



Melrose School Committee

Regular Meeting

Tuesday, November 18, 2025, 7:00 PM
562 Main Street, Melrose, MA 02176
Council Chamber, First Floor, Melrose City Hall

MINUTES

1. CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Dorie Withey	Chair	Present
Jennifer McAndrew	Vice Chair	Present
Jen Grigoraitis	Mayor	Present
Jennifer Razi-Thomas	Member	Present
Seamus Kelley	Member	Present
Matt Hartman	Member	Present
Margaret Raymond Driscoll	Member	Present
Cari Berman	Interim Superintendent	Present

Also in attendance: Interim Deputy Superintendent, Ken Kelley. With a roll call vote with seven (7) present, the meeting convened at 7:00 PM.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT

Without objection, the Chair opened Public Comment. Melrose resident **Gerry Mroz** expressed his concern that without a change in how the override funds are allocated, the school system would not see a meaningful improvement. He urged that the money be directed toward resources for students and that a clear spending plan be established to prevent the need for another override in the near future. Without objection, the Chair closed Public Comment.

3. REPORT OF THE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

There were no student representatives present this evening.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS OF THE CHAIR

Chair Withey opened the meeting by thanking the community for passing the historic override. Interim Superintendent Berman detailed the plan for the new funds, announcing a proposed appropriation of over \$3.8 million for instruction and learning, with additional benefits coming from DPW and IT budgets for maintenance and technology. Ms. Berman discussed the continuous work since the override to plan for the second half of FY26 as well as the plan for FY27. She outlined the next steps: the City Council will establish the total school appropriation during the November 20th meeting, after which the School Committee will allocate the funds into budget approved categories and MPS will begin year 2026 with approved budget amounts. Ms. Berman emphasized that while the override is a significant help, it won't fix everything; the

committee will prioritize restoring positions that directly impact student growth and achievement, guided by data and research. She specifically noted that due to the current school year already being underway, some existing contracted roles will remain unchanged for the remainder of the year; for example, Jason Merrill will remain as secondary principal and Bryan Corrigan will remain as deputy principal. Deputy Superintendent Kelley reinforced that this is not the typical process where the City Council sets the funding level first, and he too stressed the ultimate goal of maximizing the impact for student growth and development.

1. Report: Outreach

School Committee Member Seamus Kelley reported on his attendance at the MASC conference last week, alongside Ms. Driscoll and incoming School Committee members. He noted the high quality of professional development workshops regarding effective School Committee functioning. Mr. Kelley also announced his intention to seek the position of Chair for the 2026 calendar year.

2. Report: Superintendent Mid-Year Evaluation

Chair Withey presented the mid-year performance evaluation for Interim Superintendent Berman. The evaluation indicated that Ms. Berman has provided highly effective leadership during a period of significant transition and budgetary challenges, placing her on track for proficiency by the end of the school year. Committee members expressed their appreciation for Ms. Berman's courage in stepping into the role during a time of uncertainty, her focus on students and the district's mission, and her dedication to all students and the community. Chair Withey then reminded the Committee that, per contract, they must notify Ms. Berman of the superintendent hiring process for the 2026-2027 school year by December 31, 2025. This process will be discussed at the upcoming December meetings.

5. ANNOUNCEMENTS OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

Interim Superintendent Berman thanked the Committee for their feedback and support, stating it was her pleasure to serve the community. She expressed looking forward to the second half of the year.

1. Report: Personnel

Interim Superintendent Berman presented the Personnel Report, also noting some open positions. She confirmed that, with the exception of two Chapter 70-funded Reading Specialist positions, all current vacancies were part of the approved spring budget. Ms. Berman indicated that the two Reading Specialist roles are close to being filled. The Committee discussed challenges surrounding the timing of hiring cycles and the overall decrease in new teaching candidates.

2. Report: Enrollment Updates

Ms. Berman shared the current enrollment update from the packet which has remained fairly consistent, and offered to answer any questions from the committee.

