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***DOE REPORT INFLATES MCAS "PASS RATES" FOR CLASS OF 2003***

**DOE should restate results for the class of 2003 and revise reporting for subsequent classes to include all students enrolled with the original class in the count.**

On March 3, 2003, the Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE) announced that 90% of the class of 2003 had passed the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), the test required for high school graduation. (For a press release and link to the state report, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.asp?id=1427>.)

DOE's statewide pass rates are dramatically inflated. When all students who began 9th grade in the class of 2003 are included in the count, the MCAS pass rate for the class of 2003 is 70%.

**The problem: DOE's MCAS pass rates are calculated using 12th grade enrollment.**

Student enrollment in 9th grade defines membership in a high school class. Class membership includes students who proceed into 9th grade from 8th grade as well as students who are repeating the grade. Student enrollment in 9th grade in October 1999 establishes membership in the class of 2003.

The problem with the DOE report, in general, is that it gives only the proportion of *current* seniors who have passed. It does not account for attrition from the class of 2003 - that is, students who have dropped out, been retained in a grade, transferred out of state or into private school, or simply disappeared from the rolls. This method of calculating pass rates has inflated MCAS pass rates for the class of 2003, statewide, by race. It also inflates pass rates in many districts.

The MCAS pass rate report for the class of 2003 does not include students who were enrolled in the class of 2003 prior to 12th grade. This means that DOE has discounted 16,991 students - 22% of the original class - from its calculation of pass rates.

These students, original members of the class, are not acknowledged in DOE calculations and may never be accounted for. The increasing number of Massachusetts students dropping out of the 9th grade, along with the increasing numbers of dropouts who are not returning to school, are lost from the calculations forever. Some students who repeat grade nine may be included in pass rates reported for grades after 9th grade, but many

will not.

While DOE and the districts debate which members of the *senior* class should be counted in the calculation, or whether students who left school but are in GED programs should be included, the larger problem is that assessing pass rates based on 12th grade enrollments is misleading from the start.

MCAS pass rates, both for the class of 2003 and subsequent classes, should be restated based on 9th grade, or even 8th grade, but not 12th grade, enrollment. Regardless of the reasons for student attrition, all original members of the class of 2003 should be included in the count.

### **What difference does it make how MCAS pass rates are calculated?**

The failure to account for all students who were originally with the class of 2003 results in MCAS pass rates that are distorted statewide, by race, and for each district.

The analysis in this report illustrates differences between DOE pass rates and pass rates that more accurately account for all students in the class of 2003. We call the latter "full accounting pass rates" or "on time pass rates" because they are based on the entire number of students who were originally enrolled in the class and would be expected to be seniors in the school year 2002-03 if they had proceeded through the grades on time.

The findings of this analysis include the following:

- DOE's 90% pass rate overstates the statewide pass rate by 20 percentage points. ***The real "on time pass rate" is 70% when all members of the original class of 2003 are included.***
- MCAS pass rates, when restated as "on time pass rates," show that ***only 54% of African American, and 40% Latino students from the class of 2003 have passed MCAS.***
- ***Pass rates for most districts are also inflated.*** Although the wealthiest districts tend to maintain high pass rates when rates are restated, ***pass rates in high need districts decline dramatically.*** When all students from the original class of 2003 are included in the count, ***not one of 19 high need districts show real pass rates over 80%, and nine show real pass rates of 50% or less.***
- ***Pass rates for charter schools are also dramatically inflated.*** When the numbers of students passing MCAS are compared to the number enrolled in charter school 9th grades in October 1999, ***the "full accounting" charter school pass rate is 60%, compared to 86% using the DOE formula.***
- DOE pass rates mask wide variation in district pass rates. When rates are recalculated to account for all members of the class of 2003, results show the variability that exists,

even among districts with the same DOE rate. For example, *among 15 districts showing a DOE pass rate of 93%, pass rates that account for all students range from 88% to 55%.*

Basing MCAS pass rates on 12th grade enrollments fails to account for the status of students who were originally enrolled with the class but are no longer there.

