

**Needham Public Schools  
2008 MCAS Results - An Overview**

The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests are part of the Commonwealth’s Education Reform initiative to improve the achievement of every child. These tests are based on state curriculum frameworks which set high standards for what students are expected to know and be able to do. Last spring, the MCAS tests were administered for the tenth time since they were introduced in 1998. The school system recently received results for the 2008 MCAS tests, and this report provides a general overview.

**What tests were administered?**

A total of twenty MCAS tests in English Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science and Technology were administered to students across eight grade levels. The table below shows the 2008 tests administered at each grade level.

Grade 3	English Language Arts (ELA) Mathematics
Grade 4	ELA Mathematics
Grade 5	ELA Mathematics Science and Technology/Engineering
Grade 6	ELA Mathematics
Grade 7	ELA Mathematics
Grade 8	ELA Mathematics Science and Technology/Engineering
Grade 9/10	Biology Chemistry Introduction to Physics Technology/Engineering
Grade 10	ELA Mathematics

**How are the results reported?**

At grades 4 through 10, MCAS results are reported according to four performance levels:

<b><i>Advanced (A)</i></b>	Students at this level demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of challenging subject matter and provide sophisticated solutions to complex problems.
<b><i>Proficient (P)</i></b>	Students at this level demonstrate a solid understanding of challenging subject matter and solve a wide variety of problems.
<b><i>Needs Improvement (NI)</i></b>	Students at this level demonstrate a partial understanding of subject matter and solve simple problems.
<b><i>Warning/Failing (W)</i></b>	Students at this level demonstrate a minimal understanding of subject matter and do not solve simple problems.

Since the 2007 MCAS, the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade results are reported using four performance definitions instead of three, as in the past. The new level is:

<b><i>Above Proficient (P+)</i></b>	Students at this level demonstrate mastery of challenging subject matter and construct solutions to challenging problems.
-------------------------------------	---

The other three levels (***Proficient, Needs Improvement*** and ***Warning***) are the same as above.

Individual student scores are reported as scale scores ranging from 200-280 using the following ranges:

<b><i>Advanced</i></b>	260-280
<b><i>Proficient</i></b>	240-258
<b><i>Needs Improvement</i></b>	220-238
<b><i>Warning/Failing</i></b>	200-218

The Department of Education no longer reports scaled score averages for schools or districts; rather, they now provide schools with comparative data using average ***Proficiency Index Results***. Proficiency points are awarded to a school or district for each student in the MCAS test group using the following scale:

<b>MCAS Performance Level</b>	<b>Scale Score</b>	<b>Proficient Index Points per Student</b>
Proficient or Advanced	240-280	100
Needs Improvement (High)	230-238	75
Needs Improvement (Low)	220-228	50
Warning/Failing (High)	210-218	25
Warning/Failing (Low)	200-208	0

The **No Child Left Behind** law has a goal that all students be ***Proficient*** by 2014. The **Composite Proficiency Index (CPI)** average is designed to give schools a means to measure their progress. A score of 100 would indicate that all students had scored Advanced or Proficient. The average CPI scores are used to rate schools using the following scale:

### Performance Ratings

Rating	Proficiency Index Average
Very High	90 – 100
High	80 – 89.9
Moderate	70 – 79.9
Low	60 – 69.9
Very Low	40 – 59.9
Critically Low	0 – 39.9

### How did Needham students perform?

#### Grade 10

Students are required to earn a "competency determination" as well as meet local graduation requirements to earn a diploma from Needham High School. Up until this year students, (including our current seniors), had to pass the grade 10 MCAS English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics tests by earning a score of *Needs Improvement* or above.

The stakes are higher for the Class of 2010. To earn the “competency determination”, students must either meet the Proficient threshold (scaled score 240) in English Language Arts and Mathematics or earn a score of Needs Improvement (scaled score 220-238) and fulfil the requirements of an Educational Proficiency Plan (EPP). In addition, the Class of 2010 students must meet or exceed the Needs Improvement threshold in Science and Technology/Engineering and meet the local graduation requirements in order to earn a diploma.

Students who failed to reach the CD threshold will have the option of a retest in November. All of these students were identified during the summer based on raw score data and have already been offered individualized tutoring to prepare them for the retest. Any student who has not met the “competency determination” criteria has already been involved in planning an EPP, which involves determining a rigorous course of study focused on areas of need identified through the MCAS.

