



Acton-Boxborough Regional School District
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Dear Parents/Guardians,

Enclosed is your child's 2016 MCAS report, which includes both achievement and growth data.

You'll recall that the 2016 MCAS tests in grades 3-8 ELA and mathematics were augmented by a limited number of PARCC items in order to:

- help make statewide comparisons easier.
- offer students and staff the opportunity to experience PARCC items while new assessments for 2017 and beyond are being developed.

While scores from the MCAS portion of the test are reported as usual, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) reported performance on the PARCC items as a "stand alone" reporting category that was *not factored into students' MCAS scores*.

Additionally, as we shared with you last year, DESE was in the process of adopting a new Science, Technology and Engineering (STE) Framework and had advised districts to begin **transitioning and implementing the draft standards because the transition will require a substantial investment of time (minimum of five years), resources and professional learning**. This meant that the grade five and grade eight STE MCAS would remain aligned to the 2001/2006 STE Framework for a couple of years, even though districts were moving ahead with their transition plans. Thus, the STE content covered may not align perfectly with what is assessed on the grade five and grade eight STE MCAS. As a district, providing our students with a solid STE foundation has always been, and will continue to be, our priority. Therefore, we expect variations on our STE MCAS scores and are aware that our MCAS scores may not reflect the science teaching and learning taking place in our classrooms. For more information about DESE's STE transition plan, please visit:
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.aspx?id=23891>

You will continue to receive your child's achievement data (Warning, Needs Improvement, Proficiency, Advanced) along with the growth data. According to the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, "Achievement data . . . is still an extremely important measure of how students stand relative to proficiency."¹ Growth data alone does not create a full picture of school, district or student performance; the information is meant to be used in conjunction with MCAS achievement level results, as well as a *broad range of school- and classroom-based measures of student learning*.

District results are available on our website:

<http://www.abschools.org/departments/curriculum/assessment>

¹ MCAS Student Growth Percentiles: State Report, October 2009

Accountability and Assistance Levels

State accountability and assistance levels are used to classify districts and schools. “Massachusetts uses the Progress and Performance Index (PPI) and school percentiles to classify schools into one of five accountability and assistance levels. Schools making sufficient progress toward narrowing proficiency gaps are classified into Level 1, while the state’s lowest performing schools are classified into Levels 4 and 5.”² A district is assigned the level of its lowest leveled school. The Acton-Boxborough Regional School District received a Level 2 accountability and assistance level, and Blanchard Memorial School received a Level 1 accountability and assistance level.

Teacher Quality and Right-to-Know Qualifications

Since we are committed to providing quality instruction for all students, we employ the most qualified individuals to teach and support each student in the classroom. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has informed us that 100% of the teachers in the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District are Highly Qualified.

Parent and Family Engagement

Involving families as full partners in the education of their children is a cornerstone of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). When families support learning, children are more successful in school, and school success helps children become productive citizens of our diverse community and global society. We encourage you to become involved in helping us improve. Some suggestions include:

- Attending parent-teacher meetings and other special meetings.
- Serving as a volunteer in the school or district.
- Encouraging other parents to become involved.

For more information on participating in the school improvement process, please contact your building principal.

Sincerely,



Deborah E. Bookis

² MA DESE School Leader’s Guide to the 2014 Accountability Determinations, p. 2