**Recommendation: DOE should restate all MCAS pass rates as "on-time pass rates" to account for the status of all students from the class of 2003 and subsequent classes.**

The Massachusetts Department of Education should restate MCAS pass rates using 9th grade enrollments for both the class of 2003 and 2004. This would ensure that all students are included in the count and would underscore schools' responsibility to account for the outcome of all students, not simply those who arrive in 12th grade. The DOE should calculate the on-time pass rate, rather than a pass rate based on a denominator that changes with every new enrollment, for all subsequent classes.

Dividing the number of students passing MCAS by the number of students enrolled in the class in 9th grade will yield a more accurate pass rate -- what we call the "on-time pass rate" -- for each class. Specifically, the "on time pass rate" for the class of 2003 would be based on those students who were enrolled in grade 9 in October 1999 and who passed MCAS in time to graduate with their class in spring of 2003.

**What are the reasons for calculating MCAS pass rates in a more appropriate way?**

Calculating MCAS pass rates in a way that includes all students, rather than 12th graders only, would be more consistent with other indicators reported for each class, including the graduation rate required by federal No Child Left Behind legislation and reported for each class.

In addition, pass rates calculated to include all students would be more useful to policy-makers.

--- Statewide pass rates, by race, would more faithfully describe the status of the entire class of 2003, and more clearly highlight acute inequities experienced by different subgroups of students. More accurate pass rates would inform policy makers responsible for developing policies to address these inequities.

--- District pass rates would more precisely point to the opportunity gaps between high wealth and other districts. Policy makers would have better information necessary to identify districts with greater or less capacity to meet their dual responsibilities of ensuring that all students learn and supporting all students to persist in school.

--- Pass rates based on all members of high school classes point to schools that both teach

students and keep them in school, thus providing a better indication of the level of resources and capacity that all districts need in order to attain these dual goals of schooling.

**All students count: DOE reporting methods for MCAS pass scores should match the intent of education reform.**

Education reform was meant for all students. DOE reports on MCAS pass rates should reflect this intent.

DOE's reported pass rates for the class of 2003, based on 12th grade enrollment, (like pass rates for the class of 2004 that are based on 11th grade enrollment), fall short of the commitment to ensure that all students count.

Using on-time pass rates emphasizes that Massachusetts schools are responsible not just for helping the "easiest to work with students" pass MCAS, but also for holding on to all students so that they both learn and persist in school to 12th grade.

As currently calculated, DOE pass rates disregard the status of students who have been lost from the class. Students who do not proceed in school beyond 9th grade may never be accounted for.

**What happens to MCAS pass rates when all student are counted?**

To support our recommendation, we compare DOE pass rates with "full accounting pass rates" statewide, in high-need and high-wealth districts, in 13 charter schools that had 9th grade enrollments in 1999, and in districts for which DOE has reported a 93% pass rate.

**Massachusetts class of 2003 pass rates, by race**

MCAS on-time pass rates for the class of 2003 compared to rates reported by the Massachusetts Department of Education are as follows:

- **All students:** 70% of the original class of 2003 has passed MCAS, not 90%.
- **African American students:** 54% of the original class of 2003 has passed MCAS, not 75%.
- **Latino students:** 40% of the original class of 2003 has passed MCAS, not 70%.
- **Asian students:** 79% of the original class of 2003 has passed MCAS, not 91%.
- **White students:** 76% of the original class of 2003 has passed MCAS, not 94%.

These percentages are based on the following numbers:

DOE reports that 54,684 out of 60,742 **Massachusetts** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 90%. But 77,733 students were enrolled in Massachusetts' original class of 2003 in 1999.

***The pass rate based on grade 9 enrollment for all students for the Massachusetts class of 2003 is 70%.***

DOE reports that 3,748 out of 4,984 **African American** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 75%. But 7,003 African American students were enrolled in Massachusetts' original class of 2003 in 1999.

***The pass rate based on grade 9 enrollment for African American students originally enrolled in the class of 2003 is 54%.***

DOE reports that 3,362 out of 4,820 **Hispanic** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 70%. But 8,313 Hispanic students were enrolled in Massachusetts' original class of 2003 in 1999.