6. CONSENT AGENDA

MOTION:	To Approve the Consent Agenda
RESULT:	ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Seamus Kelley
SECONDER:	Matt Hartman
AYES:	Dorie Withey, Jennifer McAndrew, Jennifer Razi-Thomas, Jennifer Grigoraitis, Seamus Kelley, Margaret Raymond Driscoll, Matt Hartman

1. Meeting Minutes from October 28, 2025
2. Cafeteria Report
3. 2026 Quebec Field Trip Date Change
4. Warrants

FY26 School - [S26031](#) - \$641,700.16
FY26 October Debit Card #2 - [S26032](#) - \$205.00
FY26 Refunds/Officials - [S26033](#) - \$5,126.99
FY26 October MVMMS Student Activity Wire - [S26034](#) - \$3,720.00
FY26 October High School Student Activity Wire - [S26035](#) - \$4,670.43
FY26 November Debit Card - [S26036](#) - \$1,625.00
FY26 October Meals Tax - [S26037](#) - \$55.60

7. SUBCOMMITTEES (COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE)

1. Finance and Facilities - Seamus Kelley/Jennifer McAndrew
- A Vote: Monthly Budget Summary/Grants/Revolving Accounts

The monthly budget, grants, and revolving accounts reports were presented by Interim Deputy Superintendent Kelley, who noted that they are encumbered with staff and tuition for the year.

MOTION:	To Approve the Monthly Budget Summary/Grants/Revolving Accounts
RESULT:	ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Jennifer McAndrew
SECONDER:	Jennifer Razi-Thomas
AYES:	Dorie Withey, Jennifer McAndrew, Jennifer Razi-Thomas, Jennifer Grigoraitis, Seamus Kelley, Margaret Raymond Driscoll, Matt Hartman

- B Report: Special Education Expense and Summer Program Updates

Interim Deputy Superintendent Kelley presented the Special Education Report and the Summer Program Update Report from the packet, offering to address any committee questions. Discussion included: more services to more students for less money this year,

consolidating programs into one building this summer, which created some savings, positive feedback received from families, positive feedback also received from surveys of families, and the wonderful opportunity for a more inclusive setting.

2. Educational Programs and Personnel - Jennifer Razi-Thomas/ Margaret Driscoll

A Vote: Roosevelt School Improvement Plan

Principal Venancia Cruz presented the Roosevelt School Improvement Plan. The plan centers on creating an inclusive, welcoming, and equitable learning environment to promote a sense of belonging for all, with the academic goal of achieving literacy growth for one hundred percent of learners.

The plan also aims to improve student attendance, reinforce the "Roosevelt Three R's" (Respectful, Responsible, and Ready to Learn), and utilize the IXL platform to identify skill gaps and implement targeted interventions.

MOTION:	To Approve the Roosevelt School Improvement Plan
RESULT:	ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Jennifer McAndrew
SECONDER:	Margaret Raymond Driscoll
AYES:	Dorie Withey, Jennifer McAndrew, Jennifer Razi-Thomas, Jennifer Grigoraitis, Seamus Kelley, Margaret Raymond Driscoll, Matt Hartman

B Report: MCAS Overview

Executive Director of Academics & Accountability Melanie Acevedo and Director of Academics (6-12) Nora Tsoutsis presented an overview of the 2025 spring MCAS results. The presentation included informational slides (added to minutes) and a packet summarizing the Melrose results, focusing on high-level analysis and next steps for the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Discussion included the district's priorities and next steps, with a particular focus on improving Math performance, closely examining mid-year data to monitor student progress, analyzing cohort data, and at the building level trying to identify consistent, grade-level performance gaps every year. Other key topics covered were a review of teacher licensure in content areas, enhancing communications with families, and strategies for increasing the focus on Science and Social Studies while still prioritizing ELA and Math. Finally, the group discussed how the recent change—making the MCAS no longer a requirement for high school graduation—might impact overall student progress.

[2025 MCAS Overview Slides](#)

C Vote: MHS Athletic Dept. Waiver

Interim Superintendent Berman presented a request for an Athletic Waiver from Athletic Director Stephen Fogarty. The waiver seeks approval for 8th-grade students to participate in the high school level girls and boys ice hockey teams to ensure team numbers.

MOTION:	To Approve the Athletic Waiver
RESULT:	ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Seamus Kelley
SECONDER:	Dorie Withey
AYES:	Dorie Withey, Jennifer McAndrew, Jennifer Razi-Thomas, Jennifer Grigoraitis, Seamus Kelley, Margaret Raymond Driscoll, Matt Hartman

3. Policy and Planning - Matt Hartman/Margaret Driscoll

A Vote: JJF Policy

Mr. Hartman presented the JJF Policy as it was scheduled for its second reading and vote.

