

BRIEF History of Education Reform and MCAS

1954

Brown v Board of Ed which led to “massive resistance” of whites to integration

**1960's
and
1970's**

Civil rights and push for equity led to more demands on schools

- English language learners result of changes in immigration policy, with more black and brown ELL students
- IDEA—Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

1981

Prop 2 ½ cut funding for schools as schools need more resources to meet demands

1983

A Nation at Risk—launches attack on public education, starts myth of “failing” schools

“If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war...”

1993

1993: MA Ed Reform Act

- Lawsuit brought by a coalition called the Council for Fair School Finance, which included the NAACP, MTA, and Citizens for Public Schools against the state of MA for more equitable funding.
- Grand Bargain: More funding with more “accountability”
- MCAS=Mass Comprehensive Accountability System
- Curriculum frameworks
- Charter schools

1998

First MCAS given—Grades 4, 8, 10 in ELA, math—protested by parents, teachers, students added social studies (later took that away).

2002

No Child Left Behind—with goal of 100% proficiency by 2014. Mandated testing in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 10 and required students to pass MCAS to earn a high school diploma. Also added science testing. By 2010, 38% schools labeled as “failing”

2008

Race to the Top

- Turnaround schools
- State take-overs
- Teacher testing
- Common Core Curriculum Standards

2013

PARCC—more rigor? More protests

- Computer-based test
- “Higher order thinking skills”
- More essay writing

2016

MCAS 2.0

2020

COVID pandemic: MCAS suspended

2021

MCAS reinstated

2022

BESE votes to raise MCAS cut scores for graduation