

Needham Public Schools
2009 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 eleventh time since they were introduced in 1998. The school system recently received results for the 2009 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 2009 tests administered at each grade level.

Grade 3	English Language Arts (ELA) Reading Comprehension Mathematics
Grade 4	ELA Composition and Reading Comprehension Mathematics
Grade 5	ELA Reading Comprehension Mathematics Science and Technology/Engineering
Grade 6	ELA Reading Comprehension Mathematics
Grade 7	ELA Composition and Reading Comprehension Mathematics
Grade 8	ELA Reading Comprehension Mathematics Science and Technology/Engineering
High School	High School Science and Technology/Engineering Biology Chemistry Introductory Physics Technology/Engineering
Grade 10	ELA Composition and Reading Comprehension Mathematics

How are the results reported?

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

Advanced (A)

Students at this level demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of challenging subject matter and provide sophisticated solutions to complex problems.

- Proficient (P)** Students at this level demonstrate a solid understanding of challenging subject matter and solve a wide variety of problems.
- Needs Improvement (NI)** Students at this level demonstrate a partial understanding of subject matter and solve simple problems.
- Warning/Failing (W)** Students at this level demonstrate a minimal understanding of subject matter and do not solve simple problems.

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

- Above Proficient (P+)** 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:

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

The Department of Elementary and Secondary 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:

MCAS Performance Level	Scale Score	Proficient Index Points per Student
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

Beginning with the Class of 2010 more rigorous standards in MCAS must be met in order to earn Competency Determination and be eligible for a high school diploma.

Competency Determination Requirements			
Classes of 2003–2009	Classes of 2010 and Beyond		
Earn a scaled score of 220 (<i>Needs Improvement</i>) or higher on the MCAS ELA and Mathematics grade 10 tests or retests (or MCAS-Alt)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Earn a scaled score of 240 (<i>Proficient</i>) or higher on the ELA and Mathematics grade 10 tests or retests (or MCAS-Alt) <li style="text-align: center;">And ▪ Earn a scaled score of 220 or higher on one of the four MCAS high school STE tests in Biology, Chemistry, Introductory Physics, or Technology/Engineering (or MCAS-Alt) 	OR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Earn a scaled score of 220–238 on the ELA and Mathematics grade 10 tests or retests (or MCAS-Alt) <li style="text-align: center;">And ▪ Earn a scaled score of 220 or higher on a high school STE test (or MCAS-Alt) <li style="text-align: center;">And ▪ Successfully complete the requirements of an Educational Proficiency Plan (EPP) for ELA and/or Mathematics (the subject(s) in which the student has not earned a scaled score of 240)
Students in all classes also must meet all local requirements in order to qualify for a high school diploma.			

Current juniors 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 will be involved in planning an Educational Proficiency Plan, which involves determining a rigorous course of study focused on areas of need identified through the MCAS.

This is the second year for this higher threshold. The following compares the results of CD for our Class of 2011 (2009) students, with the Class of 2010 (2008) and the state results for the same classes.

Two-Year Comparison of Needham and Massachusetts Competency Determination Results (% of students who earned CD in each subject)

	English Language Arts		Mathematics		Science and Technology/Engineering	
	Needham	State	Needham	State	Needham	State
CD attained - 2008	96	71	93	68	99	83
CD attained –2009	94	76	92	70	97	87
EPP required -2008	3	22	5	20		
EPP required –2009	3	16	5	19		

In 2009, **90% of our Grade 10 students** have earned CD in all subject areas. By comparison, 65% of the Class of 2011 in Massachusetts has met CD for all subject areas. At NHS, there are a total of 21 juniors who must retest or complete an EPP for either ELA or Math. 4 of these students require an EPP in both ELA and Math, 7 in ELA only and 10 in Math only.

The following are the Grade 10 results in ELA, Math and Science/Technology/Engineering.

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

Grade 10	Advanced	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Failing	CPI
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
2009 English Language Arts	59	37	3	1	98.0
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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
2009 Mathematics	80	13	5	2	98.0

The CPI decreased slightly on ELA and increased slightly for Math. 93% of students scored at Advanced or Proficient in Mathematics, and 96% scored at these levels in ELA, matching student scores from 2008.

