

Sophomores would take MCAS tests as juniors under new plan

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Current high school sophomores, who missed their first chance to take the grade 10 English and math MCAs exams this spring amid COVID-19 school closures, will instead likely be given the tests this winter, as 11th graders, under a plan set to be discussed at a Board of Elementary and Secondary Education meeting Tuesday afternoon.

In a memo to board members, Education Commissioner Jeffrey Riley said administering the 10th grade tests to 11th graders next school year would give members of the class of 2022 the ability to earn the competency determination (CD) required for high school graduation and to qualify for scholarships based on their test scores. The test schedule “will be announced shortly,” and officials “will work to balance the need to provide an opportunity to earn the CD with the uncertainties about school schedules and conditions next year,” the memo said.

Students in the class of 2023, who will be sophomores in the fall, will take their 10th grade tests in the spring, as is usual, and next year’s seniors will have two opportunities for English and math re-tests if they have not yet earned their competency determinations, Riley wrote. “We recognize that the situation for next school year may change depending on the evolving nature of the pandemic,” he wrote. “We will reassess as needed and keep the Board and the public informed about any changes.”

The board plans to meet remotely at 2 p.m., and the agenda

includes an update on action steps related to COVID-19. Riley has convened a 27-member working group to help develop “a K-12 summer and fall restart and recovery plan” after a spring of remote learning.