

## High School MCAS Biology Performance Level Descriptors

Student results on the MCAS tests are reported according to four performance levels: *Advanced*, *Proficient*, *Needs Improvement*, and *Warning/Failing*. The descriptors in this document illustrate the kinds of knowledge and skills students demonstrate on MCAS at each level. **Knowledge and skills are cumulative at each level.** No descriptors are provided for the *Warning/Failing* performance level because student work at this level, by definition, falls below the criteria of the *Needs Improvement* level.

Chemistry of Life		
Needs Improvement	Proficient	Advanced
Identifies some of the most common elements found in organisms and the four biologically important categories of molecules	Identifies the six most common elements found in organisms and describes how very few elements make up the structure of biological molecules	Describes the functions of carbohydrates, lipids, proteins, and nucleic acids and relates their structures to functions
Describes the basic purpose of an enzyme	Classifies organic molecules into one of the four biologically important categories and describes some basic functions of these molecules  Describes the function of enzymes and identifies some factors that have an effect on enzymes	Explains the effects enzymes can have on biological processes and how environments can have an effect on the activity of enzymes