

Dover-Sherborn Regional School District
Memorandum

To: Valerie Spriggs, Superintendent
Dover-Sherborn Regional School Committee
From: Claire W. Jackson, Ph.D., Interim Assistant Superintendent
Date: October 5, 2008
Subject: Brief Overview of MCAS

An overview of the MCAS results produced by the Middle and High Schools fails to do justice to the outstanding performance of our students and teachers. Few public school districts in the state of Massachusetts performed so consistently well. In fact, a careful review of the data suggests that among the schools in the top 5 – 10%, the differences are often statistically insignificant. In a word, schools that may have higher scores are often exam schools, specialized charter schools and schools with much smaller and selective student bodies like Boston Latin and the Worcester Math and Science Academy. Based on the percentage of students who scored Advanced or Proficient when measured against all other schools in Massachusetts, here's how we performed:

Middle School

Grade	Subject	% Rank
6	English	90 th
6	Math	96 th
7	English	94 th
7	Math	95 th
8	English	95 th
8	Math	94 th
8	Science	95 th

MS Overall 2008: 94th percentile
MS Overall 2007: 93rd percentile

High School

Grade	Subject	% Rank
10	English	96 th
10	Math	98 th
10	Science	99 th

DSHS: Science is #1 in the State.
DSHS: 7th year as a top performer in Math.

HS Overall 2008: 98th percentile
HS Overall 2007: 98th percentile

The fact that Dover-Sherborn performed so well, and better than in 2007, is a tribute to our students, to their parents and to the teachers whose strong instruction is reflected in our success. Our administrators, too, deserve great gratitude for their commitment to leading schools where outstanding teaching and learning are the primary factors.

While it is undeniable that Dover-Sherborn's results are the envy of most of Massachusetts' School Committees, leadership and faculty, the truth remains that we are on a course of continuous improvement and are constantly striving to reach the next level of excellence. To that end, our Headmasters, Ms. Lonergan and Mr. Randall, along with department heads, have reviewed the test analyses and will focus the improvement spotlight in the following areas:

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS

1. Provide more frequent self-assessments in writing, particularly with respect to paragraph and essay topic development
2. Provide more practice with open response prompts

SCIENCE

1. Continue to offer after school MCAS preparatory sessions and distribute MCAS practice packets to all students taking the science MCAS
2. Address weak areas identified through item analyses through curricular revision and additional instructional emphasis

MATHEMATICS

1. Continue to work in small group format with the students who scored NI (#=5)
2. Continue to offer after school help sessions and to use warm-up problems to further develop and strengthen students' skills

I look forward to working with the Middle and High School this year as they continue to strive to be the best and to do the best for all Dover/Sherborn students.

I will be happy to respond to any particular question via email or phone call.