

Understanding the Next-Generation MCAS

November 2017

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY
EDUCATION



What is the Next-Generation MCAS?

- Updated version of the nearly 20-year-old MCAS assessment
- Focuses on students' critical thinking abilities, application of knowledge, and ability to make connections between reading and writing
- Addresses concerns that MCAS is not a good predictor of college success
- Designed to be given on a computer
- Massachusetts based, for Massachusetts, tied to new Massachusetts standards
- Will eventually replace all older (“legacy”) MCAS tests in grades 3-10 across subject areas

Spring 2017 Scores Released

- Next-Gen MCAS
 - English language arts and math, grades 3-8
- Legacy MCAS
 - Science and tech/eng in grades 5 and 8
 - All high school MCAS (English language arts, math, and science and tech/eng)

MCAS Achievement Levels

Legacy

Advanced

Students at this level demonstrate a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of rigorous subject matter, and provide sophisticated solutions to complex problems.

Proficient

Students at this level demonstrate a solid understanding of challenging subject matter and solve a wide variety of problems.

Needs Improvement

Students at this level demonstrate a partial understanding of subject matter and solve some simple problems.

Warning

Students at this level demonstrate a minimal understanding of subject matter and do not solve simple problems.

Next-Generation

Exceeding Expectations

A student who performed at this level exceeded grade-level expectations by demonstrating mastery of the subject matter.

Meeting Expectations

A student who performed at this level met grade-level expectations and is academically on track to succeed in the current grade in this subject.

Partially Meeting Expectations

A student who performed at this level partially met grade-level expectations in this subject.
The school, in consultation with the student's parent/guardian, should consider whether the student needs additional academic assistance to succeed in this subject.

Not Meeting Expectations

A student who performed at this level did not meet grade-level expectations in this subject.
The school, in consultation with the student's parent/guardian, should determine the coordinated academic assistance and/or additional instruction the student needs to succeed in this subject.

MCAS Scoring Scale Comparison

Legacy MCAS

Next-Gen MCAS

200-218	Warning/Failing	440-469	Not Meeting Expectations
220-238	Needs Improvement	470-499	Partially Meeting Expectations
240-258	Proficient	500-529	Meeting Expectations
260-280	Advanced	530-560	Exceeding Expectations

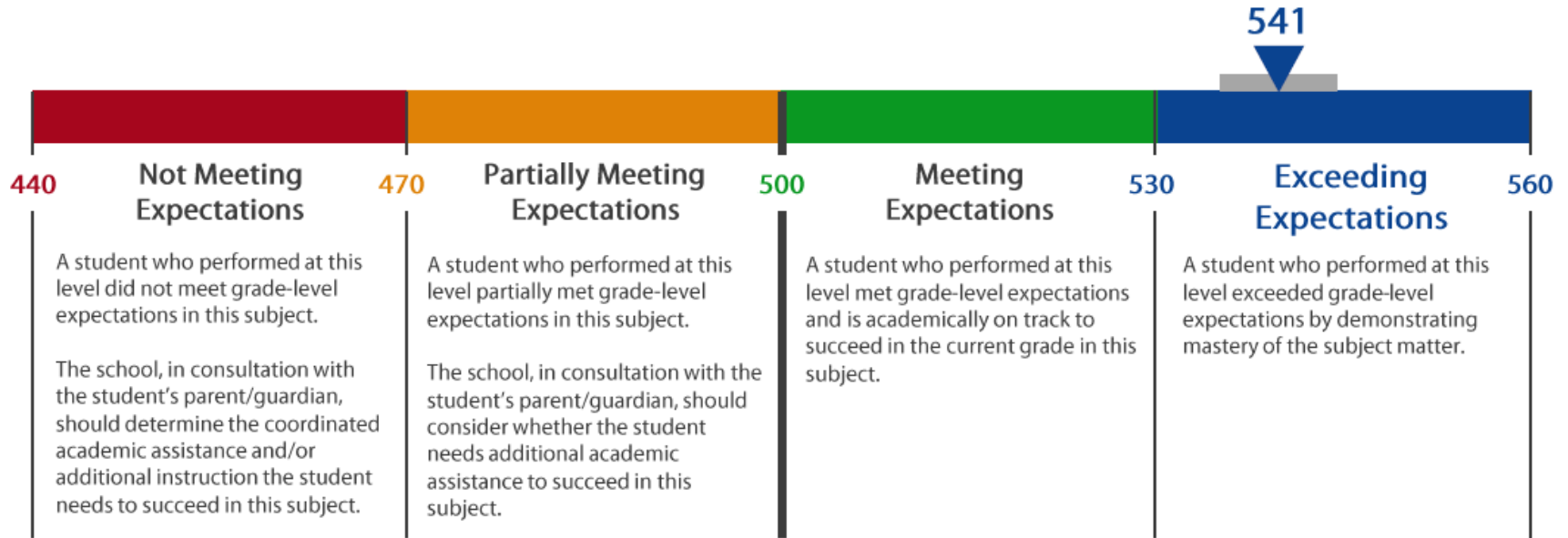
***When looking at your child's score it is critical that you look at where that score falls in the score range.**


