

## MCAS Performance: 2003-2009

Despite all the controversy surrounding the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) it does give us one way to compare the academic achievement of students with and without disabilities.

Of the thirteen disability categories recognized by special education law, only three (Developmental Delay, Intellectual Impairment, and Multiple Impairment) allow for the presence of a significant cognitive impairment.<sup>1, 2</sup> These are disabilities which *may* put academic proficiency out of reach for students.

However, most students with special needs (typically 85-95% depending on the district<sup>3</sup>) fall into disability categories other than these three. These students are as intellectually capable as their non-disabled peers of reaching academic proficiency given appropriate special education services. Despite this, the academic achievement gap between students with and without disabilities is enormous and has been growing ever wider over time.

***Tens of thousands of Massachusetts students with disabilities are failing needlessly because they are denied the services they need in order to achieve at a rate commensurate with their ability.***

### MCAS Statewide Results - Aggregate Performance Percent of Students Scoring Proficient or Advanced<sup>4</sup>

<u>Year/Exam</u>	<u>Students without Disabilities</u>	<u>Students with Disabilities<sup>5</sup></u>	<u>Achievement Gap</u>
2009 English Language Arts	75.0%	28.0%	47.0 points
2008 English Language Arts	73.1%	26.3%	46.8
2007 English Language Arts	74.1%	27.3%	46.8
2006 English Language Arts	70.7%	26.1%	44.6
2005 English Language Arts	67.9%	24.4%	43.5
2004 English Language Arts	69.4%	25.4%	44.0
2003 English Language Arts	67.8%	25.2%	42.6
2009 Mathematics	64.0%	20.0%	44.0 points
2008 Mathematics	63.0%	19.3%	43.7
2007 Mathematics	60.5%	18.3%	42.2
2006 Mathematics	53.1%	15.5%	37.6
2005 Mathematics	53.2%	14.5%	38.7
2004 Mathematics	51.1%	13.0%	38.1
2003 Mathematics	48.2%	12.4%	35.8

<sup>1</sup> See Code of Federal Regulations at 34 CFR 300.8

<sup>2</sup> Developmental Delay can only be used for students aged 3–9. Beginning at age 10 (customarily grade 5) students with significant cognitive impairment should be placed in either the Intellectually Impaired or Multiply Impaired categories. During the 2008–2009 school year only 10% of Massachusetts students with disabilities were assigned to those two categories. <http://www.doe.mass.edu/InfoServices/reports/enroll/sped09/dd.xls> Accessed October 15, 2009.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.doe.mass.edu/InfoServices/reports/enroll/sped09/dd.xls> Accessed October 15, 2009.

<sup>4</sup> Source: Massachusetts Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education: Student Assessment Services. October 15, 2009.

<sup>5</sup> Students with Disabilities are defined as only those with IEPs.