

Hull Public Schools Receive MCAS Results

Hull Students Consistently Exceeded Statewide Average for Math and English Testing Results

HULL — Superintendent Michael F. Devine reports that the Hull Public Schools have received and reviewed the district's Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) exam scores, and he is pleased to note that Hull students consistently exceeded statewide average scores.

"The results show clearly what we in the community already know: that Hull students are bright, strong, and motivated, and that they are receiving an excellent education in the Hull Public Schools," Superintendent Devine said. "That said, the raw numbers indicate, as they always do, that we still have work to do, and we can always improve."

Hull Public Schools students partially met, fully met, or exceeded expectations at rates higher than the state average in every category tested, except for eighth grade mathematics.

The results are insightful, especially considering the fact that this was the first year for students in grades three through eight to take the Next Generation MCAS tests. The students were taking the third different type of test in four years, with the MCAS and PARCC tests being replaced this year in grades three through eight and next year in grade 10. With the new exams adding a new challenge to students, state officials expect test results to improve in future years.

The school district was designated "no level" on this year's assessment. "No level" is a new designation, which indicates that the district as a whole is not earmarked for improvement. (Previously called Level 1)

The district noted three areas of concern:

First, the Lillian M. Jacobs Elementary School was designated a Level 3 school because of a new rule that penalizes schools if fewer than 90 percent of any category of student take any one portion of the exam. At the school, three fifth grade students refused to take the Science and Technology/Engineering assessment. That factor, alone, resulted in the Level 3 designation, even though the school performed very well on the assessment, and would have been given "No Level" otherwise.

"We are appealing this designation, as it is very unfortunate and it does not paint an accurate picture of the true academic performance at the Jacobs Elementary School," Superintendent Devine said. "The truth is that nearly all of our elementary school students are proficient in Math, English and Science, and three students refusing to take an exam should not denigrate the hundreds who took the exam and performed well. It further creates an unwarranted stigma for the hardworking teachers whose success in the classroom deserves a better report card from the Commonwealth."

Second, while eighth graders were Partially Meeting, Meeting, or Exceeding state expectations in Math at a higher than average rate, it was the lowest rate in the district. Also, 40 percent of eighth graders were rated as Meeting or Exceeding expectations, which was below the state average of 47 percent.

"While it is difficult to draw definitive conclusions based on the first year of a new exam, eighth grade mathematics has been earmarked for improvement. The district will work closely with school administration and classroom teachers to ensure that math is a point of emphasis in the Middle School, and we are hopeful that we will see improvement going forward," Superintendent Devine said.

Finally, the Hull High School was designated a Level 2 school and will seek to improve its narrowing of the achievement gap, and the state would like to see higher exam participation among economically disadvantaged students, who took the exam at a slightly lower rate than other students.

The results in English Language Arts and Mathematics are broken up into four levels: Exceeds Expectations, Meeting Expectations, Partially Meeting Expectations and Not Meeting Expectations. All 10th grade exams and all results in the Science and Technology/Engineering category are broken up into four levels: Advanced, Proficient, Needs Improvement and Warning/Failing.

Of note:

Lillian M. Jacobs Elementary School

94 percent of third grade students were at least partially proficient in English Language Arts (ELA) and 92 percent in Mathematics. More than half of third graders fully met or exceeded expectations (the highest two levels) in both categories.

98 percent of fourth grade students were at least partially proficient in ELA and 94 percent in Math. Sixty-eight percent of fourth graders fully met or exceeded expectations in ELA, and 55 percent in Math.

95 percent of fifth graders were at least partially proficient in ELA and 89 percent in Math. Sixty-one percent of fifth graders fully met or exceeded expectations in ELA, and 50 percent in Math. Fifty-six percent of fifth graders were rated proficient or better in Science and Technology/Engineering. (Third/fourth graders are not tested in that category.)

Memorial Middle School

All sixth graders (100 percent) were at least partially proficient in ELA, and 92 percent in Math. Sixty-nine percent fully met or exceeded expectations in ELA.

95 percent of seventh graders were at least partially proficient in ELA, and 97 percent in Math. Fifty-nine percent fully met or exceeded expectations in ELA, and 55 percent in Math.

88 percent of eighth graders were at least particularly proficient in ELA, and 85 percent in Math. Fifty percent fully met or exceeded expectations in ELA, and 40 percent in Mathematics. Superintendent Devine notes that this is an area that is earmarked for improvement.

Hull High School

All 10th graders (100 percent) passed the exam in ELA, and 95 percent in Math. Ninety-five percent were rated as Proficient or Advanced in ELA, and 85 percent were rated as Proficient or Advanced in Math.

99 percent of 10th graders passed the Science and Technology/Engineering portion of the exam, with 88 percent rated Proficient or Advanced..

The Next Generation MCAS tests were developed after the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted in November 2015 to create a new, computer-based test that was tailored to Massachusetts. It updates the nearly 20-year-old MCAS test and is designed to give a better indication of readiness for the next grade level than older assessments.