

**SCHOLARSHIP**

**CITIZENSHIP • COMMUNITY**

**PERSONAL GROWTH**



**NEEDHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**2015**

**Performance Report**



*Needham, Massachusetts*

A school and community partnership that creates excited learners, inspires excellence, and fosters integrity



SCHOLARSHIP | CITIZENSHIP | COMMUNITY | PERSONAL GROWTH

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Dear Neighbors, Friends, and Families,

We are pleased to send you the 2015 Performance Report of the Needham Public Schools. We are proud of our schools and the fine work of our students, staff, and leaders as they make progress toward the district goals, all anchored by our core values of Scholarship, Citizenship, Community, and Personal Growth. Thanks to the generous support of the Town of Needham and its residents, the schools benefitted from additional resources in the 2014-2015 school year, which increased student opportunities for learning and provided teachers with time to collaborate and problem solve, review data, and share best practices.

Along with the innovative and imaginative teaching practices and programs already in our classrooms, a number of key initiatives were implemented in the 2014-2015 school year, and are described in this report. These include the ongoing interdisciplinary learning experiences, such as the Greater Boston Project, African-American studies, environmental science at the high school, and engineering studies at the middle school. Strong service learning and performing arts programs complement these courses. The new Da Vinci Workshop at the high school and the new elementary STEAM programs enable students to explore science, technology, engineering, the arts, and math. New technology tools, such as laptops and iPads, allow students to personalize their learning and gain more autonomy and responsibility as they research, collaborate, create, and communicate in new ways.

Our accomplishments are many and varied, including: Level One Status achieved by four schools based on improving MCAS scores; the development of common assessments at every level from grades K to 12 to improve learning; and new elementary programs in Spanish, Wellness and Music. In addition, our Fine and Performing Arts students achieved success in competition and performance. Two of our high school athletic teams won Sportsmanship Awards from the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association and three teams won State Championships. The elementary STEAM Fair for families was incredibly well received by more than 800 participants. Our exchange program with Beijing's Daxing School District continued to grow. All in our schools know that these are just a few highlights among many!

Challenges and opportunities lie ahead: We will propose a plan for reconstruction of the Hillside School later in this year; we must address a space shortfall at the high school; and we are studying the path to Full-Day Kindergarten for our youngest students. The implementation of new state testing, developing strong special education programs, and ensuring our students and staff are culturally proficient as well as socially and emotionally aware will round out our agenda.

As we reflect and move forward, we are thankful for our dedicated staff and teachers and for the support of our families and community. Together, we are committed to our district's core values and what we want our children to become: Good and decent people who have acquired foundational knowledge and skills, curious minds, tolerant perspectives, and strong work ethics, who will contribute as caring human beings and engaged citizens in a world craving these qualities.

Sincerely,

Connie S. Barr  
School Committee Chair

Daniel E. Gutekanst  
Superintendent of Schools

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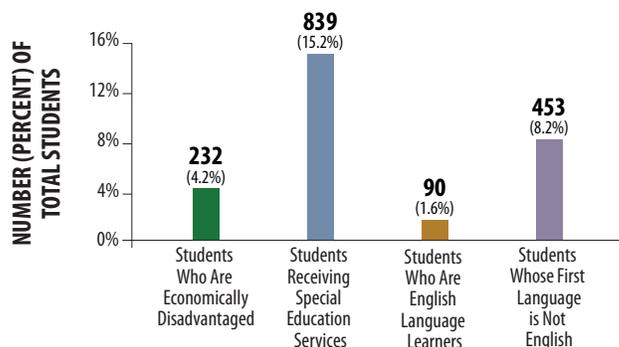
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## BY THE NUMBERS

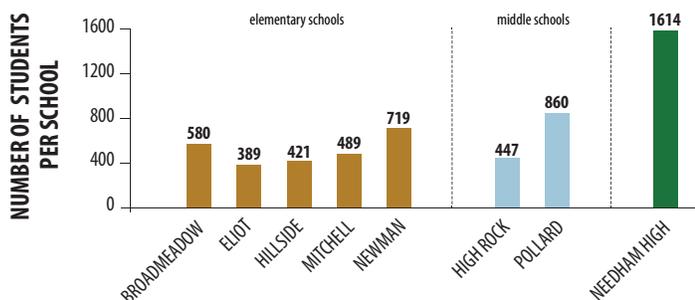
### Census Data on Our Schools and Other School Options

The Needham Public Schools ([www.needham.k12.ma.us](http://www.needham.k12.ma.us)) serve students in grades preschool through 12. During the 2014-2015 school year, the five elementary schools, the sixth grade High Rock School, the 7th-8th grade Pollard School, and the high school accommodated 5,519 students.

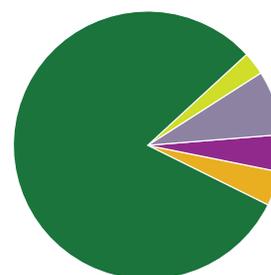
### STUDENT POPULATION RECEIVING SPECIAL SERVICES



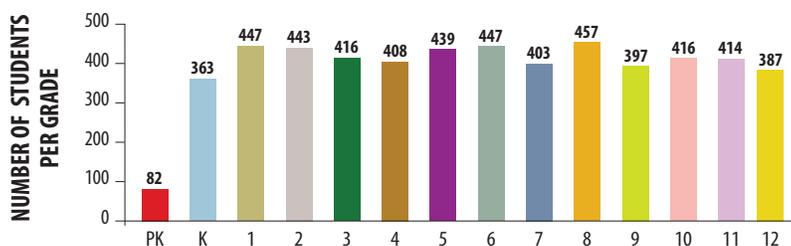
### STUDENT POPULATION BY SCHOOL



### STUDENT POPULATION BY RACE



### STUDENT POPULATION BY GRADE



Needham is a member of The Education Cooperative (TEC) and the ACCEPT Education Collaborative, consortiums of surrounding school districts. Our partnership with these collaboratives provides opportunities for high quality professional development, innovative programming for students with disabilities, joint purchasing of school supplies, and a TEC "Virtual Academy." [www.tec-coop.org](http://www.tec-coop.org) and [www.accept.org](http://www.accept.org)

Among the options for Needham residents are the opportunity to attend two vocational schools: Norfolk County Agricultural High School [www.norfolkaggie.org](http://www.norfolkaggie.org) and Minuteman Career and Technical High School [www.minuteman.org](http://www.minuteman.org)

OTHER SCHOOL OPTIONS	NUMBER OF STUDENTS
Out-of-District Public Schools	18
Home Schooled	8
Charter Schools	7
Vocational Technical	23
Collaboratives	15
Private Schools	1151

**Nondiscrimination Policy:** The Needham Public Schools do not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation or disability, and ensure that all students and employees have equal rights of access and equal enjoyment of the opportunities, advantages, privileges, and courses of study.



## PROGRESS TOWARD DISTRICT GOALS

Evidence of the district's progress is reflected in the accomplishments of our students as they progress through their education and emerge from Needham schools prepared to take their places as citizens in the community. In a letter sent to the Superintendent at the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year, 91 year old James Hugh Powers, a longtime Needham resident who served as a Town Meeting member for 60 years, provided this sound advice: "Motivate each student to his or her best effort, settle only for his or her best effort, and do not give up on a single one of them."

This sage advice represents our challenge and our commitment as we make progress by advancing standards based learning; by developing the social, emotional, wellness, and citizenship skills of all children; and by ensuring the infrastructure supports the district values and learning goals. This Performance Report highlights our accomplishments in the 2014-2015 school year for each of these three goal areas.

### GOAL 1 ADVANCE STANDARDS BASED LEARNING

We are continuing to put into practice a system of curriculum, instruction, and assessment that enables each student to be engaged in challenging academic experiences. This requires opportunities for students to have **differentiated instruction**. Our teachers and administrators moved forward on this objective in the 2014-2015 school year in a variety of ways, including:

- Collaborative planning time focused on specific strategies for differentiation;
- Professional development on differentiation rubrics;
- 1 to 1 personalized learning initiative with iPads where students learned at their own pace and teachers provided extended lessons for those interested in additional challenges;
- 18 interdisciplinary experiences at the high school including the Greater Boston Project which integrates English, Social Studies, and Math;
- Online courses for students who are unable to attend school regularly;
- Assistive technology to enhance instruction for students with special needs.