***The pass rate that fully accounts for all Latino students who were originally enrolled in the class of 2003 is 40%.***

DOE reports that 2,605 out of 2,888 **Asian** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 90%. But 3,301 Asian students were enrolled in Massachusetts' original class of 2003 in 1999.

***The pass rate based on the grade 9 enrollment for all Asian students who were originally enrolled in the class of 2003 is 79%.***

DOE reports that 44,812 out of 47,877 **white** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 94%. But 58,903 white students were enrolled in Massachusetts' original class of 2003 in 1999.

***The pass rate based on grade 9 enrollment for all white students enrolled in 9th grade in October 1999 is 76%.***

### **Class of 2003 MCAS pass rates, by district**

DOE's calculation of MCAS pass rates for individual districts based only on 12th grade enrollment also paints an overly glowing picture of the proportion of students who have passed MCAS.

At the district level, DOE pass rates mislead regarding districts' overall success in meeting their dual responsibilities of holding on to all students and ensuring that all students learn. A pass rate of 97% does not necessarily reflect district success in meeting this dual commitment.

On-time pass rates reveal greater, and more accurate, variation from one district to another.

The difference between DOE pass rate and the on-time pass rate reflects the attrition that occurs between grade 9 and 12. In districts where the DOE pass rate is close to the on-time pass rate, little attrition occurs. In districts where both rates are high, schools capacity for teaching all students is high.

The greater the difference between DOE pass rates and on-time pass rates, the greater the attrition. High rates of attrition indicate weak holding power and limited district capacity to help all students persist in school and learn.

### **On-time MCAS pass rates in high-need districts**

The Massachusetts Department of Education has identified 19 high-need districts from across the state based on overall numbers of students, percentage of students eligible for meal subsidies, and MCAS scores. (See "Revised Interim Report: The Massachusetts Institute for New Teachers and Master Teachers/NBPTS Programs," 2002, p. 26, available from the Center for Education Policy, University of Massachusetts.)

An analysis of data from high need districts dramatically shows the extent to which DOE pass rates misrepresent the status of the class of 2003.

DOE reports that 355 out of 469 **Cambridge** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 76%. But 484 students were enrolled in Cambridge's original class of 2003 in 1999.

***The pass rate that accounts for all of Cambridge's class of 2003 is 73%.***

DOE reports that 714 out of 848 **Brockton** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 84%. But 1,090 students were enrolled in Brockton's original class of 2003 in 1999.

***The pass rate that accounts for all of Brockton's class of 2003 is 66%.***

DOE reports that 379 out of 417 **Haverhill** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 91%. But 576 students were enrolled in Haverhill's original class of 2003 in 1999.

***The pass rate that accounts for all of Haverhill's class of 2003 is 66%.***

DOE reports that 358 out of 381 **Somerville** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 94%. But 560 students were enrolled in Somerville's original class of 2003 in 1999.

***The pass rate that accounts for all of Somerville's class of 2003 is 64%.***

DOE reports that 319 out of 362 **Taunton** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 88%. But 511 students were enrolled in Taunton's original class of 2003 in 1999.

***The pass rate that accounts for all of Taunton's class of 2003 is 62%.***

DOE reports that 673 out of 782 **Lynn** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass

rate of 86%. But 1,165 students were enrolled in Lynn's original class of 2003 in 1999.  
***The pass rate that accounts for all of Lynn's class of 2003 is 58%.***

DOE reports that 324 out of 358 **Pittsfield** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 91%. But 554 students were enrolled in Pittsfield's original class of 2003 in 1999.  
***The pass rate that accounts for all of Pittsfield's class of 2003 is 58%.***

DOE reports that 1,102 out of 1,346 **Worcester** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 82%. But 1,979 students were enrolled in Worcester's original class of 2003 in 1999.  
***The pass rate that accounts for all of Worcester's original class of 2003 is 56%.***

DOE reports that 615 out of 742 **Lowell** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 83%. But 1,228 students were enrolled in Lowell's original class of 2003 in 1999.  
***The pass rate that accounts for all of Lowell's original class of 2003 is 50%.***

