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Beyond the Early Grades: The State of Adolescent Literacy in Massachusetts

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Introduction

In recent years, literacy has rightfully taken center stage in education policy conversations, both nationally and in Massachusetts. A growing body of research underscoring the importance of early reading skills has spurred significant investments in early literacy, including Massachusetts' Literacy Launch initiative[1] and the recent passage of the Right to Read Act[2], which ensures research-based literacy instruction in early grades. These efforts reflect an important and long-overdue recognition that strong early foundations are essential.

But this growing focus has also created a critical blind spot. Far less attention has been paid to the tens of thousands of students who enter middle and high school without mastering foundational literacy skills. Reports from Massachusetts[3] and across the nation[4] show that many students reach these later grades unable to read fluently or comprehend grade-level text, leaving them functionally illiterate in settings where literacy is assumed rather than taught. In some cases, students advance for years without their foundational reading gaps being fully addressed, only to encounter significant barriers once academic demands intensify in middle school. Importantly, these challenges are not limited to students who enter adolescence already behind. Research increasingly shows that even students who develop basic reading proficiency in the early grades may struggle to apply those skills as texts become more complex. This complexity requires them to navigate multisyllabic words, dense sentence structures, and more sophisticated academic language. Without explicit instruction to support this transition, many students reach a threshold at which they can no longer effectively access grade-level text, which constrains both comprehension and continued reading growth.[5]

The Commonwealth has begun taking steps to strengthen literacy supports beyond the early grades through initiatives such as the Partnership for Reading Success in Massachusetts (PRISM) III grants,[6] which support schools in implementing high-quality English language arts (ELA) curricula and in developing tools for adolescent literacy interventions.[7] Yet these efforts are limited in scale relative to the magnitude of the need. State and national data reveals that large numbers of students — disproportionately Black and Latino students, multilingual learners, students with disabilities, and students from low-income backgrounds — are not getting consistent access to the instruction, support, and resources needed to meet grade-level expectations in ELA well into adolescence. Without the right investments and interventions, these students may struggle to graduate on time, access college-level coursework, or secure stable employment.

Recent assessment data illustrates the depth and persistence of these gaps, even in a high-performing state like Massachusetts. On the 2024 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) reading assessment, Massachusetts eighth graders ranked among the top in the nation, reinforcing the state's reputation as a high-performing system.[8] Yet, this standing obscures a more troubling reality: only 40% of Massachusetts eighth graders scored at or above the NAEP Proficient level, highlighting a clear need to expand access to instruction and supports that can help more students demonstrate grade-level mastery in reading. Despite the state outperforming most others, 1 in 4 students (25%) scored Below Basic, indicating that additional attention to foundational reading development could make a meaningful difference. Persistent disparities across student demographic groups also remain stark, further underscoring where targeted investments can accelerate progress. Black and Latino students reached proficiency at rates of 20% and 21%, respectively, compared to 48% of white students, and students from low-income backgrounds trailed their more affluent peers by wide margins.[9]

These differences reflect longstanding disparities in access to critical learning conditions — including high-quality instruction,[10] timely identification of reading needs,[11] and consistent academic supports[12] — rather than differences in students' ability or potential. They also underscore that being "best in the nation" is not the same as meeting the literacy needs of all students, particularly as academic demands intensify in adolescence.

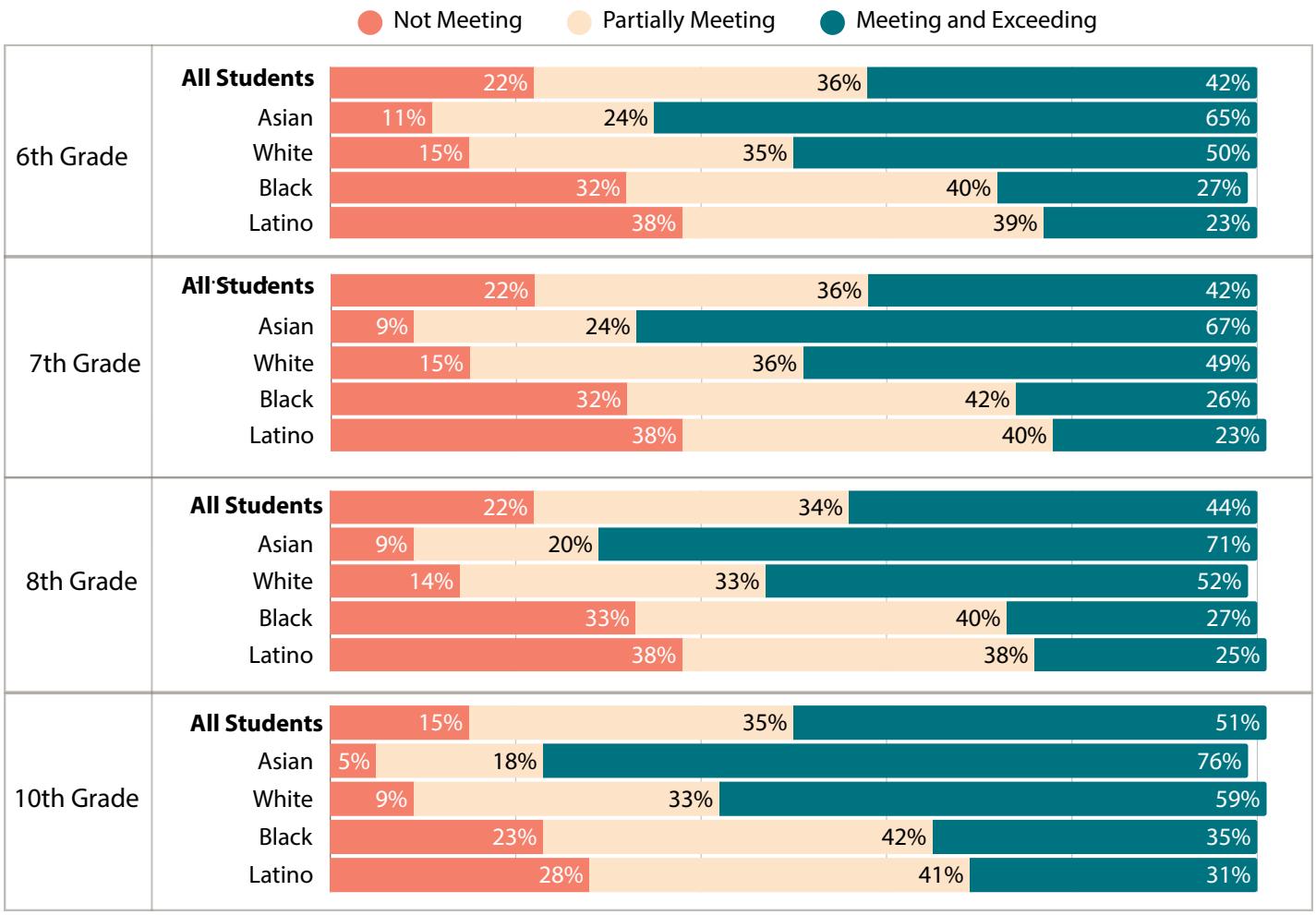
This report examines the state of adolescent literacy in Massachusetts, highlighting five trends in ELA outcomes for middle and high school students, with a particular focus on equity. It elevates adolescent literacy as a critical component of the Commonwealth's broader education agenda, making clear that while Massachusetts has a strong foundation, meaningful progress will require sustained action well beyond the early years to ensure that all students develop the literacy skills needed to navigate the world around them and thrive in life after high school.

5 Facts About English Language Arts (ELA) Outcomes

1 **About half of students in grades six through eight and 10 are not meeting grade-level benchmarks on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) ELA exam. This represents nearly 150,000 students statewide, with large disparities by race and ethnicity.**

In 2025, only about half of students statewide met or exceeded expectations in 10th grade ELA, and fewer than half did so in middle school, with large gaps between racial and ethnic groups. For example, in 10th grade, 76% of Asian students and 59% of white students met or exceeded expectations, compared with just 35% of Black students and 31% of Latino students. Similar gaps appear in middle school, where proficiency rates for Black and Latino students hover in the mid-20% range, while rates for white and Asian students are two to three times higher. While stark racial and ethnic disparities demand immediate attention, the data also reveals a broader systemic shortfall: ELA proficiency is lagging for students across the board.

