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PRESS RELEASE

**EXCEL ACADEMY RANKED FIRST IN THE STATE FOR IMPROVING STUDENT PERFORMANCE**  
*Release of state growth data another indicator of Excel Academy's Success*

**[East Boston]** – Excel Academy Charter School ranked first in the state in English and fourth in the state in math for improving student performance over time and has been identified as a “high growth” school.

On Tuesday, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) released a new growth model that measures the achievement of students across a three-year period and compares a student’s academic attainment against that of their peer group. In the aggregate, Excel Academy students grew at the 86<sup>th</sup> percentile in English language arts, meaning Excel Academy students progressed at a faster rate than 86 percent of their peers statewide. In math, Excel Academy students grew at the 83<sup>rd</sup> percentile, outpacing the improvements of their statewide peers by a rate of 83 percent.

“At Excel Academy we are committed to providing the highest quality instruction and individualized support to ensure that all students can achieve at high levels,” said Rebecca Cass, Excel Academy’s Interim Executive Director. “These results demonstrate that our commitment helps each child make significant academic gains year after year.”

Earlier this year, DESE released results from the Spring 2009 MCAS examinations, a measure of absolute performance in achieving state content standards. Excel Academy students posted some of the highest scores in the state, earning them first place rankings on both the 8<sup>th</sup> grade English Language Arts and math examinations. The school’s MCAS achievements, coupled with its growth results, earned Excel Academy the DESE’s “high achievement, high growth” school designation.

This is the first time Massachusetts has used a growth model to evaluate student performance. The results measure individual student progress on the state's assessment test by tracking the scores from one year to the next. Whereas basic test results reflect how a student performed on a particular assessment, growth reports detail how much the student's performance has changed over time compared to students with similar test score histories.

*Excel Academy Charter School* ([www.excelacademy.org](http://www.excelacademy.org)) is a tuition-free, public middle school serving East Boston and Chelsea. Our mission is to prepare students to succeed in high school and college, apply their learning to solve relevant problems and engage productively in our communities. Excel currently serves 211 students in grades five through eight, of which two-thirds are Latino and low-income. We are significantly impacting the trajectories of our students as scholars, citizens and community leaders by teaching them to learn, lead, and excel.