

## State Releases 2018 Assessment and Accountability Results

Earlier this month the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education released both the 2018 MCAS results and the 2018 accountability results and assistance levels. This year marked the second year of the grade 3-8 next generation MCAS and the debut of the state's new accountability system. The new system is designed to measure how a school or district is doing and what kind of support it may need, is more comprehensive than the previous system and complies with the 2015 federal Every Student Succeeds Act.

### MCAS Results

Next-generation MCAS scores fall into four categories: Exceeding Expectations, Meeting Expectations, Partially Meeting Expectations and Not Meeting Expectations.

The state results of the 2018 next-

generation MCAS in grades 3-8 English language arts and math were similar to those from 2017 in that approximately 50 percent of the students who took the test scored Meeting Expectations or above. The achievement categories were established in 2017 by a comprehensive group of MA educators in collaboration with DESE and are designed to reflect what students need to know to be successful in the next grade.

The next-generation MCAS was developed after the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted in November 2015 to create an updated, Massachusetts-specific test administered via computer. Schools have been phasing in computer-based testing, and in spring 2018, 89 percent of students in grades 3-8 took MCAS on a computer. The Department expects that the transition to computer-based testing in

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## Conference 2018: Sneak Peak

*Following is a preview of one of our featured sessions at the Upcoming Joint Conference. **LEAN + Design Thinking = Increased Effectiveness***

It is no surprise that districts and district leaders continue to face increased pressure on resources (time, money and human capital) while needing to provide an environment for student growth. The significant question to be answered is: How can districts meet increasingly challenging and diverse student needs without cutting services or staff?

Since 2015, the Wallingford Public School District in Connecticut has adopted the LEAN and Design Thinking strategies, led by district Superintendent

Salvatore Enzo. This collective approach, which will be described in a Joint Conference session on Thursday, November 8 (complete with detail, outcomes and take-away ideas) has enabled the district to meet local budgetary needs while maintaining—and even increasing—resources for students and staff.

Based on the goal of increasing effectiveness of a system and/or organization, the LEAN concept engages participants in improvement strategies to identify potential areas of waste while increasing overall capacity. Similarly, Design Thinking is a methodology used

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## Legislators of the Year Announced

MASC is proud to announce that *Senator Harriette Chandler and Representative Aaron Vega* have been awarded the Association's 2018 Legislator of the Year award in recognition of their many legislative efforts on behalf of the students and families of the Commonwealth.



**Senator  
Chandler**



**Representative  
Vega**

A native of South Holyoke, Aaron Vega represents Massachusetts' Fifth Hampden District. In 2009, Aaron was elected one of Holyoke's first Latino at-large councilors. In his first term he worked to keep his commitment

to improve the quality of life for all Holyoke residents by strengthening ordinances while giving city departments and citizens the tools they need to address the many issues facing Holyoke. In 2011, Aaron was elected to a second term.

In 2012, he was elected State Representative. He is the Vice-Chair of the Committee on Children, Families and Disabled Persons and also serves on the Committees for Labor & Workforce Development, Higher Education and the Regulation of Marijuana. Vega has been particularly influential in raising the issue of the needs of migrant and disadvantaged students and families.

A graduate of Holyoke Community College Aaron continued his education at Keene State College where he received a dual bachelor degree in film and psychology.

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## Equity Funding Update: A Tale of Four Cities



President-elect Devin Sheehan of the Holyoke School Committee introduces the presentation “The Tale of Four Cities” regarding the need for reform of state school funding from the perspectives of Brockton, Holyoke, Springfield, and Worcester. Superintendents and school business officials of those four districts presented at Holyoke High-Dean Campus on October 9 to a group of school committee members,

teachers, parents, and other members of the community. The gaps in the calculations of special education and health insurance have left these minimum-funded districts a total of over 2000 regular classroom teachers short in FY17.

Look for further informational presentations and opportunities for advocacy in the coming year.

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### MASC Events UPCOMING WORKSHOPS YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS

#### MASC Delegate Assembly/Resolutions Review and Analysis

*When:* Wednesday, October 24, 6:00pm

*Where:* Boston Tavern, 389 West Center St. (Route 106) West Bridgewater

*Hosted by:* MASC Division III

What is the Delegate Assembly? What is my role as a school committee member? What are the resolutions all about? Whether you are a new school committee member or a veteran, the review and discussion will engage all! Topics include: Complete overview of the Delegate Assembly • Parliamentary Procedures • The role of your Delegate • Review of the resolutions to be presented at the Delegate Assembly on Friday, November 9 at 3:15pm in conjunction with the MASC/MASS Annual Joint Conference