Figure 1: 2025 ELA MCAS Results for Grades Six, Seven, Eight, and 10, by Race/Ethnicity*



Source: Massachusetts Education-to-Career Research and Data Hub MCAS Achievement Results

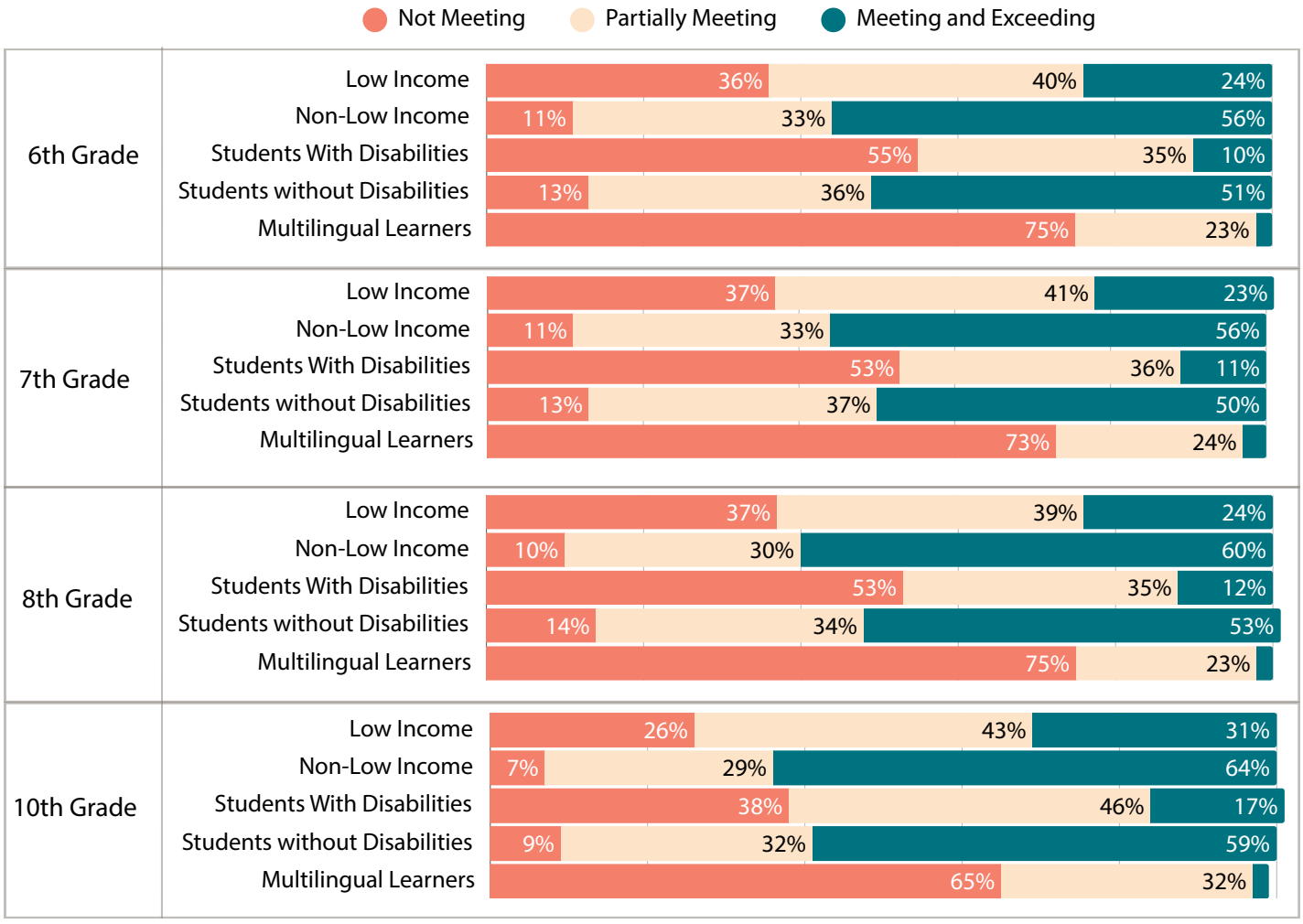
**Percentages for some student groups may total slightly above or below 100% due to rounding by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). These small discrepancies are expected and do not affect the overall interpretation of the data.*

NOTE: Grade 10 results in 2025 should be interpreted with caution, as this year marked the first time in two decades that the ELA MCAS was decoupled from graduation requirements following a statewide ballot initiative. In 2025, approximately 7 percentage points more 10th graders fell into the Not Meeting or Partially Meeting categories than the prior year, suggesting a notable shift in performance distribution. Reporting and early analyses indicate that the shift in graduation requirements may have affected student motivation and test-taking behavior, contributing to weaker outcomes.[13] While these results do not diminish the need for strong adolescent literacy supports, they likely reflect a transitional period following a major policy transition.

2 Large gaps persist by income and disability status, and multilingual learners are the student group most likely not to meet expectations.

Across grades six through eight and 10, substantial shares of students are only partially meeting or not meeting expectations in the ELA MCAS, underscoring widespread challenges. Clear disparities are evident between students with disabilities and their peers without disabilities: in grades six through eight, about half of students without disabilities meet or exceed expectations, compared with just 10-12% of students with disabilities. Similarly, students from low-income backgrounds are roughly three times as likely as their more affluent peers to not meet expectations across all grades. At the same time, multilingual learners face the greatest challenges of any group. Between 65% and 75% of multilingual learners in grades six through eight and 10 are not yet meeting expectations — by far the highest rates of any student group — suggesting a need to strengthen language development supports alongside rigorous, grade-level content.

Figure 2: 2025 ELA MCAS Results for Grades Six, Seven, Eight, and 10, by Student Group*



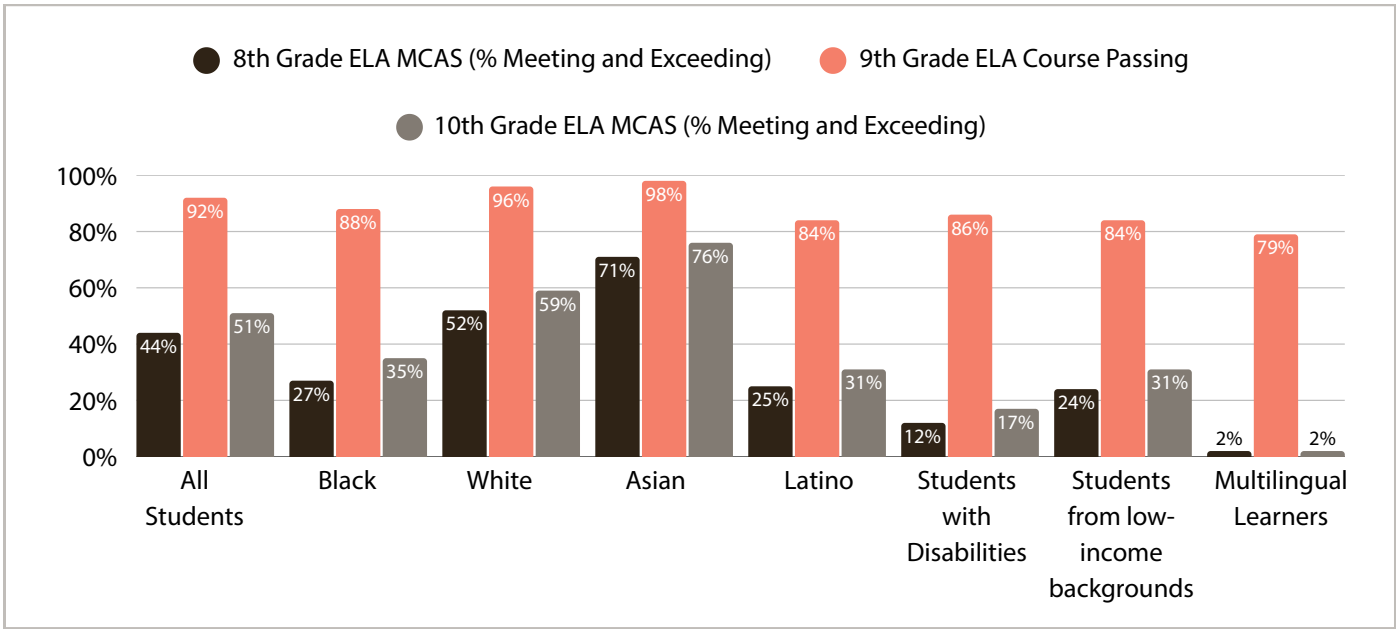
Source: Massachusetts Education-to-Career Research and Data Hub MCAS Achievement Results