STEAM Night at  
Needham Science Center

To further advance standards based learning, we are developing our students' **foreign language, technological, scientific, and civic skills**. Every student has the opportunity to become proficient in a world language. We introduced the elementary Spanish program for grades 1 to 5 with a curriculum focusing on speaking, listening, reading and writing skills, supplemented by a Latin American music performance with lessons about the countries of origin and students singing in Spanish at the event. We continued the French and Spanish programs in the middle schools and introduced Chinese Culture and Mandarin. At the high school, we offered French, Spanish, Mandarin, and Latin.

In the 2014-2015 school year, we established a high school Computer Programming course sequence incorporating a nationally recognized college preparatory computer science program and opened the new Da Vinci Workshop. (See sidebar on page 4.) Students throughout the district participated in an *Hour of Code*, a global initiative in partnership with [code.org](http://code.org) designed to engage students in computer science, problem-solving skills, logic, and creativity. In fact, there were multiple entry points for students to learn problem solving and design with Makey Makey (invention design kits), the Engineering Challenge Program, and elementary STEAM programs (integrating knowledge of Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math). Our Science Center held STEAM Night 2015 with over 800 participants. To view a short video demonstrating this tremendous family event, go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hllxulcV1ME>

More students used technology to access course materials, record notes, join virtual discussions, and search online for information about topics they were studying. At the 6th grade



*Kinetic Sculpture Presentation*

## THE DA VINCI WORKSHOP

Thanks to a \$50,000 grant from the Needham Education Foundation and a \$30,000 commitment

from PTC Inc., the Da Vinci Workshop, a lab space for technological innovation and hands-on learning, opened at Needham High School. This workshop serves as a space for students and teachers to innovate, collaborate, create and problem-solve—all 21<sup>st</sup> century learning goals. To create the Da Vinci Workshop, existing space was outfitted with laptops for programming and computer aided design (CAD), a laser cutter and other modern fabrication tools and equipment, traditional hand and power tools, construction materials, and modular furniture for different room configurations. The lab accommodated projects in existing classes and clubs, independent study, and collaboration between a Robotics class and a Sculpture class to build kinetic sculptures. The Da Vinci Workshop will open new academic and career paths for a broad range of students.



*NHS Club Building a 3D Printer*

High Rock School, the integration of iPads into the daily learning experience was dynamic. Students turned to software applications such as *myHomework*, *Google Docs*, *Socrative* and *Notability* for their lessons and assessments.

To enhance civic skills, a Community Service Learning committee met throughout the year for the purpose of cross-pollinating ideas and posting programs online at [http://rwd1.needham.k12.ma.us/Community\\_service\\_learning/](http://rwd1.needham.k12.ma.us/Community_service_learning/). In addition, civics education was provided through the US History and AP US Government curriculum; a lesson on civic engagement was created for the *Be the Change* course; and civic skills were further developed through a voter registration drive in collaboration with the League of Women Voters.

Another objective is for teachers and administrators to identify and communicate **essential content and learning expectations by grade level and subject area that are aligned to state**

**standards.** Here are a few examples of the ways in which this objective was carried out in the 2014-2015 school year:

- Four reading units of study were implemented for grades 1 through 5 with an emphasis on non-fiction texts. Our youngest students were exposed to different types of informational texts; in grades 4 and 5, students were taught different strategies for navigating and comprehending complex non-fiction texts that intermingle stories with charts, diagrams, facts, and figures.
- The middle school Science department began to review new state standards and the impact on current programs.
- At the high school, teachers focused on identifying differences within courses by level so that there is a clear distinction in the expectations and curriculum for a given course at the standard, honors, and accelerated levels.
- Middle school and high school History teachers applied an approach from the Stanford History Education Group to determine common language and content-specific skills for students as they proceed through our history program in grades 6 through 12.



*Speed Reading at Pollard Library*

We also moved forward on establishing a cohesive and coherent structure for articulation of K to 12 math instruction. In summary, at the elementary math level, teachers help students gain a solid understanding of number concepts and number sense. In middle school, teachers build on the learning from elementary school and work with students on application, problem solving and discovery focused on pre-algebra. In high school, students continue with application and delve more deeply into math purpose and the use of technology tools to reach the next level in our rigorous math program. For more information, view the interview with curriculum leaders on Needham Superintendent Spotlight at <http://www2.needham.k12.ma.us/nhs/TV-nps/14-15/MathCurriculum.htm>



*Eliot Student Participating in Hour Of Code*

The next objective for advancing standards based learning deals with **assessments, data analysis, and student feedback incorporated into instructional practice**. In the 2014-2015 school year, two common assessments (or District Determined Measures) were developed and piloted in all academic and some special education program areas. In the classrooms, multiple data sources were used to assess student strengths and needs, develop instruction, and measure progress. Here are some examples:

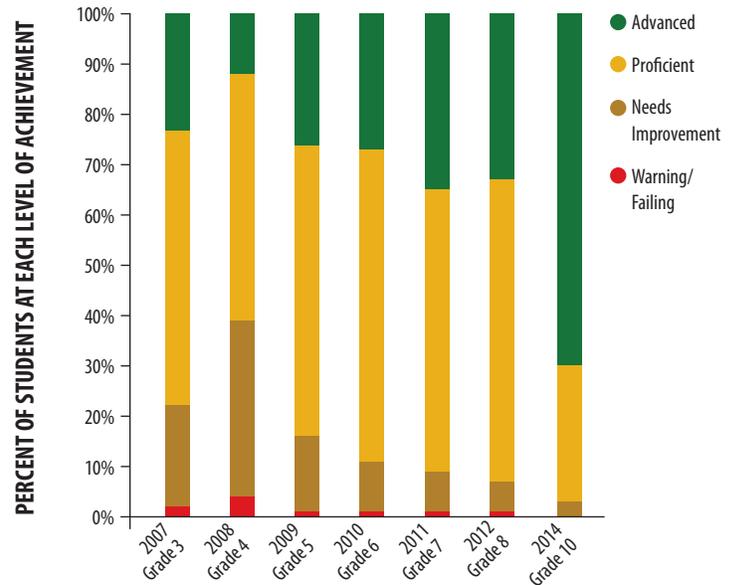
- A comprehensive, child-friendly Preschool assessment was introduced based on developmental expectations and standards.
- The aMath and Fountas & Pinnell benchmark assessments were used for monitoring elementary student outcomes in math and literacy. These same assessments were used to develop instructional groupings of elementary school students.
- In sixth grade, math educators developed a common midyear assessment and common protocol for administration. This assessment was used, in conjunction with three others, to help determine student placement for math in seventh grade.
- Across the district, students used computer-based assessments and instant results were analyzed with their teachers.

The Massachusetts School and District Accountability and Assistance System provided us with data for our district as compared to the state and other comparable communities locally. (See inside back cover for comparisons.) Needham continued to perform well on the **MCAS** exams.

