

Understanding the Next- Generation MCAS

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MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF
ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY
EDUCATION



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What is the Next-Generation MCAS?

- ☐ Updated version of the nearly 20-year-old MCAS assessment
- ☐ Focuses on students' **critical thinking abilities, application of knowledge,** and ability to make **connections between reading and writing**
- ☐ Gives a **clearer signal of readiness** for the next grade level or college and career
- ☐ Designed to be given on a **computer** (though paper versions remain available)
- ☐ First given in **spring 2017** in grades 3-8 in English language arts and math
- ☐ Will eventually replace all older (“legacy”) MCAS tests in grades 3-10



Computer-Based Testing



☐ Spring 2017:

☐ 60% of all grades 3-8 students took the test on computers; >93% in grades 4 and 8

☐ Phasing in computer-based testing by grade level

☐ Spring 2017: Grades 4 and 8 English language arts (ELA) and math

☐ Spring 2018: Grades 4-5 and 7-8 in ELA and math and grades 5 and 8 in science and tech/eng

☐ Spring 2019: All tests in grades 3-8, grade 10 ELA and math



Equating of Computer- and Paper-Based Test Forms

- ☞ Ensure fairness regardless of test form (computer or paper)
- ☞ Applied in grades where schools could choose to administer computer-based or paper-based tests (grades 3, 5, 6, and 7)
- ☞ Used the results from parts of the test that are **similar** to help adjust the scoring on parts of the test that vary by format.



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Scores Are Being Released This Month for Tests Students Took in Spring 2017

☐ Next-Gen MCAS

☐ English language arts and math, grades 3-8

☐ Legacy MCAS

☐ Science and tech/eng in grades 5 and 8

☐ All high school MCAS (English language arts, math, and science and tech/eng)



What will the scores look like?

☞ Achievement levels

☞ Parent report

☞ Aggregate results for schools, districts, and the state



MCAS Achievement Levels

Legacy

Advanced

Students at this level demonstrate a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of rigorous subject matter, and provide sophisticated solutions to complex problems.

Proficient

Students at this level demonstrate a solid understanding of challenging subject matter and solve a wide variety of problems.

Needs Improvement

Students at this level demonstrate a partial understanding of subject matter and solve some simple problems.

Warning

Students at this level demonstrate a minimal understanding of subject matter and do not solve simple problems.

Next-generation

Exceeding Expectations

A student who performed at this level exceeded grade-level expectations by demonstrating mastery of the subject matter.

Meeting Expectations

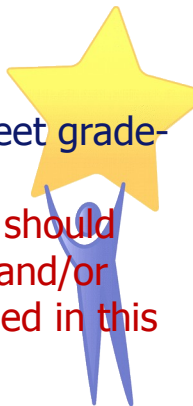
A student who performed at this level met grade-level expectations and is academically on track to succeed in the current grade in this subject.

Partially Meeting Expectations

A student who performed at this level partially met grade-level expectations in this subject. **The school, in consultation with the student's parent/guardian, should consider whether the student needs additional academic assistance to succeed in this subject.**

Not Meeting Expectations

A student who performed at this level did not meet grade-level expectations in this subject. **The school, in consultation with the student's parent/guardian, should determine the coordinated academic assistance and/or additional instruction the student needs to succeed in this subject.**