**Percentages for some student groups may total slightly above or below 100% due to rounding by DESE. These small discrepancies are expected and do not affect the overall interpretation of the data.*

3 Despite high ninth grade ELA course passing rates, most students — particularly Black and Latino students, those from low-income backgrounds, students with disabilities, and multilingual learners — are not demonstrating grade-level proficiency on statewide literacy assessments before or after entering high school.

Eighth grade ELA MCAS results show that fewer than half of students meet or exceed expectations, with minimal recovery since the pandemic and large, persistent gaps by race, income, disability status, and multilingual learner status — gaps that have remained largely unchanged through 2025. While ninth grade ELA course passing rates remain consistently high across all student groups — suggesting that students are successfully earning credits and being promoted — this success has not translated into stronger outcomes on the 10th grade ELA MCAS, where overall proficiency declines and disparities among student groups remain stark. Together, these patterns point to a troubling misalignment between course performance and literacy mastery, indicating that students are being moved through the system without the supports needed to build foundational skills and that existing instructional supports are insufficient to close longstanding literacy gaps.

Figure 3: Comparison of ELA MCAS Proficiency and Course Passing by Student Group (2025)



Source: Massachusetts Education-to-Career Research and Data Hub MCAS Achievement Results and Grade Nine Course Passing Report
Note: Historical data for all three measures (2019–2025) are available in Appendix A, Tables A1–A3.

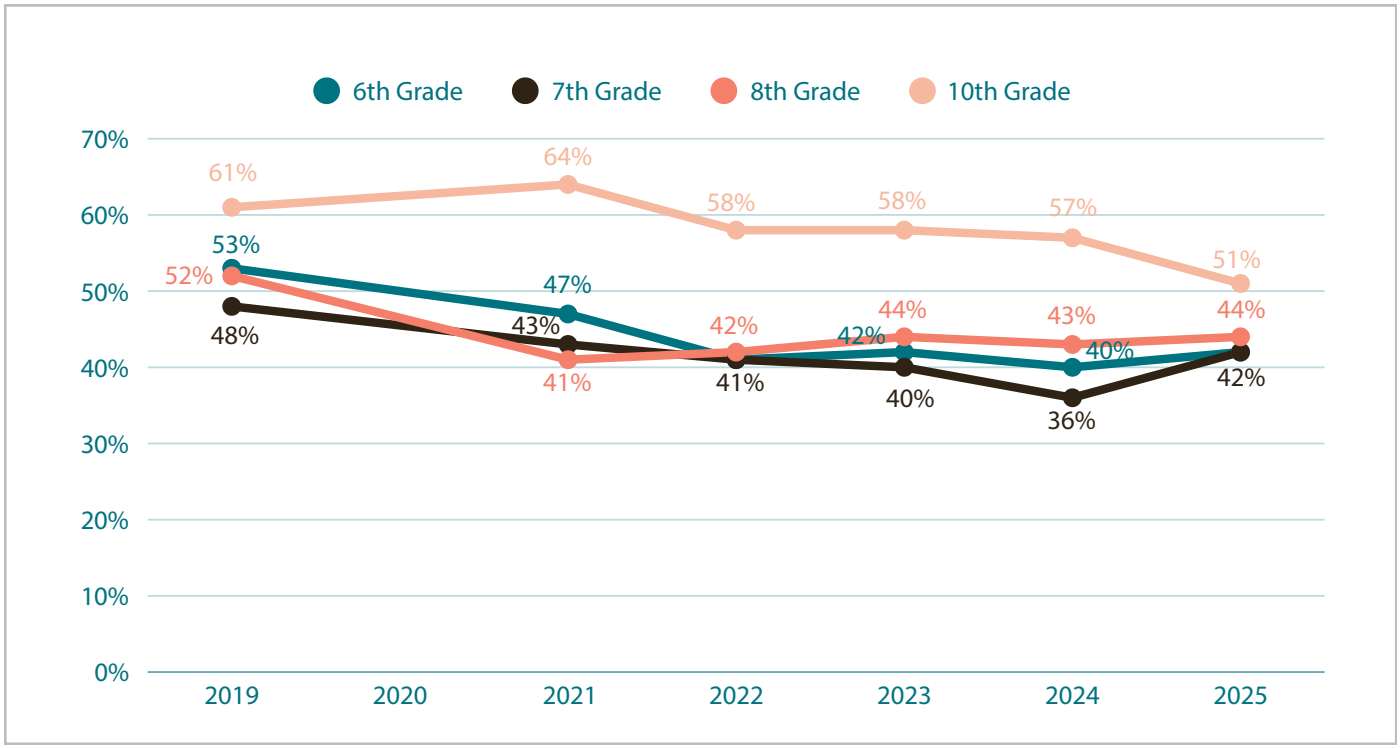
NOTE: All three indicators — eighth grade MCAS performance, ninth grade course passing, and 10th grade MCAS performance — reflect whether students are meeting grade-level expectations in ELA.[14] MCAS assessments are aligned to Massachusetts' learning standards and place students into four categories: Exceeding, Meeting, Partially Meeting, or Not Meeting Expectations — based on their demonstration of grade-level knowledge and skills.

While the state does not audit what is taught in individual ninth grade English courses, those courses are intended to align with the same state standards that guide MCAS, so passing a course is also meant to signal that a student is meeting grade-level expectations.

4 Middle and high schoolers across the state have been struggling with literacy for years — and the pandemic made an already persistent problem worse.

Even before COVID-19 disrupted schooling, widespread literacy challenges were evident: In 2019, roughly half of students in grades six through eight and 61% of 10th graders met grade-level expectations in ELA. Since then, the overall share of students meeting or exceeding expectations has declined and remains below pre-pandemic levels in most grades, with only modest improvement in recent years. These declines compound earlier challenges, leaving large numbers of students without the literacy skills needed to access grade-level content in middle and high school.

Figure 4: Percentage of Students Meeting and Exceeding Expectations on the ELA MCAS (Grades Six, Seven, Eight, and 10), 2019–2025



Source: Massachusetts Education-to-Career Research and Data Hub MCAS Achievement Results

Understanding the Data

While the MCAS has been in place since 1993, this analysis focuses on ELA performance trends from 2019 onward. Massachusetts transitioned to the Next-Generation MCAS in 2017, replacing the legacy assessments that had been in use for nearly 20 years. However, 10th graders did not begin taking this new assessment until 2019. Due to differences in content, format, and performance expectations between the legacy and Next-Generation MCAS, their results are not directly comparable.

In 2020, MCAS testing was suspended statewide due to the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in no valid statewide ELA results for that year.

5 Students across cohorts experience notable performance declines in middle school, with recent cohorts nearing high school graduation at lower proficiency levels.

While more recent graduating classes began with higher proficiency rates in third grade, they are now experiencing much sharper declines as they move toward graduation. Across all classes, a consistent pattern emerges: students tend to perform better in early grades, experience a significant drop in middle school, and then recover by 10th grade. Further research should examine the factors contributing to this recovery.

For the most recent cohorts, the middle school dip is becoming steeper. For example, the Class of 2028 started strong with 56% proficiency in third grade but reached their lowest proficiency of 40% in seventh grade — a 16 percentage-point decrease. In contrast, older cohorts experienced less steep declines.