DOE reports that 427 out of 472 **Chicopee** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 90%. But 856 students were enrolled in Chicopee's original class of 2003 in 1999.  
***The pass rate that accounts for all of Chicopee's class of 2003 is 50%.***

DOE reports that 225 out of 255 **Revere** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 88%. But 450 students were enrolled in Revere original class of 2003 in 1999.  
***The pass rate that accounts for all of Revere's class of 2003 is 50%.***

DOE reports that 208 out of 224 **Salem** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 93%. But 378 students were enrolled in Salem's original class of 2003 in 1999.  
***The pass rate that accounts for all of Salem's class of 2003 is 55%.***

DOE reports that 525 out of 641 **New Bedford** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 82%. But 994 students were enrolled in New Bedford's original class of 2003 in 1999.  
***The pass rate that accounts for all of New Bedford's class of 2003 is 53%.***

DOE reports that 2,681 out of 3,820 **Boston** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 70%. But 5,634 students were enrolled in Boston's original class of 2003 in 1999.  
***The pass rate that accounts for all of Boston's original class of 2003 is 48%.***

DOE reports that 460 out of 549 **Fall River** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 84%. But 1,105 students were enrolled in Fall River's original class of 2003 in 1999.  
***The pass rate that accounts for all of Fall River's class of 2003 is 42%.***

DOE reports that 290 out of 383 **Holyoke** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 76%. But 688 students were enrolled in Holyoke's original class of 2003 in 1999.  
***The pass rate that accounts for all of Holyoke's original class of 2003 is 42%.***

DOE reports that 161 out of 253 **Chelsea** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 64%. But 401 students were enrolled in Chelsea's original class of 2003 in 1999. ***The pass rate that accounts for all of Chelsea's original class of 2003 is 40%.***

DOE reports that 780 out of 1,135 **Springfield** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 82%. But 2,352 students were enrolled in Springfield's original class of 2003 in 1999.

***The pass rate that accounts for all of Springfield's original class of 2003 is 33%.***

DOE reports that 243 out of 437 **Lawrence** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 56%. But 917 students were enrolled in Lawrence's original class of 2003 in 1999.

***The pass rate that accounts for all of Lawrence's original class of 2003 is 26%.***

### **On-time MCAS pass rates in wealthy districts**

Although almost all districts show some difference between DOE pass rates and on-time pass rates, narrower differences exist between the two rates in the state's wealthiest communities. For example:

DOE reports that 243 out of 249 **Duxbury** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 98%. But 233 students were enrolled in Duxbury's original class of 2003 in 1999. ***The pass rate that accounts for all of Duxbury's class of 2003 is 100%.***

DOE reports that 282 out of 284 **Concord-Carlisle** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 99%. But 295 students were enrolled in Concord-Carlisle's original class of 2003 in 1999.

***The pass rate that accounts for all of Concord-Carlisle's class of 2003 is 96%.***

DOE reports that 135 out of 140 **Weston** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 96%. But 143 students were enrolled in Weston's original class of 2003 in 1999.

***The pass rate that accounts for all of Weston's class of 2003 is 96%.***

DOE reports that 151 out of 154 **Medfield** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 98%. But 157 students were enrolled in Medfield's original class of 2003 in 1999.

***The pass rate that accounts for all of Medfield's class of 2003 is 96%.***

DOE reports that 242 out of 247 **Wellesley** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 98%. But 256 students were enrolled in Wellesley's original class of 2003 in 1999.

***The pass rate that accounts for all of Wellesley's class of 2003 is 95%.***

DOE reports that 234 out of 238 **Hingham** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 98%. But 247 students were enrolled in Hingham's original class of 2003 in



1999.

***The pass rate that accounts for all of Hingham's class of 2003 is 95%.***

DOE reports that 344 out of 355 **Acton-Boxborough** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 97%. But 360 students were enrolled in Acton-Boxborough's original class of 2003 in 1999.

***The pass rate that accounts for all of Acton-Boxborough's class of 2003 is 95%.***

DOE reports that 191 out of 192 **Wayland** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 99%. But 204 students were enrolled in Wayland's original class of 2003 in 1999.

