graphs;
- the desired performance level to attain mastery of the skill
- other descriptive information, such as setting, people assisting, instructional approach, or materials used

Table 1
One method of collecting field data on accuracy and independence

Behavior	Activity	Dates:					Setting	Notes
		3/9	3/12	3/16	3/18	3/21		
Make a choice when given an array of 3 items	Book	+ Vb	+ I	+ I	+ I	+ I		
	Software	- Vs	+ Vb	+ Vb	- Vb	- I		
	Friend	- P	- Vb	+ I	+ Vb	+ I		
	Marker	+ I	+ I	+ I	+ I	+ I		
	Snack	- Vb	- Vb	- Vb	- I	+ Vb		
Criterion: 4/5 correct		40% A 20% I	60% A 40% I	80% A 60% I	60% A 60% I	80% A 80% I		
KEY: (+) = correct (-) = incorrect (Vb) = verbal prompt (Vs) = visual prompt (P) = physical prompt (I) = independent								

A *skill matrix*, also known as an IEP matrix, such as the example shown in Table 2, may be a useful tool to plan *where* and *when* data will be collected on a specific skill.

Table 2
Skill Matrix (setting in which skill is addressed)

	Reading	Social Studies	Library
Use switch to greet adults and peers	X	X	X
Answer yes/no questions	X	X	
Follow object-picture sequence	X	X	

Step 6. Record the data each time the student performs the task.

Record raw data on a “field data chart” (see sample field data chart below) each time the student performs a task or activity related to a targeted skill. This allows tracking of important information on each performance over a series of trials.

Field data charts may also be useful in tracking the student’s performance on a series of related work samples that address a particular skill or body of knowledge. Charting the student’s score over a period of time enables teachers to track progress toward mastery of the skill.

Step 7. Summarize the data.

In order to make interpretation easier after field (raw) data is collected, summarize the performance data on each date as a percentage of accuracy and independence; or transfer field data to a bar or line graph to track progress on each day over a period of time. For example, John answered 7 out of 9 questions correctly (78%); on another occasion, he answered 17 out of 21 correctly (81%). Conversion to percentages helps the teacher determine whether the student's performance has improved.

Step 8. Review, evaluate, and reflect on the data.

Once the data have been summarized on a graph or chart, data points can be compared over a period of time. Questions to consider might include the following:

- Do the data indicate that the student achieved the outcome (i.e., do three or more data points exist at or above the level of mastery of the targeted skill)?
- How much progress, if any, has the student made toward the desired outcome?
- If progress is slow, should the student be addressing less complex skills or concepts?
- If the student rapidly achieves mastery, should he or she address more challenging goals (i.e., by introducing a new, more complex skill)?

If a trend is not clear in the data, it may be necessary to review the activities and the conditions in which the activities were conducted with the student and to consider the following possibilities:

- Do all activities address the same skill?
- Do results differ depending on the person assisting, the setting, or the materials being used?
- Do results differ based on the type of reinforcement or consequences provided during instruction?
- Does the student perform better at certain times of day, or on specific day(s) of the week?
- Do performance levels change after long weekends, holidays, or vacations?

Step 9. Student self-evaluates.

At the end of a series of instructional activities in which strategies for reinforcement and/or consequences are used, it is important to provide opportunities for a student to evaluate and reflect on his or her performance. For example, Selma worked on her goal of identifying numbers in math class. At the end of the session, Selma reflected on her performance and reported that she “worked very hard and was proud that she got only one wrong.” **Evidence of self-evaluation and reflection should be included in all student portfolios, along with instructional data on the performance itself, since this activity increases the student's awareness of and engagement in his or her own learning.** Examples of self-evaluation can be found in the *Sample Portfolio Evidence* provided at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt, and the process is fully described in the *Expanded Scoring Rubric* section of this manual.

Conclusion

Data charts provide compelling evidence of a student's progress toward mastery of targeted skills and content over a period of time. When data are collected consistently and systematically, summarized clearly, and analyzed objectively, they provide educators and IEP Team members with reliable information on which to base instructional decisions. As teachers experiment with different models and techniques for collecting data and begin to use these routinely, they will likely become more comfortable with the process and use it to provide more effective instruction. Data collection is an essential part of every student's MCAS-Alt portfolio. Work samples and instructional data used together provide a valuable illustration of a student's achievements over a period of time, from a variety of perspectives, and in a range of settings and contexts.

References:

Burdge, M., and J. Clayton. 2003. Systematic instruction and data collection. *Inclusive large scale standards and assessment*. University of Kentucky.

Lignugaris/Kraft, B., N. Marchang-Martella and R. C. Marchang-Martella. 2001. Writing better goals and short-term objectives or benchmarks. *TEACHING Exceptional Children* Vol. 34, No. 1.