September 23, 2019

Highlights from 2019 MCAS and Accountability Results

**EMBARGOED UNTIL 12:01 A.M TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2019**

* The state’s 2019 MCAS test results show modest improvement in grades 3-8 in both English language arts and mathematics. In terms of the percentage of students meeting expectations, both subjects saw an increase of 1 percentage point for grades 3-8. English language arts scores rose from 51 percent to 52 percent, and math scores increased from 48 percent to 49 percent. Of particular note was a significant increase in grade 3 English language arts scores after years of stagnation, and strong gains in grade 6 math scores.
* On the grade 3 English language arts MCAS, the percent of students who scored in the Meeting Expectations category rose from 52 percent to 56 percent in one year.
* The percentage of students meeting expectations in grade 6 math increased from 47 percent to 51 percent. Grade 6 is the first group in grades 3–8 to surpass an average scaled score of 500 in math, with more than 50 percent of students meeting expectations.
* This year is the first year of grade 10 results on the next-generation English language arts and mathematics MCAS results. This revamped assessment is designed to give students a clearer signal of whether they are on track for college and career readiness, and the average scores in both English language arts (506) and mathematics (505) were both in the Meeting Expectations category.
* Also new in this year’s results is the first administration of the next-generation science assessments in grades 5 and 8, which showed 48 percent of fifth graders and 46 percent of eighth graders scoring Meeting Expectations on the new standards.
* The state’s [accountability system](http://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/) – which looks at additional factors beyond test results, including graduation rates, attendance and other measures – shows that 71 percent of schools met or made substantial progress toward meeting improvement targets in the last two years.
  + This year was the second year of the state’s new accountability system, which considers:
    - Student achievement,
    - Student growth,
    - High school completion,
    - Progress toward English proficiency,
    - Chronic absenteeism and
    - Advanced coursework.
* Several districts and schools stand out for exceptionally high achievement or improvements in their accountability data.
  + outstanding overall results (In terms of a two-year average, these school districts met the highest percentage of their district improvement targets compared to other traditional school districts):
    - **Savoy Elementary School**, a one-school district in the northwest part of the state,
    - **Mattapoisett Public Schools** in Southeastern Massachusetts.
  + For significantly improved results among traditional public schools and vocational schools, these two districts saw the greatest improvement in meeting their targets from 2018 to 2019:
    - **Auburn Public Schools**
    - **Northern Regional Berkshire Vocational Technical School District**

* + 67 Schools of Recognition for high achievement, high growth, and/or exceptional performance relative to their improvement targets. Schools receiving commendations in all three areas include:
    - **Daniel Butler Elementary School, Belmont Public Schools**
    - **Deerfield Elementary School, Westwood Public Schools**
    - **Gates Elementary School, Acton-Boxborough Regional School District**
    - **James B. Congdon Elementary School, New Bedford Public Schools**
    - **Josiah Haynes Elementary School, Sudbury Public Schools**
    - **Luther Burbank Middle School, Nashoba Regional School District**
* In addition, Commissioner Riley is exiting two schools from underperforming status:
  + **John J. Duggan Academy**, a grades 6-12 school in the Springfield Empowerment Zone, part of the Springfield Public Schools,
  + **Channing Elementary School** in the Boston Public Schools
* This year’s accountability results also highlight areas of persistent challenge. While individual school results vary, this year’s data again show that a high proportion of the Commonwealth’s lowest performing schools remain concentrated in a few districts, with a sizable percentage in the Boston Public Schools (BPS).
  + The Department will be conducting a previously scheduled district review of the Boston Public Schools this fall, which will provide an opportunity to more deeply assess district-level systems and supports and engage in further dialogue with local officials.
* While the commissioner typically names new underperforming and chronically underperforming schools in the fall, this year he will take time to gather more information about district-level factors influencing school performance and will not issue any such potential determinations until later in the school year.

***Additional information on MCAS (the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System):***

* As noted above, this year is the first year of results on the next-generation English language arts and mathematics MCAS results for grade 10.
* Next-generation MCAS scores fall into four categories on a scale that runs from 440 to 560 points - Exceeding Expectations, Meeting Expectations, Partially Meeting Expectations and Not Meeting Expectations. While the next-generation test has different categories than the legacy test, the minimum passing score that 10th graders need to meet the testing requirement for graduation is currently set at the equivalent of the minimum passing score on the legacy MCAS. On the next-generation MCAS, that equivalent falls within the “Not Meeting Expectations” category. Eighty-seven percent of 10th graders, the same as the previous year, met the minimum testing requirement for graduation in all three subjects.
* That [interim passing standard](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/graduation.html) will remain in place for at least this year’s juniors and sophomores (the classes of 2021 and 2022). The Board of Elementary and Secondary Education will decide in the future whether to transition to a higher minimum score to better reflect students’ readiness for college and careers.
* Parents should receive their child’s scores from their school district in October. When reviewing students’ scores, students, parents and educators should keep in mind that:
  + In general, the standards for Meeting Expectations are more rigorous than the standards for reaching the Proficient level on the legacy MCAS.
  + Next-generation MCAS scores should not be compared to legacy MCAS scores.
  + For more information on the next-generation MCAS, visit <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/parents/results-faq.html>.

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