***The pass rate that accounts for all of Wayland's class of 2003 is 94%.***

DOE reports that 305 out of 312 **Westford** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 98%. But 325 students were enrolled in Westford's original class of 2003 in 1999.

***The pass rate that accounts for all of Westford's class of 2003 is 94%.***

DOE reports that 103 out of 104 **Dover-Sherborn** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 99%. But 109 students were enrolled in Dover-Sherborn's original class of 2003 in 1999.

***The pass rate that accounts for all of Dover-Sherborn's class of 2003 is 94%.***

DOE reports that 307 out of 314 **Lincoln-Sudbury** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 98%. But 320 students were enrolled in Lincoln-Sudbury's original class of 2003 in 1999.

***The pass rate that accounts for all of Lincoln-Sudbury's class of 2003 is 94%.***

DOE reports that 219 out of 220 **Winchester** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of virtually 100%. But 235 students were enrolled in Winchester's original class of 2003 in 1999.

***The pass rate that accounts for all of Winchester's class of 2003 is 93%.***

DOE reports that 250 out of 256 **Algonquin (Northborough-Southborough)** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 98%. But 272 students were enrolled in **Algonquin's** original class of 2003 in 1999.

***The pass rate that accounts for all of Algonquin's class of 2003 is 92%.***

DOE reports that 274 out of 276 **Masconomet** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 99%. But 300 students were enrolled in Masconomet's original class of 2003 in 1999.

***The pass rate that accounts for all of Masconomet's class of 2003 is 91%.***

DOE reports that 403 out of 413 **Lexington** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of virtually 98%. But 441 students were enrolled in Lexington's original class of 2003 in 1999.

***The pass rate that accounts for all of Lexington's class of 2003 is 91%.***

DOE reports that 161 out of 166 *Hamilton-Wenham* seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 97%. But 178 students were enrolled in Hamilton-Wenham's original class of 2003 in 1999.

***The rate that accounts for all of Hamilton-Wenham class of 2003 is 90%.***

DOE reports that 77 out of 78 *Harvard* seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 99%. But 91 students were enrolled in Harvard's original class of 2003 in 1999.

***The pass rate that accounts for all of Harvard's class of 2003 is 85%.***

### **On-time MCAS pass rates in charter schools**

The Massachusetts Department of Education reports MCAS pass rates for individual charter schools. MCAS pass rates for these schools derive from small numbers of students who were seniors in October 2002; even if school rates were based on 9th grade enrollments, they would have little meaning. When data from these schools are aggregated, however, they yield pass rates for these charter schools comparable to district rates.

Of the 18 charter schools listed in DOE's MCAS pass rate report, 13 reported student enrollments for both 9th grade in October 1999 and 12th grade in October 2002. The average number of students enrolled in these schools as seniors in October 2002 was 32. Grade 12 enrollments range from five (5) at South Shore Charter School to 79 at Pioneer Valley School for the Performing Arts.

Like district rates, differences in pass rates appear when the rate based on 12th grade enrollment is compared to the rate based on all students who were originally enrolled in the 9th grade in these schools.

According to the DOE report, 363 out of 421 seniors from *13 charter school* have passed MCAS, yielding an aggregate pass rate of 86%. But 606 students were enrolled in the ninth grade in these 13 charter schools.

***The pass rate that accounts for all all students originally enrolled in the class of 2003 in these 13 charter schools is 60%.***

### **When is a 93% pass rate not a 93% pass rate?**

The Massachusetts Department of Education report on MCAS pass rates reports that in 204 out of 270 school districts, between 90% and 100% of the class of 2003 had passed MCAS by March 2003.

But although a number of districts may show similar DOE pass rates, once these rates are recalculated to account for all members of the class of 2003, results show pass a wide range of on-time pass rates among districts with the same DOE rate.

For example, DOE reports MCAS pass rates of 93% for 15 districts. But a comparison with on-time pass rates shows that not all 93% pass rates are equal. (An analysis of data from schools with any similar pass rate yields similar variation. The example of 93% is chosen for illustration.)

