

1. Why leave MATCH?

Many MATCH students transfer back to the traditional public schools after achieving very high MCAS scores as sophomores. This is a concern. We are trying to keep more kids through graduation – but without lowering our standards.

In most Boston schools, MCAS is the hard part. At MATCH, MCAS is the **easy** part - even though kids usually failed it in their former middle schools. Our kids rock the MCAS. After MCAS in Grade 10, however, much tougher challenges loom – required Advanced Placement classes and Boston University classes.

The MATCH required curriculum, and our promotion requirements, are more challenging than that of any other public school in Massachusetts. The support level, however, is also greater than at any public school in Massachusetts – 2+ hours per day of tutoring.

Why leave? Usually: low grades. MATCH teachers simply won't lower their standards. D's don't count as passing. At least 50% of our students struggle each year just to be promoted. With parent support and massive tutoring, we are able to get our yearly pass rate to 85%.

But then we hold the line. Many schools “sneak” failing kids into the next grade if they just show up at summer school; not at MATCH. So that's 15% of students per year who must repeat the year because they didn't hit the teacher-set standards, even though they exceeded MCAS standards.

Those kids are tempted to leave. They say: "I'd like to stay at MATCH but I'd have to repeat 10th grade. If I transfer, I can automatically move directly to 11th grade in my new school, because they don't mind the D's or F's on my report card. Plus my new school would dismiss me at 1.45pm, and at MATCH it's 5pm at the earliest and for me probably 7.45pm."

2. What are the numbers?

Boston Public Schools

50% drop out entirely - no diploma

20% transfer at some point - but get diploma

30% graduate from the high school where they began as 9th graders

MATCH

10% drop out entirely - no diploma

60% transfer at some point - but get diploma from an easier school

30% graduate from MATCH

This is changing. For the MATCH Class of 2008 we predict:

5% drop out entirely - no diploma

50% transfer at some point - but get diploma from an easier school

45% graduate from MATCH

3. So do weak MATCH students go back to the district?

No. For example, MATCH kids who left after 2005 MCAS not only had 100% pass rate, but 100% proficiency rate. When a kid leaves MATCH, the district gets a student who is usually BETTER, not worse, than their other students.

Students who leave after 9th grade are also better off. In a typical school, a 9th grader would get about 150 hours per year of math class and 150 hours per year of English instruction. In the MATCH 9th grade, each student gets over 400 hours of English instruction and over 340 hours of math instruction.