MOTION:	To Approve the JJF Policy
RESULT:	ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Margaret Raymond Driscoll
SECONDER:	Seamus Kelley
AYES:	Dorie Withey , Jennifer McAndrew, Jennifer Razi-Thomas, Jennifer Grigoraitis, Seamus Kelley, Margaret Raymond Driscoll, Matt Hartman

B Vote: IJND and IJNDB Policies

Mr. Hartman presented Policies IJND and IJNDB for a potential first vote.

MOTION:	To Approve Policies IJND and IJNDB
RESULT:	ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Margaret Raymond Driscoll
SECONDER:	Jennifer Razi-Thomas
AYES:	Dorie Withey , Jennifer McAndrew, Jennifer Razi-Thomas, Jennifer Grigoraitis, Seamus Kelley, Margaret Raymond Driscoll, Matt Hartman

C Vote: Concussion Report

Mr. Hartman presented an updated memo regarding concussions (from a previous agenda), noting that a document with additional details was added to the packet. Interim Superintendent Berman reviewed the memo and discussed with Mr. Fogarty the possible increase in reported concussion numbers. While there is no definitive explanation for the increase, factors may include greater awareness among students, coaches, families, and referees, leading to increased reporting. It was noted that the percentage of concussions remains consistent across various sports and that the report only tracks incidents for

grades 9-12 that occurred during district activities.

MOTION:	To Approve the Concussion Report
RESULT:	ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Jennifer McAndrew
SECONDER:	Margaret Raymond Driscoll
AYES:	Dorie Withey , Jennifer McAndrew, Jennifer Razi-Thomas, Jennifer Grigoraitis, Seamus Kelley, Margaret Raymond Driscoll, Matt Hartman

8. ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION

Chair Withey cited the need for an Executive Session to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel, Cari Berman. The Committee will not be returning to Public Session.

MOTION: To Adjourn to Executive Session
RESULT: **ACCEPTED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER: Jennifer McAndrew
SECONDER: Matt Hartman
AYES: Dorie Withey , Jennifer McAndrew, Jennifer Razi-Thomas, Jennifer Grigoraitis, Seamus Kelley, Margaret Raymond Driscoll, Matt Hartman

The meeting adjourned at 8:46 PM.

9. EXECUTIVE SESSION

1. To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel, Cari Berman.

Spring 2025 MCAS Overview

Melanie Acevedo, *Executive Director of Academics & Accountability*

Nora Tsoutsis, *Director of Academics, 6-12*



[Slides Link](#)

[Full Report Link](#)

School Committee Presentation 11/18/25

Objectives

- ❖ Provide an overview of Melrose Spring 2025 MCAS Results
- ❖ Identify high level analysis and next steps for Elementary, Middle, and High School
- ❖ Discuss district wide conclusions
- ❖ Answer questions from the committee

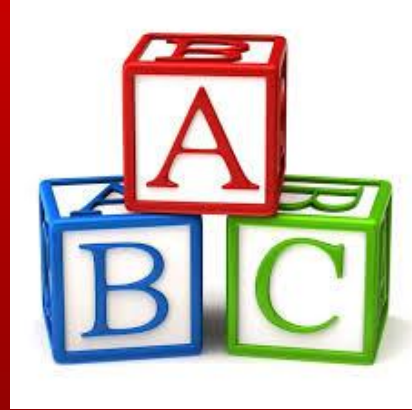
Assessment Terms to Know

- ❖ Tier I vs. Tier II & III Practices
- ❖ Proficiency vs. Growth
- ❖ Meeting or Exceeding Expectations



MCAS Results...