DOE reports that 115 out of 124 **Ipswich** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 93%. But 130 students were enrolled in Ipswich's original class of 2003 in 1999. ***The pass rate that accounts for all of Ipswich's class of 2003 is 88%.***

DOE reports that 286 out of 309 **Amherst-Pelham** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 93%. But 342 students were enrolled in Amherst-Pelham's original class of 2003 in 1999. ***The pass rate that accounts for all of Amherst-Pelham's class of 2003 is 84%.***

DOE reports that 154 out of 165 **Minuteman Vocational Tech** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 93%. But 192 students were enrolled in Minuteman's original class of 2003 in 1999. ***The pass rate that accounts for all of Minuteman's class of 2003 is 80%.***

DOE reports that 156 out of 167 **Bellingham** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 93%. But 199 students were enrolled in Bellingham's original class of 2003 in 1999. ***The pass rate that accounts for all of Bellingham's class of 2003 is 78%.***

DOE reports that 86 out of 92 **Bristol County Agricultural** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 93%. But 113 students were enrolled in Bristol County's original class of 2003 in 1999. ***The pass rate that accounts for all of Bristol County's Class of 2003 is 76%.***

DOE reports that 231 out of 249 **Shawsheen Valley Vocational Tech** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 93%. But 307 students were enrolled in Shawsheen Valley's original class of 2003 in 1999. ***The pass rate that accounts for all of Shawsheen Valley's class of 2003 is 75%.***

DOE reports that 373 out of 402 **Methuen** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 93%. But 496 students were enrolled in Methuen's original class of 2003 in 1999. ***The pass rate that accounts for all of Methuen's class of 2003 is 75%.***

DOE reports that 307 out of 329 **Everett** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 93%. But 416 students were enrolled in Everett's original class of 2003 in 1999. ***The pass rate that accounts for all of Everett's Class of 2003 is 74%.***

DOE reports that 524 out of 562 **Plymouth** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 93%. But 718 students were enrolled in Plymouth's original class of 2003 in 1999. ***The pass rate that accounts for all of Plymouth's class of 2003 is 73%.***

DOE reports that 275 out of 296 **Beverly** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 93%. But 376 students were enrolled in Beverly's original class of 2003 in 1999. ***The pass rate that accounts for all of Beverly's class of 2003 is 73%.***

DOE reports that 347 out of 353 **Leominster** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 93%. But 483 students were enrolled in Leominster's original class of 2003 in 1999.

***The pass rate that accounts for all of Leominster's class of 2003 is 72%.***

DOE reports that 82 out of 88 **Northern Berkshire Vocational Tech** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 93%. But 116 students were enrolled in Northern Berkshire's original class of 2003 in 1999.

***The pass rate that accounts for all of Northern Berkshire's class of 2003 is 71%.***

DOE reports that 107 out of 115 **Palmer** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 93%. But 154 students were enrolled in Palmer's original class of 2003 in 1999.

***The pass rate that accounts for all of Palmer's Class of 2003 is 69%.***

DOE reports that 87 out of 94 **Winthrop** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 93%. But 126 students were enrolled in Winthrop's original class of 2003 in 1999.

***The pass rate that accounts for all of Winthrop's Class of 2003 is 69%.***

DOE reports that 208 out of 224 **Salem** seniors have passed MCAS, resulting in a pass rate of 93%. But 378 students were enrolled in Salem's original class of 2003 in 1999.

***The pass rate that accounts for all of Salem's class of 2003 is 55%.***

## **Conclusion**

The Massachusetts Department of Education's report on MCAS pass rates for the class of 2003 is misleading. MCAS pass rates reported for statewide results and results by race are dramatically inflated. They do not account for all students who enrolled in the original class of 2003 in October 1999. For the class of 2003, 16,991 students who have been lost from the class are not accounted for.

Results for many individual districts are also inflated. As a result, districts reporting similar schools according to DOE calculations, in fact, show dissimilar results when all students are included in the calculations. Misleadingly similar pass rates offer little useful information that decision makers can use in developing policies for school improvement.

The Massachusetts Department of Education should restate all MCAS pass rates to account for all students originally enrolled in the class of 2003. It should also report pass rates appropriately for all subsequent classes.