There are signs of recovery: The Class of 2021 reached 61% proficiency, and the Class of 2027 reached 51% by 10th grade. However, because the middle school declines have been so steep for recent cohorts, their 10th grade recovery still leaves them well below the performance levels of earlier classes, whose proficiency reached as high as 64%.

Ultimately, the data points to a clear problem: middle school literacy performance is weakening over time, and the increasing complexity of texts and academic demands makes strengthening adolescent literacy supports, especially in the middle grades, an urgent priority.

Table 1: ELA MCAS Cohort Trends: Percentage of Students Meeting and Exceeding Expectations

Decrease from prior assessment (≥3 percentage points)
Increase from prior assessment (≥3 percentage points)
Assessment Results Forthcoming

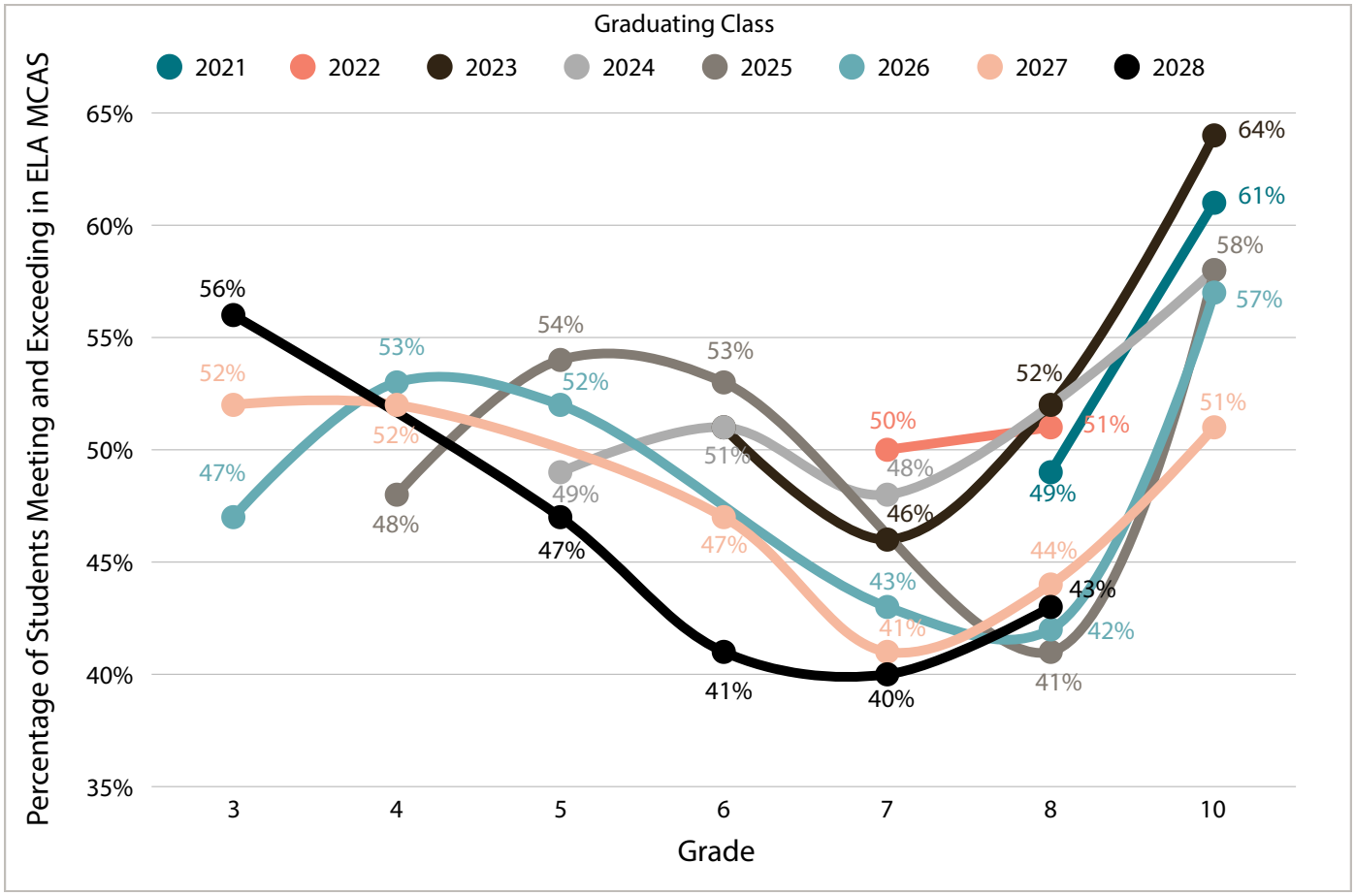
Cohort	3rd Grade	4th Grade	5th Grade	6th Grade	7th Grade	8th Grade	10th Grade
Class of 2021						49%	61%
Class of 2022					50%	51%	COVID YEAR
Class of 2023				51%	46%	52%	64%
Class of 2024			49%	51%	48%	COVID YEAR	58%
Class of 2025		48%	54%	53%	COVID YEAR	41%	58%
Class of 2026	47%	53%	52%	COVID YEAR	43%	42%	57%
Class of 2027	52%	52%	COVID YEAR	47%	41%	44%	51%
Class of 2028	56%	COVID YEAR	47%	41%	40%	43%	

Source: EdTrust in Massachusetts' analysis of Massachusetts Education-to-Career Research and Data Hub MCAS Achievement Results

Cohort Selection Rationale

This analysis includes students in the Classes of 2021 through 2028. The Class of 2021 is the earliest cohort with available ELA data from the New Generation MCAS, allowing for consistent comparisons across grades and years. Statewide ELA MCAS results were not reported in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in unavoidable data gaps for some cohorts. The analysis extends through the Class of 2028, including both graduated and current students; notably, the Class of 2028 is scheduled to take the 10th grade ELA MCAS during the current school year.

Figure 5: ELA MCAS Cohort Trends: Percentage of Students Meeting and Exceeding Expectations



Source: EdTrust in Massachusetts' analysis of Massachusetts Education-to-Career Research and Data Hub MCAS Achievement Results

> *He's gotten A's in language arts, but I get the feeling that almost everybody does. From what I can see at the school events where they put writing up on the walls, he skims over the words without really comprehending, and things like that. I think he's definitely a little behind some of the kids that are showing a little bit more nuance and complexity.*
>
> *Parent Participant in 2024 EdTrust Focus Group*

Bright Spots Across Massachusetts: Excellence and Equity in Action

Across Massachusetts, some districts are narrowing 10th grade MCAS achievement gaps and improving outcomes for Black and Latino students, though significant disparities persist for students from low-income backgrounds and students with disabilities. In 22% of districts, Black and Latino students not only met or exceeded the statewide average for all students on the 2025 10th grade ELA MCAS, but also demonstrated achievement gaps that were narrower than the statewide gap for these groups. This pattern is less prevalent for students from low-income backgrounds. Only 7% of districts achieved both performance higher than the statewide average for students from low-income backgrounds and smaller achievement gaps between them and their non-low-income peers. Outcomes for students with disabilities remain the most concerning. In fewer than 1% of districts — only one statewide — did students with disabilities both meet or exceed the statewide performance of students without disabilities and experience a smaller achievement gap.

How the Analysis Was Conducted

Statewide Achievement Gaps in 10th Grade ELA Scores

Student Group (Focal)	Comparison Group	% Meeting and Exceeding Excpectations (Focal vs. Comparison)	Statewide Gap (Percentage Points)
Black students	All students	35% vs. 51%	-16
Latino students	All students	31% vs. 51%	-20
Students from low-income backgrounds	Non-low-income students	31% vs. 64%	-33
Students with disabilities	Students without disabilities	17% vs. 59%	-42

**Multilingual Learners were not included in this analysis because data for the comparison group (Former ELs) is not publicly available.*

Analytical Approach

1 Find districts with strong outcomes

Identify districts where outcomes for the focal group are at or above the state average for the comparison group.