There were four science tests, and students were able to choose which test to take. Needham students participated in only Biology (n=369). 100% of our 9th graders took the Biology test. It is possible to compare the Biology results over three years of assessment.

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

9th Grade Biology	Advanced	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Failing	CPI
2007 Needham	31	57	11	1	95.5
2008 Needham	45	42	10	3	95.4
2009 Needham	38	53	8	1	96.5

The number of students who scored Advanced or Proficient in Biology increased from 87% in 2008 to 91% in 2009. 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. (This result includes the highest performance of students in any of the Science tests, through grade 10.) Any one of the tests (Introductory Physics, Biology, Chemistry or Technology/Engineering) can be counted towards each student's "competency determination".

**Grade 10 Needham and Massachusetts Performance Levels
(% of students)**

Science and Technology/Engineering	Advanced	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Failing	CPI
2008 Needham	31	56	11	1	95.7
2009 Needham	47	42	11	1	95.5
2008 Massachusetts	14	43	31	12	79.8
2009 Massachusetts	16	45	29	9	83.1

Needham students continue to do well on the Science tests. In 2009, 89% of students scored in Advanced or Proficient for their Science and Technology/Engineering competency compared to 61% of all students in the state scoring at these high levels.

Grade 8

All 8th 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.

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

Grade 8	Advanced	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Warning	CPI
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
2009 Mathematics	43	39	13	5	92.0

The percentage of students in the Proficient or higher increased from 73% in 2008 to 82% this year. The CPI increased to 92, a full 5.2 points higher than 2008. The state results show a slight decline in students scoring Proficient or higher between 2008-2009, decreasing by 1% to 48%.

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

Grade 8	Advanced	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Warning	CPI
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
2009 Science	11	54	31	5	85.9

The percentage of students scoring in the Advanced category increased this year. Overall CPI increased to 85.9 in 2009. The percentage of students receiving a Warning remains similar to last year.

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

Grade 8	Advanced	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Warning	CPI
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
2009 English Language Arts	25	70	4	1	98.2

This year 95% of the 8th grade students scored Proficient or better, as compared to 89% last year (+6%). The CPI reflects a significant upward trend (3.1 points) in performance from 2008 to 2009. In 2009, students who scored Proficient or higher in the state increased by 3% over 2008.

Grade 7

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

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

Grade 7	Advanced	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Warning	CPI
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
2009 English Language Arts	29	61	9	1	96.1

The grade 7 scores decreased slightly from 2008 to 2009. The percentage of students scoring in the Advanced and Proficient categories remained stable.

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

Grade 7	Advanced	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Warning	CPI
2006 Mathematics	35	37	20	7	87.3
2007 Mathematics	38	40	16	6	90.0
2008 Mathematics	32	45	18	4	90.8
2009 Mathematics	36	39	19	5	88.7

There was a decrease in the CPI (2.1 points) and there was a decrease in the number of students scoring Proficient or higher (from 77% to 75%).

Grade 6

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

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

Grade 6	Advanced	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Warning	CPI
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
2009 Mathematics	40	39	17	4	91.2

The student performance in this assessment was unchanged from last year.

**Four-Year Comparison of 6th Grade ELA Performance Levels
(% of students)**

Grade 6	Advanced	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Warning	CPI
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
2009 English Language Arts	31	56	11	2	94.9

The percentage of students at the Advanced and Proficient level decreased slightly from 89% to 87%. The performance of students scoring Proficient or higher state-wide also decreased by 1%.

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)**

Grade 5	Advanced	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Warning	CPI
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
2009 Science	20	41	36	3	85.6

The Science scores remained at the same levels as 2008. 61% of students scored Proficient or higher in both 2008 and 2009. State-wide grade 5 Science MCAS scores dropped by 1% for students scoring Proficient and higher.

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

Grade 5	Advanced	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Warning	CPI
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
2009 English Language Arts	26	58	14	1	94.8

The number of students scoring Proficient or higher decreased from 85% to 84%. State-wide, 63% of grade 5 students score at this level.

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

Grade 5	Advanced	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Warning	CPI
2006 Mathematics	30	39	24	7	87.2
2007 Mathematics	40	40	16	4	91.5
2008 Mathematics	39	35	23	3	89.6
2009 Mathematics	39	37	21	3	91.2

The percentage of students scoring Proficient or higher increased from 74% to 76%. The percent of students in Massachusetts scoring Proficient or higher also increased by 2% to 63%. The CPI increased by 1.6 points which is partly due to the increased number of students in the “High Needs Improvement” category.

