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Waltham Public Schools: Wins and Next Steps Based on 2016-2017 MCAS 2.0 Results
Waltham's Middle Schools Demonstrate Significant Improvement

Waltham, MA, October 17, 2016- In 2016-2017 Massachusetts students participated in a new state standards-based assessment called MCAS 2.0. This new assessment is more rigorous than previous MCAS assessments in several important ways: (1) the assessment is aligned to a new set of rigorous English Language Arts, Mathematics and Science standards that Massachusetts has adopted; (2) the assessment includes new performance bands (i.e. exceeding expectations, meeting expectations, partially meeting expectations and not meeting expectations); and (3) a phased shift toward computer-based assessment and away from paper-pencil assessments.

The Commissioner of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has communicated a significant decline across the state in the percentage of students who scored “meeting or exceeding expectations” on the current assessment when compared with the number of students who scored “advanced and proficient” on previous assessments. Given that past assessments are so different from the MCAS 2.0, DESE is clear that we cannot compare current and past results. We have looked at creative ways to make sense of where Waltham stands relative to our state peers. To make sense of how Waltham has performed relative to our peers we are closely examining three key metrics:

1. Student Growth Percentile (SGP): Student Growth Percentile (SGP) range from 1 to 99 and measure student growth when compared to other students who have a similar score history. An SGP of 1-39 represents low growth; a 40-59 SGP is considered moderate growth and finally SGP between 60-99 shows high growth. The median SGP in the state is 51.
2. Strict Comparison with State: We have looked at how Waltham students performed in each performance band compared to state averages.

3. Gap with state as compared to historical state gaps: We examined the gap between WPS and state as measured by the percentage of students who scored Advanced or Proficient on the 2014 MCAS versus Exceeding or Meeting Expectations on 2017 MCAS 2.0

We share highlights of our 2016-2017 results in the context of these three key metrics (above) because we believe they best help us understand our results relative to the state.

English Language Arts

General Trends

- High SGP in grades 5 (59), 6 (64) , 7 (57) & 8 (77)
- WPS students outperformed state in grades 6, 7 and 8 on MCAS 2.0
 - 4% points above state in grade 6 (% of students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations)
 - 8% points above state in grade 7 (% of students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations)
 - 11% points above state in grade 8 (% of students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations)

Key Trends at Individual Elementary Schools

- Grade 3
 - FitzGerald students outperformed the state
 - 55% Exceeding or Meeting Expectations compared to 47% statewide
- Grade 4
 - Whittemore students led the entire district with a median SGP of 68 (High Growth) and for the first time in their history outperformed the district average
- Grade 5
 - FitzGerald and MacArthur students outperformed the state
 - 51% Exceeding or Meeting Expectations compared to 49% statewide
 - Several schools had median SGPs above 60 (High Growth)
 - FitzGerald (64), MacArthur (60), Stanley (74), and Whittemore (75.5)
 - Whittemore, for the first time, outperformed district and state averages in writing

Key Trends at Middle Schools

- Grade 6
 - WPS students outperformed state
 - 54% Meeting or Exceeding Expectations compared to 50% statewide
 - McDevitt students outperformed state
 - 59% Meeting or Exceeding Expectations compared to 50% statewide
 - The district and McDevitt had median SGPs above 60 (High Growth)

- WPS (64) and McDevitt (77)
- Grade 7
 - WPS students outperformed state
 - 58% Meeting or Exceeding Expectations compared to 50% statewide
 - Kennedy students outperformed state
 - 59% Meeting or Exceeding Expectations compared to 50% statewide
 - McDevitt students outperformed state
 - 61% Meeting or Exceeding Expectations compared to 50% statewide
 - McDevitt had a median SGP above 60 (High Growth)
 - McDevitt (63)
- Grade 8
 - WPS students outperformed state
 - 60% Meeting or Exceeding Expectations compared to 49% statewide
 - Kennedy students outperformed state
 - 56% Meeting or Exceeding Expectations compared to 49% statewide
 - McDevitt students outperformed state
 - 65% Meeting or Exceeding Expectations compared to 49% statewide
 - The district, Kennedy and McDevitt had median SGPs above 60 (High Growth)
 - WPS (77), Kennedy (73) and McDevitt (82)

The table below summarizes Waltham’s 2016-2017 middle school ELA performance.

Grade 6	2017						
School	Exceeds	Meets	Partially Meeting	Not Meeting	E + M	CPI	SGP
Kennedy	4%	44%	42%	10%	48%		49
McDevitt	23%	36%	32%	9%	59%		77
District	15%	39%	37%	9%	54%		64
State	7%	43%	39%	10%	50%		50
Grade 7	2017						
School	Exceeds	Meets	Partially Meeting	Not Meeting	E + M	CPI	SGP
Kennedy	5%	54%	29%	11%	59%		50
McDevitt	10%	51%	34%	6%	61%		63
District	7%	51%	32%	10%	58%		57
State	6%	44%	39%	11%	50%		50

Grade 8		2017					
School	Exceeds	Meets	Partially Meeting	Not Meeting	E + M	CPI	SGP
Kennedy	6%	50%	34%	10%	56%		73
McDevitt	17%	48%	30%	5%	65%		82
District	12%	48%	32%	9%	60%		77
State	8%	41%	39%	11%	49%		50