It is possible to compare the recent MCAS results with the previous seven years.

#### **Seven-Year Comparison of High School Performance Level Results (% of students)**

<b>Grade 10</b>	<b>Advanced</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Failing</b>	<b>CPI</b>
2002 English Language Arts	43	48	8	1	95.0
2003 English Language Arts	43	47	9	1	96.0
2004 English Language Arts	40	49	10	0	96.7
2005 English Language Arts	47	43	8	1	96.3
2006 English Language Arts	39	53	6	1	97.1
2007 English Language Arts	50	45	5	1	98.2
2008 English Language Arts	60	36	2	1	98.8

2002 Mathematics	44	36	17	3	91.7
2003 Mathematics	48	34	17	2	92.5
2004 Mathematics	57	30	12	1	95.4
2005 Mathematics	67	24	7	1	96.5
2006 Mathematics	76	17	6	1	96.9
2007 Mathematics	74	17	8	1	97.9
2008 Mathematics	78	15	5	1	97.9

The CPI increased on ELA and remained static for Math. 93% of students scored at Advanced or Proficient in Mathematics, and 96% scored at these levels in ELA.

There were four science tests, and students were able to choose which test to take. Needham students participated in only Biology (n=319) and Introductory Physics (n=6). The Physics group was too small to yield comparative data to 2007. 100% of our 9<sup>th</sup> graders took the Biology test, compared to 56% of the state group. The participation rates reflect the sequencing of our high school science curriculum.

It is possible to compare the Biology results with 2007 results.

**Two-Year Comparison of High School Performance Levels  
(% of students)**

<b>9<sup>th</sup> Grade Biology</b>	<b>Advanced</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Failing</b>	<b>CPI</b>
2007 Needham	31	57	11	1	95.5
2008 Needham	45	42	10	3	95.4

The number of students who scored Advanced is significantly increased from 2007. Overall, the students maintained a high level of performance on this test.

The Science and Technology/Engineering results represent our district’s cumulative overall performance on all the science tests. Any one of the tests (Introductory Physics, Biology, Chemistry or Technology/Engineering) can be counted towards each student’s “competency determination”. Again, this year, it is most useful to compare Needham’s results with the state’s results.

**Needham and Massachusetts Performance Levels  
(% of students)**

<b>Science and Technology/Engineering</b>	<b>Advanced</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Failing</b>	<b>CPI</b>
2008 Needham	31	56	11	1	95.7
Massachusetts	14	43	31	12	79.8

Needham students continue to do well on the Science tests. The resulting 87% of students scoring in Advanced or Proficient for their Science and Technology/Engineering competency compares to 57% of all students in the state scoring at these high levels. Altogether 99% of our students have met the Competency Determination for the Science MCAS requirement for the Class of 2010.

Because the Class of 2010 must meet more rigorous standards in MCAS testing in order to meet competency for their high school diploma, those students in the Class of 2010 who have not yet attained Competency Determination (CD) through MCAS results alone may opt for retesting or attainment of CD through meeting “Needs Improvement” criteria plus completion of an Educational Proficiency Plan. Since this is the first year for this threshold, the following illustrates the results of CD for our Grade 10 students, compared to the state.

**Needham and Massachusetts Competency Determination Results  
(% of students who earned CD in each subject)**

	English Language Arts		Mathematics		Science and Technology/Engineering	
	District	State	District	State	District	State
CD attained	96	71	93	68	99	83
EPP required	3	22	5	20		

Overall, **91% of our Grade 10 students** have earned CD in all subject areas. 80% of the Class of 2010 in Massachusetts’ met CD for all subject areas. There are a total of 24 students in the Class of 2010 who need an EPP for either ELA, Math or Physics. 7 of these students require an EPP in both ELA and Math.

Grade 8

All 8<sup>th</sup> grade students were tested in three areas. Mathematics and Science & Technology/Engineering have been given for a number of years, and ELA was added for the first time in 2006.