Mathematics Results

Computer-based test

Your Child's Achievement Level: **Exceeding Expectations**

Your Child's Score: **541**








 In the figure above, the triangle indicates your child's score on the test. The gray bar shows the range of likely scores your child would receive if he or she took the test multiple times.

How your child performed compared to the school, district, and state

Your Child's Score	Average Score		
	School	District	State
541	485	502	515

How your child performed on the test in each reporting category and on each individual test question

Reporting Category	Points earned by your child	Average number of points earned by Meeting Expectations students who scored close to 500.
Operations & Algebraic Thinking 	7 out of 10	6.0 out of 10
Numbers & Operations in Base Ten 	10 out of 10	6.8 out of 10
Numbers & Operations - Fractions 	5 out of 5	4.0 out of 5
Measurement & Data 	8 out of 9	6.1 out of 9
Geometry 	3 out of 4	2.5 out of 4

Individual Test Questions

Question Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Points Earned	1/2	3/4	0/1	0/1	3/3	1/4	1/1	1/1	1/1	0/1	1/1	1/2	1/2	1/1	1/1	0/1	4/4	3/4	0/4	1/1	1/1	1/1	0/1	0/1	0/1	2/3	5/6	0/1	1/1	1/1

Key

x/y = x points earned out of y possible points

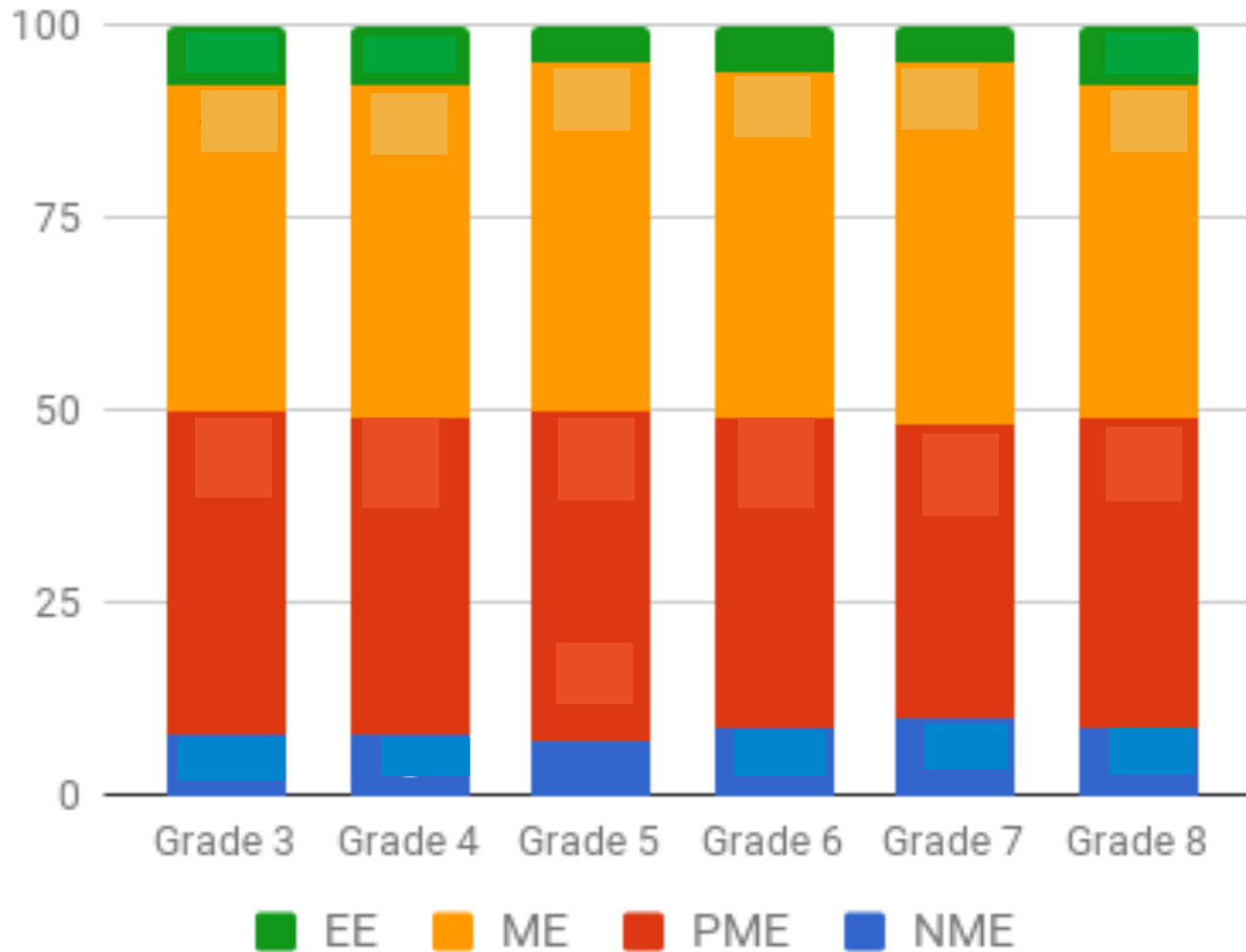
Blank space/ y = no answer provided

Go online to see a description of every test question at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/parents.