2 From those districts, identify the ones with narrower gaps

From the districts identified in Step 1, select those where the achievement gap between the focal group and the comparison group is smaller than the statewide gap between those groups.

3 Identify districts with strong outcomes and narrower gaps

The final list includes districts that have both strong outcomes and narrower gaps compared to the statewide gaps.

By focusing on districts where outcomes surpass these statewide benchmarks and gaps are smaller than the statewide average, these charts highlight districts where stronger performance and more equitable outcomes are occurring simultaneously.

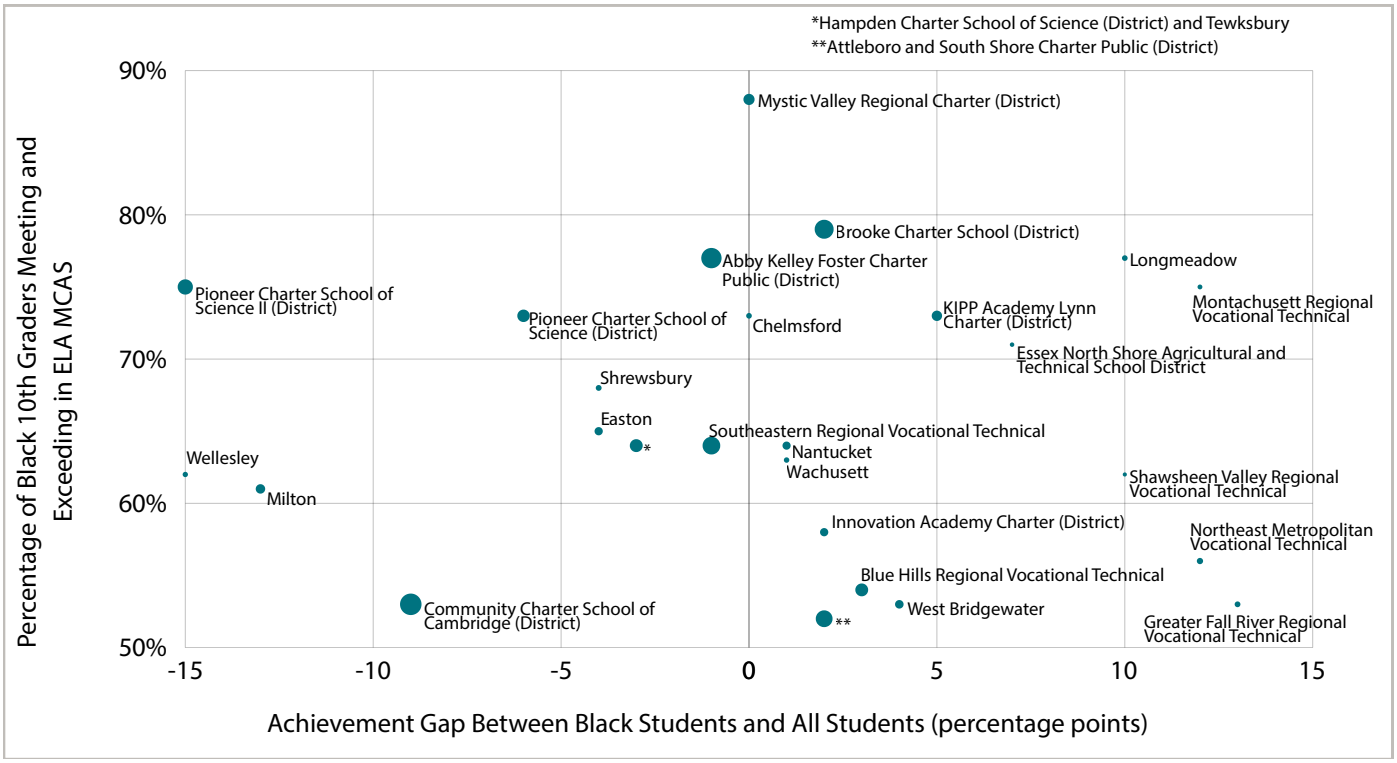
Understanding The Graphs

In the scatterplot, each point represents a district, and the size of the point reflects the percentage of students in the focal student group (e.g., Black, Latino, students from low-income backgrounds, or students with disabilities) enrolled in that district, with larger points indicating a higher concentration of that student population. The vertical axis shows the percentage of students in the focal group meeting or exceeding expectations on the 2025 10th grade ELA MCAS, while the horizontal axis shows the achievement gap between that group and its comparison group in percentage points. For Black and Latino students, the comparison group is all students; for students from low-income backgrounds, the comparison group is non-low-income students; and for students with disabilities, the comparison group is students without disabilities.

Interpreting the Findings

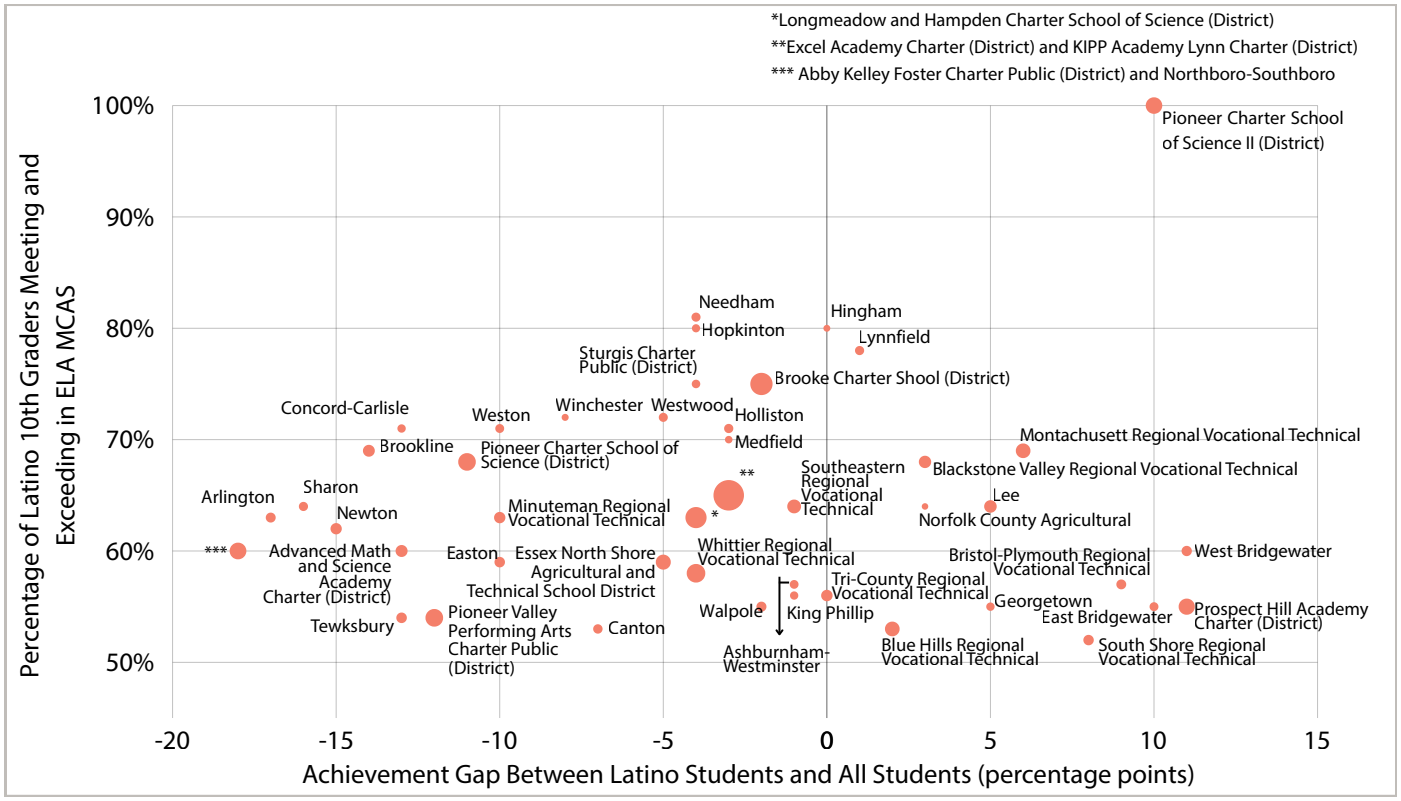
A "positive" gap means the focal student group has higher outcomes than the comparison group, while a "negative" gap means the focal group has lower outcomes than the comparison group. Gaps are measured in percentage points. For example, in the scatterplot below, Black students at Brooke Charter School outperform all students by 2 percentage points on the 10th grade ELA MCAS. In that district, 79% of Black 10th graders meet or exceed expectations. The size of each dot represents the proportion of the focal student group within the district. At Brooke Charter School, the dot is larger because Black students make up about 49% of the student population in 2025.