**Seven-Year Comparison of Grade 8 Mathematics Performance Level Results  
(% of students)**

Grade 8	Advanced	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Warning	CPI
2002 Mathematics	22	37	30	12	81.6
2003 Mathematics	25	38	28	9	83.4
2004 Mathematics	29	39	24	8	84.7
2005 Mathematics	31	35	22	12	83.0
2006 Mathematics	31	42	17	10	87.3
2007 Mathematics	39	35	19	8	87.6
2008 Mathematics	38	35	18	3	86.8

While the percentage of students in the Advanced and Proficient ranges remained relatively static this year, and the number of students in Warning decreased, the lower CPI indicates an increased number of students in Low Needs Improvement. The state results show a 4% increase (to 72%) in the number of Grade 8 students scoring Proficient or higher in Mathematics. 73% of our Grade 8 students scored at Proficient or higher.

**Six-Year Comparison of Grade 8 Science and Technology/Engineering Results  
(% of students)**

<b>Grade 8</b>	<b>Advanced</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Warning</b>	<b>CPI</b>
2003 Science	10	51	30	9	82.5
2004 Science	18	48	25	9	85.2
2005 Science	11	50	27	12	81.6
2006 Science	13	53	26	8	86.6
2007 Science	10	53	31	6	85.3
2008 Science	5	60	28	7	84.7

The CPI declined slightly in Science. This is due to less students scoring in Advanced and more students scoring in the Low Needs Improvement range. The percentage of students receiving a Warning remains similar to last year.

**Three-Year Comparison of Grade 8 ELA  
(% of Students)**

<b>Grade 8</b>	<b>Advanced</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Warning</b>	<b>CPI</b>
2006 English Language Arts	22	67	8	3	97.0
2007 English Language Arts	25	69	5	1	97.9
2008 English Language Arts	22	67	8	3	95.1

Needham's 8<sup>th</sup> grade had 89% of its students in the Advanced or Proficient range on this test administration. The CPI reflects a significant downward trend (2.8 points) in performance from 2007 to 2008.

Grade 7

The ELA test has been given at the 7<sup>th</sup> grade level for a number of years, and this is the second year for the Mathematics assessment.

**Seven-Year Comparison of Grade 7 Performance Levels in ELA  
(% of students)**

<b>Grade 7</b>	<b>Advanced</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Warning</b>	<b>CPI</b>
2002 English Language Arts	16	69	13	1	95.7
2003 English Language Arts	16	72	11	1	96.1
2004 English Language Arts	16	72	11	1	95.5
2005 English Language Arts	25	64	7	3	96.9
2006 English Language Arts	23	67	9	1	96.4
2007 English Language Arts	21	67	9	2	95.5
2008 English Language Arts	30	63	6	1	97.0

There was an improvement in the CPI score (1.5 points), due to the significant increase (9 percentage points) of students in the Advanced range.

**Three-Year Comparison of Grade 7 Performance Levels in Mathematics  
(% of students)**

<b>Grade 7</b>	<b>Advanced</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Warning</b>	<b>CPI</b>
2006 Mathematics	35	37	20	7	87.3
2007 Mathematics	38	40	16	6	90.0
2008 Mathematics	32	45	18	4	90.8

There was an increase in the CPI (.8 points). State wide 47% of grade 7 students scored at least at the Proficient level. 77% of our students scored at those levels.

Grade 6

Sixth graders were assessed in ELA and Mathematics. Below is a comparison of the Mathematics scores with the previous six years.

**Seven-Year Comparison of Grade 6 Mathematics Performance Levels  
(% of students)**

<b>Grade 6</b>	<b>Advanced</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Warning</b>	<b>CPI</b>
2002 Mathematics	47	30	16	7	89.6
2003 Mathematics	43	35	15	7	89.4
2004 Mathematics	47	29	19	5	89.5
2005 Mathematics	44	33	17	6	89.8
2006 Mathematics	43	32	18	7	89.0
2007 Mathematics	32	46	18	4	91.1
2008 Mathematics	46	35	15	4	91.2

2008 results reflect an increased percentage of students in the Advanced range. The overall CPI remained stable from last year. 78% scored Proficient or higher in 2007, and 81% scored Proficient or higher in 2008. The increased percent (3 points) was slightly less than the 4-point increase for 6<sup>th</sup> Grade students across the state in Mathematics. Last year the district's increase of 3% points was also slightly less than the state increase for this grade level.