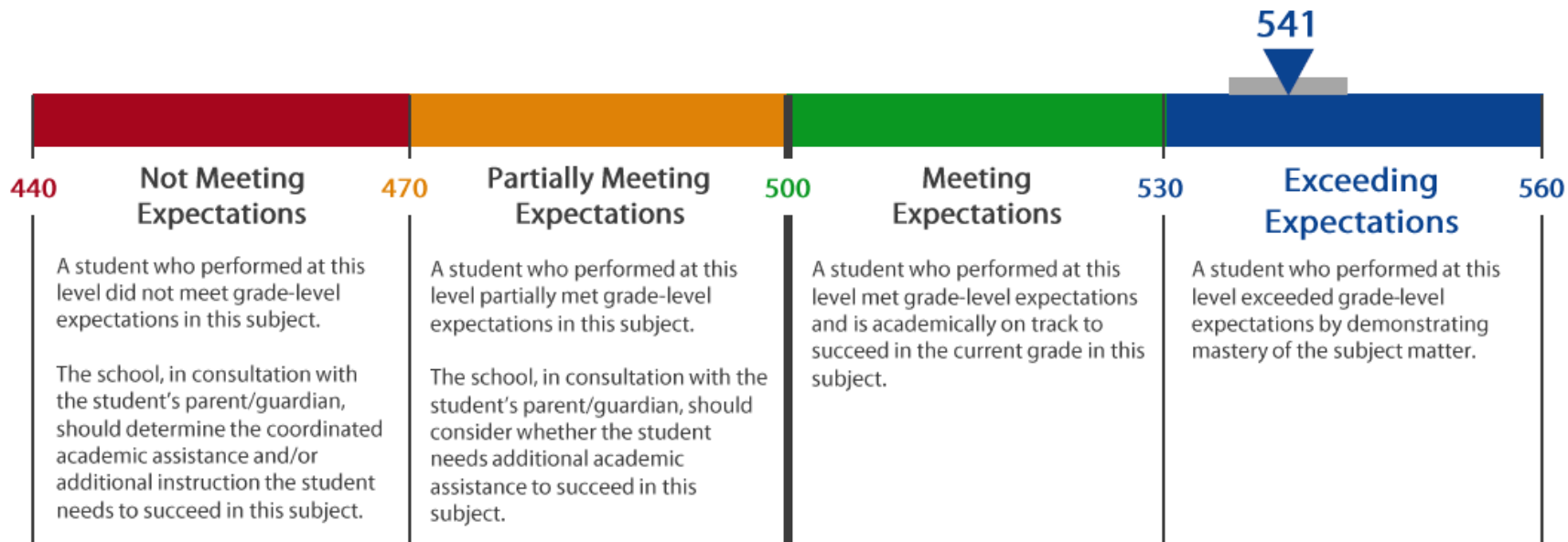


Mathematics Results

Computer-based test

Your Child's Achievement Level: **Exceeding Expectations**

Your Child's Score: **541**








In the figure above, the triangle indicates your child's score on the test. The gray bar shows the range of likely scores your child would receive if he or she took the test multiple times.

How your child performed compared to the school, district, and state

Your Child's Score	Average Score		
	School	District	State
541	485	502	515

How your child performed on the test in each reporting category and on each individual test question

Reporting Category	Points earned by your child	Average number of points earned by Meeting Expectations students who scored close to 500.
Operations & Algebraic Thinking 	7 out of 10	6.0 out of 10
Numbers & Operations in Base Ten 	10 out of 10	6.8 out of 10
Numbers & Operations - Fractions 	5 out of 5	4.0 out of 5
Measurement & Data 	8 out of 9	6.1 out of 9
Geometry 	3 out of 4	2.5 out of 4

Individual Test Questions

Question Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Points Earned	1/2	3/4	0/1	0/1	3/3	1/4	1/1	1/1	1/1	0/1	1/1	1/2	1/2	1/1	1/1	0/1	4/4	3/4	0/4	1/1	1/1	1/1	0/1	0/1	0/1	2/3	5/6	0/1	1/1	1/1

Key

x/y = x points earned out of y possible points

Blank space/y = no answer provided

Go online to see a description of every test question at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/parents.

