

## Charter school students shine in latest round of MCAS results

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The highly controversial MCAS test has been a painful reminder for many schools in the commonwealth that their students are in need of improvements in math and English, but at the Excel Charter School in East Boston, the 2004 MCAS was a piece of cake for students.

Sixth graders at the school outperformed all relevant peer groups on the 2004 math MCAS exam.

With 85 percent of the sixth grade class Latino, Excel Academy had the highest passing rate of 84 percent and advanced/proficient rate of 44 percent than any Boston public school with a predominantly Latino population. In fact, more Excel Academy students scored advanced or proficient than all but four public, district middle schools in Boston.

Excel Academy's sixth graders also posted a higher passing rate, 84

percent, than all neighboring school districts including Boston (47 percent), Chelsea (64 percent), Winthrop (73 percent) and Revere (80 percent).

The school's passing rate was greater than the statewide average of 75 percent and Excel Academy's predominantly Latino student population had a greater passing rate than the state's white students who had a passing rate of 82 percent.

With 44 percent of the sixth graders scoring advanced or proficient on the math MCAS, the school also outperformed the neighboring districts of Boston (18 percent), Chelsea (29 percent) and Winthrop (38 percent) as well as the state average (42 percent).

"Given this was our very first year of operation, we are extremely pleased by our performance and are proud of our students," said Excel Academy's Executive Director Yutaka Tamura. "In particular, we have shown that urban, low-income

students and students of color can achieve great academic success in the right environment."

Established in 2003, Excel Academy is currently serving 200 sixth- and seventh- grade students. The school's mission is to prepare sixth- through eighth-grade students to succeed in high school and college, apply their learning to solve relevant problems, and engage productively in their communities.

In its very first year of operation, the school's MCAS scores are a testament that Excel Academy's philosophy on education is working.

"Our results illustrate that a rigorous learning environment in which students receive extra support, combined with a longer school day and year, can produce excellent academic results," said Excel Academy's Principal Brian Turner. "In addition, this is a testament to our amazingly dedicated staff that is committed to providing the best education to our students."