Math

General Trends

- High SGP in grades 6 (65) , 7 (66) & 8 (69)
- WPS students have significantly closed the gap with the state when comparing results from 2017 MCAS 2.0 to 2014 MCAS
 - Gap between WPS and state as measured by % of students Advanced or Proficient in 2014 versus Exceeding or Meeting Expectations in 2017
 - Grade 3
 - 2014 (-14%) and 2017 (-6%)
 - Grade 7
 - 2014 (-13%) and 2017 (-3%)
 - Grade 8
 - 2014 (-12%) and 2017 (-5%)

Key Trends at Individual Elementary Schools

- Grade 3
 - FitzGerald, Northeast and Plympton students outperformed or matched the state
 - FitzGerald
 - 58% Exceeding or Meeting Expectations compared to 49% statewide
 - Northeast
 - 49% Exceeding or Meeting Expectations compared to 49% statewide
 - Plympton
 - 52% Exceeding or Meeting Expectations compared to 49% statewide
- Grade 4
 - Plympton students matched the state

- 49% Exceeding or Meeting Expectations compared to 49% statewide
 - Plympton students had a median SGP of 60 (High Growth)
 - Whittemore students, for the first time, tied the district average.
- Grade 5
 - MacArthur students outperformed the state
 - 51% Exceeding or Meeting Expectations compared to 46% statewide
 - Stanley (57) and MacArthur (60) lead the way at grade 5 with SGP.

Key Trends at Middle Schools

- Grade 6
 - The district and McDevitt had median SGPs above 60 (High Growth)
 - WPS (65) and McDevitt (75)
- Grade 7
 - Kennedy students outperformed the state
 - 57% Exceeding or Meeting Expectations compared to 47% statewide
 - The district, Kennedy and McDevitt had median SGPs above 60 (High Growth)
 - WPS (66) , Kennedy (72) , McDevitt (61)
- Grade 8
 - The district, Kennedy and McDevitt had median SGPs above 60 (High Growth)
 - WPS (69), Kennedy (70) and McDevitt (66)

Science Technology and Engineering

General Trends

- WPS students outperformed the state in grade 8
 - 1% point above state (% of students scoring Advanced or Proficient)
- WPS students have significantly closed the gap with the state when comparing results from 2017 MCAS to 2014 MCAS
 - Gap between WPS and state as measured by % of students Advanced + Proficient in 2014 versus 2017
 - Grade 8
 - 2014 (-8%) and 2017 (+1%)
 - Grade 10
 - 2014 (-4%) and 2017 (-1%)

Key Trends at Individual Elementary Schools

- Grade 5

- MacArthur, Northeast and Plympton students outperformed the state
 - MacArthur
 - 49% Advanced or Proficient compared to 46% statewide
 - Northeast
 - 47% Advanced or Proficient compared to 46% statewide
 - Plympton
 - 55% Advanced or Proficient compared to 46% statewide
- Whittemore students have significantly closed the gap with the state when comparing results from 2017 MCAS to 2014 MCAS
 - Gap between Whittemore and state as measured by % of students Advanced + Proficient in 2014 versus 2017
 - 2014 (-30%) and 2017 (-4%)

Key Trends at Middle Schools

- Grade 8
 - WPS students outperformed the state
 - 41% Advanced or Proficient compared to 40% statewide
 - McDevitt students outperformed the state
 - 42% Advanced or Proficient compared to 40% statewide

Advanced Placement Scores--Waltham High School

The Waltham Public Schools has also received Advanced Placement data. Advanced Placement (AP) courses are rigorous, college-level classes in a variety of subjects that give students an opportunity to gain the skills and experience colleges recognize. At the conclusion of the course, students are encouraged to take a standardized AP exam. Many colleges and universities will honor college credit for students who earn a score of 3 or higher on the exam. We note that over the last 6 years, Waltham Public Schools has nearly doubled the number of students who take AP exams and tripled the number of tests taken. The table below outlines Waltham High School’s performance on a range of AP exams compared to global and state averages.

AP SCHOOL SCORE SUMMARY 2017			
Subject	Mean Score		
	WHS	MA	Global
Biology	3.45	3.13	2.89
Chemistry	3.00	2.99	2.67
Computer Science Principles	3.47	3.06	3.17

English Literature and Composition	3.42	3.04	2.69
European History	3.27	3.09	2.81
Macroeconomics	3.35	3.27	2.89
Microeconomics	3.59	3.28	3.26
Physics 1	2.82	2.52	2.40
Physics C: Electricity and Magnetism	4.00	3.56	3.49
Physics C: Mechanics	4.29	3.94	3.71
Statistics	3.55	2.85	2.72
Studio Art Drawing Portfolio	4.50	3.62	3.56
United States History	3.38	3.19	2.65

Next Steps

The Waltham Public Schools will present MCAS 2.0 results at the November 1, 2017 School Committee meeting. In the meantime, the central office is working with each individual school to analyze data and to develop a Quality School Plan (QSP). The QSP is the strategic plan each school will develop in which goals, benchmarks and strategies are collaboratively set to drive improvement efforts. Throughout the fall and winter months, individual schools will present their plans to the School Committee. Specifically, schools will generate goals to improve academic outcomes, achieve equity across their respective schools and better engage family and community. This will also include a deep look at how best to support subgroups of students for whom we need to accelerate outcomes. We look forward to sharing the wins and challenges of our individual schools and their plans to accelerate improvement.

Families can expect that they will be receiving MCAS results for their children in the next few weeks. Please know that families can schedule a meeting with their child(ren)'s teacher and/or principal if you would like to discuss further.