Figure 6: Black Students: 10th Grade ELA MCAS Achievement Gaps and Outcomes



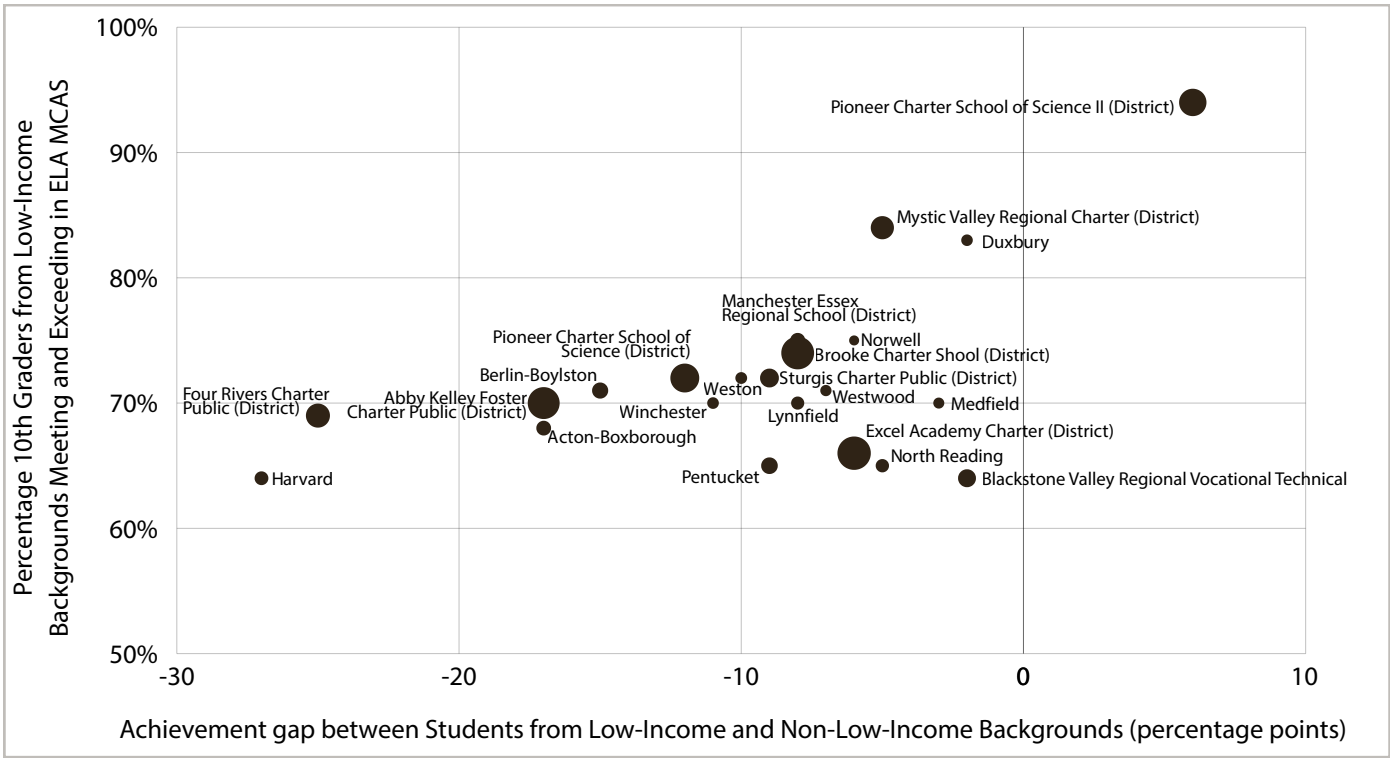
Source: EdTrust in Massachusetts' analysis of Massachusetts Education-to-Career Research and Data Hub MCAS Achievement Results
Note: The data underlying this figure is provided in Appendix B, Table B1.

Figure 7: Latino Students: 10th Grade ELA MCAS Achievement Gaps and Outcomes



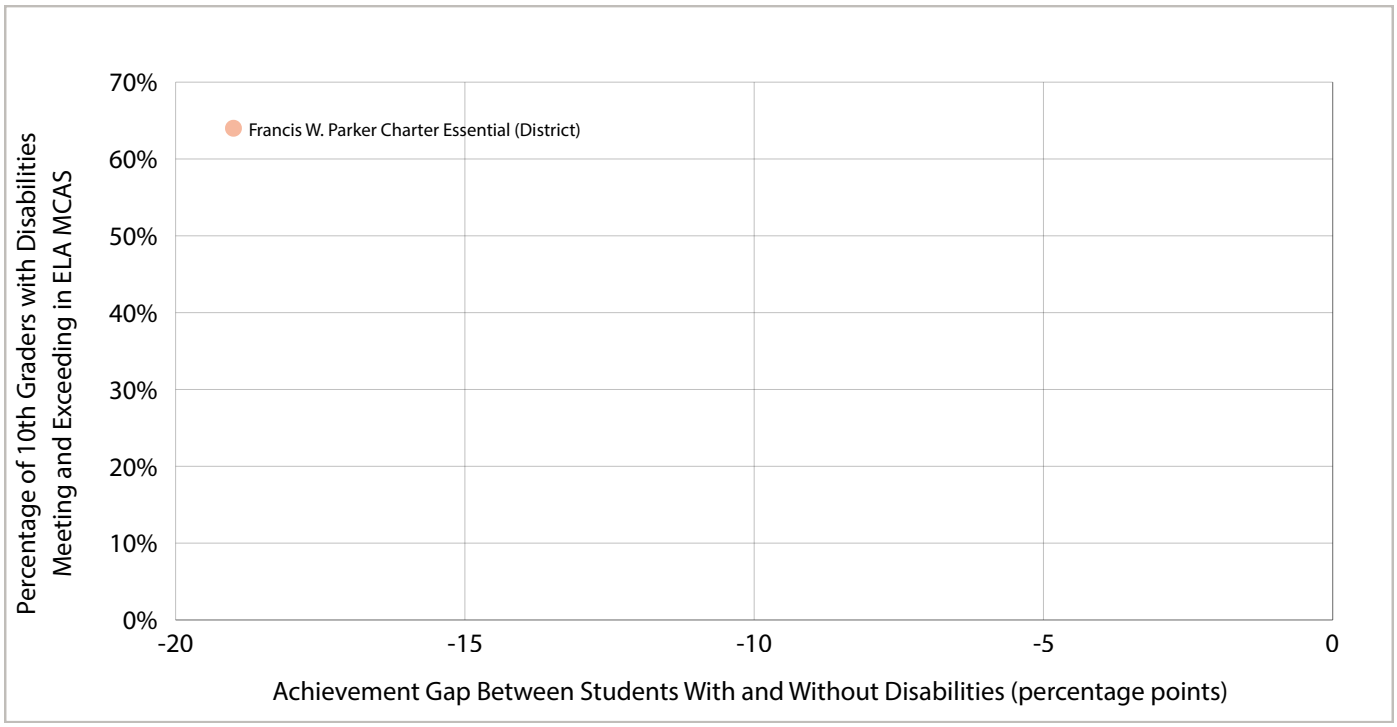
Source: EdTrust in Massachusetts' analysis of Massachusetts Education-to-Career Research and Data Hub MCAS Achievement Results
Note: The data underlying this figure is provided in Appendix B, Table B2.