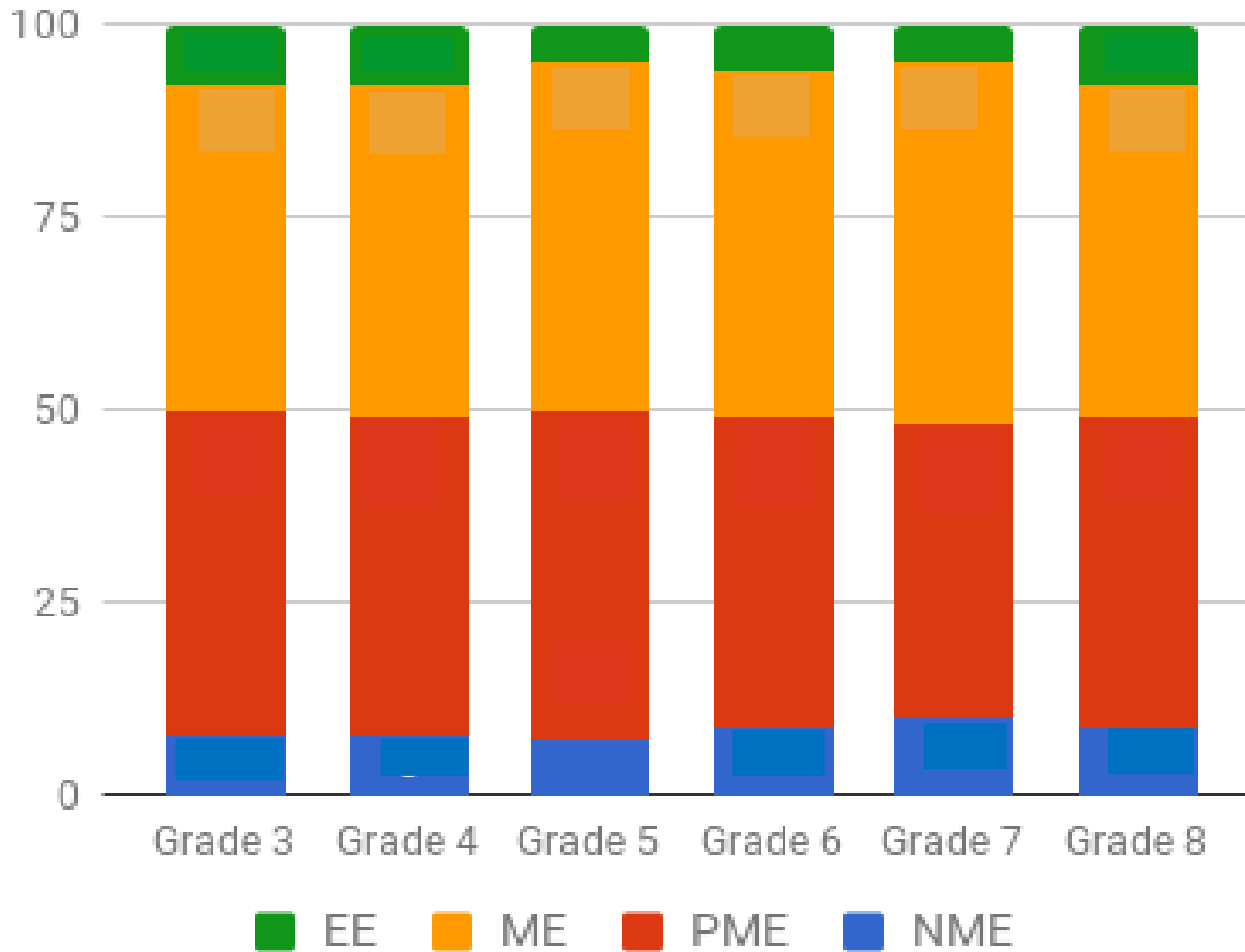


Why Did My Child Score Proficient on the Older MCAS but Only Partially Meeting Expectations This Year?

- ☞ In general, the new standards for Meeting Expectations are **more rigorous** than the standards for reaching the Proficient level on the legacy MCAS.
- ☞ **Massachusetts educators** set the new standards to help **signal students' readiness** for the next grade level.
- ☞ **Look closely at where your child's score falls** within the Partially Meeting Expectations category. If it isn't close to Meeting Expectations, talk with your child's teacher about how you can work together to help your child catch up.
- ☞ Spring 2017 is a **baseline year** for a new test in grades 3-8, and spring 2017 scores **should not be compared** to previous years' scores.



Projected Statewide 2017 Results for Grades 3-8 ELA and Math: Percent of students in each achievement level



Interpreting the Projected Results (Part 1)

- ☐ **The results do NOT mean that students learned less;** the next-generation MCAS **measures in a different way**
- ☐ Remember: **2017 is the baseline year** — the first year of a new assessment — and we expect scores to change over time, as occurred when the legacy MCAS debuted in 1998.
- ☐ **Massachusetts educators** set these standards, and they raised them in order to make sure our students will be college- and career- ready.
- ☐ **In some grades and subjects** (grade 4 English language arts and math, grade 7 math), **the percent of students** Meeting Expectations **will likely be similar** to the percent that were Proficient previously. **In other grades and subjects** (grade 8 English language arts), **the percent** who are in Meeting Expectations **will likely be lower** than the previous percent of Proficient students.

