

Dear FRCS families,

Each fall, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) releases state standardized testing data from the previous spring. This letter serves to provide a brief summary of our students' progress – highlighting many of our strengths, areas of needed focus, and related actions steps leading into the new school year.

I am pleased to announce FRCS students outperformed the state in every single MCAS test. Some MCAS highlights include:

- 100% of FRCS high school students earned Advanced or Proficient on their English Language Arts assessment for the third year in a row.
- FRCS high school students outperformed the state by 8 percentage points in mathematics and have consistently outperformed the state average in Math MCAS for the past 8 years.
- FRCS 5<sup>th</sup> grade students outperformed the state by 27 percentage points in Science, Technology, and Engineering. FRCS has outperformed the state average by more than 20 percentage points for the past 5 years running.
- Overall, our students outperformed the state by over 10 percentage points in Science, Technology, and Engineering this year.

This year, the state of Massachusetts allowed all public elementary and middle schools to select which standardized test their students would take. Schools could take either PARCC on computer, PARCC as a paper and pencil test, or continue with MCAS (paper and pencil only). FRCS selected to take PARCC using computers as this was the direction in which state standardized testing was moving, and we want to prepare our students to use computer and online assessment platforms. However, because schools around the state selected different tests, the DESE did not release any statewide performance data.

While PARCC is relatively new in our state, FRCS students saw mixed results from last year to this year. FRCS students saw a big jump in PARCC Algebra scores this year but a decrease in some of our PARCC ELA scores. Despite limited data released and the fact that our state has now abandoned PARCC to develop “Next Generation MCAS”, we will continue to focus on strengthening our core curriculum in reading comprehension, writing, and mathematics.

#### *State Accountability and School Leveling*

As part of the federal laws: “No Child Left Behind” (NCLB) as well as the recently passed “Every Student Succeeds Act” (ESSA), the state uses standardized testing data to create accountability levels for all public schools. ESSA allows each state to identify how exactly they will hold schools accountable. MCAS, PARCC (and soon, Next Generation MCAS) scores drive the Massachusetts school accountability system. Massachusetts focuses statewide accountability on each school's success in closing the achievement gap for particular subgroups of students, including special education, English language learners, economically disadvantaged and

minority groups. Accordingly, each district and school is placed in a level, from 1-5 based on their performance closing this gap.

FRCS is currently designated level 2 along with approximately 70% of all schools and districts in Massachusetts. Level 2 indicates that our students are making strong academic gains in general, but we have not yet closed the achievement gap for some subgroups, coming up short to meet the state targets for our Progress and Performance Index (PPI). We are focused on two major subgroups in particular, disabled students (students who have an Individualized Education Plan or IEP) and English Language Learners (students who speak another language at home and are learning English at our school). The state sets a target of 75 PPI to close the achievement gap for a given subgroup. While we have not yet hit that target for these student groups, we have taken great strides to meet that goal and have plans in place to continue to support these students.

### *Special Education*

FRCS is committed to closing the achievement gap for disabled students and recognizes there is still significant work to be done to do so. In 2012, our Special Education subgroup PPI was 53. Four years later, this group of students improved to a PPI of 63. To continue supporting our disabled students, FRCS has passionate and dedicated special education liaisons at each grade level who differentiate instruction and accommodate students' learning needs within the inclusion setting. We also have paraprofessionals at each level (elementary, middle, and high school) who provide additional support to the inclusion classrooms. In addition, FRCS employs a Speech Language Pathologist, Psychologist, Occupational Therapist, Physical Therapist and Adjustment Counselors who provide services, support and intervention to our students throughout the campus.

To proactively provide intervention and services for our most significantly disabled students, FRCS recently developed a substantially-separate program for elementary school students whose academic, social/emotional, and/or behavioral needs prevent them from accessing the curriculum in a full inclusion setting. Through a partnership with teachers, service providers, families, and administration, The Learning Center provides a small group learning environment and intensive emotional/behavioral support for students. The TLC program affords FRCS students the opportunity to remain at FRCS instead of being placed out of district or returning to their home school district.

Our students made strong academic gains and the intensity and/or duration of their emotional difficulties decreased over the last year. The program is now in its second year, and we are looking to increase their inclusion opportunities in academic areas. Our ultimate goal is to help our students close learning gaps and regulate their emotions/behavior, so that they can return to the full inclusion classrooms at FRCS.