- Inform school and district improvement plans
- Identify curriculum needs
- Examine instructional practices
- Identify and address achievement gaps
- Support individual students and groups
- Progress monitor growth



**Spring 2025
Melrose Public
Schools MCAS
Results**

English Language Arts Highlights

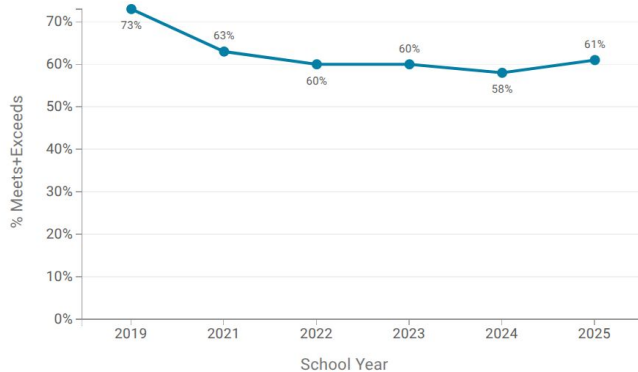
Outperforming the state and surrounding districts in Meeting & Exceeding Percentages

- **Grades 3-8:** Melrose (61%), State (42%), Wakefield (55%), Stoneham (45%), Woburn (35%)
- **Grade 10:** Melrose (80%), State (51%), Wakefield (58%), Stoneham (59%), Woburn (46%)

MHS grade 10 has met and exceeded 2019 scores, Grades 3-8 are increasing towards that target.

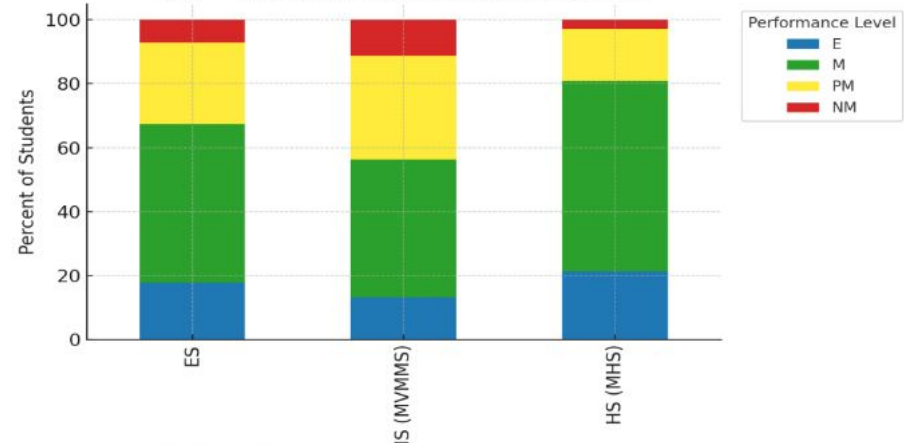
MCAS Results by Student Group

Percent of students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations by student group and year



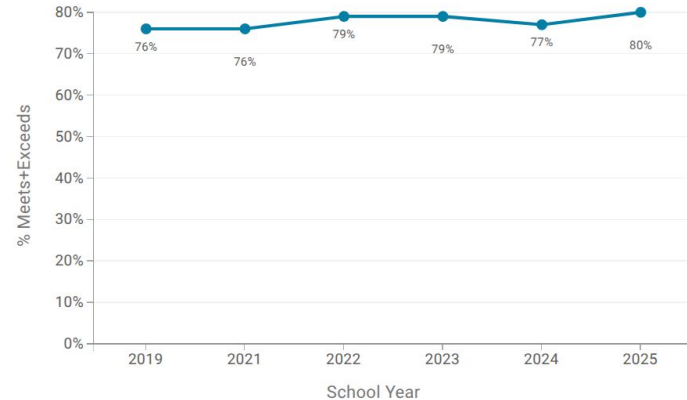
ELA Grades 3-8

ELA — Performance Distribution (2025)



MCAS Results by Student Group

Percent of students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations by student group and year



ELA Grade 10

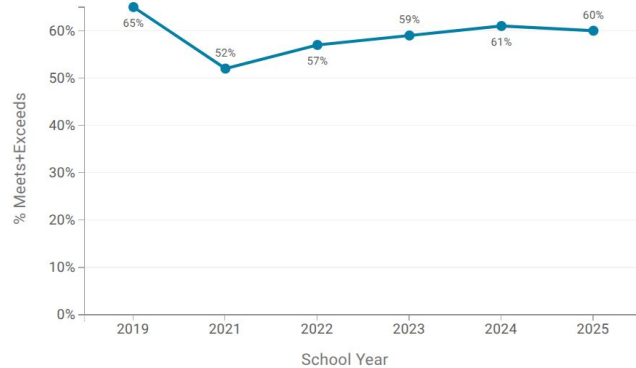
Math Highlights

Outperforming the state and surrounding districts in Meeting & Exceeding Percentages