**Comparison of 6<sup>th</sup> Grade ELA Performance Levels  
(% of students)**

<b>Grade 6</b>	<b>Advanced</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Warning</b>	<b>CPI</b>
2006 English Language Arts	30	59	9	2	96.5
2007 English Language Arts	17	71	12	1	95.7
2008 English Language Arts	35	54	9	1	96.0

The percentage of students at the Advanced and Proficient level increased slightly from 88% to 89%. The percent of 6<sup>th</sup> grade students in Massachusetts at these levels remained at last year's level, 75%.

## Grade 5

Fifth graders have been given a science test since 2003, but this is only the third year for the ELA and Mathematics tests at this grade level.

### **Five- Year Comparison of Grade 5 Science and Technology/Engineering Performance Levels (% of students)**

<b>Grade 5</b>	<b>Advanced</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Warning</b>	<b>CPI</b>
2003 Science	31	41	24	5	89.4
2004 Science	29	45	24	2	89.9
2005 Science	24	42	30	4	88.4
2006 Science	26	39	32	2	87.9
2007 Science	25	46	26	2	89.6
2008 Science	22	39	36	3	85.3

The Science scores significantly decreased this year. 61% of students scored Proficient or higher compared to 71% last year. State scores remained relatively static this year, with the % of students scoring in Proficient or higher dropping by 1% over last year (from 51% to 50%). The CPI dropped 4.3 points due to this shift and a concomitant increase in students in the Needs Improvement category.

### **Three-Year Comparison of Grade 5 ELA Performance Levels (% of students)**

<b>Grade 5</b>	<b>Advanced</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Warning</b>	<b>CPI</b>
2006 English Language Arts	33	53	12	2	95.3
2007 English Language Arts	37	50	11	2	95.3
2008 English Language Arts	23	62	13	2	94.3

The number of students scoring Proficient or higher decreased from 87% to 85%. In Massachusetts, the Advanced and Proficient levels also decreased by 2 percentage points (from 63% to 61%).

### **Three-Year Comparison of Grade 5 Mathematics Performance Levels (% of Students)**

<b>Grade 5</b>	<b>Advanced</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Warning</b>	<b>CPI</b>
2006 Mathematics	30	39	24	7	87.2
2007 Mathematics	40	40	16	4	91.5
2008 Mathematics	39	35	23	3	89.6

The number of students scoring Proficient or higher decreased from 80% to 74%. The percent of students in Massachusetts scoring Proficient or higher increased by 1% to 52%.



## Grade 4

Fourth graders are tested in both ELA and Mathematics:

### **Seven-Year Comparisons of Grade 4 ELA Performance Level Results (% of students)**

<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Advanced</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Warning</b>	<b>CPI</b>
2002 English Language Arts	14	60	22	3	NA
2003 English Language Arts	24	57	18	1	93.5
2004 English Language Arts	24	54	21	1	92.8
2005 English Language Arts	22	48	27	3	89.5
2006 English Language Arts	22	56	21	2	92.3
2007 English Language Arts	17	60	21	2	91.3
2008 English Language Arts	12	50	34	3	86.8

These scores show a decrease in students scoring in the Proficient and Advanced ranges, from 77% in 2007 to 62% in 2008. Massachusetts' data reflects a 7% decrease in this category from last year to 49%. The CPI decreased 4.5 points, which is a significant drop.

### **Seven-Year Comparisons of Grade 4 Mathematics Performance Level Results (% of students)**

<b>Grade 4</b>	<b>Advanced</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Warning</b>	<b>CPI</b>
2002 Mathematics	25	41	27	7	NA
2003 Mathematics	19	41	36	4	85.4
2004 Mathematics	32	36	29	3	88.5
2005 Mathematics	25	38	34	3	87.4
2006 Mathematics	29	38	31	3	87.5
2007 Mathematics	30	33	34	3	86.7
2008 Mathematics	29	34	33	4	86.5

The percent of students at the Advanced and Proficient level remained the same at 63%. The CPI also remained stable for this test.

### Grade 3

Third grade students were tested in ELA and Mathematics. This is the third year the *Proficient+* rating has been used.

