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PRESS RELEASE

**EXCEL ACADEMY TOPS MA SCHOOL DISTRICT RANKINGS ON SPRING 2008 MCAS EXAMS**  
*Seventh graders ranked first in state*

September 26, 2008. East Boston, MA. Seventh grade students at Excel Academy Charter School were ranked first in the state after achieving a perfect 100 percent Advanced/Proficient rate on the Spring 2008 English MCAS exam. Excel Academy’s students are the first seventh grade class in Massachusetts to earn a perfect Advanced/Proficient rate since 2005.

All Excel Academy students, 69 percent of whom are Latino and 75 percent of whom are low-income, surpassed their local and state peers at every single grade level on the English, math and science MCAS exams. Excel Academy students earned an overall 88 percent Advanced/Proficient rate on the English MCAS exam and 78 percent Advanced/Proficient rate on the math exam.

“Our MCAS results demonstrate that when you couple a rigorous academic program with a structured school environment, all students will achieve at the highest levels. Excel Academy students in every grade worked to eliminate the achievement gap that exists between low-income, minority students and their more affluent, Caucasian peers. Our sixth, seventh and eighth graders actually reversed this gap. Their success reflects the substantial investment that Excel Academy students, families, teachers and staff make in their education,” said Ann Waterman Roy, Excel Academy’s Executive Director.

Excel Academy is the only public, charter middle school in East Boston. During the 2007-08 school year, the school served 204 middle school students from East Boston, Chelsea and surrounding communities. Students are admitted through an open lottery and commit to an extended school day (nearly eight hours) and extended school year.

Excel Academy’s 100 percent Advanced/Proficient rate on the seventh grade English exam is just one indicator of the strength of Excel’s academic program. This class also posted a 38 percent Advanced rating (the highest possible rating on the MCAS exam) that triples the state-wide Advanced rate (12 percent) and more than doubles the state-wide Caucasian Advanced rate (15 percent). The seventh graders achieved similarly remarkable results on the 2008 math MCAS exam, placing second out of 284 school districts with an 85 percent Advanced/Proficient rate.

“We believe that preparation for college begins in middle school, and our program is geared to ensuring that students are prepared to succeed at the next level. Our MCAS results illustrate the rapid progression students make when they are exposed to a challenging curriculum and receive high quality instruction from a talented and dedicated faculty year after year,” said Komal Bhasin, Excel Academy’s Principal.

The eighth grade students of Excel Academy exemplified this progression with their strong scores on the 2008 MCAS exams. Their math scores placed them second in the state, with 88 percent of students achieving Advanced or Proficient. The eighth grade class also delivered on the English MCAS exam, with 93 percent of students earning an Advanced or Proficient score. This score topped those received by students in the exclusive, suburban communities of Newton (76 percent), Wellesley (82 percent) and Weston (75 percent).

After completing Excel Academy’s program last June, most of Excel Academy’s eighth graders matriculated at many of the region’s most prestigious college-preparatory high schools. Overall, 97 percent of students in Excel’s 2008 eighth grade class were admitted to college-preparatory independent, parochial, charter, pilot or exam schools.

“At Excel Academy, every one of our students is on the path to higher education. We set high expectations for our students, and our teachers work relentlessly to ensure students are equipped with the skills and tools they need to meet those expectations,” states Ms. Roy. “Our eighth graders’ MCAS results demonstrate that they are ready for the very competitive high schools they are entering this fall. We are extremely proud that our younger students’ strong performance on the MCAS indicates that they, too, are gaining the skills and knowledge required to succeed not just in middle school, but in high school, college and beyond.”

Excel Academy currently serves over 200 fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth grade students. The school’s mission is to prepare middle school students to succeed in high school and college, apply their learning to solve relevant problems, and engage productively in their communities.