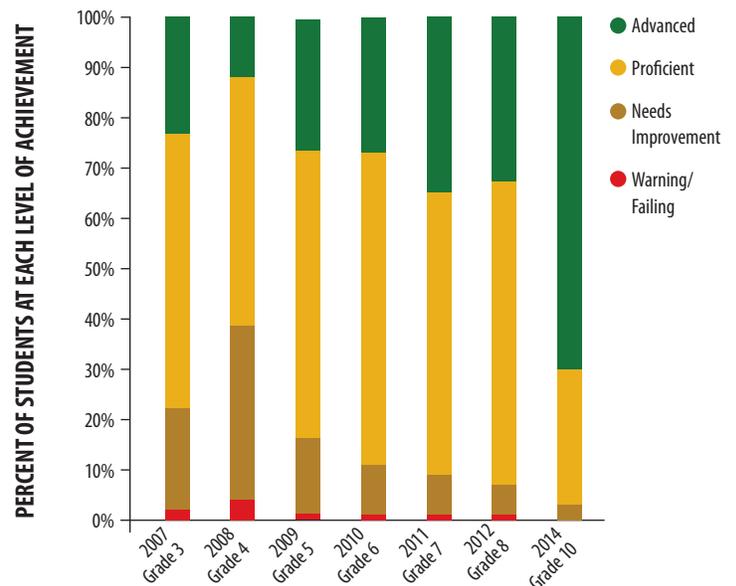
We know that our students learn and grow at different rates and times. The MCAS scores are a snapshot of that growth and do not capture the full picture of how our students progress. The charts on the right represent the class of 2016 students in grade 10 and their MCAS achievement since grade 3 in English Language Arts and Math. Over their time with Needham Public Schools, almost all these students were able to reach the intended proficiency targets.

Our district also analyzed the MCAS results by school, subgroup, and individual student, along with other available data sources to identify areas of need. Special and general education teachers teamed to use the data to determine solutions for particular students and particular groups. These teachers focused on instructional practices and experiences that have already improved student achievement, and adjusted the curriculum where necessary.

### CLASS OF 2016 ACHIEVEMENT IN MCAS—ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS



### CLASS OF 2016 ACHIEVEMENT IN MCAS—MATH



We began to show returns on investments in curriculum, instruction, programming, and staffing—particularly for subgroups. For students with disabilities, the trend was positive in the percent of those scoring advanced and proficient in English Language Arts and Math at most grade levels. Students with disabilities scoring advanced and proficient in Science at grade 5 also grew. The good news continued for African American/Black students with positive trends in the percent of students scoring advanced and proficient in English Language Arts and Math.

Although we made progress, our gains fell just short of intended targets for several subgroups, which resulted in a Level 2 for our district accountability status. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education uses this “DESE Level” rating ranging from 1 (meeting gap-closing goals) to 5 (chronically under-performing) based on effectiveness in closing the proficiency gap of struggling students while also continuing to raise proficiency of high-achieving students. Four of our eight schools achieved a Level 1 accountability rating (up from two schools in 2013).

SCHOOL	DESE ACCOUNTABILITY LEVEL
Broadmeadow	Level 1
Eliot	Level 2
Hillside	Level 2
Mitchell	Level 1
Newman	Level 2
High Rock	Level 1
Pollard	Level 2
Needham High	Level 1

4 schools achieved a Level 1 DESE accountability rating

The full MCAS district report can be found at [http://rwd1.needham.k12.ma.us/superintendent/school\\_report\\_cards](http://rwd1.needham.k12.ma.us/superintendent/school_report_cards)

The last objective in our plan to advance standards based learning is to provide **feedback for students and their parents** regarding each student’s progress. Overall, there was increased attention paid to this objective because the need for feedback was identified in the 2013 District Survey. Here are examples from the 2014-2015 school year:

- Teachers made learning goals explicit at the start of each curriculum unit; used performance standards and exemplars to help their students understand progress; posted learning goals and performance standards in their classrooms; and regularly provided specific feedback on individual student’s progress.
- Elementary teachers used standards based report cards; Middle School and High School students and parents received grade notifications through PowerSchool.
- Cluster teachers sent curriculum updates each trimester with information on core content and special projects.
- Progress was communicated to parents through Principal Coffee meetings, PTC meetings, Curriculum Nights, Parenting Conferences, list serve messages, letters home, newsletters, and website postings.

- Physical Education staff invited parents to observe gymnastic and dance classes in the elementary schools.
- More than 420 teachers updated their own teacher websites with information of interest to students and parents.

For families beginning their relationship with Needham Public Schools and/or navigating **Special Education** for the first time, staff worked closely with individual families and provided orientations. In Special Education Team Meetings with parents, conversations covered how students learn best, data collected during formal and informal classroom assessments, as well as strategies and accommodations to improve progress. Following Special Education Team Meetings, data was gathered to monitor effectiveness and, in addition to communicating all of this information to parents, feedback was shared with students. Reflecting back on school history, Special Education administrators presented a comprehensive report of trends in Special Education to the Needham SEPAC, which is a parents’ information and support organization for children with special needs.

In the 2014-2015 school year, we increased General Education and Special Education collaboration at all levels in order to make progress providing effective mainstream curriculum learning expectations and modifications. Individual Education Programs (IEPs) reflected the new Common Core Standards, and Board Certified Behavioral Analysts (BCBAs) met monthly to align and plan Special Education programs. The opening of a group home in Needham for children in state custody resulted in an increased enrollment of elementary and middle school students with emotional needs. District-wide, the average incidence of students with autism continued to be higher than the state average. We built stronger in-district programs for our students with autism spectrum disorders and those with learning and emotional needs in preschool through grade 12. At the secondary level, we focused on providing a challenging academic setting that provided both strong mental health supports and specific instruction related to learning and social skills. Additionally, we provided more support to families on how to deal with complex learning and emotional challenges.

Response to Intervention or RTI is a system for providing early assistance to children who are having difficulty learning. A district framework for RTI is being developed and plans are being put in place to roll out RTI at each school so that we prevent

academic failure through early intervention, frequent progress measurement, and increasingly intensive research-based instructional interventions.

Our **English Language Learner (ELL)** program grew in the 2014-2015 school year, both in the number of students and the intensity of students' needs. In compliance with a state mandate, Needham Public Schools' certified staff provided assessments, instruction and support services for 90 ELL students representing about 17 countries and 23 languages.

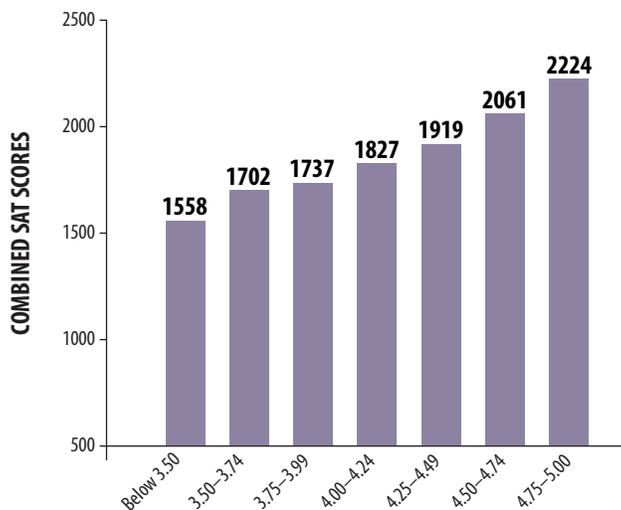


*Needham High School Graduate, Class of 2015*

This section of the Performance Report concludes with a **profile of the Needham High School Class of 2015** to provide further evidence of progress toward the district's academic goals. More than 85% of the graduates took the SAT exams with the majority taking the tests more

than once. The College Board's Educational Testing Service furnished the results using the average scores for the *last* SAT tests taken: 586 for Critical Reading, 605 for Math, and 590 for Writing. Colleges and universities take students' *best* scores into consideration during the admissions process. The following chart displays the SAT scores by grade point average (GPA), showing the best combined Critical Reading, Math, and Writing SAT average scores of our graduating Seniors.

