

MCAS Update

LINCOLN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

10/27/17

Note: some images and text taken from DESE communications to districts and families

Hello faculty and families,
MCAS results were released this past week and since this is the first year districts are getting scores from the next-generation MCAS test, we wanted to share some key pieces of information with our whole community.

Goals

- Clarify changes in MCAS from the former legacy test to the current next-generation test
- Contextualize results—across the state and in Lincoln

Note:

- District analysis of trends in our data will be shared at School Committee on November 30th

This presentation has two goals: The first is to clarify changes in MCAS from the former legacy test to the current next-generation test and the second is to contextualize the results—both across the state and in Lincoln. We will not be delving deeply into our data at this time. Instead, district analysis of trends will be shared at School Committee on November 30th, alongside data from other Key Yearly Measures.

MCAS Results

- Individual score reports will be sent home through mail before the end of the week of 10/30/17
- Teachers with questions should reach out to their principal, content specialists, or Assistant Superintendent
- Families who have questions should reach out to their child's current teacher
 - Other resources, including a Parent's Guide to MCAS, can be found at:
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/parents/>
- **MCAS results are only one measure of our students' growth and achievement**

Individual scores will be sent home in the mail to students and families by the end of next week. Families should keep in mind the newness of the test and that we anticipate many students to perform better as they get used to the new format. If teachers have additional questions they should reach out to their principal, content specialists, or me, the Assistant Superintendent. If families have questions they should reach out to their child's current teacher. Families can also find other resources, including a Parent's Guide to MCAS at the Department of Education's website on the screen.

We want to emphasize that MCAS results are only one measure of our students' skills. We have a longstanding tradition of using multiple measures—both quantitative and qualitative—and while MCAS is a measure we include in our review of Key Yearly Measures, it only reveals a part of our students' growth and achievement.

Legacy → Next-generation

- First year of the new next-generation MCAS
- One significant driver was that students in Massachusetts were going to college having achieved Proficiency in MCAS but needed remedial coursework
- The next-generation MCAS test is **different** than the legacy test in a number of ways

Last spring was actually the first year students in Massachusetts took the new next-generation MCAS. Prior to 2017, students across the state had been assessed with the legacy MCAS and some districts took PARCC. One significant driver in changing the test was that a consistent portion of students who had scored Proficient on MCAS were unprepared for college-level work and needed remedial courses. One of the most important things to know is that the next-generation MCAS test is different than the legacy test in a number of ways.

Next-Generation Test

- Different types of computer-based items enable and require students to show a range of different skills
- Some technology-enabled features of online testing were new to students
- This current school year will be the first that all of our students in grades 3-8 take the next-generation MCAS through a computer
- Comparing results between districts this year does not provide a complete or accurate understanding of the results and their context

One significant change is that the next-generation test is computer-based rather than paper and pencil. Because of this, a variety of technology-enhanced questions that allow and require students to show a range of different skills are now possible. This might include dragging and dropping answers into different categories or highlighting evidence in a text to support a claim.

Some items are multi-part, requiring students to answer each step correctly in order to receive points. And some features of the online test, like how to enter equations, were new to students who had been used to simply showing their work on paper. Last year, DESE had not yet released questions for each grade level in the various formats students saw them. Full practice tests with all item formats are scheduled to be released this upcoming January so that students at each grade level will have a chance to see what the various types of questions might look like.

Last year, only grades 3, 4, and 8 in Lincoln took the test online but this current school year all grades 3-8 in Lincoln will take the test on the computer. Each district in the state has approached phasing in computer-based testing differently. Some still aren't having all their students take the test online while others have been using computer-based testing for multiple years already so comparing MCAS results between districts

this year does not provide a complete or accurate understanding of the results and their context.

Skill complexity for each test

ELA

- Writing is now assessed in all grades including writing about reading
- Pairing texts more, finding relevant evidence in the text

MATH

- Identifying multiple right answers
 - Example: write three equivalent expressions (all three expressions need to be correct to receive points)

Not only is the test more challenging because of technological changes, but the skill complexity has also increased, especially at certain grade levels. Here are just a few quick examples from ELA and Math:

The legacy MCAS only assessed writing in grades 4, 7, and 10, but the next-generation MCAS tests writing for all students in grades 3-8. Students are also being asked to write not just in response to a prompt, but based on a rigorous text and their writing is being assessed for things like idea development, evidence, analysis, and conventions, not all of which was required in the past. Additionally, students are asked to compare and contrast texts and take multiple texts into account when answering questions as well as identify relevant evidence in the text to support their choices rather than simply answering questions.

