



CITY OF SOMERVILLE, MASSACHUSETTS
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Benjamin G. Brown School Earns “Commendation School” Designation
as District Continues Upward Growth Trajectory**

*Somerville High School Maintains Level 1 Accountability designation for fourth straight year, helps
continue to set aggressive growth trend in district*

Somerville, MA – The Somerville Public Schools maintained its upward trajectory on the annual state assessment, highlighted by the district’s first “Commendation School” and a district-wide four-point increase in the median Student Growth Percentile (SGP) in English Language Arts over the past year. According to [spring 2016 MCAS results](#) released yesterday afternoon by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Somerville registered district-wide SGPs of 62 in ELA and 58 in Math, outpacing state-wide growth averages of 52 in each core subject. The district’s combined growth rate of 120 surpassed last year’s combined growth rate of 116.5. Somerville High School maintained its Level 1 status for the fourth consecutive year and helped continue to set an aggressive growth trend in the district with SGPs of 77 in ELA and 69 in Math.

The district’s continuing high growth trend was matched by a Composite Performance Index of 81.4 in ELA, the highest CPI in the last five years. Using a 100-point index, CPI measures the extent to which students are progressing toward proficiency.

The Brown School became the district’s first school to be designated a Massachusetts Commendation School. A subset of Level 1 schools are recognized as Commendation Schools, identified for high achievement, high progress, and narrowing of proficiency gaps. Multiple criteria determine eligibility for Commendation School designation, including: a 2016 school percentile of 90 or higher, ranking within the top 10% of schools (90th percentile) in the same school type category for both the aggregate and the high needs subgroup for ELA and Math, demonstrated improvement in the CPI for all subgroups in both ELA and Math over the most recent four school years, be in the top 25% of all schools in the state for both ELA and Math based on its progress in closing achievement gaps between the school’s high needs subgroup and the state’s all students group over the last four years.

“Across the district, we’re continuing to see more and more the importance of utilizing the rich data we have consistently and thoughtfully to understand where each student is at, and implementing practices that will ensure growth for every student throughout the year,” commented Superintendent of Schools, Mary Skipper. “The Brown School, Somerville’s first Commendation School, is a prime example of how important it is for us to continue focusing on individual growth and challenging every single student in our district regardless of where they’re at in their level of proficiency.”

“How highly we value education is the key not only to the success of our students, but reflects on the values of our community. That our students continue to achieve such outstanding growth is a testament to our focus on educating and supporting the whole child, inside and outside of the classroom,” said Mayor Joseph A. Curtatone. “We believe that every child should and must have the opportunity to reach his or her highest potential, and our



students continue to prove that Somerville’s public schools are and will be among the top in the Commonwealth, thanks to their hard work and the support of the entire Somerville community.”

“We have focused on effective instruction in every classroom without cutting back on the essentials like music, world languages, art, or athletics. Educating the whole child is what Somerville is all about,” added Carrie Normand, Somerville School Committee Chair.

While SGP is not the state's sole measure of progress, it does provide a clear measure of a school's ability to help students at every level of proficiency show growth compared to their “academic peers” from across the state. District-wide median SGPs outpaced the state median SGP at nearly every grade level in both ELA and Math, including a district-high Grade 7 SGP of 78 in English Language Arts. Grade 7 students also registered an ELA Composite Performance Index (CPI) of 88.5.

“The sustained growth patterns district-wide are an indication of strong, tiered curriculum practices in our classrooms, and an understanding of students’ individual needs,” added Dr. McKay. “We were also very pleased to see that our focused efforts in early literacy are beginning to pay off, as reflected in our Grade 3 results, our best since 2010. Our early education team’s focus continues to be on that strong start, helping our earliest learners build the foundational skills in pre-school through grade 2 that will lead to continued academic success in future years.”

“From an educator standpoint, what’s truly exciting is seeing evidence of exceptional teaching practices throughout the district,” added Superintendent Skipper, “and seeing how those translate in the MCAS results. Grade 6 at the Healey School, for example, registered phenomenal SGPs of 83 in Math and 81 in ELA. Those are outstanding growth numbers that demonstrate the impact of an instructional approach that focuses on the individual student and making sure that each student is receiving the support they need to be successful.”

Additional District highlights from the spring 2016 MCAS results include the following:

- Math: 75.3 CPI is the highest in at least 7 years (71.9 in 2013)
- ELA: 81.4 CPI is the highest in at least 7 years (79.7 in 2013)
- Grade 3 CPI of 78.6 in Math is the highest in at least 7 years (73.1 in 2013)
- Grade 7 CPI in ELA increased by 6 points over last year to a CPI of 88.5, the highest in at least 7 years
- Grade 10 CPIs of 92.3 in ELA and 82.9 in Math

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For additional details, analysis, and commentary on the spring 2016 MCAS test results, please contact Dr. Vince McKay, SPS Assistant Superintendent at 617-629-5214 or vmckay@k12.somerville.ma.us.

Definitions:

- **SGP: Student Growth Percentile** is “a measure of student progress that compares changes in a student’s MCAS scores to changes in MCAS scores of other students with similar scores in prior years.” (from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s [MCAS Student Growth Percentiles: Interpretive Guide](#), March 2011)
- **CPI: Composite Performance Index** is a “100-point index that assigns 100, 75, 50, 25, or 0 points to each student participating in MCAS and MCAS-Alt tests based on their performance. The total points assigned to each student are added together and the sum is divided by the total number of students assessed. The result is a number between 0 and 100, which constitutes a district, school or group's CPI for that subject and student group. The CPI is a measure of the extent to which students are progressing toward proficiency (a CPI of 100) in ELA and mathematics. CPIs are generated separately for ELA and mathematics, and at all levels - state, district, school, and student group.” (from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s [2010 Glossary of Accountability Reporting Terms](#))

