



To: Nashoba Regional School Committee  
From: George King, Acting Superintendent  
Subject: MCAS/PARCC  
Date: December 1, 2015

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has been considering a change in the MCAS testing program during the last couple of years. In 2014 there were random pilot tests of the PARCC test including some here at Nashoba. In 2015 Districts were required to choose to use either MCAS or PARCC for use in their district, grades 3-8. MCAS remained the test for grade 10. Nashoba chose to use MCAS for all grades in 2015.

This month the Board of Education was to make a statewide decision to determine whether districts would be utilizing PARCC or MCAS going forward. The final decision was a little different than the original question. They decided to adopt what essentially is a hybrid test being referred to as MCAS 2.0. The idea is to create a test that will use some PARCC questions, while still using questions developed specifically for and by Massachusetts. It is anticipated that this new test will be given for the first time in 2017. For the 2016 testing cycle districts that used PARCC this year will use it again, districts that used MCAS in 2015 will use it again unless they affirmatively decide to switch to PARCC. So in the case of Nashoba we will once again use MCAS unless we decide otherwise. If we were to decide otherwise we must notify DESE by December 18<sup>th</sup>.

Given we made a decision to use MCAS this year over PARCC, it seems consistent to continue in 2016. Our curriculum is based on the state standards that are measured by both MCAS and PARCC. Therefore we do not teach to a test in terms of curriculum and content, the tests are designed to measure the standards. In that regard the decision should not matter. However, we do model some of our student work products in the fashion students would see it on MCAS, to help prepare them to be responsive. Given that we have not spent time preparing students to respond to PARCC formatted questions it seems to be in our interest to remain with MCAS for one additional year for consistency. Also by staying with MCAS it will allow a bit more consistency of data to compare our year to year growth.

Please let me know if you have any questions or desire further information.