

New Bedford Public Schools Continues to Grow and Raise Student Performance

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education released the 2019 Accountability Data and MCAS results. New Bedford Public Schools showed growth in many grades and multiple subjects in all schools. There are several metrics used to determine student performance including English Language Arts, Mathematics and Science MCAS results. These results along with attendance, graduation, advance course completion and others comprise the Accountability rating set by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The 2019 results illustrate that the students in New Bedford Public Schools continue to demonstrate increased growth in skills and knowledge in several areas across most grade levels.

NBPS has implemented new strategies and key initiatives with an intense focus on increasing students' overall literacy skills (i.e. reading comprehension, writing and critical and analytical thinking skills) and their social-emotional development to support overall learning and success in the classroom.

This past 2018-2019 school year NBPS saw improvements in ELA scores across all grade levels. Chronic absenteeism was reduced by 15.5% across the district from 46.2% in 2018 to 30.7% in 2019. New Bedford High School saw a significant (16.3%) decrease in chronic absenteeism from 45.3% in 2018 to 29.0% in 2019. This work has resulted in overall improvement.

Superintendent Thomas Anderson stated that, “Although our students and teachers, similar to many others across the Commonwealth, are adjusting to the more challenging exam, we are seeing gains. Teachers are engaging students and sparking their interests in learning which is allowing students to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the assessed skills.”

“New Bedford Public Schools continue to make progress toward the goal of ensuring an excellent education for every student in the city, which is evident in the MCAS results that show improvements in grade levels across the district. I am proud of the strides the district has made thanks to the hard work of the educators and students of New Bedford Public Schools; as much as anything else, the results confirm how important it is we keep our foot on the gas pedal and continue to press forward with the necessary improvements in our schools,” said Mayor Jon Mitchell.

The trajectory of New Bedford Public Schools is moving in a positive direction and student performance continues to increase on the MCAS as 64% of schools across the district have made substantial progress towards their targets. Among several highlights, NBPS is celebrating the continued success of James B. Congdon Elementary School students and staff:

- School of Recognition – Second consecutive year (1 of 67 elementary schools statewide out of over 1,100)
- 91st percentile (up from the 85th percentile in 2018)
- 100% of 2019 targets met
- Exceeded all targets: ELA, Math and Science
- Exceeded all targets towards attaining English Language Proficiency
- Exceeded typical growth in ELA and Math

More Highlights:

- 15 of New Bedford elementary schools met a minimum of 50% of their targets, indicating they are showing substantial improvement.
- More than 95% of 2019 targets were met by: Pacheco ES (96%) and Congdon ES (100%)
- Parker ES met 86% of its 2019 targets, exceeding their targets in ELA, Math and Science

New Bedford High School received kudos for reducing chronic absenteeism by 16.3% and the dropout rate from 4.4 in 2016 to 1.4 most recently and exceeding their target in ELA.

- Exceeded or met targets for ELA in 6 out of 8 subgroups
- Exceeded target for dropout rate for all students and all subgroups
- EL subgroup decreased their dropout rate by 3.5%
- 16.3% reduction chronic absenteeism - from 45.3% to 29%
- EL students progressing towards proficiency in English increased
- 5% increase for 11th and 12th grade students enrolled in advanced coursework (Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, Dual Enrollment, and several other high-level courses designated by DESE)

Middle Schools have made substantial progress toward meeting their targets.

- 66% of targets were met by Keith MS and Normandin MS compared to 7% in 2018
- 54% of targets were met by Roosevelt MS compared to 12% in 2018
- Normandin MS and Roosevelt MS met targets in ELA
- Normandin MS and Keith MS exceeded targets in Math
- Keith MS met targets in Science
- Roosevelt MS exceeded chronic absenteeism targets
- All three middles schools demonstrated improvement in ELA, Math and Science

Elementary Schools continue to make progress towards meeting their targets.

- 15 of the 19 elementary schools are making substantial progress towards their targets
- 6 schools reduced chronic absenteeism
- 72% of schools with an EL subgroup met or exceeded the EL target for attaining English language proficiency
- 11 out of 19 elementary schools exceeded their targets for the lowest performing subgroup

Deputy Superintendent Karen Treadup said “This year’s MCAS data indicates that the New Bedford Public Schools are headed in the right direction. Our schools continue to make progress towards achieving their targets. The middle schools have made some improvements over the past year and will continue to receive focused support to keep the momentum. I am proud of the work of our principals, teachers and support staff who are committed to providing high-quality instruction based upon student needs each and every day. This practice will lead to better outcomes for all of our students.”

This year’s work is critical in supporting sustained student improvement through quality redesign plans. The data clarifies that we must continue to support our middle schools and assist in the implementation of their plans. The New Bedford Public School system is proud of its students’ effort. NBPS recognizes the need for and is committed to continuous improvement in all areas at all levels.

NBPS will continue to enhance the capacity of all staff and remain focused on key objectives:

- Social Emotional Learning
- Equity and early literacy
- Benchmark Assessments
- Strategic Data Meetings
- District Instructional Walks

NBPS will continue to strategically move forward with a sense of urgency to better support the teaching and learning process and eliminate the opportunity and achievement gaps. Superintendent Anderson commented that, "Our continued progress reflects our staff being committed to the task at hand – eliminating what is not working and narrowing our focus to support our students. Our 5 goals, High Quality Instruction, Effective Student Support Systems, Strong Family/Community Engagement, Organizational Team Excellence, and Impactful Community Outreach are at the core of this work.

The increased strategic use of student data and being more reflective has created an environment of collaboration, openness and a willingness to take risks to benefit our students. Our team of support staff, teachers, administrators, and volunteers are working with our students in our pursuit of excellence."