## *English Learners*

The number of English Learner (EL) students at FRCS has steadily climbed to over 130 students representing over a dozen primary languages from around the world. This creates an incredible atmosphere of diversity at FRCS but for our EL students, learning the English Language while still progressing in a rigorous curriculum is certainly a challenge. It is one that FRCS is committed to tackle!

While we have not yet hit our 75 PPI target, FRCS English Language Learners have been making great progress on their standardized assessment called ACCESS. This assessment tests students on the major components of mastering the English language including reading, writing, listening, and speaking. EL students have seen continued growth on their ACCESS tests. In 2014, our average ACCESS score was 4.15/6. 2015 saw a modest increase to 4.21/6 and this year's preliminary ACCESS data has seen our average climb to 4.45/6. While there is still much work to be done, we are committed to meeting the educational needs for each and every one of our EL students and closing this achievement gap.

To that end, FRCS has expanded our English Language Education ELE staffing each year; from one staff member in 2011 to five ELE staff this year. We are also in the process of hiring an additional ELE staff member which will be a dedicated ELE paraprofessional pending the approval of our Title III grant application. This is the first year that FRCS is eligible for Title III funds and all of these funds will be focused on expanding the number of staff to meet the needs of our growing population of EL students.

## *Advanced Placement*

In addition to MCAS, PARCC, and ACCESS, we want to also celebrate our students' performance on Advanced Placement. Advanced Placement (AP) courses, college-level study at the high school level, provide rigorous content, critical thinking skills, and higher education preparation. We offer a variety of AP options here at FRCS, throughout the English, mathematics, science, history, and foreign language disciplines. At the end of the coursework, students sit for their respective AP exams, which are scored out of a possible five points. Students, who score a three or above on a specific test, receive college credits for that course. In addition, students who perform well enough on the test are eligible for additional scholarships and grants. I am pleased to announce that our students again are participating and achieving at high levels. Some highlights for our school include:

- FRCS continues to be a state wide leader in providing access to highly rigorous academic programming with 62.5% of all FRCS graduates taking at least 1 AP course. Compared with the state average of only 39.7% of all students, FRCS continues to focus on expanding access to programming that prepares students for college and beyond.
- 53.9% of FRCS students score a 3 or higher on their AP exams, earning them free post-secondary credits at many colleges and universities around the world.

### *Other State Indicators*

Lastly, we'd like to celebrate some other key indicators recently released by the DESE this fall.

- As a regional school, getting to school can be a hurdle. Our staff, particularly our Department of Students and Families, works closely with families to ensure that all students are able to access our educational experiences. We are proud of having a 96% attendance rate. While the state continues to wrestle with a chronic absenteeism rate of nearly 16%, FRCS has less than 5% and we are continuing to work with individual students and their families to bring this to zero.
- 100% of our students completed Mass Core recommendations for high school curriculum. Mass Core is a recommended set of courses that high school students should take for college and career readiness. FRCS' standards exceed Mass Core and include 4 years of a foreign language as well as additional laboratory science and college advising graduation requirements. You can learn more about Mass Core [here](#).
- With school discipline at the forefront of the national education conversation, FRCS is proud to report only 2.3% of students required out of school suspension compared to the 5.5% state average. This year, FRCS is developing a restorative justice program and expanding opportunities to engage students in learning and service learning experiences. The FRCS Fabulous Falcon program recognizes students who show school pride, and our merits/demerits system in middle and high school reinforces acts of kindness and rewards students who contribute positively to our school community. These steps, along with our growing character education program, support our students in not only achieving academically but also guiding them in making positive choices.

### *Accountability Report Card and Individual Student Performance Reports*

You can find the complete Foxborough Regional Charter School Accountability Report Card [here](#). On Tuesday, October 11<sup>th</sup>, individual MCAS and/or PARCC student performance reports will be go home in backpacks for grades 4 and 5 students as part of their daily class folders and will be mailed home for all other students. Please look for additional information on these and other achievements and initiatives in the coming weeks and months.

If you have any questions about your child's progress in any aspect of their education, please contact Mr. Griffin at [rgriffin@foxboroughrcs.org](mailto:rgriffin@foxboroughrcs.org).

Sincerely,

*Dr. Mark F Logan*

Mark F. Logan, Ph.D.  
Executive Director