

Worcester Public Schools

Press Release

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For immediate release



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The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) today released 2015 district and school-level test scores from the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) assessment.

In 2014-15, the DESE administered both the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) and PARCC tests in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics to students in the Commonwealth. While most school districts selected one or the other to administer to students in grades 3-8, the Worcester Public Schools (along with Boston and Springfield) chose a hybrid of both – with some schools administering MCAS while others had students participate in PARCC.¹

In the WPS, nearly 6000 students in 24 schools participated in PARCC testing. The majority of students were in grades 3-8. A small number of 9th and 11th grade students also participated in PARCC high school tests.

Among students in PARCC participating schools in the WPS, 40 percent of students “met or exceeded expectations” on the PARCC ELA assessments (see Appendix A) administered to students in grades 3-8. Students in Grades 7 and 8 were the most likely to meet or exceed performance expectations on the ELA PARCC test with 49 percent at Grade 7 and 50 percent at Grade 8 doing so. In Mathematics, 29 percent of grade 3-8 students either met or exceeded expectations (see Appendix B). As with the ELA PARCC scores, Grade 7 and Grade 8 students had the highest proportion of students meeting or exceeding expectations with 31 percent and 34 percent respectively.

As only a subpopulation of WPS students participated in PARCC testing in ELA and Mathematics, it is important to recognize that these scores are not representative of the entire population of Grade 3-8 students in the district. Similarly, it is not appropriate to make direct comparisons of the “meeting expectations” achievement level on PARCC and the Proficient and/or Advanced performance levels on MCAS.

¹ Due to state graduation requirements, the grade 10 MCAS test was used by all districts in the state. High school students as well as students in Grades 5 and 8, also continued to participate in Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) MCAS tests.

One way to examine student progress over time is to examine student growth percentiles (SGP). SGPs show how a student's achievement on PARCC in 2015 compares to that of other students in the state who began the year at the same level based on MCAS. The middle SGP, or median, is an indicator of how well the typical student in a district, school or class performed relative to similar students in Massachusetts. A typical school or district in the Commonwealth would have a median student growth percentile of 50.

Among students in PARCC participating schools, the median ELA SGP for students across all grades was 51, indicating that the typical student in the PARCC participating schools in the WPS scored slightly higher in 2015 than Massachusetts students with similar performance histories. The ELA median SGPs were higher than the statewide growth rate for both grade 6 (SGP of 57) and grade 8 (SGP of 57). In mathematics, the median SGP across all grades was 49 – just shy of statewide median growth. The median SGPs in mathematics in the WPS were highest in grade 7 (SGP of 50) and grade 8 (SGP of 50).

Across all grade levels tested under MCAS, several schools had median SGPs that were “above target” in 2015 (60 or higher). In ELA, these are Clark Street Community School (SGP of 60.5), Goddard School of Science and Technology (SGP of 63), Lake View School (SGP of 69), Thorndyke Road School (SGP of 69), Woodland Academy (SGP of 68), and Worcester East Middle School (SGP of 63). In mathematics, two schools met this student growth criterion: May Street School (SGP of 72) and Forest Grove Middle School (SGP of 64).

“I am encouraged that so many of our schools continue to demonstrate that high levels of student growth can be obtained through hard work and perseverance – particularly in English Language Arts which has been the focus of so much of our work during my tenure in Worcester,” said Superintendent Melinda Boone. “The PARCC test is a higher bar for our kids. I am confident that our children will rise to the challenge, and I look forward to continuing to watch the progress of our students and schools in the years that follow.”

The Massachusetts Board of Education is expected to vote on whether to adopt PARCC as a replacement for MCAS on November 17.

Additional school-level detail on PARCC MCAS scores can be found on the School

Appendix A: Worcester Public Schools: English Language Arts PARCC Results by Grade Level

Grade Level	Number of Students Included	Level 5 - Exceeded Expectations	Level 4 - Met Expectations	Level 3 - Approached Expectations	Level 2 - Partially Met Expectations	Level 1 - Did Not Yet Meet Expectations	Median SGP
3-8	5,823	6	34	28	19	12	51.0
3	967	3	28	22	25	22	.
4	885	5	29	32	21	12	40.0
5	843	2	33	30	23	11	49.0
6	829	5	35	34	18	9	57.0
7	1,172	12	37	25	15	11	49.0
8	1,127	9	41	27	16	8	57.0

Optional English Language Arts Tests:

Grade Level	Number of Students Included	Level 5 - Exceeded Expectations	Level 4 - Met Expectations	Level 3 - Approached Expectations	Level 2 - Partially Met Expectations	Level 1 - Did Not Yet Meet Expectations	Median SGP
9	49	6	39	29	14	12	.
11	45	2	20	22	40	16	.

Appendix B: Worcester Public Schools: Mathematics PARCC Results by Grade Level

Grade Level	Number of Students Included	Level 5 - Exceeded Expectations	Level 4 - Met Expectations	Level 3 - Approached Expectations	Level 2 - Partially Met Expectations	Level 1 - Did Not Yet Meet Expectations	Median SGP
3-8	5,810	4	25	28	28	15	47.0
3	972	4	25	25	27	19	.
4	884	3	25	27	31	15	44.0
5	844	3	20	26	32	18	42.0
6	829	2	23	33	28	14	49.0
7	1,158	3	28	33	29	7	50.0
8	1,064	6	28	22	23	21	50.0

Optional Mathematics Tests:

Grade Level	Number of Students Included	Level 5 - Exceeded Expectations	Level 4 - Met Expectations	Level 3 - Approached Expectations	Level 2 - Partially Met Expectations	Level 1 - Did Not Yet Meet Expectations	Median SGP
8 (Algebra I)	59	0	59	37	3	0	24.0
HS (Algebra I)	22	0	0	9	45	45	.
HS (Algebra II)	73	0	8	25	27	40	.