- **Grades 3-8:** Melrose (60%), State (41%), Wakefield (53%), Stoneham (43%), Woburn (32%)
- **Grade 10:** Melrose (63%), State (45%), Wakefield (48%), Stoneham (57%), Woburn (36%)

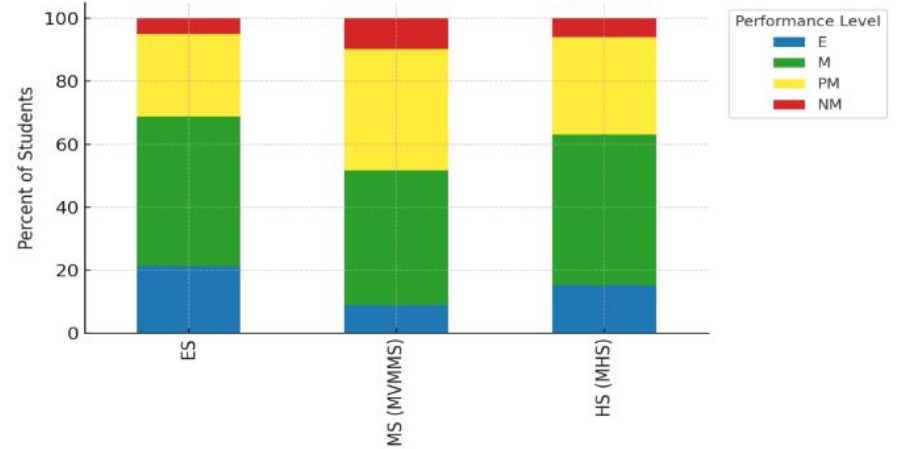
MCAS Results by Student Group

Percent of students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations by student group and year



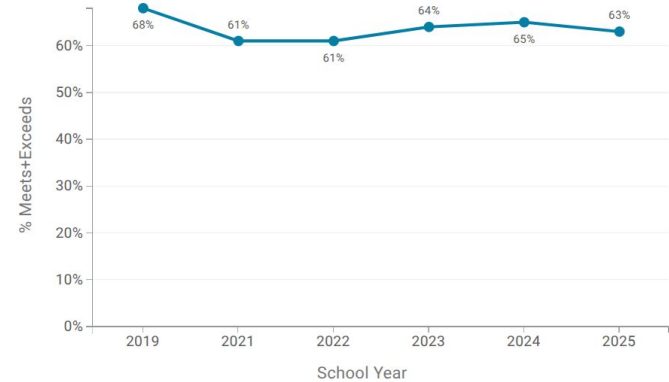
Math Grades 3-8

Math — Performance Distribution (2025)



MCAS Results by Student Group

Percent of students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations by student group and year



Math Grade 10

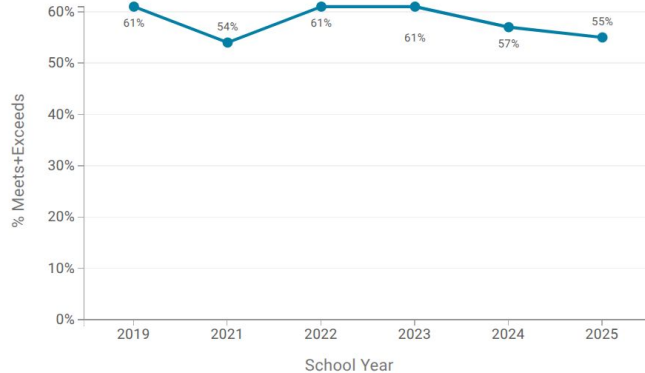
Science Highlights

Outperforming the state and surrounding districts in Meeting & Exceeding Percentages

- **Grades 5 & 8:** Melrose (55%), State (46%), Wakefield (55%), Stoneham (51%), Woburn (37%)
- **MHS (Bio):** Melrose (71%), State (46%), Wakefield (49%), Stoneham (57%), Woburn (46%)

