



October 14, 2021

Dear Students, Staff and Families,

We hope everyone is enjoying the beautiful fall foliage of New England and having some fun with carving pumpkins during this wonderful season.

Curriculum and Instruction Updates:

The district is in the midst of a Literacy Reset to ensure all students develop strong literacy skills. In April of 2021, when our students returned to in-person learning we took the opportunity to take a closer look at where we stood using our various research-based core curriculum, and student data. We discovered that we needed to take this opportunity with the return of all students to school to reset expectations. We are working to ensure on grade-level standards are not only covered, but that we provide specific Tier 2 and 3 interventions to help close individual students learning gaps.

The District Leadership Team, Instructional Leadership Teams, along with teachers at each of our schools are involved in the work we are doing. We continue to work closely with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Sustainable Systems of Support Team (SSOS) at both the middle and high school as they are in a "turnaround status." We are in our second year of the Early Grades Literacy Grant for the elementary school and we were recently awarded the GLEAM (Growing Literacy Equity Across Massachusetts) for the middle and high school. In addition to these noted supports, we have hired Literacy Coaches to work at each school this year: Cheri Kent – Webster Middle School and Park Ave Elementary, Marie Levy-Pabst and Diana Malkin at Bartlett High School.

We have recently upgraded our ELA curriculum resources from Wonders 2017 to Wonders 2020 for grades K-5. We are also using StudySync 2020 as their main curriculum resource for teaching ELA for grades 6-12. Both of these research-based curricula are highly rated by teachers on CURATE.

<https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate/?section=ela>



While we have had Wonders and StudySync curriculum for several years, during the remote/hybrid learning models, they were not implemented with fidelity. The focus with the Literacy Reset is to ensure all students have access to engaging on-grade level curriculum and develop strong independent literacy skills. The focus of both the Early Grades Literacy and GLEAM grants is to ensure the teaching of strong literacy skills and adherence to research-based curriculum that has been proven to work. The Hill for Literacy Coaches will be coaching teachers and administrators and conducting a comprehensive Literacy Needs Assessment for us. This Literacy Needs Assessment will be used to create a district-wide comprehensive Literacy Plan that supports all students.

To support our Literacy Reset, we continue to ask parents/guardians/grandparents to encourage reading and writing at home.



Evidence of Student Learning

Homework is a great way for students to develop their independent learning skills as well as develop the organizational skills and the persistence needed for strong academic skills. Homework is also a way for parents/guardians to actually see the evidence of what their child/children are learning each day. It is important that parents/guardians engage in daily conversations about what your child/children are learning each day, because these conversations provide students yet another way to explain their own thinking. Metacognition is thinking about how you learn and how you think and a great way to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills.

Parents/Guardians are strongly encouraged to set aside some time each day to review the work that comes home from school and ask open ended questions to their child/children to support the development of metacognitive (reflective) thinking skills.