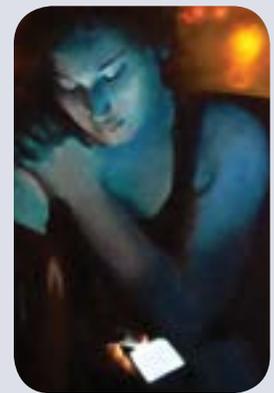
**SAT SCORES BY GRADE POINT AVERAGE**



In May 2014, three hundred and sixty-eight students took 667 Advanced Placement exams. Seventy-five percent achieved 4's or 5's defined as well qualified or extremely well qualified to achieve college credit. Details on SAT scores and Advanced Placement test results as well as a list of colleges or universities attended by our Needham High School graduates can be found at <http://www.needham.k12.ma.us/documents/NHSProfile15.pdf>

**FINE & PERFORMING ARTS**

The Fine and Performing Arts are considered to be a Core Academic by the United States Department of Education, as well as our state. Without an extensive education in the creative and expressive processes that are fundamental to the Arts, a student's education is incomplete. In the 2014-2015 school year, students in K through 12 were able to experiment, express themselves, explore and achieve personal goals through a variety of carefully designed curricular and co-curricular Fine and



*Ali Bartlett, NHS Junior Won Gold Award at the National Level in the Boston Globe Scholastic Art Awards Competition*

Performing Arts activities and lessons. Students received accolades and awards for musical and artistic accomplishments, among which were 54 Regional Awards and one National Award in the 2015 Boston Globe Scholastic Art Awards competition and a Gold Medal for the Needham High School Symphonic Band at the Massachusetts Instrumental and Choral Conductors Association Festival, with a follow-up performance at Symphony Hall.



*Needham High School Orchestra Performs at Symphony Hall*

## GOAL 2

### DEVELOP SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL, WELLNESS, AND CITIZENSHIP SKILLS

We are committed to helping all students develop the knowledge and skills that will empower them to become healthy, resilient, and culturally proficient global citizens who act with integrity, respect, and compassion. As a district, we made some good strides forward in the 2014-2015 school year toward this goal.



Newman May-rathon Students and Staff

Our first objective is to help students experience a sense of **wellness, participation, and safety** in response to meaningful adult and peer relationships within a caring school environment. Here are examples of outstanding programs that reinforced this objective:

- *Day of Silence* was held at the middle and high schools as part of the ongoing effort to create welcoming places for all students. By participating in *Day of Silence* our students not only defended those within the gay community who are denied the opportunity to express freely who they are, but students stood in partnership with victims of any kind of discrimination.
- The high school also held *Own Your Peace Week* with homeroom activities focused on community building and mental health awareness; whole school interactive exercises focused on exploring how each student owns their peace and piece; a speak-out assembly; and a parent evening.
- Former NBA basketball star Chris Herren spoke at a high school assembly about substance abuse, which provided motivation for students' self-care, outreach, and good decision-making.

In addition to targeted programs, certain departments are dedicated to this objective. At the high school, the Wellness staff continued a holistic approach to traditional physical education with six areas of wellness—physical, spiritual, emotional, social, intellectual and occupational. In the 2014-2015 school year, there were team games, discussions of sexuality and relationships, nutrition planning, ropes courses, and yoga. The six-week yoga class was required for

seniors and, in addition to the physical benefits of yoga, also taught them strategies to combat stress and promote relaxation, with the hope that our students will use the information and relaxation practices as they go off to college and the work world.

Guidance Counselors saw students in thousands of individual and group counseling sessions, fielded questions and concerns from parents, and connected on numerous occasions with outside agencies also serving the students. Guidance ran student lunch groups for social skills support, advised clubs, and continued with the Therapeutic Program.

Aiming to increase capacity and expertise in mental health services, the district received a \$35,500 grant from the MetroWest Health Foundation to construct a model for *Tiers of Intervention*. This grant made possible three significant initiatives:

- 1) Training modules for all staff to become knowledgeable of mental health programs in our schools and in our community that help students at varying levels of need;
- 2) Mindfulness training to enable counselors, nurses and select faculty members to use this approach with students in complex clinical situations and in the Wellness curriculum;
- 3) Training for counselors in Dialectic Behavior Therapy for application in skills groups and for working one-on-one with high-risk adolescents.

With the completion of the *Tiers of Intervention* informational brochure and the staff training, we improved our ability to intervene appropriately to support students with mental health issues. And to maintain the momentum, we established a Mental Health Task Force.

In terms of safety, we formed a **School Safety** Committee tasked to update our crisis response plans with a shift toward the ALICE protocol (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate) which we piloted. In addition, we held lockdown drill practice with the Needham police and fire departments, fine tuned our fire drill procedures, and enforced visitor sign-in. Recognizing a potential issue in our Science labs, we revised laboratory safety procedures and improved the way we store equipment and chemicals. We continued with the requisite fingerprinting of staff and began to implement *Safety Care Training*, a de-escalation and response procedure for unsafe student behavior.

A complementary objective is to provide all students with consistent, layered and effective instruction in social and emotional skills. We conducted a needs assessment and witnessed the **Social and Emotional Learning (SEL)** that is at the foundation of each school's ability to provide support. As a district, we began to develop a more integrated approach between academics and SEL. Responsive Classroom was reinforced at the elementary level with the daily Morning Meetings. Elementary instructional frameworks built a community of readers and writers with methodologies like "turn and talk" and "reading partners." Teachers became more cognizant of their Responsive Classroom practices and furthered their students' development of social and emotional skills.

Advisory continued to be a time for middle school students to practice specific SEL skills, and Advisory Buddies aided in the transition from 7th to 8th grade. During the *Make Your Move* anti-bullying day, middle school students participated in workshops on ways to be kind, inclusive, and listen to other perspectives. In fact, anti-bullying lessons were conducted at each grade level from elementary through high school. Extended Homeroom at the high school continued to serve as an opportunity for students to develop skills that helped build their resiliency, and the high school faculty renewed their commitment to SEL by establishing the Culture and Climate Committee.

A further objective is to support our students with **Community Service Learning (CSL)**, which is a teaching strategy that integrates meaningful community service with instruction and reflection to enrich the learning experience, teach civic responsibility, and strengthen communities. In the elementary schools, community service learning included the *Buddy Water Project* where students learned about dirty water around the world and how to remedy this problem; *Sandwich Tuesdays* for providing food and clothing to families in need; *Loose Change* for collecting money to provide supplies to a remote village in Peru; *Giving Project Read-a-thon* to raise money for charities researched by students; *Book Pals* to collect donated books for our sister school in Dorchester. Some elementary students visited local senior centers.

In the middle schools, students engaged in such projects as *Hoops for Heart* where they learned about heart health and helped organize a food drive that benefitted the community. Other middle school students worked toward cluster-based CSL projects that set the stage for individual CSL projects in

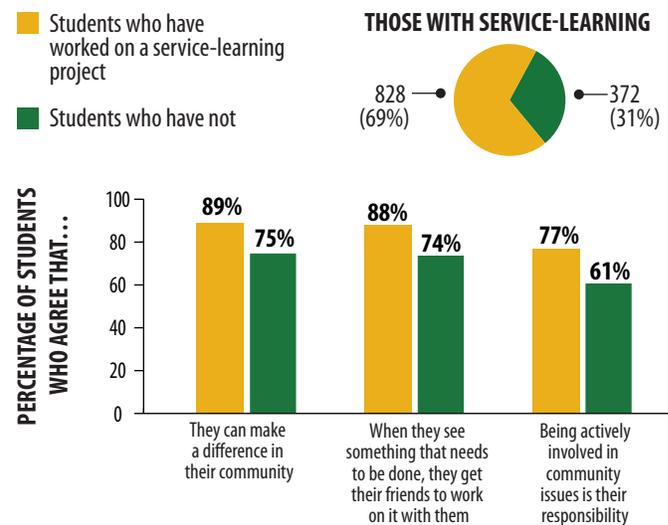
8th grade. These included *Students Take Action Day*, *Make a Move Day*, *Day of Silence*, and opportunities through the Social Justice League, with culminating assemblies to share these experiences. At the high school, students were involved in peer leadership, ran workshops through SALSA (Students Advocating Life without Substance Abuse), promoted healthy nutrition and visited senior centers. High School students continued the *Be the Change* and *Greater Boston Project* Community Action Projects. The *Red Cross Club* interviewed veterans sheltered at the New England Center for Homeless Veterans in Boston, then transformed their stories into an art exhibit called *If You Could Walk A Mile In My Shoes*.