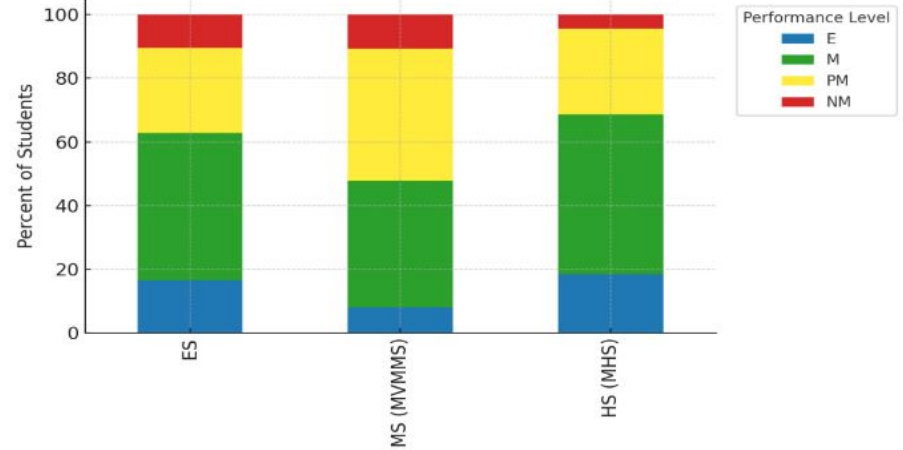
MCAS Results by Student Group

Percent of students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations by student group and year



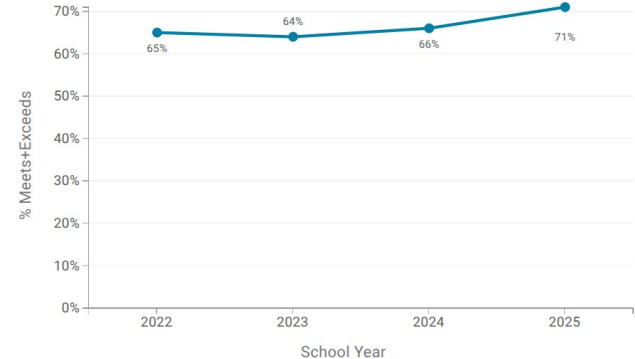
Science Grades 5 & 8

Science — Performance Distribution (2025)



MCAS Results by Student Group

Percent of students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations by student group and year

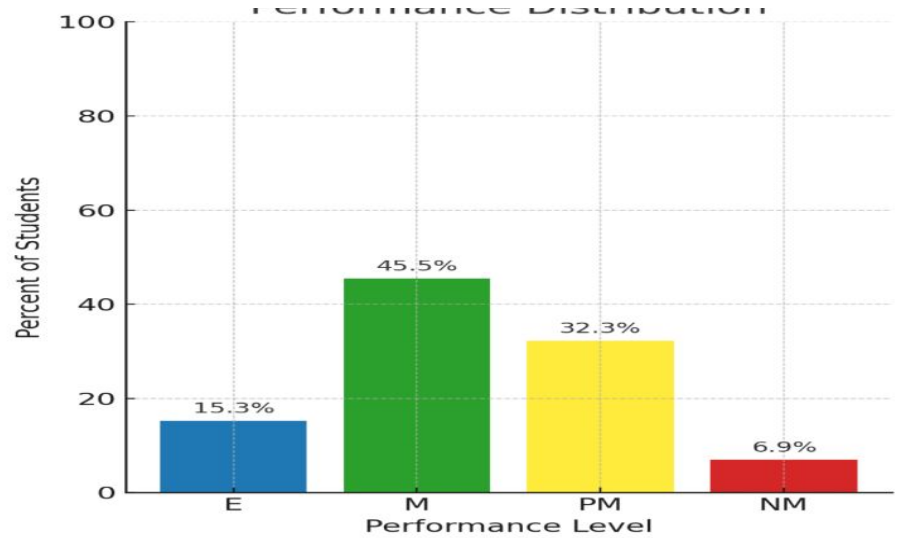


MHS Bio

Civics Highlights

Outperforming the state and surrounding districts in Meeting & Exceeding Percentages

- **Grade 8:** Melrose (60%), State (39%), Wakefield (53%), Stoneham (55%), Woburn (30%)



