

## MCAS UPDATE

By now you should have received your child's Spring 2009 MCAS scores. We are very proud of our students' performance. However, we strive for excellence and as a result there is always room for improvement. Together with Department Chairs, our Mathematics, English, and Science teachers have been investigating data (from MCAS) to identify students' strengths and weaknesses. These investigations and discussions are leading us to make adjustments in our curriculum and instructional practices. Our goal is to insure all students are provided with a solid foundation, ultimately improving their performance on MCAS.

As a parent, you are provided with annual scaled scores and performance levels. Schools, however, are given a tremendous amount of data to sort, analyze, and evaluate. We have the opportunity to look at more in depth at our aggregate (total) school population, as well as our sub-group populations. This allows us to identify trends, both positive and negative. The state began testing all students each year in ELA and Mathematics in 2006. The natural trend was for teachers and parents to compare student performance from one year to the next. However, the tests are not designed to compare from year to year. As a result, the state is unveiling a new *Student Growth Model*. This new model will help parents to see individual growth in their child's scores, rather than relying on comparison.

The ***Student Growth Model*** will provide schools with an important piece of information. The *Student Growth percentile* will measure how much an individual student has gained from one year to the next relative to other students statewide with similar MCAS score histories. *Student Growth percentiles* will range from 1 to 99, where higher numbers represent relatively high growth and lower numbers represent relatively lower growth. This data will allow teachers in this district to target individual student growth, and have conversations about good teaching and learning at the student and classroom level – the place where the information can be most useful.

Here at QMS, we are working diligently to analyze and evaluate the data from the state. We have already made some subtle changes in the area of Mathematics, and are working on developing new strategies in all areas to insure our students have the skills and strategies necessary to perform well on the MCAS tests. Under the direction of the Department Chairs, we continue to work with all schools in the district to insure a smooth and appropriate content transition from one grade to the next.

If you would like more information on the *Student Growth Model* please visit the Massachusetts Department of Education website at [www.doe.mass.edu](http://www.doe.mass.edu).