Figure 8: Students From Low-Income Backgrounds: 10th Grade ELA MCAS Achievement Gaps and Outcomes



Source: EdTrust in Massachusetts' analysis of Massachusetts Education-to-Career Research and Data Hub MCAS Achievement Results
Note: The data underlying this figure is provided in Appendix B, Table B3.

Figure 9: Students With Disabilities: 10th Grade ELA MCAS Achievement Gaps and Outcomes



Source: EdTrust in Massachusetts' analysis of Massachusetts Education-to-Career Research and Data Hub MCAS Achievement Results
Note: The data underlying this figure is provided in Appendix B, Table B4.

Conclusion

The Case for Systemic Action and a Deeper Understanding of Adolescent Literacy

Equity and excellence for older readers is achievable, but remain far too rare. The data in this report points to a clear and consistent pattern: too many students in Massachusetts — particularly those from historically underserved groups — are entering and moving through middle and high school without the literacy skills they need to succeed. While course passing rates suggest students are progressing through the system, assessment data reveals that many are doing so without mastering grade-level literacy, underscoring a fundamental misalignment. For years, roughly half of students in grades six through eight and 10 have not met grade-level expectations on the ELA MCAS, a pattern that predates the COVID-19 pandemic and reflects longstanding gaps in literacy instruction and intervention beyond elementary school.

These trends reflect a broader challenge in adolescent literacy: even students who develop basic reading skills in the early grades need ongoing support to engage with increasingly complex texts, academic language, and discipline-specific literacy demands. When this support is inconsistent and foundational gaps persist into adolescence without systematic intervention — as they did following pandemic-related disruptions — literacy challenges can compound over time — limiting students' ability to succeed across subjects, access rigorous coursework, and build the knowledge and skills needed for life after high school.

While recent years show modest stabilization, performance remains well below what is necessary to ensure students are prepared for postsecondary education, workforce training, and full civic participation. Improving these outcomes and strengthening adolescent literacy is therefore not only essential to closing equity gaps and ensuring that all students can fully access grade-level learning, but a crucial lever for expanding opportunity, supporting college and career readiness, and ensuring that all students can pursue pathways aligned with their goals and potential.

Sadly, these challenges are not experienced equally. Deep and persistent equity gaps characterize adolescent ELA MCAS outcomes in Massachusetts. Black and Latino students, multilingual learners, students with disabilities, and students from low-income backgrounds are far more likely to score below grade-level expectations than their peers. Across many of these student groups, fewer than 1 in 3 students meet ELA benchmarks in middle and high school — limiting access to rigorous coursework, increasing the risk of disengagement, and impacting their postsecondary experiences. While this analysis identifies overall gaps in adolescent literacy outcomes, each student has a different constellation of strengths and needs. Addressing these gaps will require not only a deeper understanding of the specific literacy components with which students are struggling, but also the systems and structures that enable schools to accurately diagnose those needs and deliver targeted, responsive instructional support and interventions.

Further analysis should also examine districts that demonstrate both high overall performance and comparatively smaller gaps for Black, Latino, low-income students, and students with disabilities — as highlighted in the preceding finding. Understanding the policies, instructional practices, and system conditions in these districts may help identify strategies that can be replicated or adapted across the state to improve both overall literacy outcomes and equity in achievement.

Current State Initiatives and Infrastructure

While a more comprehensive approach is still needed, the Commonwealth has begun taking steps to strengthen literacy supports beyond the early grades. Through DESE, the state is building infrastructure to support district decision-making:

- **PRISM Grants**, funded through the state's Literacy Launch initiative, aim to empower educators to create engaging learning experiences for every student through high-quality instructional materials and effective instruction. While all PRISM grants are designed to strengthen literacy teaching and learning, PRISM III specifically focuses on upper-grade literacy in grades 4–12. Districts receive support tailored to their current stage in adopting and implementing high-quality instructional materials (HQIM). Although Prism III is a relatively recent initiative, the extensive need for upper-grade literacy support has far exceeded available capacity, with only 16 school districts selected.[6]

- **Curriculum Review**: The state is reviewing middle school ELA curricula and updating CURATE (CUrriculum RAtings by TEachers), a project that convenes panels of local educators to review and rate instructional materials to reflect improved quality ratings for upper-grade materials.[15]

- **Intervention Selection**: Massachusetts is part of the Region 1 Comprehensive Center, a federally funded technical assistance partnership housed at the American Institutes for Research that includes representatives from Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Vermont. The center works to build the capacity of state education agencies (SEAs), local education agencies, and schools to improve instructional quality, address achievement and equity gaps, and advance state-identified priorities. Through this partnership, the Region 1 Comprehensive Center developed an Adolescent Literacy Intervention Selection Tool, which compiles information about literacy intervention programs for grades 4-12 and helps educators identify evidence-based supports for struggling readers.[4]

Addressing the Instructional and Structural Gap

Despite these efforts, adolescent literacy must be addressed through an even broader lens. Teacher preparedness and capacity are areas that require immediate attention. National survey data confirms that teachers across the country report that substantial numbers of middle and high school students still require explicit instruction in foundational reading skills — such as decoding, fluency, and vocabulary. These are skills that should have been solidified years earlier, yet they continue to require development as text complexity and grade-level expectations increase in rigor.[16] As a result, secondary educators often devote instructional time to foundational literacy remediation,[17] frequently without age-appropriate materials, adequate training, or aligned state guidance.[18] This reflects not a failure of individual students or teachers, but a systemic breakdown in how literacy development is supported beyond the early grades. Strengthening the pipeline of reading specialists who understand the complexity of adolescent literacy challenges is one way to lighten the burden on teachers. However, teachers in all core subjects (not just ELA) must be better prepared to address literacy development in secondary grades.

Furthermore, the rigid structure of secondary schooling presents unique hurdles. Middle and high school schedules are typically structured around subject-area courses, leaving limited time within the school day for targeted literacy intervention, such as small-group instruction. Teachers often lack the time, systems, and specialized training needed to identify reading gaps and deliver targeted supports while simultaneously teaching grade-level content. These challenges are further compounded by the need for instructional coherence across classrooms and intervention structures, as fragmented or inconsistent approaches can limit the effectiveness of supports even when they are available.

Centering Equity and Student Experience

Improving instructional materials and professional development is insufficient without a deliberate focus on equity and the student experience. Broader learning gaps resulting from literacy challenges are particularly pronounced in under-resourced schools, where access to high-quality instruction and targeted support is often limited. It's also crucial to consider the student experience — many students who have continually struggled with literacy may internalize the belief that they are simply "not readers." Effective interventions must therefore be developmentally appropriate and affirming, maintaining access to grade-level content while avoiding stigmatizing students. Without this, reading challenges can contribute to broader issues such as disengagement, chronic absenteeism, and behavioral challenges. In some cases, discipline and attendance policies may respond to symptoms rather than address underlying literacy needs, further hindering efforts to resolve these fundamental issues.

The challenges facing Massachusetts districts are significant, and schools cannot address them in isolation. Systemic investment must prioritize teacher capacity and interventions that meet older students where they are — both academically and emotionally. Only through sustained, intentional action can the Commonwealth ensure every student graduates prepared for the demands of the future.

