



LOWELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Henry J. Mroz Central Administration Offices
Edith Nourse Rogers School
43 Highland Street
Lowell, MA 01852

Chris A. Scott, Ph.D
Superintendent of Schools

Tel: 978-674-4324
Fax: 978-937-7609
email:cscott@lowell.k12.ma.us

SUPERINTENDENT'S CORNER

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Dear Staff, Families and Lowellians,

On October 27th, 2009 a Press Release was issued explaining the results of the new assessment test being used by the State to evaluate student achievement entitled the Growth Model. The median or “typical” student in Lowell grew at the **49th** percentile in English Language Arts and at the **55th** percentile in Mathematics, according to the State's new growth model that compares students with similar MCAS score histories. The district scores showed growth in English Language Arts consistent with statewide growth rates, and the district showed strong levels of growth in Mathematics, particularly in the middle schools.

Among the findings:

- Lowell's 55th percentile growth in Mathematics was at the top of the list of 27 urban districts.
- Only three Greater Lowell districts (Groton-Dunstable, Shawsheen, and North Middlesex) had a higher Mathematics growth score than Lowell.
- Lowell's 66th percentile growth in Grade 6 Mathematics topped the list of urban districts and Greater Lowell districts.
- The Moody Elementary School had among the highest growth scores in the state (81st percentile English Language Arts, 81st percentile Mathematics).

- Seven Lowell schools (Moody, Wang, Stoklosa, Morey, Lincoln, Pyne Arts, Daley) had median Student Growth Percentiles [SGPs] scores above the 60th percentile (high growth) in Mathematics, and the remaining schools had scores above the 40th percentile (moderate growth).
- Four Lowell schools (Moody, Daley, Lincoln, Wang) had median SGP scores above the 60th percentile (high growth) in English Language Arts. Of the remaining 18 schools, 11 had scores above the 40th percentile (moderate growth).
- The Moody, Morey, and Lincoln had the highest growth rates of the district's elementary schools.
- The Wang, Stoklosa, and Daley had the highest growth rates of the district's middle schools.

To celebrate and acknowledge the good work that is being done in our schools, Commissioner Mitchell Chester visited the Charles W. Morey Elementary School and Lowell High School on October 23rd. He heard from enthusiastic and committed staff about the success that we are experiencing. The Commissioner indicated that he was impressed with the work being done in our schools and the positive direction the District has taken. As such they would like to partner with Lowell Public Schools in an attempt to secure additional "Race to the Top" monies. The Commissioner stated that these grants are to encourage innovation and reform and he would like Lowell to build on the work that we are presently doing. The four core education reform areas of the Race to the Top grant are:

1. Standards and Assessments
2. Data Systems to Support Instruction
3. Great Teachers and Leaders
4. Turning Around Struggling Schools

For those districts that place an emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics [STEM], they will be given a competitive preference for the Race to the Top monies. Our STEM Pathway competitively positions us because it takes the Governor's and the Secretary of Education's position papers on Century 21 Skills and Readiness Schools and makes it operational. One of the competitive preference priorities of the Race to the Top money is for school districts to not only place an emphasis on STEM but also to:

...cooperate with industry experts, museums, universities, research centers, or other STEM capable community partners to prepare and assist teachers in integrating STEM content across grades and disciplines, in promoting effective and relative instruction, and in offering applied learning opportunities for students.

Since Lowell Public Schools has been successful in this cooperative effort, we are poised to take advantage of this potential opportunity.

The consultants who are writing this grant for the State were instructed by the Department to contact us to discuss the four core education reform areas as the State needs to partner with successful urban districts in order to win these competitive grants. Lowell Public Schools' emphasis on supporting professional learning communities in order to improve student achievement is viewed as a promising approach that targets all four of these areas.

In addition, we welcomed the Treasurer and Receiver General Timothy P. Cahill to the Morey School where he presented a check for the amount of \$19.7 million dollars from the Massachusetts School Building Authority symbolizing the Commonwealth's investment in the Charles W. Morey Elementary School. We thank the State, our local Delegation, and the City for this beautiful new school.

My best to you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Timothy P. Cahill". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font.