ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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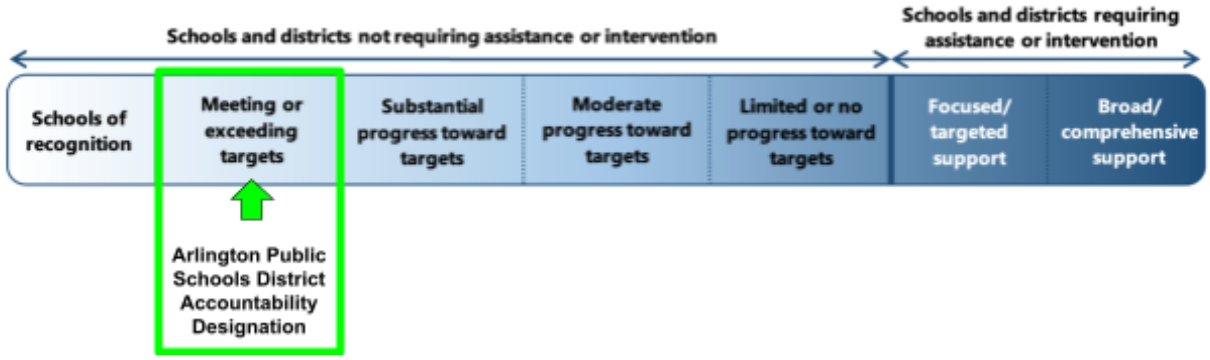
For Immediate Release

Arlington Public Schools Celebrates Strong Outcomes and Continued Implementation of 5-year Strategic Goals

Arlington, MA, September 24th - Arlington Public Schools is pleased to share positive results for students based on the 2024 MCAS and Massachusetts Accountability System, published today by the state. For more information about the MA Accountability System, please review this additional information.

Each school earns an overall state classification based on its progress toward target improvement and student participation. The state classifies schools into two categories: schools *requiring assistance or intervention* and schools *not requiring assistance or intervention*, on the following scale. The state classified the Arlington Public Schools as **Meeting or Exceeding Targets,** the highest designation possible for a School District.



For Arlington Public Schools, five of ten of our schools earned 75% or above on their progress towards improvement targets, earning them meeting or exceeding designations. **Overall, as a district, Arlington earned 80% on their progress toward improvement targets, placing it in the highest tier of districts.**

State and federal laws require high student participation in statewide assessments. Each district and school within the district is expected to maintain a participation rate of 95 percent or higher for each subject-area test. Two elementary schools, Thompson Elementary and Peirce Elementary, earned an overall classification of *requiring assistance or intervention* due to low participation in statewide assessments for a focal group. This is mostly due to families' voluntary non-participation in MCAS.

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The School Accountability Percentile (Table 1) measures all students' performance compared to other schools in the state. We are proud to report that APS schools are in the 84th percentile or above relative to comparable schools.

Table 1

School Accountability Information, Progress Towards Targets, and Accountability Percentile

School	Accountability Information	Progress toward improvement targets	School accountability percentile 2024-25
Arlington High	Not requiring assistance or intervention, substantial progress toward targets.	71%	84
Brackett	Not requiring assistance or intervention, substantial progress toward targets.	67%	88
Cyrus E. Dallin	Not requiring assistance or intervention, substantial progress toward targets.	71%	87
Gibbs School	Not requiring assistance or intervention, substantial progress toward targets.	73%	84
Hardy	Not requiring assistance or intervention, meeting or exceeding targets.	88%	92
John A. Bishop	Not requiring assistance or intervention, meeting or exceeding targets.	89%	96
M Norcross Stratton	Not requiring assistance or intervention, substantial progress toward targets.	63%	90
Ottoson Middle	Not requiring assistance or intervention, meeting or exceeding targets.	90%	95
Peirce	Requiring assistance or intervention, Low participation rate.	89%	92
Thompson	Requiring assistance or intervention, Low participation rate.	91%	90

2024 Outcomes Summary: Celebrations, Challenges, and Next Steps

APS has much to celebrate in our 2024 Outcomes, including strong growth scores, improvement for students of color and students with disabilities, and positive trends in chronic absenteeism and access to advanced coursework. The sections below highlight these and other areas of achievement and future work for the Arlington Public Schools.

