



# NASHOBA

Regional School District

## Press Release

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MCAS Results Continue to Inform About Teaching and Learning  
By Michael L. Wood, Superintendent of Schools

The Nashoba Regional School District has released all of its MCAS data for students who were in grades three, four, five, six, seven, eight and ten last year. The data is available in its entirety at <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/ayp2005/?orgcode=725000>. The District is especially pleased that the results continue to demonstrate high performance by its students, suggesting that there is consistency to the delivery of instruction and curriculum. All students must pass the MCAS tests at the tenth grade in English Language Arts and mathematics.

While the MCAS results are only part of the assessment picture administrators and teachers use to plan strategies for learning, they clearly have a great significance because it is what parents, community members and the greater public has access to for comparison to other communities. It is also the measure used for compliance with the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act passed in 2001. This act requires all school districts to make adequately yearly progress (AYP) using state designed tests. An ambitious effort, NCLB is often criticized because it uses only one measure; requires all students to be above needs improvement, and breaks students into sub groups, noting that these sub groups for Massachusetts must be larger than 40 or 1% of the total district population to be considered. This last element means that comparing districts making AYP is a challenge since not all districts have the same subgroups.

Our students did very well overall having met our target for both English Language Arts and Mathematics as a District. There are four areas that count toward adequate yearly progress (AYP): participation, performance, improvement, and attendance. You have to meet standards in any two out of the four to be considered for AYP status. The district has two sub groups that are measured: special education and low income students. In English Language Arts we did not meet the performance or improvement target as a District for either group. Our overall scores in these two areas, however, are still strong enough to count toward our aggregate score and the District made AYP for the year. In mathematics the District made AYP for the year. Special education students did not meet the performance target or the improvement target for this year. Again, despite this score, the District made AYP overall for the year in mathematics.

Our administrators continue to analyze the individual scores for their schools and for students. They conduct an item analysis, looking at each question to determine trends for instruction or curriculum changes. Additionally, teachers look at their scores in grade level clusters and make adjustments to curriculum planning for the new group of students. While the scoring changed slightly for these tests, the District's scores are all compared to the baseline year 2002-2003. That group did extremely well, which, like for many districts, means that our performance and improvement targets are very challenging.

Parents and students should look at their scores together and have a conversation about what they believe the information is telling them. Goals should be set as a family and communicated with the school to be sure there is agreement on how best to identify instructional plans for the student. Also, if there is a need for parents to address any questions they have about their student's performance, they should talk to the classroom teacher for the content area in question and the school's principal.