

Monthly Memo from the Superintendent

Dr. Laurie Hunter
Concord Public Schools
Concord-Carlisle Regional School District

Superintendent
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MCAS Results 2017

As many of you know, there have been significant changes to the MCAS process in the past three years. In the spring of 2017, all Concord students in grades 3-8 took the Next Generation MCAS online for both English Language Arts and Math. The Science tests and all the high schools tests all remained the previous Legacy MCAS. Given the changes, the state widely publicized that scores would drop. Here in Concord, however, the scores did just the opposite. Below is an overview of the percentage of students scoring in the top two performance categories:

Grades 3-5:

English Language Arts	80%
Math	79%
Science	76%

Grades 6-8:

English Language Arts	82%
Math	80%
Science	75%

CCHS:

English Language Arts	98%
Math	96%
Science	96%

With the state average at approximately 50% of students in these top two categories, these results are even more noteworthy. Of great impact is the extensive curriculum work completed over the past four years and the consistency of the high performance across all grades levels and subjects. We congratulate our students and teachers whose efforts are evident in these outcomes.

That said, I am not one to measure success simply by one mandated assessment. The state's accountability system is also in flux. The leveling system typically prescribed as part of the test results is in hiatus for the elementary and middle schools. Since the older test is still in place, high schools did receive an assigned level. CCHS remains a Level 2 school despite the outstanding performance given a

flaw in the formula. Principal Mastrullo's blog eloquently outlines the complicated process that can provide misleading outcomes:

<http://cchsmm.blogspot.com/2017/11/principals-blog-mcas-results.html>

Below are links to the presentation Kristen Herbert, Director of Teaching and Learning, provided to the School Committees as well as the links to the detailed test results on the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE) web page:

2017 MCAS Presentation:

<http://www.concordps.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/MCAS-Accountability-2017.pdf>

DESE Link for District Profiles:

<http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/search/search.aspx?leftNavId=11238>

Entry Plan

My entry plan is in the last phase of data and information collection. As I compile patterns, I will provide a report in January as to themes, strengths and areas of interest to dive into further. I am so appreciative of the input and willingness all stakeholders to share their thoughts and feedback.

Strategic Planning

Both school districts will begin the strategic planning process in late January. During the months of February and March, community forums will be held for conversations about long-range plans. We will also be soliciting parents for the 35 member planning team. Please watch for that invitation.

STEAM Innovation Lab

We are so excited for the kick-off next week at the three elementary schools! The larger scale physical project is in progress although at a slower pace than originally anticipated. In January, grade 5 students will visit the Ripley building for a pilot program using some of the smaller pieces of equipment so generously supported by the Concord Education Foundation.

Mindfulness

It has been fantastic to see much evidence of mindfulness efforts throughout the district. The strategic planning process to build a systemic approach is underway. Updates will be shared during the second half of the school year.

Cultural Proficiency

Plans for the district's growth in cultural proficiency are underway. Our overarching theme for the 2018-2019 school year will be professional development related to cultural awareness, proficiency and sensitivity. The administrators are kicking off their work currently and will continue to build capacity to lead this effort. I am grateful for the many conversations with families throughout the district in order to gain a better understanding of the various perspectives. The goal is to build a structure that allows all students to feel safe and accepted in the schools.

Thank you also for your continued participation in the discussion of the Religious Holiday Accommodation Policy. This work will also inform our processes and practices. As we reach the mid-point of the school year, it will also connect to the discussion of the 2018-2019 school calendar.

Communication and Collaboration

Among my most important goals is to be present and visible in classrooms as well as throughout the schools and communities. This is also the aspect of my role that brings me the greatest joy. Twitter is my communication tool to share these travels so I hope you will continue to follow me!

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