Elementary Literacy Rollout: Pilot Year Successes and Looking Ahead

APS piloted a new K-5 literacy curriculum, EL Education, to enhance all students' foundational reading and writing skills. The program was piloted successfully with fourteen grade-level teaching teams across the district, a process that has provided valuable insights and feedback that guided the full implementation for this year. EL incorporates evidence-based instructional practices and high-quality resources, ensuring consistency and effectiveness in literacy education. We are excited to see how this curriculum will support student learning and foster a strong foundation in literacy.

Districtwide in ELA grades K-8, APS "met targets" for students from low-income households and students with IEPs. In Elementary ELA/Literacy, grades three through five students have shown signs of level achievement despite the downward trend across the state (Figure 1). Additionally, our growth across grades four and five continues to outpace the state, with an average SGP of 58 at each grade (Figure 2). This supports the continued focus on ELA curriculum modifications and the continued support of the new elementary literacy curriculum.

Figure 1

APS Grades three through five, percent Meeting or Exceeding - High Needs Status compared to State

State ELA 3-5 Trend in Yellow

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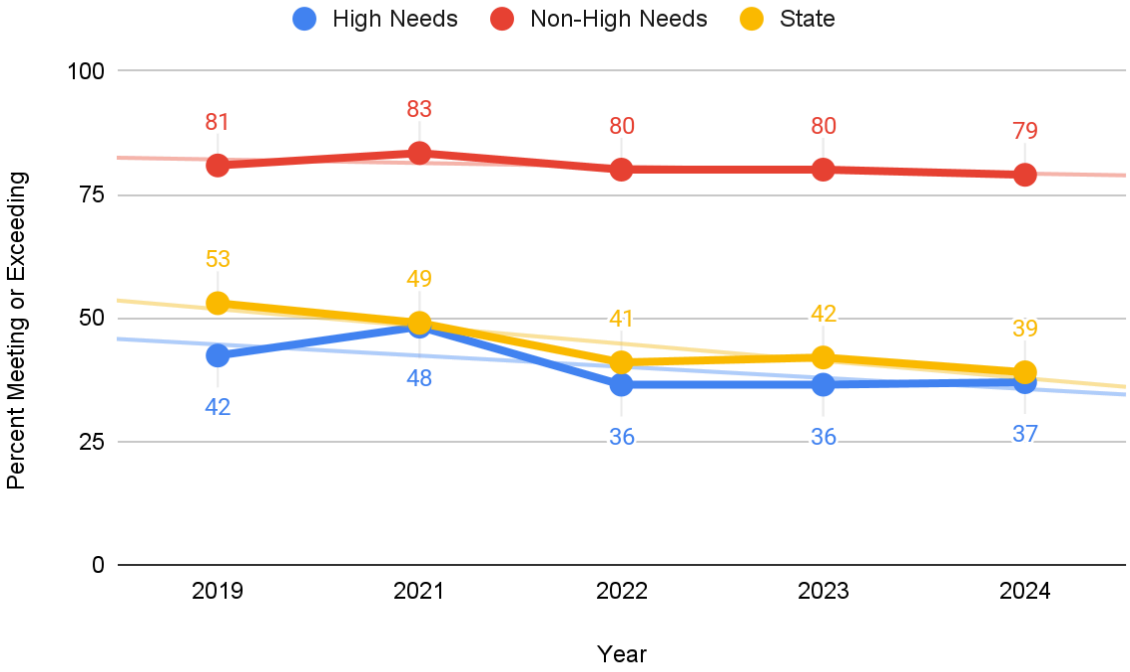
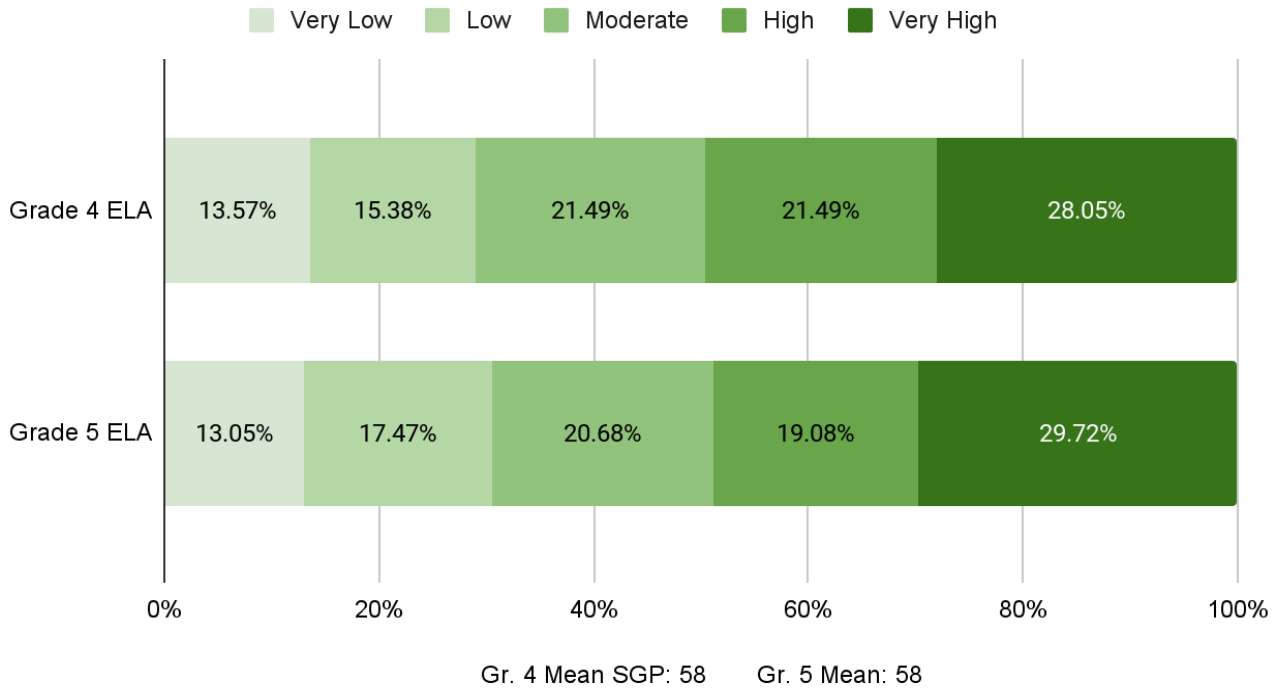