Hillside Students at Avery Crossings with Senior Citizens

We assessed Community Service Learning using an online survey developed by the CSL Team of teachers representing each school. Throughout the year, these teachers showcased projects and provided CSL resources district-wide. Over 1,200 students in grades 3 to 8 completed the survey by the end of the 2014-2015 school year, with 69% having worked on a service-learning project. In comparing those who worked on a project with those who did not, there were some notable differences demonstrating the impact of CSL, as shown in the graphic below.

**DIFFERENCES AMONG STUDENTS WHO HAVE/HAVE NOT WORKED ON A SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECT**



An objective for both students and staff is to develop **Cultural Proficiency** in order to understand and address matters of diversity, racism, ethnocentrism, and bias. From our hiring practices to our teaching and our policies and procedures, we reflected on what it means to be “culturally proficient” and made changes where needed in an effort to improve. Here are some of the important initiatives:

- More culturally diverse resources were added to our school libraries.
- Parents joined our students and staff in Diversity Book Groups reading such works as those written by Sherman Alexie on Native Americans.
- The Needham Education Foundation brought *Luca Lazy Legz* to each of the elementary schools for this year’s program on “Understanding Our Different Abilities.”
- With advocacy from our nursing staff, we implemented a scholarship program in support of students’ food needs and placed culturally diverse materials in our Health Offices.
- With greater sensitivity, we factored affinity groups into our placement processes and ensured that students in traditionally marginalized groups were placed in challenging classes.
- The nonprofit organization Needham Steps Up helped us bridge the opportunity gap for income-eligible students through mentoring and educational support.
- Consultants from *IDEAS (Initiatives for Developing Equity and Access for Students)* delivered staff workshops.
- Students from the club called *SEAL (Social Empowerment, Active Listeners)* made a presentation to the School Committee about the need for social change and their efforts to work toward a more culturally proficient district.
- We participated in community-wide events like the *MLK Day Celebration* and the *Diversity Summit*.

An extension of our work on cultural proficiency is developing **Global Competency**. Exchange programs and international travel made that possible in the 2014-2015 school year. Teachers and principals from our sister school in Beijing’s Daxing School District visited Needham in February 2015 and Needham administrators visited and lectured in Daxing in April 2015.

We welcomed Daxing students to our schools and to Needham host families’ homes during their visit last spring. Opportunities for our own students’ global travel expanded to Shanghai, as well as European and Central American programs. The high school’s often-



*Chinese Exchange Students from Our Sister School in Daxing District, Beijing*

emulated Global Competency Program helped students stretch outside their comfort zones, use their foreign language skills, and learn how to adapt and function in new cultural situations. For details, go to <http://nhs.needham.k12.ma.us/core/Travel/GCP>

The Needham **METCO** program brought 79 Boston students into our elementary schools, 39 into our middle schools and 44 into our high school during the 2014-2015 school year. METCO continues to be more than a desegregation program. It is an opportunity to advance the dialogue and educate all of our students in an environment that embraces different perspectives and produces students who will effect positive change in a global society. The spirit of the program is reflected in this quote from a METCO student, Class of 2017, in a high school assembly:

*“ Let’s have a talk. I want everyone to enter this conversation with an open mind and, when it’s over, it is not my goal for you to think the way that I do or feel the way that I feel. But instead, I hope that at the very least, you can begin to understand why I think the way that I do and feel the way that I feel. ”*

That spirit continued to be both the foundation of our METCO programming as well as our inspiration for seeking to maintain the METCO experience despite state budget cuts. We provided academic support services for METCO students beginning in elementary school and prepared students for advanced level course selection in high school.

We also developed transportation options allowing METCO students to fully participate in extra-curricular activities. To enhance METCO parent involvement, the Needham School Committee's April meeting was held in Boston.

To watch a WGBH Greater Boston program featuring Needham High METCO students, click on this link: <http://wgbhnews.org/post/metco-program-should-funding-be-priority>

## HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS

Athletics at the high school consists of 34 varsity interscholastic programs and 10 club sports programs. In the 2014-2015 school year, 1650 student athletes participated. Clearly, their actions and the awards they received say a lot about the social and emotional growth of our students!



New Balance National Championship

The high school Ski Team and the Boys Volleyball Team both received the prestigious Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association's (MIAA) Sportsmanship Award. The athletes and coaches were honored for their teamwork, sense of fair play, good spirit, and genuine commitment to sportsmanship and mature, intelligent behavior. To help a competitor in need, the Volleyball Team raised money to cover some medical expenses for a Westfield student who was diagnosed with leukemia. The Boys Volleyball Team went on to become State Champions, joining the Needham High School Girls Cross Country Team and Boys Soccer Team who were also State Champions in the 2014-2015 school year. Girls Distance Medley Relay Team won first place in the New Balance National Championship. Needham Boys Athletic Teams won the Bay State Conference, Carey Division "All Sport Award" for the 2014-2015 school year. This was awarded to the school with the best overall win percentage. The Girls finished a close 2nd.



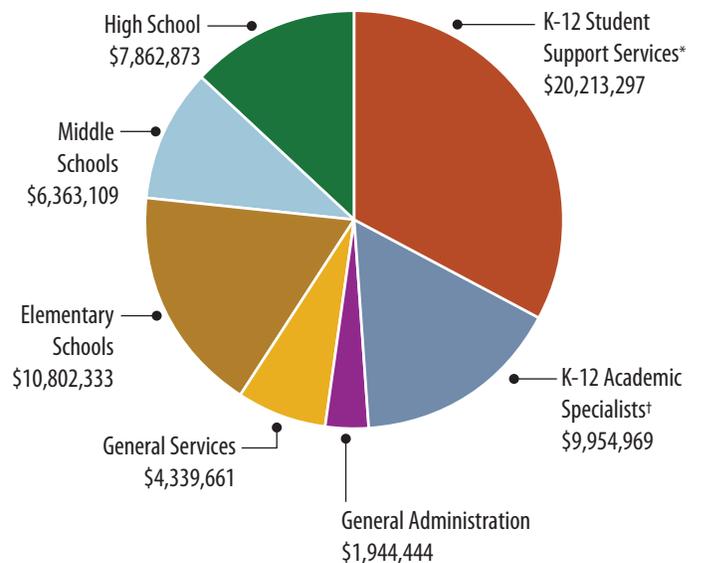
Ski Team Receiving the MIAA Sportsmanship Awards

## GOAL 3

### ENSURE INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORTS DISTRICT VALUES AND LEARNING GOALS

We work continuously on implementing plans for **financial, building, technological, and human resources** that enable us to be responsive to student and school needs. Needham's 2015 Annual May Town Meeting supported school projects and initiatives through the passage of a \$61,480,687 **Operating Budget** for FY16. The approved budget represented a \$3,519,399 or 6.07% increase over the FY15 operational budget and included \$250,500 to implement a 1 to 1 technology program for grade 6 students, which changed the funding model from parent-provided to school-provided equipment. Special Education and Student Support Services accounted for another \$1.48 million of the overall increase due to the number of students moving into Needham who require Special Education tuition and transportation, the addition of a new group home in the town, and the expansion of the Preschool program. Modest additional funding of \$198,538 was provided for the continued development of the middle school curriculum leadership, math programming, technology management, software and website upgrades and licenses. Operating Budget details can be found at <http://rwd1.needham.k12.ma.us/finance/Budget>

### FY2015/2016 APPROVED OPERATING BUDGET INCREASE OF 6.07% TO \$61,480,687



Total Budget = \$61,480,687

\* Includes all Special Education (in district and out-of-district), Guidance, Nursing, ELL, Reading and Math Special Instruction

† Includes specialists in Science, Computer/Media, Physical Education/Health, Fine & Performing Arts, World Languages

The administration reallocated existing funds as much as possible and practical to support this budget. For example, elementary staffing was reduced and funds reallocated to support secondary classroom needs. According to the Massachusetts Department of Education per pupil expenditure data, we know that per pupil expenditures in Needham have remained comparable to the state-wide average over time and have been consistently less than the average per pupil expenditure of twenty communities with whom we compare ourselves. (See inside back cover for *At A Glance* comparison.)