MCAS Comparison: Melrose and Local Districts

MCAS	6	7	8	10
ELA Meeting/ Exceeding	Melrose: 56% Wakefield: 53% Stoneham: 44% Woburn: 31% State: 42%	Melrose: 57% Wakefield: 56% Stoneham: 38% Woburn: 34% State: 42%	Melrose: 55% Wakefield: 59% Stoneham: 60% Woburn: 37% State: 44%	Melrose: 80% Wakefield: 58% Stoneham: 59% Woburn: 46% State: 51%
Math Meeting/ Exceeding	Melrose: 58% Wakefield: 49% Stoneham: 46% Woburn: 29% State: 41%	Melrose: 54% Wakefield: 51% Stoneham: 29% Woburn: 37% State: 39%	Melrose: 41% Wakefield: 51% Stoneham: 45% Woburn: 32% State: 38%	Melrose: 63% Wakefield: 48% Stoneham: 57% Woburn: 36% State: 45%
Science Meeting/ Exceeding	N/A	N/A	Melrose: 48% Wakefield: 52% Stoneham: 57% Woburn: 37% State: 37%	Melrose: 71% Wakefield: 65% Stoneham: 49% Woburn: 46% State: 46%
Civics Meeting/ Exceeding	N/A	N/A	Melrose: 60% Wakefield: 53% Stoneham: 55% Woburn: 30% State: 39%	N/A

Analysis and Next Steps by Grade Span

Elementary Analysis

Highlights

- ★ Grade 3 & 4 Math
- ★ Grade 4 ELA Increase
- ★ High growth for current 4th & 5th grade students

Hot Spots

- ❖ Writing Idea Development
- ❖ Grade 3 & 4- Fraction Application
- ❖ Disproportionality in subgroups (Black, EL, & Students w/ disabilities)

Elementary Next Steps

Tier I Practices for All

- Evaluative & Non-Evaluative Feedback reset
- MyView & Mindset Math, and FOSS Implementation High Leverage Practices
- Scheduled vs. Actual Minutes of ELA, Math, and Science instruction

Tier II & III Targeted Practices

- Data Team Meetings- ongoing cycles with 4-6 week interventions
- Lincoln After School Support for English Learners (ELs)
- Reviewing EL and Special Education services to support more grade level instruction

MVMMS Analysis

Highlights

- ★ Grade 7 ELA
- ★ Grade 6 & 7 Math Standards Mastery
- ★ Grade 8 Civics

Hot Spots

- ❖ Writing Idea Development
- ❖ Overall ELA & Math achievement stagnant or declining
- ❖ Disproportionality in subgroups (Black, EL, & Students w/ disabilities)

MVMMS Next Steps

Tier I Practices for All

- Evaluative & Non-Evaluative feedback reset
- Explore High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) for ELA & Math 6-8
- Increase writing across disciplines
- Increase IXL opportunities at home & at school

Tier II & III Targeted Practices

- Data Team Meetings- ongoing cycles with 4-6 week interventions
- Title I Reading & Math after school tutoring
- Reviewing EL and Special Education services to support more grade level instruction

MHS Analysis

Highlights

- ★ Grade 10 ELA
- ★ English Language Learner growth 2024-2025
- ★ High School Biology

Hot Spots

- ❖ Grade 10 Math achievement remains stagnant since 2021
- ❖ Math Short Answer and Constructed Response
- ❖ Disproportionality in subgroups has improved slightly, but significant gap remains

MHS Next Steps

Tier I Practices for All

- Evaluative & Non-Evaluative feedback reset
- Explore High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) for Algebra I, Geometry, & Algebra II
- Increase writing across disciplines
- Content Lead instructional walks

Tier II & III Targeted Practices

- Data Team Meetings- ongoing cycles with 4-6 week interventions
- Increase IXL opportunities at home & at school
- Reviewing EL and Special Education services to support more grade level instruction

District Wide Conclusions

Overall Conclusions

- Melrose continues to outperform state and surrounding districts in all subjects
- Achievement post-pandemic has shown moderate increases, but most grades/subjects remain stagnant
- Triangulating MCAS Data with other sources like ACCESS provide a more complete picture of student achievement
- Success for many of our students, but not all- especially subgroups Black, EL, and Students w/disabilities

District Priorities & Next Steps

- Resetting feedback cycles with evaluators and educators
- Consistent Data Team Meeting structure & intended outcomes
- HQIM for ELA K to 8 and Math K to Algebra II
- Utilizing IXL - Mastery Development/Gap Filling, Practice & Extension
- Scale high-leverage instructional practices, but alter those that aren't working for our students any longer

Questions and Discussion