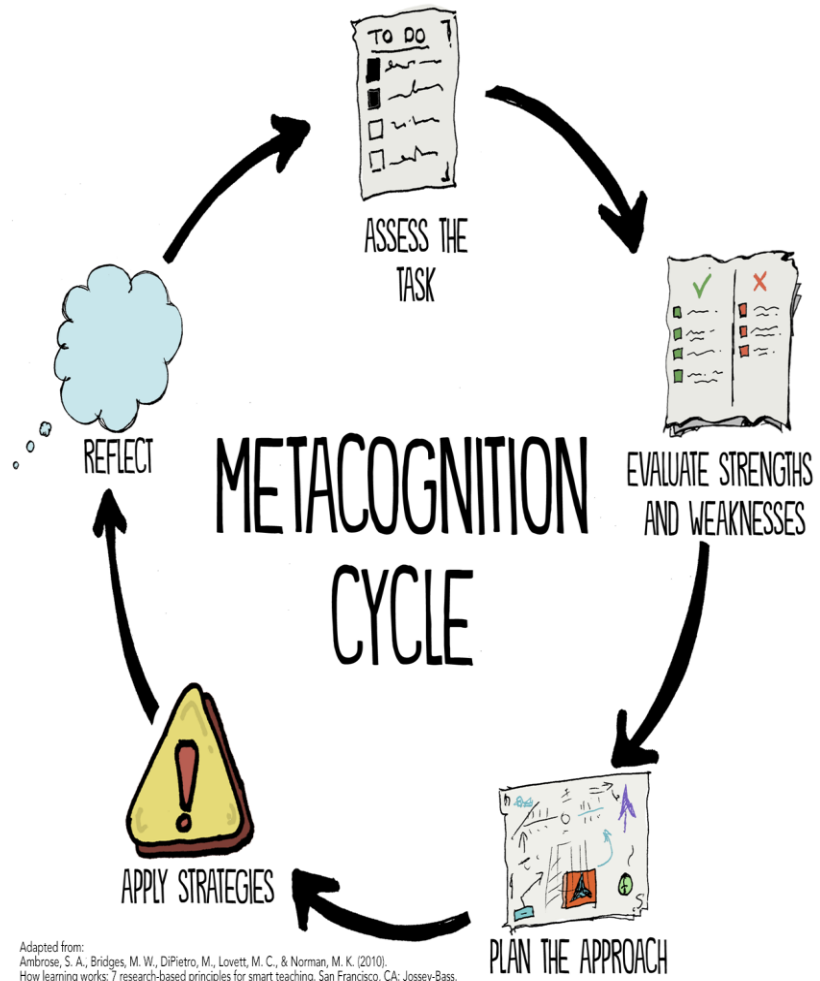
THE POWER OF METACOGNITION

Metacognition is vital for students to thrive in college, in their careers, and in life-long learning. It helps promote autonomy and resiliency. When students improve their metacognitive skills, they are more likely to embrace a Growth Mindset and learn from mistakes.

If we want students to grow into problem-solvers and critical thinkers, we need to help them develop metacognition.



JOHN SPENCER





COVID Safety Protocols, Masks, and COVID Dashboards

The COVID Weekly and Cumulative Dashboards are attached for your review.

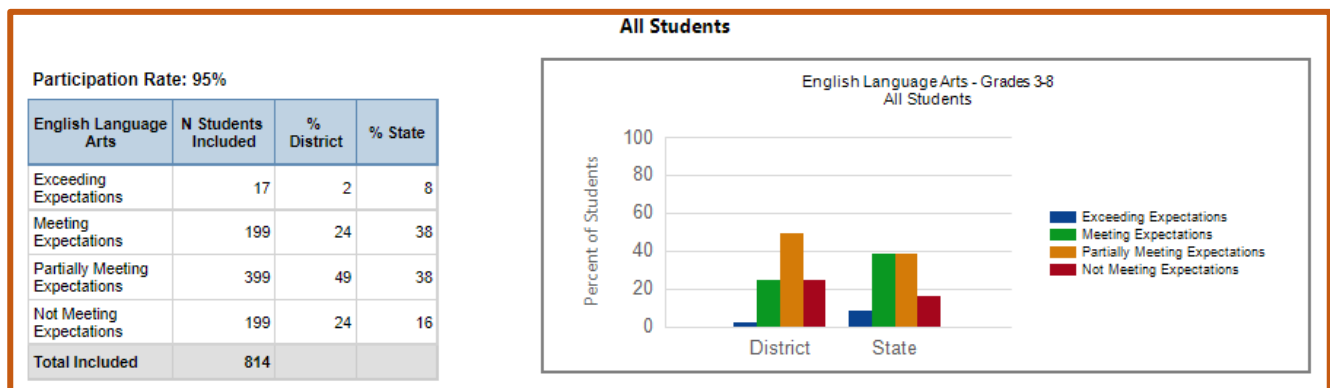
As a reminder, we ask parents/guardians to ensure all students come to school with their own masks. While we have disposable masks on hand for the occasional mask that breaks or a student who forgets one, we are not prepared to provide a mask to each student every day for the entire year. We ask that you ensure your child/children have masks of their own for school. Thank you for your assistance in this area.

Food Service Update

Due to shortages of food and packaging materials, labor shortage and delivery delays, our menus are subject to change based on availability. Please know that we are working hard to provide meals every day, adjust on the fly and provide updates about menu changes as soon as possible. We may need to make quick menu substitutions based upon what we have on hand, but we are trying our best to make comparable changes. Thank you for your continued support and patience. Please stick with us through this challenging time.