Approximately 13.2% or \$8,121,321 of the \$61,480,687 school operating budget is funded by state revenue. Property taxes and other local receipts make up the difference or \$53,359,366.

Whenever possible, the district seeks to enhance its programs and services through outside grants and fee-based programs. Grant funds for FY15 totalled \$2,886,569 up 10.6% from the previous year. A little more than half of this increase reflected new federal entitlement aid for Special Education and Title I programs. This increase was encouraging given concerns of the past two years about the potential impact of Federal Sequestration on local budgets. Fees from extracurricular and non-mandated programs and services were collected by the district for Transportation, Food Services, Athletics, Fee-Based Arts Instruction, Preschool, Kindergarten After School Enrichment (KASE), among 48 different fee-based programs.

The approved **Capital Improvement Plan** included \$511,145 allocated to purchase technology, furniture, and copiers. These funds will be used to keep school technology and infrastructure current and replace desktops, some more than seven years old. Town meeting also voted to support over \$3 million on these school projects and capital needs:

- High school maintenance projects including interior classroom work;
- Asbestos abatement, HVAC upgrades, duct cleaning, and locker replacement at Pollard;
- New freezers, lighting, and flooring, as needed, at other schools;
- Repairs to play equipment, fencing, resurfacing, and general upkeep of outdoor playgrounds at all schools;
- Major reconstruction and refurbishing of fields and conservation area on the Newman campus, with new drainage, fields, walkway, landscaping, learning areas, and handicapped accessibility.



*Newman Field Reconstruction*

The Town is clearly committed to maintaining and improving the schools in order to provide an excellent learning environment for each child.

**Building construction projects** are in the queue. Hillside and Mitchell, Needham's oldest and most crowded elementary schools, are being reviewed for renovation or replacement. The district is collaborating with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) on a Hillside School feasibility study for the design and construction of an educationally appropriate, flexible, sustainable and cost-effective public school facility. In February 2015, the MSBA voted to appoint architectural firm Dore and Whittier to work on the Preliminary Design Program Report for Hillside. The report included an educational program and space summary, site assessment, and preliminary evaluation of alternatives. The work to identify a preferred option will continue into 2015-2016 with the School Committee, Selectmen, and Permanent Public Building Committee charged with reviewing and voting on options. A ballot question to fund construction is tentatively scheduled for November 2016.

To accommodate the immediate space needs of the Mitchell School, four new modulares opened in September 2014. These single-story detached buildings, designed as 4 classroom spaces, were located on the existing basketball court and a new court was installed at the back of the site. Updates on these two school building construction projects can be found at [http://rwd1.needham.k12.ma.us/Hillside\\_and\\_Mitchell\\_Planning/](http://rwd1.needham.k12.ma.us/Hillside_and_Mitchell_Planning/)

**Technology resources** also require funding as we develop a sustainable technology plan that addresses 21st century skills, assistive technology requirements, and modern administrative systems. We made progress on a technology needs assessment with input from staff and administrators as well as parent representatives from each school. We also established a strategic planning process, slated for the 2015-2016 school year. Rapid technological change and increased user demand require that we continually attend to our technology infrastructure.

We have invested in network resources, electronic communications, database systems, computers and other information technology resources. We implemented a new Google mail system and introduced Google Drive. We also invested in our human capital by providing faculty with new technology tools and professional development to further their instructional capacity.

In the 2014-2015 school year, we launched the **1 to 1 Personalized Learning Initiative** with iPads for all 6th grade students at High Rock. Our goals were to assist students with organizational and study strategies, empower them to take ownership of their learning, and educate them to use the iPad with an understanding of good digital citizenship practices. Our experience by year end was positive and students benefitted in significant ways. They had greater access to learning materials, they were driving their own learning, and their assessments were authentic and timely. These 6th grade students became fluent technology users who collaborated and learned with peers. Yet, there were challenges to address with the iPad rollout. The positive aspects of the apps for learning also generated opportunities for distraction; procedures needed to be streamlined; and students needed to be taught how to properly care for their devices. We increased Instructional Technology specialist time for support and troubleshooting, and we established online High Rock Family Tech Resources to help parents navigate the digital world and maximize students' learning experiences. <https://sites.google.com/a/needham.k12.ma.us/hrtechresources/home>

Expansion of 1 to 1 personalized learning to the entire secondary level is rolling out as planned and the associated technology challenges are being addressed. In the coming school year, the program will include Pollard's entire 7th grade. At the high school, we researched various models for technology tools that best suit students in grades 9 through 12.



*High Rock Students Working with iPads*

To ensure the appropriate use of technology district wide, the School Committee approved a policy for Student Responsible Use of Digital Resources that teachers shared with students in age-appropriate ways and parents signed to acknowledge their understanding. <http://rwd1.needham.k12.ma.us/news/documents/StudentResponsibleUseofDigitalResourcesPolicy.pdf>

**Faculty and staff** are a critical component of the district's infrastructure. The Office of Human Resources supervises the hiring and evaluation of approximately 1,200 people. Salaries account for 86.7% of the approved FY16 Operating Budget, increasing \$2.1 million from FY15 as a result of 10.77 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) new positions required for Special Education and high school enrollment growth, as well as contractual salary adjustments. As we reflect back on the 2014-2015 school year, we note the myriad ways in which the faculty and staff tackled challenges and managed to keep the focus on the most important work: providing an excellent education to Needham Public Schools' children.

Beyond our faculty and staff, we rely on **community support** and the spirit of volunteerism. For 25 years, the innovative Needham Education Foundation (NEF) has funded over 500 grants totaling \$2.2 million. Over the years, thousands of students have enjoyed and benefitted from imaginative and dynamic learning experiences and programs that would not have been possible without the NEF. Spurred on by generous donors, the NEF's work goes well beyond funding. The NEF, in close collaboration with teachers, administrators, parents and students, has provided expertise, perspective, and deep experience to assist the schools to envision, shape, and develop educational programs. The dollars certainly make things possible, but it is also the collective energy, wisdom, and inspiration of NEF members that encourage us to go further than we thought possible.

Other compassionate and talented individuals with good heads and eager hearts volunteer for the Needham Public Schools every day. They are parents, grandparents, civic officials, and community leaders who deeply believe in young people and are committed to their success. We are humbled by the generosity of each school's Parent Teacher Council (PTC) and all those in our community who volunteer to augment the work of the Needham Public Schools through a network and web of caring, learning, and support.

## CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

We are proud of our accomplishments in the 2014-2015 school year and look forward to the many opportunities and challenges that lie ahead—including shifts in **student enrollment**, the need for **high school expansion**, a pathway to implementing **full-day kindergarten**, and implementation of **new state testing**.

Over the next fifteen years, Needham’s **student enrollment** is projected to slowly decrease. The analysis, completed in March 2015 by McKibben Demographic Research, reflects smaller cohorts of students entering and moving through the school system in conjunction with larger cohorts of students leaving the system. These assumptions are dependent on the rate, magnitude and price of existing home sales and the ability of families to continue to afford to purchase these homes. The composition of enrollment also is expected to change over the next fifteen years. Declining enrollment at the elementary level will be balanced by an increasing middle school population for much of the forecast period, and by high and steady enrollment at the high school:

