Dear Parent or Guardian:

This spring, your child will take new tests in English language arts (ELA) and math, called “PARCC.” Your child will take the PARCC tests this year in place of the MCAS tests in ELA and math. The state will decide in the fall of 2015 whether PARCC will permanently replace MCAS.

Most likely, your child’s Individualized Education Program (IEP) lists the accommodations your child can receive on MCAS tests. However, PARCC is a different test. In most cases, the accommodations allowed are the same for MCAS and PARCC, but there are also some important differences. If your child’s IEP identifies an MCAS accommodation that is also allowed on PARCC, it will be given during PARCC testing this spring.

Section A: Below are two additional accommodations that we will make available to your child during the Spring 2015 PARCC testing, even if the accommodations are not listed on your child’s current IEP. If PARCC replaces MCAS, the IEP Team will discuss at a future meeting whether these accommodations should be added to your child’s IEP.

- **Extended testing time:** Unlike the MCAS tests, PARCC tests are timed. Most students must finish their test within the time limit. However, students with disabilities and English language learners who take PARCC may have until the end of a school day (“extended time”) to finish each test, just as they did on MCAS. “Extended time on PARCC tests” will be added to your child’s IEP next year, if the Team agrees that he or she needs this accommodation. However, it will be given to your child on the PARCC tests this spring without this documentation.

- **Paper version of the test:** Schools will give the PARCC tests to students using either a computer version or paper version of the tests. Your child’s teacher can give you information on how students in your school will participate in PARCC. Even if other students in the school will take PARCC tests on a computer, students with disabilities are allowed to take the paper version of the test if they cannot use a computer for testing. This accommodation will need to be added to your child’s IEP next year, if the Team agrees that he or she needs it. However, it will be available without such documentation for the PARCC tests this spring.

Section B: Below is an MCAS accommodation that may already be listed on your child’s current IEP, but is not allowed for the PARCC tests. This accommodation will not be provided during the Spring 2015 PARCC assessments and, if PARCC replaces MCAS, it may not be included in the section on PARCC testing on your child’s IEP in the future.

- PARCC test policies do not allow any student to use a graphic organizer or individualized math reference sheet, including students with disabilities. Even if your child’s IEP lists the use of these tools on state- or district-wide assessments, they will not be allowed on PARCC tests. Why? Because PARCC and MCAS test questions are quite different. The graphic organizers and individual reference sheets used for MCAS will not be useful and may lead students to give the wrong answers on PARCC tests. Additionally, if these tools are used, you will not receive accurate information about your child’s performance, and the test results will be invalid. For PARCC testing, all students will be given blank paper and can draw a graphic organizer from memory; and all students in grades 5 and higher will get a “standard” math reference sheet.

We thank you for your cooperation and support as we try out this new test, and we hope you understand that some of the rules for taking PARCC tests will be different from those for MCAS. Please contact your child’s school or the local special education office if you have any questions about your child’s special education program.

[Signed by appropriate District Administrator]