**Register for the workshop at [www.masc.org](http://www.masc.org). There is no charge to attend, however we do ask that you register in advance as space is limited.**

#### The Future of Public Education in the Connecticut Valley

*When:* Saturday, October 27, 8:30am-Noon

*Where:* Collaborative for Educational Services, 97 Hawley Street, Northampton

*Hosted by:* Division V, in collaboration with the MASC Minority Caucus and Urban Division IX

The Division Annual Fall Meeting Program will focus on two key upcoming issues: a presentation and analysis of the Resolutions that will be debated at the 2018 MASC Delegate Assembly in Hyannis in November, and a special second portion entitled The Future of Public Education in the Connecticut Valley. This interactive facilitated discussion will explore the status of school districts, options and ideas for restructuring or innovation to meet emerging needs, and the problems inherent in charter school expansion. We will also explore how best to mobilize public school stakeholders to create powerful voices to ensure that our communities, parents, students, and teachers define our future. The division meeting will be open to school committee members and their guests. Members should feel free to invite others from their districts to engage in the discussion. Light breakfast and lunch will be served, but attendees are asked to register ahead of time.

**Register online at [www.masc.org](http://www.masc.org). There is no charge to attend any portion of the meeting.**

## Proposed Homeland Security rule change would impact schools

Something that may not be making most members' education radar this week is a Homeland Security release from September 22 of proposed rule changes.

Instead of keeping the current definition of a “public charge” as someone “primarily dependent on the government for subsistence,” the Department of Homeland Security would start denying green cards and temporary visas to anyone who is deemed likely at any time in the future to receive any government benefit from a specified list.

If immigrants stop signing up for such benefits, how does this impact schools? Two ways immediately come to mind:

1. CHIP and Medicaid, both of which are federal benefits, cover 39% of children in the United States. Imagine nearly 4 out of 10 children not having health insurance: not getting well visits, not visiting the doctor when they are sick, not getting vaccinations. Now imagine what that does to schools.
2. Under direct certification, SNAP and other benefits are how the determination is made of who is eligible for free and reduced lunch. It is how community eligibility--currently feeding entire districts of children--is determined. The result will be hungry kids both in and out of school. It also is what counts for economically disadvantaged numbers in the foundation budget, so districts won't be counting all of their kids who are poor.

The proposed changes have been put out for public comment. MASC will keep members informed of further developments.

Go to the MASC website ([www.masc.org](http://www.masc.org)) for link to public comments page.

## Assessment and Accountability Results continued from page 1

English language arts and math should be complete by spring 2019, when grades 3 and 6 finish the transition.

In 2018, high school students took the legacy MCAS tests. Compared to 2017, the percentage of students state-wide who scored Proficient or higher dipped 1 percentage point each in English language arts (91 to 90 percent), math (79 to 78 percent) and science and technology/engineering (74 to 73 percent). The next-generation tests will be introduced at the high school level in English language arts and math in spring 2019, but the minimum passing level will not change until at least the class of 2023.

Parents of students in grades 3-8 should also receive their child's scores from their school district in the coming weeks. When reviewing students' scores, students, parents and educators should keep in mind that:

- In general, the standards for Meeting Expectations are more rigorous than the standards for reaching the Proficient level on the legacy MCAS.
- Next-generation MCAS scores should not be compared to legacy MCAS scores.
- The approximately 50 percent of grades 3-8 students who scored in the Meeting or Exceeding Expectations categories is not the result of a grading curve; it is where the scores fell according to the standards that educators established.

### Accountability and Assistance Levels

The new accountability system is designed to measure how a school or district is doing and what kind of support it may need. Given that this is the first year under a new accountability system, Commissioner Riley is not designating any new schools as underperforming this year.

With the data being run through a new accountability system, there are no new schools designated underperforming this year. Schools that have not exited underperforming status will continue to receive targeted assistance from DESE.

The new accountability system designated the vast majority of schools and districts as not requiring assistance or intervention (they fell in the Meeting Targets or Partially Meeting Targets categories), while other schools and districts were designated as in need of Focused/Targeted Support or Broad/Comprehensive Support.

As permitted under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act, the accountability results broadened the array of items considered in evaluating schools. Both the normative results, which rank schools across the state, and the criterion-referenced results, which evaluate districts and schools on their progress towards individual goals, now include both achievement and growth in MCAS, but also progress for ELL students, and working on chronic absenteeism.

High school systems further add graduation measures, including not only four-year graduation and drop-out rate, but a new persistence measure to credit district work on students who take more than four years to graduate.

High schools also add a measure on completion of challenging coursework. The criterion-referenced results weigh the full student group at half of the measure, and the lowest performing 25% at half the measure, putting an unprecedented emphasis on students most at risk in each category.