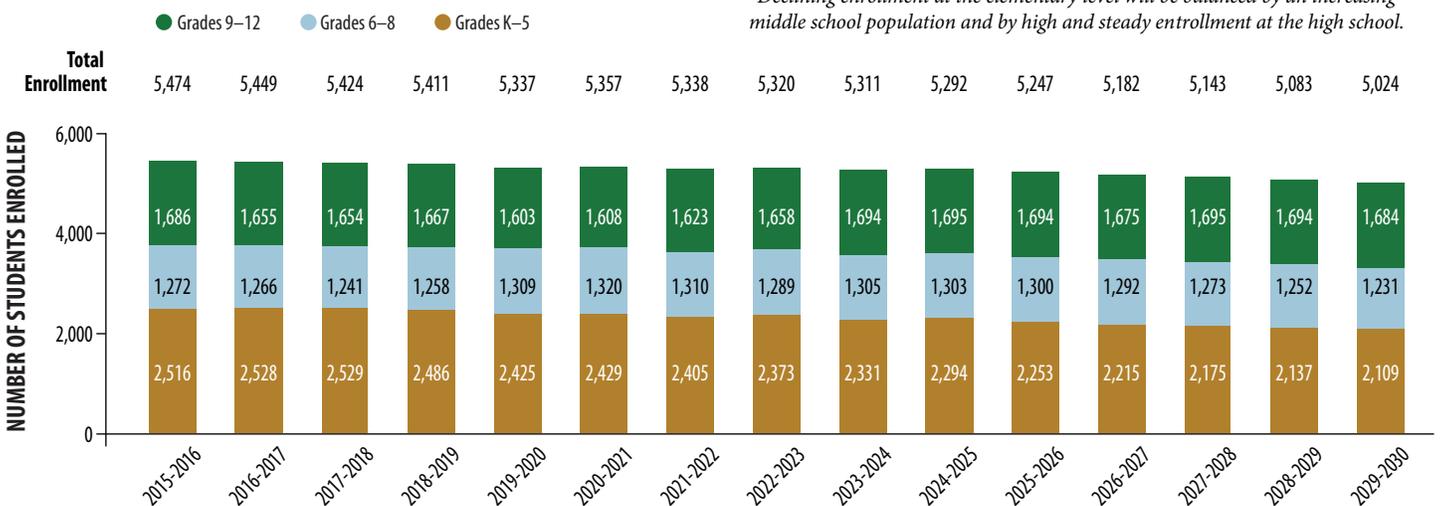
- Between FY16 and FY30, enrollment in grades K to 5 is expected to decline significantly from 2,516 in FY16 to 2,109 in FY30.
- By contrast, middle school enrollment is projected to increase through FY22, as the larger elementary cohorts reach middle school, then decline slightly to 1,231 by FY30.
- High school enrollment, however, is projected to remain at its currently high levels for the entire fifteen year projection period, as the existing cohorts move through the system.

Needham High School was designed to accommodate 1,450 students and is projected to have 1,686 students in FY16. Therefore, **high school expansion** is necessary for additional classrooms and cafeteria space. Since the fall of 2011, the high school administration has addressed the increases in student enrollment by re-purposing non-classroom spaces to classroom and student service-related use. Continuing to squeeze in seats is only a short-term solution if we are to provide excellent curriculum, programming, and innovation. The space issue has strained the school’s ability to serve our students and resulted in a number of challenges, including:

- Historic number of general education classes with 25 or more students enrolled (25% in the 2014-2015 school year);
- Lack of storage space for physical education and athletic equipment with the need to purchase an exterior, non-climate controlled storage container and use 25% of activity space in the B Gym;
- More than two-thirds of the scheduled lunch periods having more students assigned than the cafeteria’s maximum capacity;
- 53% of classroom teachers scheduled into two or more classrooms resulting in lost instructional time for travel, limited space to conference with students, and reduced workspace for teachers.

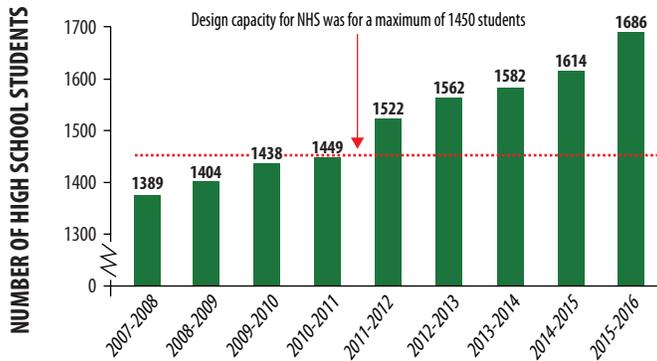
A preliminary concept for the high school expansion includes the installation of classrooms, storage space, and circulation representing between 6,500 and 8,100 square feet, plus a cafeteria expansion that would add approximately 2,500 square feet to the existing cafeteria with an expanded or reconfigured

### ENROLLMENT TRENDS



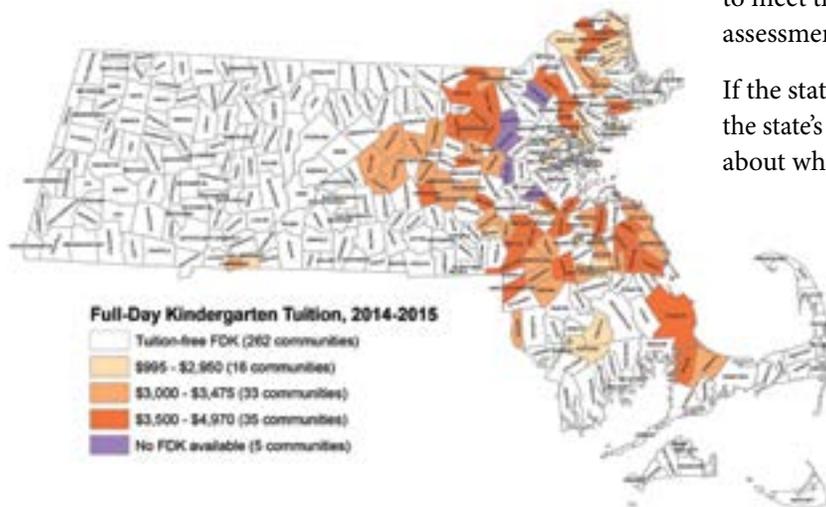
seating area. The 2015 Town Meeting approved \$150,000 in design funds for the cafeteria expansion project; a subsequent request for cafeteria construction funds is scheduled for fall 2015. The funding request for classroom space is deferred pending further study; however, the high school space shortfall is a priority to be addressed in the 2015-2016 school year.

**NHS ENROLLMENT CAPACITY**



The **pathway to full-day kindergarten** is more complex than the Full-Day Kindergarten Study and Planning Committee imagined when their work began at the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year. The committee’s research revealed a wide variety of program models in other towns and a number of options for the Needham community. In Massachusetts, 243 school districts offer district-wide full-day kindergarten, 65 districts offer partial full-day kindergarten (not district-wide), and 70 districts charge tuition for their full-day kindergarten program.

**KINDERGARTEN COMPARISON WITH OTHER COMMUNITIES**



70 school districts (serving 84 cities/towns) charge tuition for full-day kindergarten. Average annual tuition is \$3,296. Statewide, 91.7% of public school kindergarten students are enrolled in full-day kindergarten. Source: Strategies for Children based on data from Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

In a 2015 survey and focus group with Needham families, parents stressed the importance of a fair and equitable rollout of a full-day kindergarten program and they do not believe that a lottery for available spaces is an acceptable solution. Space for full-day kindergarten may be available at Broadmeadow, Eliot, Mitchell and Newman, but there is no space at Hillside until the construction is completed. Pollard may have some classrooms that would temporarily accommodate kindergarten for Hillside students. Taking enrollment projections into consideration, implementation of full-day kindergarten is possible given existing classroom spaces if class size is allowed to rise slightly during initial implementation years.

Another issue to address is tuition: The School Committee must consider whether or not full-day kindergarten will be compulsory or voluntary. If compulsory, the Town pays for full-day kindergarten; if voluntary, it can be a “tuition-in” program.

Despite the complexity, providing full-day kindergarten is a priority and the planning will continue with the possibility of implementation targeted for September 2017 or 2018.

Another challenge that lies ahead is related to the implementation of **new state testing** known as **PARCC** (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers). Massachusetts completed a two year pilot and will decide in the fall of 2015 whether to fully adopt this new online testing program and transition away from MCAS.

In the 2014-2015 school year, our district took steps to begin to prepare our students for PARCC’s interactive test-taking experience. We also determined the level of readiness of our existing computer inventories and the instructional hardware to meet the requirements for PARCC’s computer-based assessment administration.

If the state fully adopts PARCC as the new testing program, the state’s supplemental guidance will reflect current knowledge about what we will need in terms of hardware, input devices, security requirements, and levels of bandwidth. Our district will identify gaps in test administration capacity and explore scenarios for addressing those gaps.