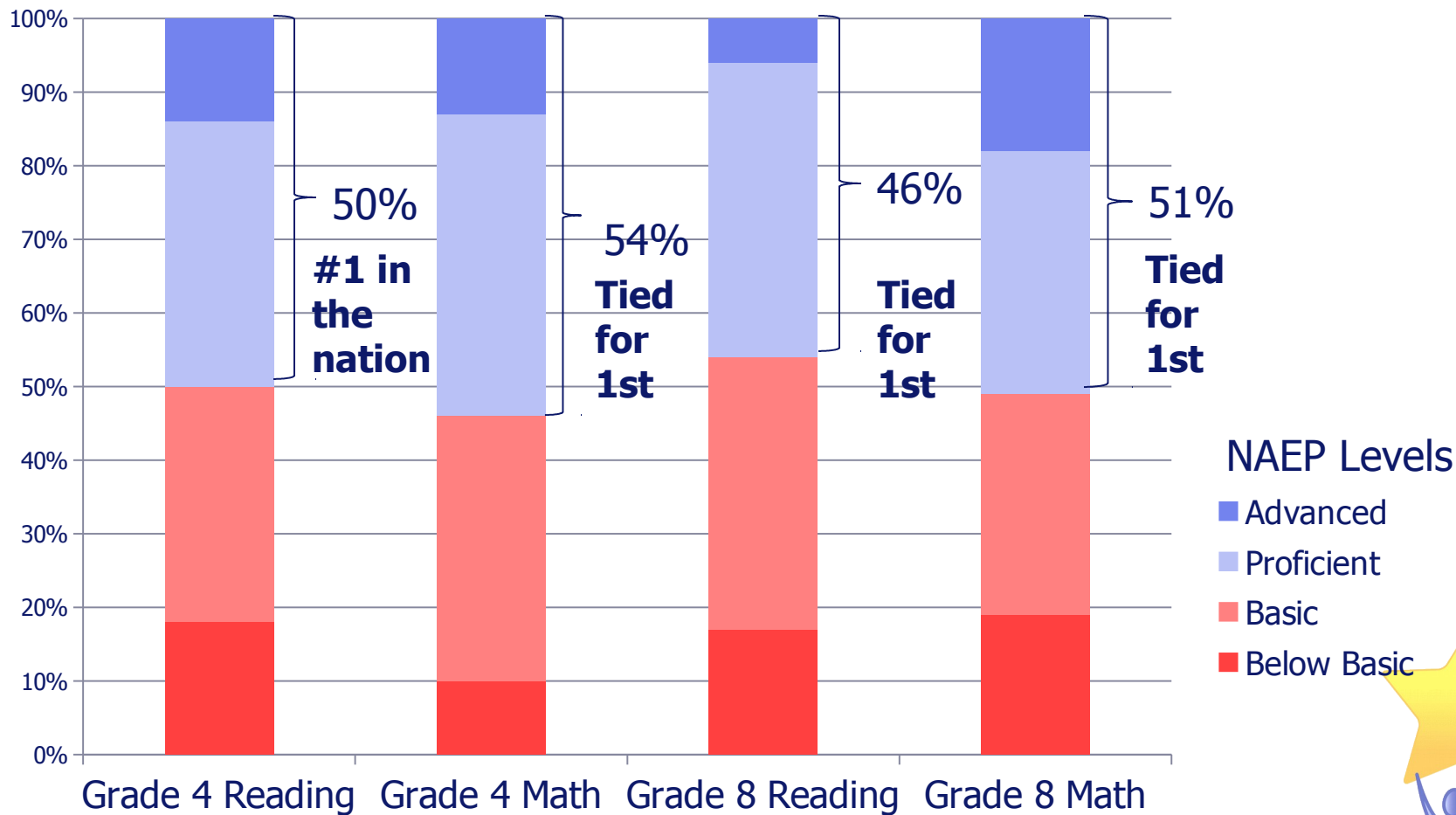


Interpreting the Projected Results (Part 2)