Because of the additional information available this year, school committees have an opportunity to have valuable results, but district work with English language learners, in absenteeism, in access and completion of advanced coursework, and in ensuring students make it to graduation. As school and district report cards will be released this winter, districts will have additional information to discuss in improving their work.

**Join DESE and MASC presenters at the Accountability Update panel session during the Joint Conference on Thursday, November 8 (2:30-3:45pm). Bring your questions.**

## Conference Sneak Peak

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to increase effectiveness by exploring the root causes of challenges and incorporating empathy of stakeholders along the way. Coupling these two concepts together allows a district to pivot resources financially and instructionally. Added to this is the application of a collective impact approach to frame and tackle deeply entrenched and complex social problems.

Menzo focuses on the need for school leaders and administrators to identify the root cause of a issue in order to be best positioned to generate solutions that are sustainable and

effective. As part of their role in this process school committee members work closely with town officials and agencies to increase community understanding of what the school district is doing for students and families. In addition, Menzo explains how he worked with staff to incorporate these new methodologies in a variety of process improvement activities. Staff at all levels, parents, students and community members were integral in first defining the problems and challenges and then working together to identify solution that have had real and measurable impact and sustainable change for all learners in the school district and community. Over

the last two years, through this process, the district has been able to identify nearly \$800,00 of savings. Make a note on your calendar to learn more about how the educational impact of these strategies on teaching, learning, budget development and community engagement.

**NOT REGISTERED FOR THE CONFERENCE YET?** There is still time. Register online at [www.masc.org](http://www.masc.org). Check out the program: it's guaranteed to be the most professionally productive three days you will spend all year.

## Legislators of the Year

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In announcing the award, MASC President-Elect (and Holyoke School Committee member) **Devin Sheehan** commended the Representative as “a passionate advocate for public education in Commonwealth since being elected to the General Court in 2012. He fought hard to get the recommendations of the Foundation Budget Review Commission implemented and worked closely with education advocates to see meaningful debate on the House floor. Although our journey for equitable funding was not successful Rep. Vega is ready to work hard next session to ensure that no matter your zip-code you can receive a high quality education.”

Senator Harriette Chandler, a nine-term legislator representing the city of Worcester, and parts of the towns of Boylston, Clinton, Holden, Northborough, Princeton and West Boylston, served as Senate President from December 2017 to July 2018, only the second woman to serve in that capacity. She currently serves as chair of the Senate Committee on Steering and Policy, vice chair of the Joint Committee on Higher Education and also serves as Co-Chair of the Prevention for Health Caucus.

Chandler began her political career when she was elected to the Worcester School Committee in

1991, serving until 1994. A year later, she was elected to the House of Representatives where she served until in November, 2000 she became the first woman from Worcester to be elected to the MA Senate.

Throughout her career in the legislature, Senator Chandler has served on numerous committees including Ways & Means, Housing, Health Care, Public Health and Ethics.

Senator Chandler earned degrees from Wellesley College (B.A.), Simmons College Graduate School of Management (M.B.A.) and Clark University (Ph.D).

According to **MASC President Beverly Hugo** “it is said that successful politicians never forget where they came from, and Senator Harriette Chandler is proof of that adage. Since beginning her political career as a member of the Worcester School Committee Senator Chandler has never lost sight of the needs of children. From her work in the Legislature on health care, to her most recent service as the Senate President, Senator Chandler has ensured that those who are voiceless have a voice on Beacon Hill. Most recently, the Senator’s tireless advocacy for regional transportation reimbursement and for recognition of the needs of English language learners put additional funding into district budgets across the Commonwealth. For this, the Senator is MASC’s 2018 legislator of the year.”

## Other recently added conference highlights

Former MA Secretary of Public Safety **Andrea Cabral** and **Jennifer Nassour**, former Chair of the MA Republican Party, will join acclaimed media host **Jim Braude** at the Friday General Session for a discussion of the election earlier in the week and the potential impact of the results on the state? The country?

Also on Friday, MASC and MASS General Counsels Stephen Finnegan and Mike Long will be joined by CT Association of Boards of Education General Counsel Patrice McCarthy for a luncheon analysis of the education equity lawsuit that is being considered in MA and which was settled a year ago in CT.

And should you feel on Friday morning that “the world is too much with you” stop by Osterville A for the Therapy Pets session, where trained-for-the-job Mr. Wuffles (bombay mix cat), Lady (golden retriever), and Fiona (great dane) will be happy to help put things in perspective for you.

**Can’t attend the whole conference? Attend Friday-Saturday for reduced price.**

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