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## PRESS RELEASE

**EXCEL ACADEMY RANKS FIRST IN STATE FOR SECOND CONSECUTIVE YEAR**  
***Eighth graders repeat perfect performance in English, also place first in math***

*September 16, 2009. East Boston, MA.* For the second year in a row, the students in Excel Academy's Class of 2009 ranked first in the state by achieving a perfect 100 percent Advanced/Proficient rate on the state's annual English MCAS exam. This year, they matched their first place performance on the math MCAS examination, ranking first out of all public middle schools in Massachusetts on both subject tests.

All Excel Academy students, 69 percent of whom are Latino and 67 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 95 percent Advanced/Proficient rate on the English MCAS exam and 85 percent Advanced/Proficient rate on the math exam.

"Excel Academy was founded to close the achievement gap that exists between low-income, minority students and their wealthier, Caucasian peers. Our 2009 MCAS results reflect what is possible when students, families, teachers and staff unite to achieve this goal," said Rebecca Cass, Excel Academy's Interim Executive Director.

Excel Academy is the only public, charter middle school in East Boston. During the 2008-09 school year, the school served 209 middle school students, of which 55 percent lived in East Boston, 24 percent were from Chelsea and the remaining from surrounding communities. Students are admitted through an open lottery system and commit to an extended school day (nearly eight hours) and extended school year.

The eighth grade's first-in-the-state performance on the 2009 English and math MCAS examinations reflects Excel Academy's strong academic foundation, as well as the school's focus on continual progress. Of the Class of 2009, 50 percent earned an Advanced rating (the highest possible rating on the MCAS exam) on the English MCAS examination, a 12 percent increase in the number of students earning this distinction over last year. The students' achievement on the math examination, with 96 percent of students scoring Advanced or Proficient, also illustrates substantial growth, as the score reflects an 11 percent increase in students earning the designation over 2008. The eighth graders also

excelled on the 2009 Science MCAS examination, ranking fifth out of 464 public middle schools statewide with a 79 percent Advanced/Proficient rate.

The eighth graders were not alone in their achievements, other notable achievement include:

- 5<sup>th</sup> Grade: 89% Advanced/Proficient on ELA MCAS, which surpasses state average (63%), and nearly triples the score of Boston (38%) and Chelsea (36%.) Excel Academy 5<sup>th</sup> graders outperformed their more affluent peers in districts such as Weston (86%), Dover (86%), Lexington (86%) and Newton (83%).
- 6<sup>th</sup> Grade: 92% and 91% of students scored Advanced/Proficient on the English and math MCAS examinations, respectively. The 6<sup>th</sup> grade math scores rank in the top 1% in the state.
- 7<sup>th</sup> Grade: Ranked second in the state with 99% scoring Advanced/Proficient on the English MCAS and in the top 5% of schools statewide on the math MCAS.

“At Excel Academy, we are proving that high quality instruction, rigorous curriculum and individualized supports generate not only great MCAS results, but also a culture of learning in which our students thrive. We’re not just looking to trigger short term transformations; we’re looking to instill in students a lasting understanding of the value of education. We’re preparing students not just for success in high school, but also for success in life,” said Komal Bhasin, Excel Academy’s Principal.

The fifty members of Excel Academy’s Class of 2009 will test out Bhasin’s theory while attending over 20 high schools this fall. Overall, 97 percent of students in Excel’s 2009 eighth grade class were admitted to college-preparatory independent, parochial, charter, pilot or exam schools. Graduates are now attending some of the area’s most prestigious high schools including Boston College High School, Boston Latin School, Concord Academy, Newton Country Day School, Pingree School and The Rivers School.

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.