MCAS Results- District Overview

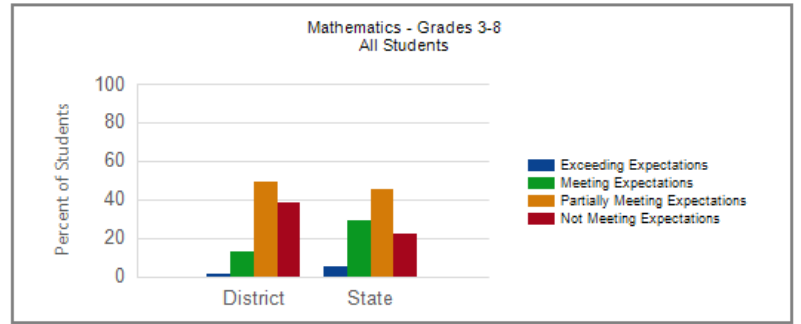
Grades 3-8 ~ English Language Arts



Grades 3-8 ~ Mathematics

Participation Rate: 92%

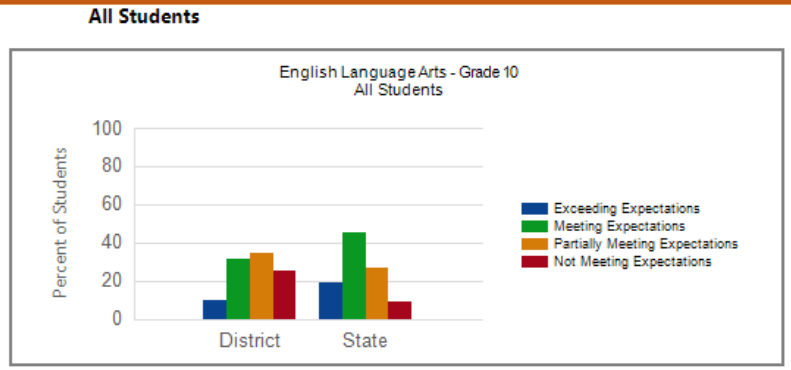
Mathematics	N Students Included	% District	% State
Exceeding Expectations	7	1	5
Meeting Expectations	101	13	29
Partially Meeting Expectations	382	49	45
Not Meeting Expectations	297	38	22
Total Included	787		



Grade 10 ~ English Language Arts

Participation Rate: 98%

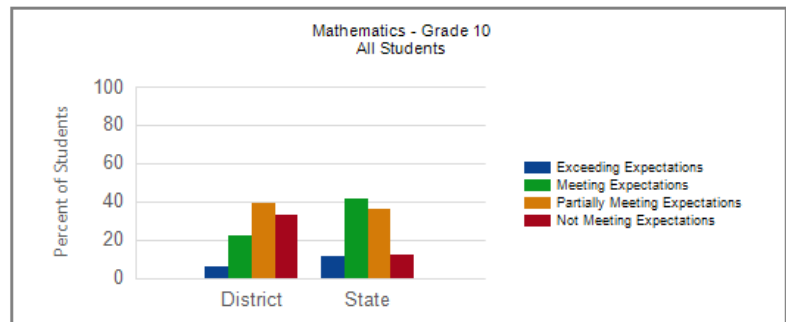
English Language Arts	N Students Included	% District	% State
Exceeding Expectations	9	10	19
Meeting Expectations	28	31	45
Partially Meeting Expectations	30	34	27
Not Meeting Expectations	22	25	9
Total Included	89		



Grade 10 ~ Mathematics

Participation Rate: 98%

Mathematics	N Students Included	% District	% State
Exceeding Expectations	5	6	11
Meeting Expectations	20	22	41
Partially Meeting Expectations	35	39	36
Not Meeting Expectations	30	33	12
Total Included	90		



Upcoming Dates

November 11 - No school

November 17 - ½ day of school/ Parent teacher conferences

November 18 - Evening Parent teacher conferences

November 24 - ½ day of school

November 25-26 - Thanksgiving Break

December 3 - ½ day of school/PD for teachers

Regards,

Dr. Ruthann Petruno-Goguen