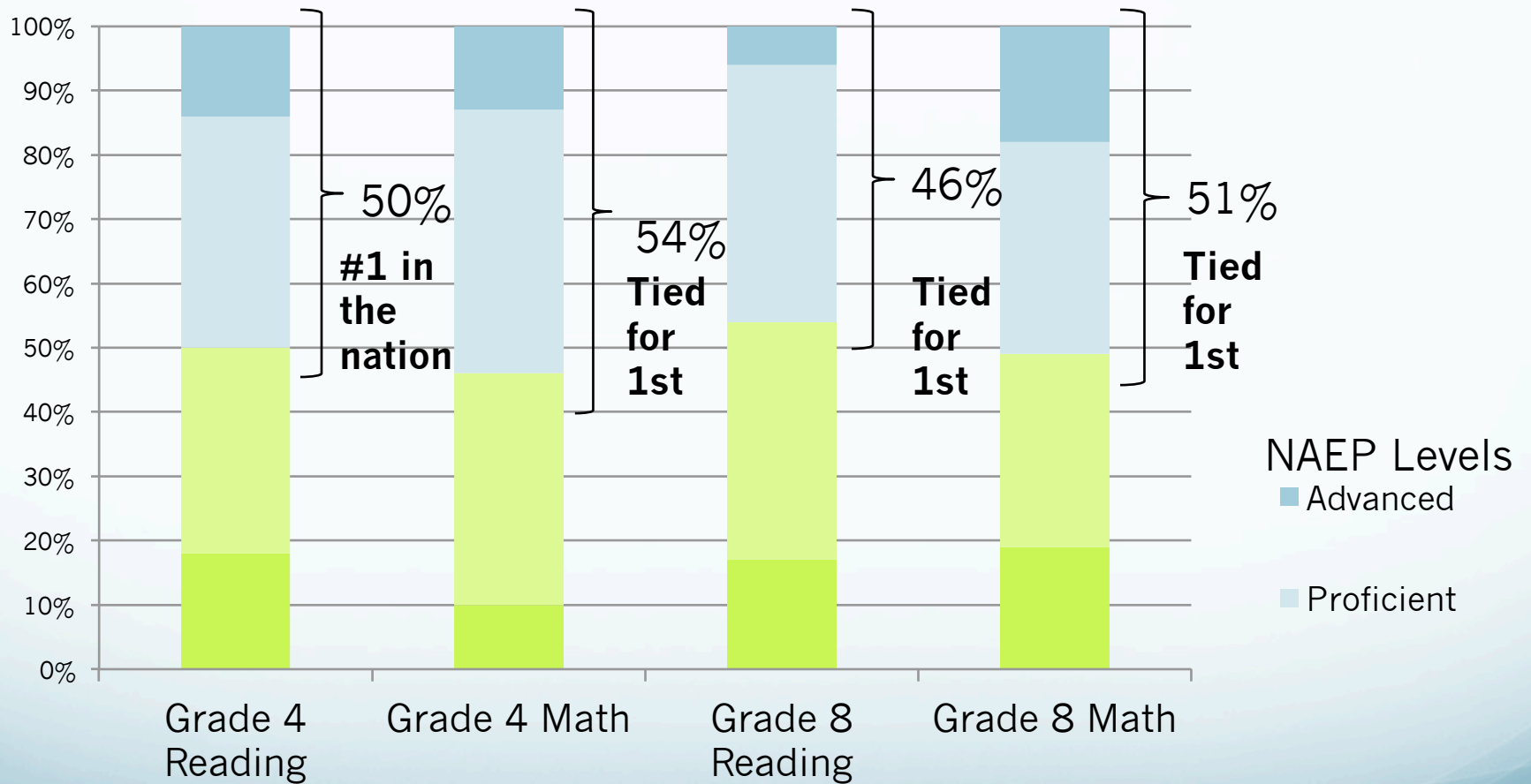
Why did many students who were Proficient on the old MCAS score at the Partially Meeting Expectations level?

- In general, the new standards for Meeting Expectations are more rigorous than the standards for reaching the Proficient level on the legacy MCAS. **Many students who scored PME would have scored Proficient on the legacy test.**
- Look closely at where the student's score falls within the Partially Meeting Expectations category.
- Spring 2017 is a baseline year for a new test in grades 3-8, and spring 2017 scores **should not be compared** to previous years' scores.
- The distribution of scores this year is significantly different from the distribution on the legacy exam.

