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2013 MCAS Results: Decrease in Third Grade Reading Proficiency

September 18, 2013 - In Massachusetts, 43% of third graders are not proficient readers, according to the 2013 MCAS results released today. Performance in reading on the third grade MCAS has not improved since 2001. Among children from low-income families, a staggering 65% lag in reading.

Carolyn Lyons, President and CEO of Strategies for Children, issued the following statement:

“The 2013 MCAS scores show that third grade reading proficiency rates have declined four percentage points since 2012. This year, 43% of third grade students did not score proficient in reading. The consequences of reading failure at this age are significant. Struggling readers are four times less likely to graduate high school on time than proficient readers, jeopardizing their prospects for participating in our global knowledge-based economy.

We have made virtually no progress on this critical benchmark for more than a decade. Our children deserve better. We will not change this trajectory until we invest more resources in high-quality early education. We are on the right course: in the FY14 state budget, Governor Patrick and the Legislature reversed years of early education budget cuts with modest increases. But more investments are needed to impact outcomes for all children.

Consider that each high school dropout costs Massachusetts taxpayers, on average, $349,000, and the cost of NOT investing early becomes staggering. We must act now.”
Percent of Students Below Proficient on Third Grade Reading MCAS 2001-2013

Source: Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS), Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Chart Courtesy of Strategies for Children

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