#### **Seven-Year Comparison of 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade English Language Arts Performance Levels (% of students)**

<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Proficient +</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Warning</b>	<b>CPI</b>
2002 English Language Arts	NA	78	20	2	NA
2003 English Language Arts	NA	73	23	4	90.7
2004 English Language Arts	NA	78	19	3	91.7
2005 English Language Arts	NA	80	19	1	93.9
2006 English Language Arts	32	46	21	1	93.2
2007 English Language Arts	26	54	18	2	92.9
2008 English Language Arts	28	48	21	3	92.3

The percent of students scoring Proficient or higher was 76% in 2008, compared to 80% in 2007. The state scores also declined this year, by 3% over 2007 scores. The CPI remained very similar to the 2007 score with 78% of the students in Needs Improvement scoring in the High range of that category.

#### **Three-Year Comparison of 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Mathematics Performance Levels (% of students)**

<b>Grade 3</b>	<b>Proficient +</b>	<b>Proficient</b>	<b>Needs Improvement</b>	<b>Warning</b>	<b>CPI</b>
2006 Mathematics	9	68	20	2	92.5
2007 Mathematics	32	50	15	3	92.7
2008 Mathematics	40	41	15	4	92.7

The percent of students in the Proficient and Proficient+ range decreased by 1 percentage point (from 82% to 81%). The percentage point change in the state was +1, from 60% to 61%.

#### **Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)**

The *No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)* has set a requirement that all students attain proficiency on the MCAS by 2014. Each year the Department of Education issues AYP determinations for each school and district. AYP determinations are made separately for English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics. For each subject, there are multiple AYP determinations for students in the aggregate as well as for student subgroups. Student groups for whom AYP determinations are made include special education students, students with limited English proficiency, economically disadvantaged students (eligible for free or reduced school lunch), and African American, Hispanic, Asian, White, and Native American students. Students are counted in *each* group to which they belong. Subgroups that do not make up at least 5% of the overall population are reported, but Performance Targets are not listed because the data are not considered statistically significant.

AYP determinations for districts, schools, and student subgroups are based on answering “Yes” to three of four questions:

**A. Are at least 95% of students taking part in MCAS?**

In Needham 100% of our students participate.

**B. Has the district met the state’s target Composite Performance Index for the current review period?**

This year, the state’s target CPI is 85.4 in English Language Arts and 76.5 in Mathematics. (See the charts below.)

**C. Is the rate of improvement on target to reach 100% proficiency by 2014?**

(See the charts below)

**D. Does the attendance meet the state’s 92% attendance rate?**

The attendance rate in Needham is 96.7%.

In the summer of 2006, the U.S. Department of Education allowed Massachusetts to revise its approach for identifying districts in need of improvement. Under the revised method, a district will be identified for corrective action only when the district fails to make AYP in the same subject area for each of the elementary, middle, and high school grade spans.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS						
Student Group	Performance			Improvement		AYP 2008
	N	CPI	Met Target (85.4)	CPI Change 2007-2008	Met Target	
Aggregate	2727	94.0	Yes	-1.1	No	Yes
Lim. English Prof.	42	71.4	-	-	-	-
Special Education	397	79.3	No	-1.8	No	No
Low Income/Free Lunch	122	79.9	-	-	-	-
Afr. Amer./Black	69	81.2	-	-	-	-
Asian or Pacif. Isl.	152	93.8	Yes	-1.3	No	Yes
Hispanic	88	85.2	-	-	-	-
Native American	3	-	-	-	-	-
White	2343	94.8	Yes	-1.0	No	Yes

Three of the four subgroups made AYP for 2008, meeting the CPI target for 2008. The special education subgroup, for the district, did not make the target of 85.4, nor did this subgroup make the Improvement Target over last year’s CPI (target range from 81.3-86.3). Therefore, they did not make CPI for this year. None of the subgroups or the District Aggregate made their Improvement goal for 2008.

There are still significant achievement gaps among the various racial, ethnic, and economic subgroups. Black (81.2), Hispanic (85.2), Special Education (79.3), Low Income/Free Lunch (79.9) and Limited English Proficient (71.4) all lag behind White (94.8) and Asian (93.8) subgroups.