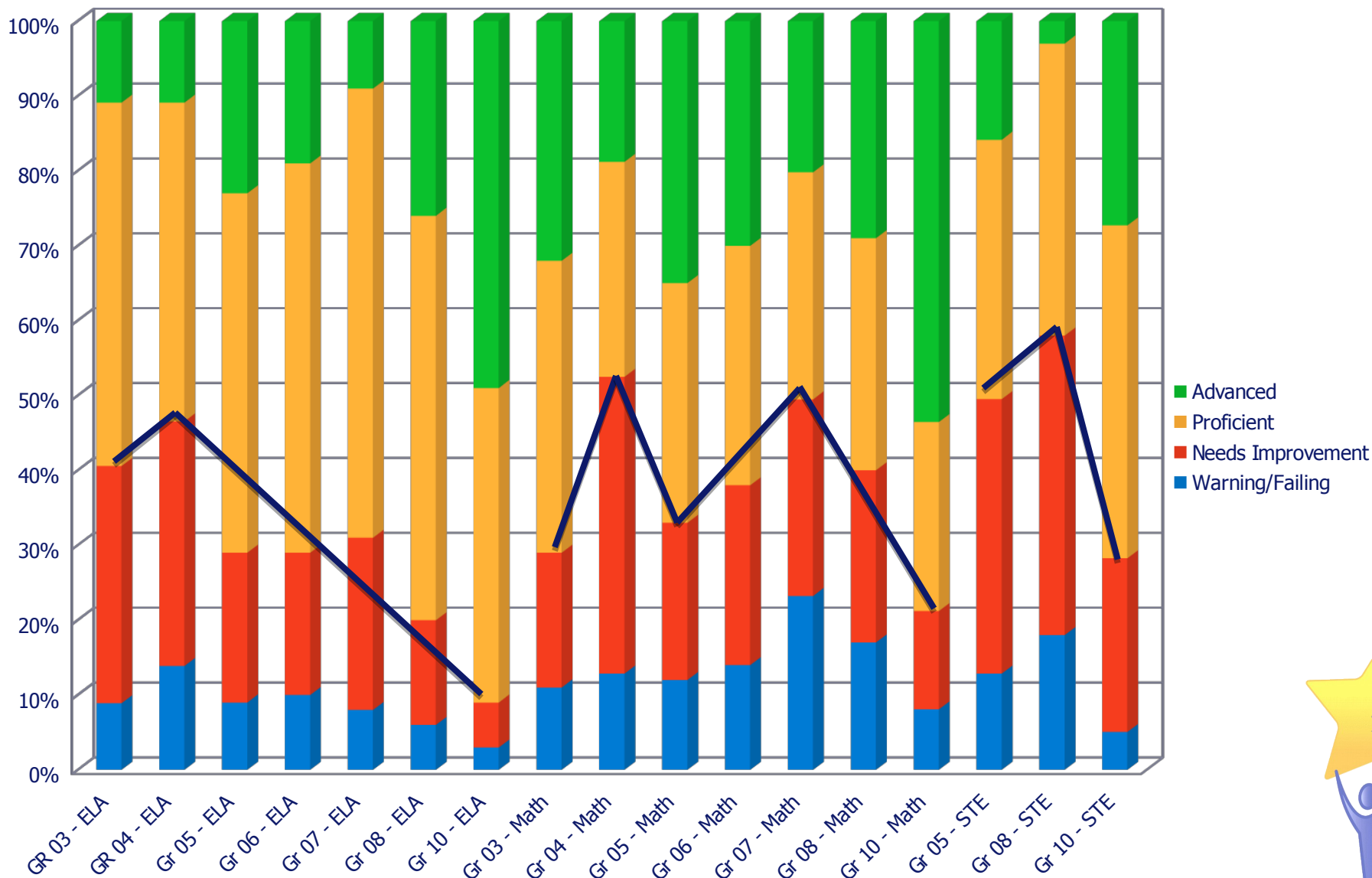
- ☐ The roughly equivalent proportion of students in each grade and subject area reflect:
 - ☐ A standard setting process involving **panels of educators** who valued a clear progression of learning expectations from grade to grade;
 - ☐ **Panelists' consistent application of the standards** as they made expert judgments about student achievement on the new tests;
 - ☐ The fact that standards were set for all these tests **at the same time**, unlike with the legacy MCAS



Projected Next-Gen MCAS Results Look More Like Massachusetts's 2015 NAEP Results...



...and Less Like Legacy MCAS Results (2015)



Looking Beyond Scores

☞ Scores can identify areas where students need academic support, but scores can also reflect **non-academic barriers to learning.**

☞ ESE and districts continue to work together to:

☞ teach with poverty in mind,

☞ build cultural competency,

☞ address disproportionate and excessive student suspensions,

☞ support homeless students, and

☞ make schools safe for vulnerable students, such as LGBTQ students, recent immigrants, and others.



Accountability & the Next-Generation MCAS

- ☞ Because of the new assessment, **there will not be any new grades K-8 Level 4 schools this year.**
- ☞ Student growth percentiles, which measure how much progress a student made in a year, can still be compared across years.



How Do I Learn More?

☞ MCAS Parents Page

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/parents/>

☞ Resources coming soon include:

☞ Annotated Parent/Guardian Report

☞ Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

☞ Item Descriptions

☞ MCAS Parent Guide (available in several languages):

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/commissioner/Back-to-School/>