Grade 4

Fourth graders are tested in both ELA and Mathematics:

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

Grade 4	Advanced	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Warning	CPI
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
2009 English Language Arts	16	53	28	3	89.3

These scores show an increase in students scoring Proficient or higher, from 62% in 2008 to 69% in 2009. Massachusetts’ data reflects a 5% increase in this category to 54%. The CPI increased by 2.5 points, which is a significant increase.

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

Grade 4	Advanced	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Warning	CPI
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
2009 Mathematics	22	43	32	3	87.4

The percent of students at the Advanced and Proficient level increased from 63% to 65%. The CPI change by +.9. Student achievement in the state data reflects a 1% decrease in the number of students scoring Proficient or higher on this test.

Grade 3

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

**Five-Year Comparison of 3rd Grade English Language Arts Performance Levels
(% of students)**

Grade 3	Proficient +	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Warning	CPI
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
2009 English Language Arts	21	53	24	2	90.9

The percent of students scoring Proficient or Proficient+ dropped from 76% in 2008 to 74% this year. This continues a declining trend over the last three years. The state scores improved by 1% over 2008 scores. The CPI is now 2.0 points lower than it was in 2007, having decreased again this year by 1.4 points from the 2008 CPI.

**Four-Year Comparison of 3rd Grade Mathematics Performance Levels
(% of students)**

Grade 3	Proficient +	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Warning	CPI
2006 Mathematics	9	68	20	2	92.5
2007 Mathematics	32	50	15	3	92.7
2008 Mathematics	40	41	15	4	92.7
2009 Mathematics	33	45	15	6	90.8

The percent of students in the Proficient and Proficient+ range decreased by 3 percentage points (from 81% to 78%). The percentage point change in the state was -1, from 61% to 60%. The CPI decreased this year by 1.9 points.

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 90.2 in English Language Arts and 84.3 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 96.8%.

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 2009
	N	2009 CPI	Met Target (90.2)	CPI Change 2008-2009	Met Improvement Target	
Aggregate	2725	94.3	Yes	+3	Yes	Yes
Lim. English Prof.	43	79.1	-	-	-	-
Special Education	393	79.6	No	+3	No	No
Low Income/Free Lunch	125	83.8	-	-	-	-
Afr. Amer./Black	88	83.2	-	-	-	-
Asian or Pacif. Isl.	168	95.2	Yes	+1.4	Yes	Yes
Hispanic	84	87.2	-	-	-	-
Native American	4	-	-	-	-	-
White	2323	94.9	Yes	+1	Yes	Yes

The district aggregate CPI in ELA continues to be high: 94.3. Two of the three subgroups made AYP, meeting their CPI target for 2009. The special education subgroup, for the district, did not make the target of 90.2, nor did this subgroup make the Improvement Target over last year's CPI (target range from 80.3-85.3). The following chart illustrates the change in CPI from 2008-2009 for different subgroups.

Subgroup	2008 CPI	2009 CPI
Limited English Proficient	71.4	79.1
Special Education	79.3	79.6
Low Income/Free Lunch	79.9	83.8
African American/Black	81.2	83.2
Hispanic	85.2	87.2
Asian or Pacific Islander	93.8	95.2
White	94.8	94.9

There are still significant achievement gaps between the Black, Hispanic, Low Income/Free Lunch, Special Education and Limited English Proficient subgroups and the Asian and White sub-groups. It is notable that all of the subgroups improved their CPI from 2008 to 2009.

MATHEMATICS						
Student Group	Performance			Improvement		AYP 2009
	N	CPI	Met Target (84.3)	CPI Change 2008-2009	Met Improvement Target	
Aggregate	2729	90.9	Yes	+ .4	No	Yes
Lim. English Prof.	47	75.6	-	-	-	-
Special Education	390	68.7	No	- .7	No	No
Low Income/Free Lunch	126	71.8	-	-	-	-
Afr. Amer./Black	88	74.1	-	-	-	-
Asian or Pacif. Isl.	169	93.3	Yes	-1.9	No	Yes
Hispanic	86	79.9	-	-	-	-
Native American	4	-	-	-	-	-
White	2333	91.8	Yes	+ .7	Yes	Yes

In Mathematics, two of three subgroups made AYP. The special education subgroup did not meet the target (84.3), nor did the subgroup meet their Improvement Target. The following chart represents the change in CPI for several subgroups in the area of Mathematics.