<b>MATHEMATICS</b>						
<b>Student Group</b>	<b>Performance</b>			<b>Improvement</b>		<b>AYP 2008</b>
	<b>N</b>	<b>CPI</b>	<b>Met Target (76.5)</b>	<b>CPI Change 2007-2008</b>	<b>Met Target</b>	
Aggregate	2724	90.5	Yes	-.3	No	Yes
Lim. English Prof.	41	79.3	-	-	-	-
Special Education	394	69.4	No	-.5	No	No
Low Income/Free Lunch	122	73.6	-	-	-	-
Afr. Amer./Black	69	74.3	-	-	-	-
Asian or Pacif. Isl.	152	95.2	Yes	-.8	No	Yes
Hispanic	87	79.9	-	-	-	-
Native American	3	-	-	-	-	-
White	2339	91.1	Yes	-.5	No	Yes

In Mathematics, three of four subgroups made AYP. The special education subgroup did not meet the target (76.5), nor did the subgroup meet their Improvement Target. This subgroup did not, therefore, make AYP for 2008. None of the subgroups or the District Aggregate made their Improvement goal for 2008.

The gap between some of the subgroups, and the White and Asian subgroups has been reduced in Mathematics this year. The Low Income/Free Lunch, Black and Hispanic subgroups improved their CPI this year an average of 5.4 points over 2007.

### **What do these results tell us?**

The performance of Needham students on this one measure continues to be very good; indeed, the scores are among the best in the Commonwealth. With the more rigorous Competency Determination for the Class of 2010 in effect, 91% of all of our 10<sup>th</sup> grade students have already earned their CD through high performance on the ELA, Math and Science tests. This is necessary for them to be awarded a diploma. To date, no Needham High School student has failed to graduate due to the MCAS requirement.

The 2008 scores remain similar to previous years. In ELA, the average CPI change for all classes was -0.9 for the seven classes that were assessed. Three of the classes registered increases and four had decreases. The decreases at Grade 8 and Grade 4 ELA are considered statistically significant (- 2.8 and - 4.5 respectively). Overall the changes ranged from a +1.5 to -4.5. The Mathematics scores were more positive although the average CPI change for the seven classes tested was -.3. Four classes either remained static or improved over the 2007 CPI. Overall, the changes in Mathematics ranged from -1.9 to + .8. None of these changes is considered statistically significant.

The designation of Pollard Middle School for Improvement Year I for subgroups focuses the district's attention on the MCAS achievement of our special education subgroup. The district has two years in which to implement interventions for this subgroup and raise the performance of these students.

Any comparisons with prior years should be done with caution. Different students took the tests, and our experience tells us that different classes can vary greatly in ability and achievement. In addition, these tests change yearly, and there are questions about the reliability of the results from year to year. In particular, increases or decreases in Needham that are mirrored by significant changes in scores across the state raise questions about the reliability of the results.

### **What are we doing with the results?**

Staff at the High School has been studying item analysis results for 10th grade since the summer. For those students who have not reached a Proficient or Advanced performance level, administrators and teachers are developing Educational Proficiency Plans with each student. The EPP prepares students to demonstrate proficiency through course work and course assessments. Some students will take a retest this November in order to meet the CD requirements. Additionally, Academic Support instruction is being targeted for those Grade 9 and 10 students who would benefit from focused remediation as they prepare for MCAS. It is our goal to provide help for at-risk students as soon as possible.

Pollard and central administrators are meeting to determine intervention plans for the students in Grades 6, 7 and 8 who did not meet expectations in the 2008 MCAS. In addition, the Math and English departments will be analyzing the results for Pollard, to ascertain whether particular aspects of the curriculum need focus. All parents of Pollard students have been notified of the Improvement Year I status and the School Improvement Plan will be amended by the School Council to include a measurable goal addressing the MCAS results. These steps are required for schools with the Improvement Year I status. The district is prepared to respond with resources to Pollard in order to achieve the goals that are set.

Curricular leaders and classroom teachers at all grade levels will now begin analyzing the results for all students to identify anyone who may need additional help as well as to look for changes which we may need to make in our curriculum or instruction. Individual Success Plans are developed for all students who fail, as well as for students who do not work up to expectations.

During the coming weeks, curricular leaders and teachers will examine item analysis reports in an attempt to gain a better understanding of what these results mean. These reports allow us to determine how our students perform with different types of questions (multiple choice, short answer, open response) as well as how they do on questions assessing a particular skill or fact.

Christine Brumbach  
October 2008