In math students are now asked to solve problems with multiple right answers. Rather than relying on multiple choice questions as much, students are now asked to, for example, write three equivalent expressions. In both cases students need to get all parts correct in order to receive points.

MCAS Achievement Levels

LEGACY

Advanced: Students at this level demonstrate a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of rigorous subject matter, and provide sophisticated solutions to complex problems.

Proficient: Students at this level demonstrate a solid understanding of challenging subject matter and solve a wide variety of problems.

Needs Improvement: Students at this level demonstrate a partial understanding of subject matter and solve some simple problems.

Warning: Students at this level demonstrate a minimal understanding of subject matter and do not solve simple problems.

NEXT-GENERATION

Exceeding Expectations: A student who performed at this level exceeded grade-level expectations by demonstrating mastery of the subject matter.

Meeting Expectations: A student who performed at this level met grade-level expectations and is academically on track to succeed in the current grade in this subject.

Partially Meeting Expectations: A student who performed at this level partially met grade-level expectations in this subject.

Not Meeting Expectations: A student who performed at this level did not meet grade-level expectations in this subject.

- New standards setting process occurred this summer with a group of Massachusetts educators
- Scaled score ranges with next-generation are different from legacy test
- Scoring categories from legacy to next—generation are not comparable

The scoring categories have also changed. In the past there were four designations: Advanced, Proficient, Needs Improvement, and Warning. The new achievement levels are Exceeding Expectations, Meeting Expectations, Partially Meeting Expectations, and Not Meeting Expectations. While there might still be four levels, the levels have different meaning.

A new standards setting process occurred this past summer with a group of Massachusetts educators to clarify these levels and some scaled score ranges for these categories have shifted from the legacy to the next-generation test.

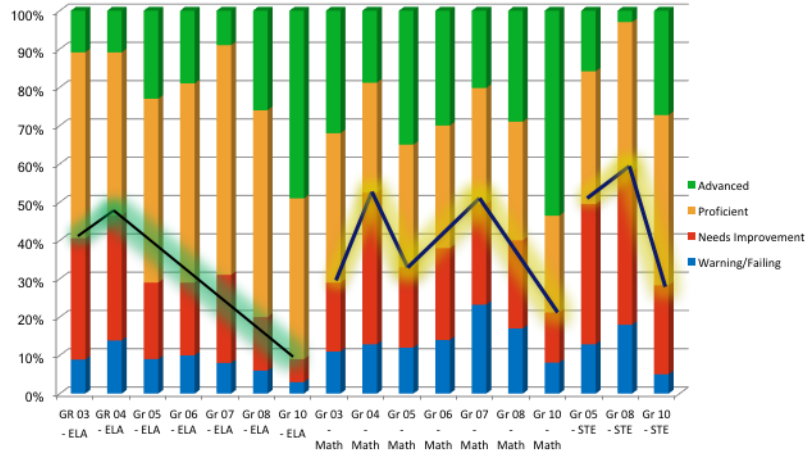
Interpreting Results

- The new standards for Meeting Expectations are **more rigorous** than the standards for reaching the Proficient level on the legacy MCAS
- **In some grades and subjects the percent of students Meeting Expectations will likely be lower** than the previous percent that was Proficient
- **The results do NOT mean that students learned more or less; next-generation MCAS measures different skills in a different way**
- **2017 is the baseline year** — scores are expected to change over time

Because of all these changes to the test, including the skills being assessed, the online component, the scoring categories and new standards setting, interpreting results this year is difficult. In general, the new standards for Meeting Expectations are **more rigorous** than the standards for reaching the Proficient level on the legacy MCAS. In some grades and subjects (grade 4 English language arts and math, grade 7 math), the percent of students Meeting Expectations will likely be similar to the percent that were Proficient previously. In other grades and subjects (grade 8 English language arts), the percent who are Meeting Expectations will likely be lower than the previous percent of Proficient students.

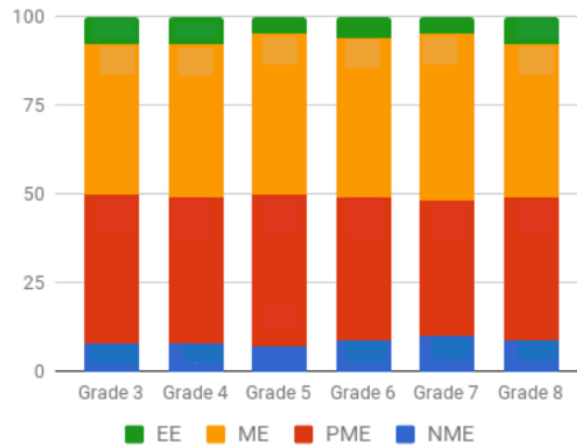
The results do NOT mean that students learned more or less; the next-generation MCAS measures different skills in a different way. 2017 is also the baseline year — the first year of a new assessment — and we expect scores to change over time, as occurred when the legacy MCAS debuted in 1998.