Figure 2

MCAS Student Growth Distribution by Grade

APS High/Very High Growth in Darker Green



In the 2024-25 School Year, we will be focusing on the full rollout of EL Education in Grades K-5, continued refinement of early literacy assessment and notification to families, and ongoing professional development for educators focused on deeper learning, high expectations, and culturally responsive teaching practices.

Increasing Access to Advanced Coursework at Arlington High School

A central goal of the APS Strategic Plan is to eliminate access barriers to advanced coursework at Arlington High School, specifically for members of our focal groups who have historically been denied access to rigorous coursework due to inequitable systems and structures. Most students at Arlington High School take advanced coursework, specifically in AP and Honors courses (Figure 3). The number of students enrolled in an AP courses has increased consistently over the past several years. Additionally, the total number of AP courses per student has increased at a faster rate. Approximately 84% of all AHS juniors and seniors enrolled in and completed an advanced course in at least one subject area in 2023-24, an increase of over 200 students over the past five years (Table 2).

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Figure 3

6-Year Advanced Placement Enrollment Trend - All Subjects

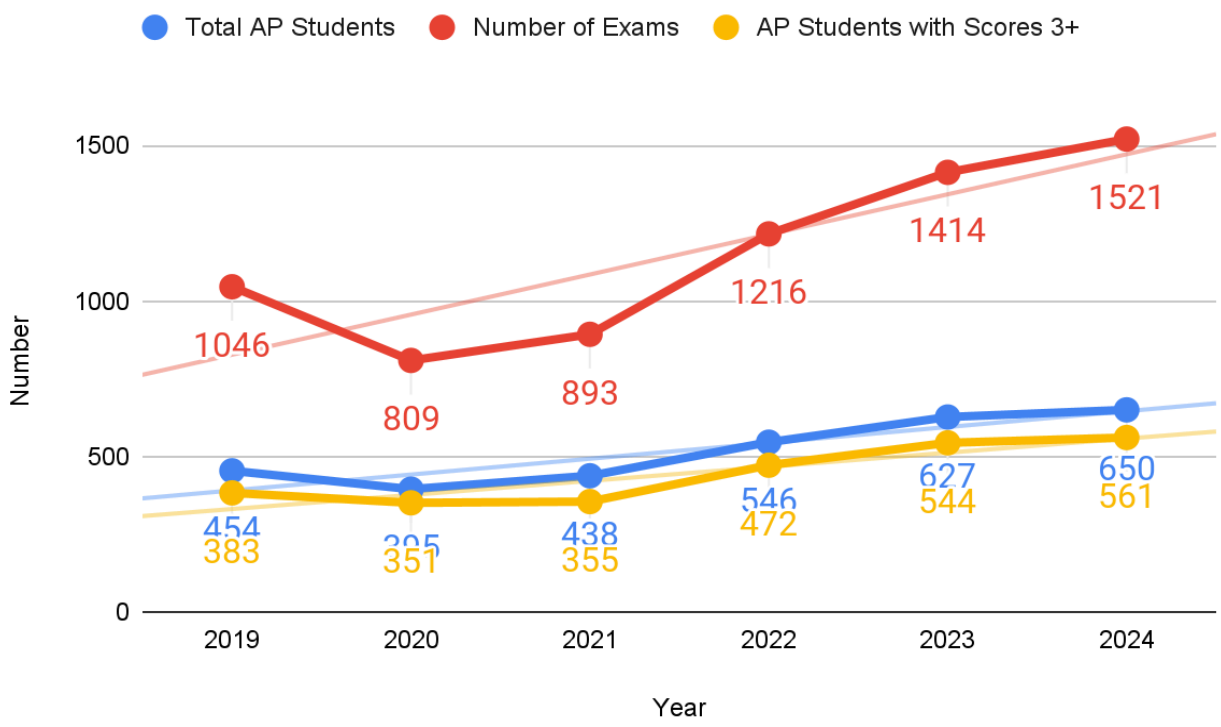

Table 2

Percentage of Juniors and Seniors Graders Completing Advanced Coursework in 2023-2024

Student Group	Students Completing Advanced	Advanced Course Completion Rate by Subject					
		ELA	Math	Science and Technology	Computer and Information Science	History and Social Sciences	Arts
All Students	83.9%	47.3%	75.3%	30.8%	8.1%	50.6%	1.6%
Male	82.4%	39.0%	72.5%	27.0%	11.5%	47.9%	0.5%

Female	84.9%	54.3%	78.3%	34.9%	4.1%	54.3%	2.0%
High needs	54.5%	13.1%	47.6%	13.1%	3.7%	22.0%	1.6%
English learner (EL)	25.0%	0.0%	25.0%	6.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Students with disabilities	46.4%	10.7%	42.0%	4.5%	1.8%	17.9%	1.8%
African American/Black	52.2%	26.1%	34.8%	8.7%	8.7%	34.8%	0.0%
Asian	89.4%	48.9%	85.1%	43.6%	13.8%	43.6%	1.1%
Hispanic or Latino	71.4%	38.1%	57.1%	17.5%	1.6%	38.1%	4.8%
Multi-race, non-Hispanic or Latino	81.3%	47.9%	77.1%	35.4%	4.2%	50.0%	2.1%
White	85.9%	48.8%	77.1%	30.7%	8.2%	53.8%	1.4%
Low income	58.1%	15.1%	49.5%	22.6%	5.4%	25.8%	1.1%

In the 2024-25 school year, in alignment with the strategic plan and 2024-25 District Goals, APS will work with the community, Mathematics department, special education department, and our two middle schools to examine equitable mathematics pathways to higher-level coursework in grades 6-12; consider opportunities for increasing access to both enrichment and challenging content across content areas; and explore opportunities for expanding equitable access to advanced coursework at Arlington High School.

