

January/February, 2014

Dear Parent(s)

I am calling for all hands on deck. The John Glenn Middle School staff and I need your support to help address a misperception amongst some students regarding the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). Since my arrival at the middle school, I have heard a number of students echo the expression, “why should I try if the test doesn’t matter until high school?”

Contrary to what some students may believe, the MCAS, and the data it yields, does matter both for your child and for us as a school. For each individual child, the MCAS results may identify the need for support services, and an inaccurate score may lead to the misperception of a student’s ability. Teachers and students alike benefit from accurate data to differentiate instruction as we begin the following year. As a faculty and also in departments, we analyze MCAS data to find potential gaps in our curriculum and instruction. We also use the disaggregated data to identify groups of students whose needs we may not be meeting. In turn, we problem-solve solutions, create new programming, and use the data to reflect upon our instruction. The JGMS Skill Center evolved partly due to this type of work and we will continue to look for creative and necessary ways to support our struggling students. It is imperative that the MCAS data is valid and reliable for us to have confidence in our decisions on how best to efficiently and expeditiously meet student needs.

For me, there also is a real sense of pride that drives why I wish for our students to do well. We have an incredibly supportive community, excellent teachers, great students, are well resourced and yet, our scores do not often fully reflect our successes or are a true indicator of our many strengths. Our results are good, but they could be much better. I (we) recognize all of the variables inherent in the MCAS exam; however, I also strongly feel our students and staff deserve to be acknowledged publicly for the hard work and impressive talents they display on a daily basis.

Renowned Coach Vince Lombardi once remarked, “The price of success is hard work, dedication to the job at hand, and the determination that whether or not we win or lose, we have applied the best of our ourselves”. This level of focus, tenacity and stick-to-it-iveness in the face of a challenge reveals character and will ultimately build a positive habit of mind in our children as they develop into young adults. I ask that you please review the schedule below. Take note of the days your child will be taking an exam. On the night before, please stress the importance of a good night sleep. In the morning, please make sure your child has a good breakfast, give them a big hug, tell them you are proud of them, and then tell them to go knock it out of the park.

Many thanks,

Kevin

MCAS Schedule
March/ April 2014

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
17 Day 1 1 2 3 4 5 6	18 Day 2 Gr.7 ELA Long Comp Blocks 1,2,3,4 7th grade eats 3rd lunch 1 2 3 4 5 6	19 Day 3 Gr. 8 ELA Reading Comp Session 1 Blocks 1,2,3 2 1 3 6 4 5	20 Day 4 Gr. 8 ELA Reading Comp Session 2 Blocks 1& 2 6 5 3 4 1 2	21 Day 5 Gr. 8 Make-ups 1 2 3 4 5 6
24 Day 6 Gr. 6 ELA Reading Comp Session 1 Blocks 1& 2 6 3 5 4 1 2	25 Day 1 Gr. 6 ELA Reading Comp Session 2 Blocks 1 & 2 1 2 3 4 5 6	26 Day 2 Gr. 7 ELA Reading Comp Session 1 Blocks 1, 2, 3 5 6 1 3 4 2	27 Day 3 Gr. 7 ELA Long Comp Make-ups Gr. 6 make-ups 1 2 3 4 5 6	28 Day 4 Gr. 7 ELA Reading Comp Session 2 Blocks 1 & 2 1 2 3 4 5 6
31 Day 5 Grade 7 make-ups 1 2 3 4 5 6	1 Day 6 Pack MCAS Complete PCPA 4/1 UPS Pick Up 4/1	2 Day 1 UPS Pick Up 1 2 3 6 4 5	3 Day 2 1 2 3 4 5 6	4 Day 3

Important notes:

- Grade 6: 2 (60 min. sessions) ELA Reading Comprehension
- Grade 7: 2 (60 min. sessions) ELA Reading Comprehension
2 (45 min. sessions) Comp. (Mandated date: 3/18; Mandated Make-Up 3/27)
- Grade 8: 2 (60min. sessions) ELA Reading Composition
- April 3rd-5th – JGMS Musical
- April 15th – Passover
- April 18th – Good Friday

MCAS Schedule
May 2013

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
5 Day 1 Gr. 8 Math Session 1 Blocks 1 & 2 2 6 3 4 5 1	6 Day 2 Gr. 8 Math Session 2 Blocks 1 & 2 6 5 3 4 1 2	7 Day 3 Gr. 8 Make-ups 1 2 3 6 4 5	8 Day 4 Gr. 8 Sci/Tech Session 1 Blocks 1 & 2 3 5 6 4 1 2	9 Day 5 Gr. 8 Sci/Tech Session 2 Blocks 1 & 2 2 3 1 4 5 6
12 Day 6 Gr. 7 Math Session 1 Blocks 1 & 2 2 3 5 4 1 6	13 Day 1 Gr. 7 Math Session 2 Blocks 1 & 2 5 6 3 4 1 2	14 Day 2 Gr. 8 Science & Tech Make-ups Gr. 7 Make-ups 1 2 3 6 4 5	15 Day 3 Gr. 6 Math Session 1 Blocks 1 & 2 1 3 2 4 5 6	16 Day 4 Gr. 6 Math Session 2 Blocks 1 & 2 6 5 3 4 1 2
19 Day 5 Gr. 6 Make-Ups	20 Day 6 Pack MCAS/Ready to ship	21 Day 1 Complete PCPA	22 Day 2 UPS PICK UP!!!	23 Day 3

Important notes:

- Grade 6: Math 2 (45 minute sessions)
- Grade 7: Math 2 (50 minute sessions)
- Grade 8: Math 2 (50 minute sessions)
- Sci/Tech 2 (45 minute sessions)
- Memorial Day: May 26th
- Washington DC Trip: May 27th – May 30th