Legacy MCAS Results (2015)



With the prior legacy test, the level of rigor and student scores were inconsistent from grade to grade, where some grades, like 4 in ELA and Math, 7 in math, and 8 in science had fewer students scoring proficient or advanced than others.

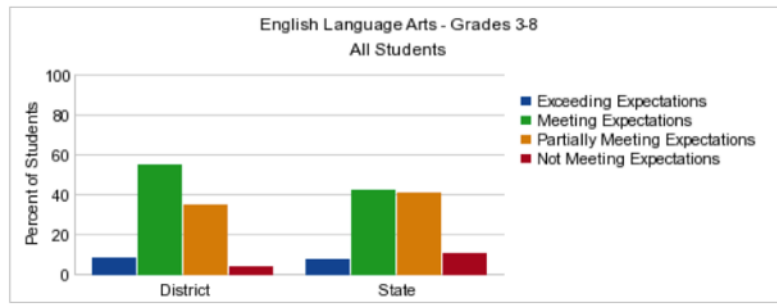
Projected Statewide 2017 Results for Grades 3-8 ELA and Math:
Percent of students in each achievement level



The new next-generation test is designed to be more consistent from year to year. The state has projected that for grades 3-8 in ELA and Math, the majority of students will score in meeting or partially meeting expectations, with fewer numbers in the not meeting expectations or exceeding expectations categories.

ELA grades 3-8

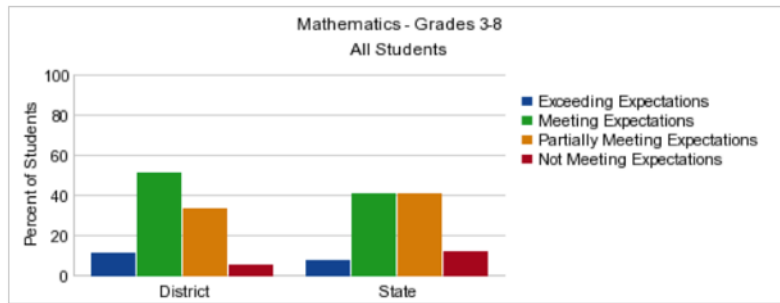
English Language Arts	N Included	% District	% State
Exceeding Expectations	57	8	7
Meeting Expectations	400	54	42
Partially Meeting Expectations	256	35	41
Not Meeting Expectations	23	3	10
Total Included	736		



In our own district, we have seen the impact of these myriad changes to our scores. Here you can see our results for all Lincoln 3rd-8th graders in ELA...

Math grades 3-8

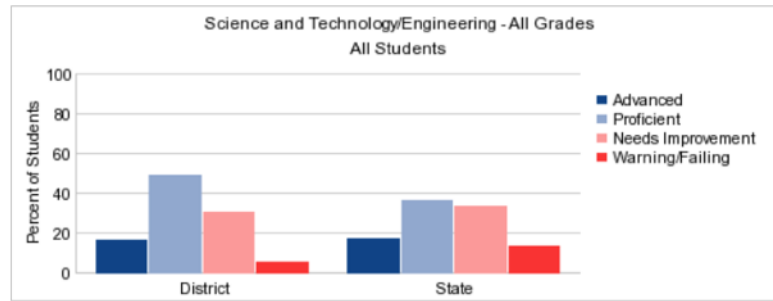
Mathematics	N Included	% District	% State
Exceeding Expectations	81	11	8
Meeting Expectations	376	51	40
Partially Meeting Expectations	241	33	41
Not Meeting Expectations	35	5	12
Total Included	733		



...math...

Science grades 5 and 8 (legacy MCAS)

Science and Technology/Engineering	N Included	% District	% State
Advanced	38	16	17
Proficient	115	49	36
Needs Improvement	72	31	33
Warning/Failing	11	5	13
Total Included	236		



...and science (though students in Massachusetts still took the legacy science MCAS test last year and will begin taking next-generation this year). These scores are publically available on Lincoln's profile page on DESE's website and a more thorough report with discussion will occur at School Committee on November 30th.

Thank you

We hope this has been helpful. If you have any questions, please reach out.