Appendix A

ELA MCAS Achievement and Course Passing Rates by Grade and Student Group, 2019–2025

Table A1: Percentage of Eighth Graders Meeting and Exceeding Expectations in the ELA MCAS

Year	All Students	Black	White	Asian	Latino	Students From Low-Income Backgrounds	Students With Disabilities	Multilingual Learners
2019	52%	32%	59%	73%	30%		14%	5%
2020	COVID YEAR							
2021	41%	24%	47%	65%	22%		10%	2%
2022	42%	27%	48%	68%	25%	25%	90%	2%
2023	44%	27%	51%	70%	25%	26%	12%	2%
2024	43%	26%	51%	68%	23%	24%	12%	2%
2025	44%	27%	52%	71%	25%	24%	12%	2%

Source: EdTrust in Massachusetts' analysis of Massachusetts Education-to-Career Research and Data Hub MCAS Achievement Results

Table A2: Ninth Grade ELA Course Passing Rates

Year	All Students	Black	White	Asian	Latino	Students From Low-Income Backgrounds	Students With Disabilities	Multilingual Learners
2019	91%	86%	95%	98%	81%		85%	77%
2020	94%	92%	97%	99%	89%		90%	87%
2021	90%	84%	94%	96%	81%		85%	75%
2022	91%	87%	95%	97%	83%	84%	87%	78%
2023	91%	86%	95%	97%	83%	84%	86%	77%
2024	91%	86%	95%	97%	83%	83%	85%	77%
2025	92%	88%	96%	98%	84%	84%	86%	79%

Source: EdTrust in Massachusetts' analysis of Massachusetts Education-to-Career Research and Data Hub Grade Nine Course Passing Report

Table A3: Percentage of 10th Graders Meeting and Exceeding Expectations in the ELA MCAS

Year	All Students	Black	White	Asian	Latino	Students From Low-Income Backgrounds	Students With Disabilities	Multilingual Learners
2019	61%	38%	69%	78%	37%		22%	3%
2020	COVID YEAR							
2021	64%	41%	73%	73%	39%		25%	4%
2022	58%	41%	65%	79%	38%	40%	20%	4%
2023	58%	42%	67%	79%	36%	39%	22%	4%
2024	57%	42%	65%	78%	36%	38%	21%	3%
2025	51%	35%	59%	76%	31%	31%	17%	2%

Source: EdTrust in Massachusetts' analysis of Massachusetts Education-to-Career Research and Data Hub MCAS Achievement Results

Appendix B

District-Level 10th-Grade ELA MCAS Achievement Gaps, Outcomes, and Enrollment by Student Group

Table B1: Black Students: 10th Grade ELA MCAS Achievement Gaps and Outcomes in 2025

District Name	% Black Students Meeting and Exceeding Expectations	Achievement Gap (Black Students vs. All Students), Percentage Points	% of Black Students Enrolled
Mystic Valley Regional Charter (District)	88%	0	17%
Brooke Charter School (District)	79%	2	49%
Longmeadow	77%	10	4%
Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public (District)	77%	-1	56%
Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical	75%	12	3%
Pioneer Charter School of Science II (District)	75%	-15	31%
KIPP Academy Lynn Charter (District)	73%	5	15%
Chelmsford	73%	0	4%
Pioneer Charter School of Science (District)	73%	-6	21%
Essex North Shore Agricultural and Technical School District	71%	7	3%
Shrewsbury	68%	-4	5%
Easton	65%	-4	9%
Nantucket	64%	1	9%
Southeastern Regional Vocational Technical	64%	-1	42%
Hampden Charter School of Science (District)	64%	-3	23%

Tewksbury	64%	-3	7%
Wachusett	63%	1	4%
Shawsheen Valley Regional Vocational Technical	62%	10	2%
Wellesley	62%	-15	4%
Milton	61%	-13	12%
Innovation Academy Charter (District)	58%	2	9%
Northeast Metropolitan Regional Vocational Technical	56%	12	5%
Blue Hills Regional Vocational Technical	54%	3	22%
Greater Fall River Regional Vocational Technical	53%	13	5%
West Bridgewater	53%	4	10%
Community Charter School of Cambridge (District)	53%	-9	63%
Attleboro	52%	2	11%
South Shore Charter Public (District)	52%	2	38%

Source: EdTrust in Massachusetts' analysis of Massachusetts Education-to-Career Research and Data Hub MCAS Achievement Results

Table B2: Latino Students: 10th Grade ELA MCAS Achievement Gaps and Outcomes in 2025

District Name	% Latino Students Meeting and Exceeding Expectations	Achievement Gap (Latino Students vs. All Students), Percentage Points	% of Latino Students Enrolled
Pioneer Charter School of Science II (District)	100%	10	24%
Needham	81%	-4	7%
Hingham	80%	0	4%
Hopkinton	80%	-4	6%
Lynnfield	78%	1	7%
Brooke Charter School (District)	75%	-2	43%

Sturgis Charter Public (District)	75%	-4	6%
Westwood	72%	-5	7%
Winchester	72%	-8	4%
Holliston	71%	-3	7%
Weston	71%	-10	7%
Concord-Carlisle	71%	-13	6%
Medfield	70%	-3	5%
Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical	69%	6	19%
Brookline	69%	-14	12%
Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical	68%	3	13%
Pioneer Charter School of Science (District)	68%	-11	27%
Excel Academy Charter (District)	65%	-3	81%
KIPP Academy Lynn Charter (District)	65%	-3	74%
Lee	64%	5	14%
Norfolk County Agricultural	64%	3	4%
Southeastern Regional Vocational Technical	64%	-1	17%
Sharon	64%	-16	7%
Hampden Charter School of Science (District)	63%	-4	39%
Longmeadow	63%	-4	8%
Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical	63%	-10	11%
Arlington	63%	-17	9%
Newton	62%	-15	11%
West Bridgewater	60%	11	9%
Advanced Math and Science Academy Charter (District)	60%	-13	13%

Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public (District)	60%	-18	24%
Northboro-Southboro	60%	-18	10%
Essex North Shore Agricultural and Technical School District	59%	-5	20%
Easton	59%	-10	10%
Whittier Regional Vocational Technical	58%	-4	30%
Bristol-Plymouth Regional Vocational Technical	57%	9	9%
Ashburnham-Westminster	57%	-1	7%
Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical	56%	0	11%
King Philip	56%	-1	6%
Prospect Hill Academy Charter (District)	55%	11	23%
East Bridgewater	55%	10	7%
Georgetown	55%	5	6%
Walpole	55%	-2	9%
Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public (District)	54%	-12	27%
Tewksbury	54%	-13	10%
Blue Hills Regional Vocational Technical	53%	2	19%
Canton	53%	-7	8%
South Shore Regional Vocational Technical	52%	8	10%

Source: EdTrust in Massachusetts' analysis of Massachusetts Education-to-Career Research and Data Hub MCAS Achievement Results

Table B3: Students from Low-Income Backgrounds: 10th Grade ELA MCAS Achievement Gaps and Outcomes in 2025

District Name	% Students From Low-Income Backgrounds Meeting and Exceeding Expectations	Achievement Gap (Students From Low-Income Backgrounds vs. Students From Non-Low-Income Backgrounds), Percentage Points	% of Students From Low-Income Backgrounds Enrolled
Pioneer Charter School of Science II (District)	94%	6	43%
Mystic Valley Regional Charter (District)	84%	-5	31%
Duxbury	83%	-2	8%
Manchester Essex Regional	75%	-8	13%
Norwell	75%	-6	6%
Brooke Charter School (District)	74%	-8	61%
Pioneer Charter School of Science (District)	72%	-12	48%
Sturgis Charter Public (District)	72%	-9	20%
Weston	72%	-10	8%
Berlin-Boylston	71%	-15	15%
Westwood	71%	-7	7%
Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public (District)	70%	-17	58%
Lynnfield	70%	-8	10%
Medfield	70%	-3	7%
Winchester	70%	-11	8%
Four Rivers Charter Public (District)	69%	-25	33%
Acton-Boxborough	68%	-17	12%
Excel Academy Charter (District)	66%	-6	63%
North Reading	65%	-5	10%
Pentucket	65%	-9	16%

Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical	64%	-2	18%
Harvard	64%	-27	11%

Source: EdTrust in Massachusetts' analysis of Massachusetts Education-to-Career Research and Data Hub MCAS Achievement Results

Table B4: Students with Disabilities: 10th Grade ELA MCAS Achievement Gaps and Outcomes in 2025

District Name	% Students With Disabilities Meeting and Exceeding Expectations	Achievement Gap (Students With Disabilities vs. Students Without Disabilities), Percentage Points	% of Students With Disabilities Enrolled
Francis W. Parker Charter Essential (District)	64%	-19	22%

Source: EdTrust in Massachusetts' analysis of Massachusetts Education-to-Career Research and Data Hub MCAS Achievement Results

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