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## ***MCAS 2011: Pockets of Improvement for Cambridge Students and Schools***

**Cambridge, MA**—For the Cambridge Public Schools, MCAS 2011 revealed several pockets of growth in student achievement and highlighted the continuing need to aggressively close achievement gaps. In a year in which 90% of all districts in Massachusetts did not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), Cambridge made AYP for all students in English language arts, but did not make AYP for all students in math or for all student subgroups in both content areas. Although overall district performance in English language arts and math remained largely unchanged from that of 2010, as it did for the state, a deeper look reveals various gains by grade level, by student group, and by school.

In English language arts, students in grades 5, 6, 8, and 10 achieved gains in the percentage scoring proficient and above, ranging from 2-11 percentage points. Sixty-two percent of grades 5 and 6 students scored proficient or advanced, while 81% of grades 8 and 10 students scored proficient or advanced. In addition, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced in English language arts increased for grade 10 students across *all* subgroups. In math, Cambridge students in grades 4, 6, and 8 achieved gains in the percentage scoring proficient and above of approximately 6 percentage points; 49-53% of students at these grades scored proficient or advanced.

Individual Cambridge schools celebrated some successes of note on MCAS 2011, particularly the Morse, Baldwin, and Amigos Schools. The Morse School was honored to be named one of the state's 127 Commendation Schools for its success in narrowing proficiency gaps for low income, limited English proficient, and Special Education students over a two-year period. The Baldwin and Amigos Schools celebrated a shared accomplishment—100% of students at both schools scored proficient or advanced in English language arts at grade 8.

Several Cambridge schools achieved high growth in 2011 according to the state's student growth model, which measures students' growth from one year to the next in comparison to academic peers statewide. Six Cambridge schools had high average to above average growth in English language arts; above average growth was achieved by students at the Amigos, King, Tobin, and Baldwin Schools. Eight Cambridge schools achieved high average to above average growth in math; above average growth was achieved by students at the Amigos, Cambridge Rindge and Latin and the High School Extension Program, Graham and Parks, Haggerty, and Tobin Schools.

An analysis of student performance by subgroup also reveals a varied picture of achievement across the district, with both gains and gaps in achievement for various student groups, at different grade levels, in both English language arts and math. The percentage of Cambridge students scoring proficient and above in 2011 was higher than that of their peers across the state for low income, Hispanic/Latino, and White students in both English language arts and math. Cambridge Asian students scored higher than their peers across the state in English language arts, and Cambridge African American/Black students scored higher than their statewide peers in math and equaled those peers in English language arts. Special education students and English language learners in Cambridge both scored below their statewide peers in English language arts and math, however—by 2-3 percentage points for Special Education students, and by 4-6 percentage points for English language learners. And the gaps in achievement between the highest and lowest performing groups of Cambridge students remain unacceptably large for this district.

As Cambridge Superintendent Jeffrey Young observed, reducing achievement gaps for all students remains a priority in Cambridge. "Cambridge Public Schools attained a Level 2 rating from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education this year—the only urban district in

the state rated above Level 3 or Level 4. While we are pleased to be recognized in this way, we also know that we are still not close to where we need to be in terms of student achievement. MCAS results do not tell the full story of how our students perform in school, but they do still tell an important part of the story, especially for those students who are struggling to learn to read, write, and do math. As a community, we need to commit to ensuring that ALL students achieve at high levels, and we will continue organizing our efforts in pursuit of that goal."

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