## AT A GLANCE *How Needham Compares*

People often ask how Needham compares with similar communities. These charts contain data on taxes, school expenditures, and student performance for comparison. The figures are the most recent available for each of these towns. Shaded numbers represent the rank order of the corresponding community in each category.

COMMUNITY	FY15 AVERAGE SINGLE FAMILY TAX BILL <sup>(1)</sup>		FY14 PER PUPIL EXPENDITURE <sup>(2)</sup>		FY14 TEACHER TOP SALARY WITH MASTERS +30 <sup>(3)</sup>		FY15 STUDENT: TEACHER RATIO <sup>(2)</sup>	
	SCORE	RANK	SCORE	RANK	SCORE	RANK	SCORE	RANK
Belmont	\$10,938	8	\$12,799	20	\$93,396	6	17.2 : 1	21
Brookline	—	—	\$17,291	6	\$94,544	5	13.0 : 1	9
Concord	\$12,890	5	\$16,710	10	\$98,659	1	13.1 : 1	11
Dedham	\$6,375	18	\$16,906	9	\$83,363	17	12.0 : 1	3
Dover	\$13,715	3	\$21,336	2	\$93,224	7	12.1 : 1	5
Framingham	\$5,952	19	\$17,100	8	\$81,255	20	11.7 : 1	2
Holliston	\$7,495	15	\$12,986	19	\$89,252	11	13.6 : 1	15
Hopkinton	\$8,885	14	\$13,101	17	\$85,468	16	13.7 : 1	17
Lexington	\$12,191	6	\$17,496	5	\$89,438	10	12.4 : 1	6
Medfield	\$9,554	12	\$13,075	18	\$86,529	14	13.3 : 1	12
Natick	\$6,630	17	\$13,550	15	\$82,764	18	14.6 : 1	20
<b>NEEDHAM</b>	<b>\$9,240</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>\$15,020</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>\$88,046</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>14.5 : 1</b>	<b>19</b>
Newton	\$10,091	10	\$17,581	4	\$92,377	9	12.0 : 1	4
Norwood	\$4,376	20	\$15,038	13	\$80,894	21	12.8 : 1	7
Sherborn	\$14,720	2	\$19,393	3	\$93,224	8	12.9 : 1	8
Walpole	\$6,693	16	\$13,501	16	\$86,313	15	13.6 : 1	16
Wayland	\$12,049	7	\$16,689	11	\$95,783	4	13.0 : 1	10
Wellesley	\$13,326	4	\$17,108	7	\$96,098	3	13.4 : 1	13
Weston	\$18,059	1	\$21,653	1	\$96,632	2	11.5 : 1	1
Westwood	\$9,999	11	\$15,337	12	\$87,249	13	13.8 : 1	18
Winchester	\$10,588	9	\$12,579	21	\$81,746	19	13.5 : 1	14

<sup>(1)</sup> Source: Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Revenue website. Brookline does not submit data.

<sup>(2)</sup> Source: Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website.

<sup>(3)</sup> Source: Commonwealth of MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website; school district websites and informal telephone survey of school districts.



This Performance Report summarizes the progress made toward the district goals. For more information on accomplishments from each school, please refer to the [School Improvement Plans \(SIP\)](#) posted on our website. (Direct links to each pdf are listed to the right.) Each School Council, comprised of the principal and representative parents, teachers and a community member, is responsible for updating their SIP annually and presenting their plan to the School Committee. The SIP includes progress on general areas of instructional focus, service learning plans and implementation, among other details specific to respective school communities.

**NOTE:** The MCAS scores represent a composite Proficiency Index (CPI) formula that gives scores of Proficient or Advanced 100 points, high Needs Improvement 75 points, low Needs Improvement 50 points and high Warning 25 points. The average score is the CPI. A score of 100 means that all students have scored Proficient or Advanced. The SAT scores are computed by the College Board's Educational Testing Service as the average combined scores for the last exams taken by students in Math, Reading, and Writing and not the highest scores for each student. See page 7 for the highest scores.

COMMUNITY	SPRING 2014 MCAS ELA CPI		SPRING 2014 MCAS MATH CPI		SPRING 2014 MCAS SCIENCE CPI		CLASS OF 2014 COMBINED SAT	
	SCORE	RANK	SCORE	RANK	SCORE	RANK	SCORE	RANK
Belmont	95.5	10	94.1	3	93.9	5	1789	8
Brookline	93.5	18	89.8	16	88.5	17	1796	7
Concord	99.1	1	97.8	1	97.2	1	1781	10
Dedham	89.2	20	86.0	19	84.8	19	1458	21
Dover	97.8	2	92.9	6	94.6	2	1860	2
Framingham	83.1	21	76.3	21	77.1	21	1585	18
Holliston	94.8	13	90.8	15	91.3	10	1718	14
Hopkinton	94.3	15	91.1	13	92.5	8	1691	15
Lexington	96.7	4	95.0	2	94.5	4	1905	1
Medfield	95.0	11	91.1	14	91.8	9	1775	12
Natick	94.2	16	89.8	17	89.2	16	1635	17
<b>NEEDHAM</b>	<b>94.8</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>91.5</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>90.4</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1781</b>	<b>11</b>
Newton	94.9	12	91.8	11	89.8	14	1785	9
Norwood	90.5	19	82.7	20	82.9	20	1501	20
Sherborn	97.8	3	92.9	7	94.6	3	1860	3
Walpole	93.8	17	88.4	18	89.5	15	1581	19
Wayland	95.9	7	93.1	5	93.4	6	1832	4
Wellesley	95.7	9	92.1	10	87.6	18	1806	6
Weston	96.5	5	92.6	9	91.2	11	1809	5
Westwood	95.9	8	93.6	4	91.1	12	1685	16
Winchester	96.3	6	92.8	8	92.8	7	1763	13

Source: Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website. 2014 MCAS data for all students, all grades. Test data for Concord is Concord-Carlisle in grades 9-12. Test data for Dover & Sherborn is Dover-Sherborn in grades 6-12.

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Broadmeadow

<http://rwd1.needham.k12.ma.us/metco/documents/BroadmeadowSIP.pdf>

Eliot

<http://rwd1.needham.k12.ma.us/metco/documents/EliotSIP.pdf>

Hillside

<http://rwd1.needham.k12.ma.us/metco/documents/HillsideSIP.pdf>

Mitchell

<http://rwd1.needham.k12.ma.us/metco/documents/MitchellSIP.pdf>

Newman

<http://rwd1.needham.k12.ma.us/metco/documents/NewmanSIP.pdf>

## MIDDLE SCHOOLS

High Rock

<http://rwd1.needham.k12.ma.us/metco/documents/HighRockSIP.pdf>

Pollard

<http://rwd1.needham.k12.ma.us/metco/documents/PollardSIP.pdf>

## HIGH SCHOOL

Needham High School

<http://rwd1.needham.k12.ma.us/metco/documents/HighSchoolSIP.pdf>



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**2015 KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF NEEDHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

*See inside for more details!*

- New elementary Spanish, Wellness, Music, and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Mathematics) programs; and new interdisciplinary courses at the high school, including the Greater Boston Project and Robotics/Arts
- Common assessments at every level to ensure each child has foundational experiences and skills in grades K-12; and assessment of the impact of community service learning on student growth
- Level One Status for four of our schools based on improved MCAS scores
- Development of culturally proficient practices; and expansion of our exchange program with Beijing's Daxing School District
- Da Vinci Workshop at NHS and an elementary family STEAM fair with over 800 attendees
- Enhancements to school safety protocols and pilot of ALICE (Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate)
- 1 to 1 Personalized Learning Initiative for the middle schools
- Development of a pathway to implementing Full-Day Kindergarten
- Feasibility studies to replace Hillside and expand high school space
- MIAA Sportsmanship Award in Skiing and Boys Volleyball; and state champions in Boys Soccer, Girls Cross Country, and Boys Volleyball