Subgroup	2008 CPI	2009 CPI
Limited English Proficient	79.3	75.6
Special Education	69.4	68.7
Low Income/Free Lunch	73.6	71.8
African American/Black	74.3	74.1
Hispanic	79.7	79.1
Asian or Pacific Islander	95.2	93.3
White	91.1	91.8

Significant achievement gaps in MCAS Mathematics' scores continue between the Black, Hispanic, Low Income/Free Lunch, Special Education and Limited English Proficient subgroups and the Asian and White sub-groups. It is notable that none of these subgroups, except for the white subgroup, improved their CPI from 2008 to 2009.

Pollard Middle School was identified as in Improvement Year I in 2008, due to the special education subgroup failing to meet AYP for two years in a row. In 2009, the special education subgroup did make AYP in ELA, but not in Mathematics. This means that Pollard moves into Improvement Year II for Math and remains in Improvement Year I for ELA. In order to return to "No Status", this subgroup must meet AYP for two years in a row. The following AYP charts illustrate Pollard's AYP performance in both ELA and Mathematics on the 2009 MCAS tests.

The administrators, curriculum coordinators and teachers at Pollard Middle School are implementing academic supports for the students in grades 7-8 who scored lower than Low Needs Improvement (below 230). Additionally, this group is analyzing MCAS results, reviewing the curricular alignment with the state standards and identifying areas for further focus within both the ELA and Mathematics curriculum

What do these results tell us?

The performance of Needham students as a group, 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 in effect, 90% of all of our 10th 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 2009 scores remain similar to previous years. In ELA, the net CPI change for all classes was +1.9. This is in contrast to Needham's decreased net CPI score in 2008 (-0.9 in ELA from 2007-2008). There were no statistically significant decreases in ELA. In contrast, the increased scores in Grades 4 (+2.5) and 8 (+3.1) are significant and are comparable to the state increases at those grade levels. Overall the changes ranged from a -1.4 to +3.1.

The Mathematics scores reflect a net CPI change for the seven classes of +3.8. There were 4 grades with increases, 2 with decreases, and grade 6 remained the same as 2008. Overall, the changes in Mathematics ranged from -2.1 to + 5.2. The increase of +5.2 points at the Grade 8 level is significant. In contrast, the state's data for Grade 8 Mathematics reflects a -1.0 change in CPI.

The designation of Pollard Middle School for Improvement Year I (ELA) and II (Math) for the special education subgroup focuses the district's attention on the MCAS achievement of our special education subgroup. Pollard Middle School will continue to study and address this group's performance on this measure.

This year, Eliot School did not make AYP for both ELA and Math. Although Eliot School is not required to act as a result of their MCAS performance, the Principal, her staff and central office administrators have already begun analyzing the results. The goal at Eliot, as in all of our schools, is to insure that all students progress in the curriculum, realizing that MCAS, although important, is just one measure of that progress.

Although this data is presented to illustrate year-to-year variation, any comparisons with prior years should be done with caution. One must remember that 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.

This year, in late October, the DESE will be releasing “Growth Data” for schools and districts. This data will provide a longitudinal look at student, school and district growth over time, using MCAS results to track that progress. This data will allow Principals and teachers to more effectively focus their improvement efforts in their schools.

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 in ELA and/or Math, 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. Academic Support in Mathematics is being targeted for those Grade 10 students who would benefit from focused remediation as they prepare for MCAS. The ARRA IDEA grant will provide funds for Grade 10 special education students who need focused remediation in ELA. NCLB grant funding will be used to provide focused Mathematics tutoring for identified students at the High School.

Pollard and central administrators are meeting to determine intervention plans for the students in Grades 7 and 8 who did not meet expectations in the 2009 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 II 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 II status. ARRA IDEA funds will be targeted for remedial efforts for special education students at Pollard as well as professional development opportunities for teachers.

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. When the Growth Data is received by the district, administrators will determine the best use of the data in our attempts to insure that our curriculum and instruction is effectively meeting the needs of our students.

Christine Brumbach
October, 2009