Supporting School Attendance for All Students

APS knows that students who are consistently not present at school will encounter challenges when it comes to engaging with content, connecting with peers, and building routines that sustain lifelong learning. We also know that students miss school for a myriad of reasons, some of which we have the ability to address directly with additional supports and services. The district is committed to addressing chronic absenteeism by implementing comprehensive strategies that include early identification, targeted interventions, and increased family engagement. We are excited to see gains made at several of our schools, particularly Arlington High School (Table 3), where recent efforts have led to notable improvements in daily attendance rates. Hardy, Stratton, Peirce, Brackett, and Dallin met or exceeded state targets for Chronic Absenteeism, including major gains for specific focal groups.

Table 3

Chronic Absenteeism Rates - Arlington High School

Group	2023 Rate	2024 Rate	Change	Target Rate	Reason
All Students	10.2%	7.7%	-2.5%	8.6%	Exceeded Target
Lowest Performing	9.4%	11.9%	2.5%	4.1%	Met Target
High Needs	21.8%	18.2%	-3.6%	18.9%	Exceeded Target
Low Income	23.6%	19.6%	-4%	19.1%	Met Target
Students with Disabilities	28.1%	22.1%	-6%	24.6%	Exceeded Target
Asian	6.4%	5.3%	-1.1%	3.6%	Exceeded Target
Hispanic/Latino	18.7%	13.6%	-5.1%	14.3%	Exceeded Target
Multi-race, Non-Hisp./Lat.	13%	9.6%	-3.4%	11.4%	Exceeded Target
White	9.3%	7%	-2.3%	7.5%	Exceeded Target

By collaborating with families, community partners, and utilizing data-driven approaches to designing interventions, Arlington Public Schools aims to continue reducing absenteeism and ensuring all students can thrive academically. We intend to start by understanding the strategies in use at schools where we have begun to close opportunity gaps for student attendance. Addressing chronic absenteeism is a matter of improving individual student outcomes and fostering a culture of consistency and support throughout the district.

General Areas for Celebration and Progress

Arlington Public Schools is pleased to share progress in advancing several key initiatives aligned with our 2024-2025 goals and the strategic plan. While not comprehensive, we are proud of the following efforts:

- This school year, we will launch a comprehensive data dashboard in partnership with Open Architects. This innovative tool provides real-time access to key performance indicators across the district, enabling educators, support staff, and administrators to make informed decisions based on accurate and up-to-date information, without creating additional data entry or analysis work for educators.
- In our ongoing commitment to supporting students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), we will thoroughly examine educator caseloads in both general education and specialized settings to develop a data-driven staffing model. This

approach will ensure that resources are allocated effectively and that students and their service providers receive the support needed to achieve their goals. By aligning staffing with student needs, we are creating a more equitable and responsive learning environment.

- We are proud to announce the implementation of higher salaries for staff following reaching collaborative bargaining agreements with teachers and paraprofessionals. Offering more competitive compensation to our educators reflects our commitment to attracting and retaining high-quality educators and support staff, who are essential to the success of our students and the district.
- Finally, in 2024-25 we will launch school-based committees that actively involve all teaching staff in the school's ongoing work and the implementation of district and school goals. These committees ensure that every educator has a voice in shaping the future of our schools, fostering collaborative and inquiry-based adult learning cultures.

These initiatives are just a few examples of the meaningful work happening across the Arlington Public Schools. We remain dedicated to partnering with our community to create an educational environment that supports every student's success and well-being.

Future Presentations and Correspondences

Members of the Arlington Public Schools will present broader findings at upcoming School Committee meetings. Our Outcomes Report, including MCAS results, Panorama Data, and College Board Data, will be presented at the October 10th School Committee meeting.

Families can expect to receive their children's MCAS results in the next few weeks. If they would like to discuss this further, they can schedule a meeting with teachers or principals.