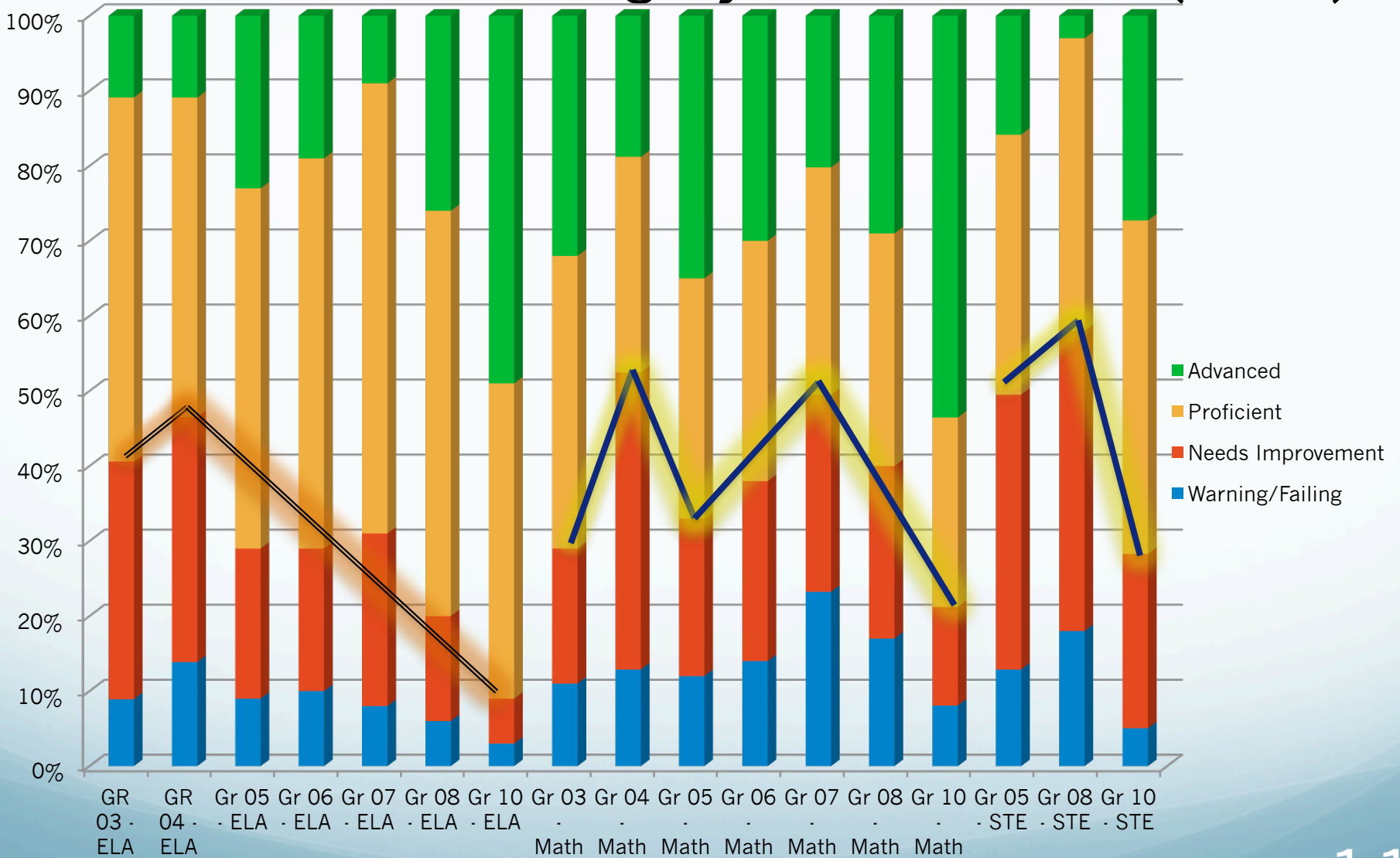
Approximate Statewide 2017 Results for Grades 3-8 ELA and Math: Percent of students in each achievement level



Projected Next-Gen MCAS Results Look More Like Massachusetts's 2015 NAEP Results...



...and Less Like Legacy MCAS Results (2015)



Interpreting the Results

- The results do NOT mean that students learned less; the next-generation MCAS measures in a different way
- Remember: **2017 is the baseline year** — the first year of a new assessment — scores are expected to change as they did with legacy MCAS debuted in 1998.
- Standards were intentionally raised to make sure our students will be college-ready.
- In some grades the percentage of students at the Meeting and Exceeding expectations levels is significantly lower than it was with legacy MCAS.

- The roughly equivalent proportion of students in each grade and subject area reflect:
 - A standard setting process involving panels of educators who valued a clear progression of learning expectations from grade to grade;
 - Panelists' consistent application of the standards as they made judgments about student achievement on the new tests;
 - The fact that standards were set for all these tests at the same time, unlike with the legacy MCAS
- Teachers did not have access to a bank of previously tested questions last school year, making it difficult for them to interpret how any particular standard would be interpreted.
- Like all tests, this is just a snapshot in time

What about growth scores?

- “Transitional growth scores” this year
- Growth scores are a comparative measure, mixture of PARCC and MCAS in 2016, difficult comparisons
- Individual scores were not shared with families this year.
- Aggregate growth scores were made public

What about interventions?

- Faculty analysis of the data
- FIT (Focused Instructional Time) groupings
- Changes to the curriculum

What about high school?

- There are concerns about next year when 10th graders will take the new test because of the new level of rigor
- In the first two years the passing score will be set to “match” legacy MCAS
- Over time there will be discussions about raising the graduation bar, but this will happen with notice

Additional Resources

- Parent resources from the DESE:
 - <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/parents/>
- Spring 2017 Test Item Release:
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/2017/release/>