Q: Will there be any results for Grade 3 students?

No. Student growth measurements are not available for grade 3 students as there is no comparison score. The grade 3 score is the student's baseline.

Q: How can I get my hands on this data?

The data is available only via the DESE's Education Data Warehouse. District administrators will have access to this data and will print reports for all classroom teachers.

Q: Will parents get an explanation of what this means?

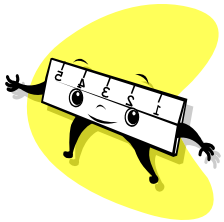
Yes. The DESE will be sending home with the MCAS results, an explanation of this new measure and what it might mean. Falmouth is also creating a brochure to explain what this measure means for our schools and district.

Q: What should I say if a parent comes to me with questions?

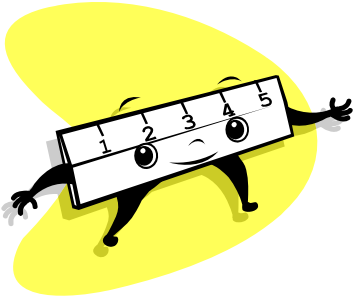
Explain that this is another measure or indicator that helps to create a bigger picture of their child's academic performance. If they have further questions that you are not able or comfortable answering, refer them to your building's principal (k-8) or to their child's guidance counselor (9-12).

Q: Where can I go for technical or additional information on the Growth Model?

Resources including an *Interpretive Guide* and *FAQ* can be accessed via the DESE's website: http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/growth/. Questions not answered by these resources should be emailed to growth@doe.mass.edu.



A Guide for Teachers



THE GROWTH MODEL:

What It Is & How We Can Use It

The "growth model" is a method of measuring individual student progress on MCAS by tracking the scores of the same students from one year to the next.

Traditional student assessment reports tell you about a student's performance in a single year, whereas growth reports tell you how much change or "growth" there has been in performance from one year to the next.

Q: How does the growth model work?

Massachusetts measures growth for an *individual student* by comparing the change in his or her MCAS performance from one year to a subsequent year to that of all other students in the state who had similar historical MCAS results (the student's "academic peers").

This change in performance is reported as a student growth percentile (SGP) and indicates how high or low that student's growth is as compared to that of his/her academic peers

For a *school or district*, the growth percentiles for all students are aggregated to create a median student growth percentile for the school or district. The median student growth percentile is a representation of "typical" growth for students in the school or district in a given year.

Q: Why would the state invest in this type of measure?

The growth model is an additional measure, that when added to MCAS performance levels and AYP results, can be used to create a more complete picture of the learning occurring in Massachusetts schools and districts.

Since 1998, we have had information about student, school and district performance based on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). We have used this data to engage in program evaluation activities — for example, understanding how well district instruction and curriculum are aligned with the state's curriculum frameworks, or how well a particular subgroup of students is performing by school and district, as well as across the state.

Until now, however, we have been unable to answer the question, "How much academic progress did a student or group of students make in one year, as measured by MCAS, in relation to their academic peers (those who scored the same as they did on the last MCAS)?" With the development of the growth model, it is now possible to answer this question.

This method of examining student performance and improvement will help districts and schools to look into why results differ for certain groups of students and support the discovery of which approaches are working best to help more students achieve higher levels of academic performance.

Q: How are the Growth Model, MCAS, and AYP different?

School and district *growth reports* display information about how much academic progress students made in relation to their academic peers (students with a similar MCAS test result history).

MCAS reports present information about the performance of students at the end of each school year, displaying the distribution of students performing at each of the MCAS performance levels.

Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) reports display information about how close a school or district is to helping all students reach or exceed proficiency. While the measure of improvement on AYP reports is correlated with individual student growth, it is focused on comparisons of grade-level cohorts (e.g., this year's 4th graders compared to last year's 4th graders). In addition, AYP reports do not measure any change in performance for students at or above the Proficient performance level.

Q: Is growth a better measure of student performance than MCAS or AYP?

No. It simply answers a different question. A more complete understanding of performance can be obtained by using the three measures (Growth, MCAS Performance, and AYP) together.

Q: What does this information mean for Falmouth schools and the district?

At the school and district level, the data can be used to identify programmatic strengths and weaknesses. In the aggregate, it can provide an additional indicator of the relative success or limitations of our instructional practices and programs. We will seek to continue to strengthen effective practice.

Q: Will this information be available sorted by individual teachers?

Yes. A teacher will be able to look back at his or her previous classes to see how those students did in terms of growth on MCAS performance. The district intends to use this data to support teachers and students. It will not be used to compare teachers against each other or to determine merit pay.