

More bang for your buck

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By Matt Carroll, Globe Staff | September 5, 2009

When families are choosing where to live, they typically ask two questions before all others. Are the schools good? Can we afford a home there? We crunched some numbers taking both questions into consideration. The results are not perfect, but they are useful in seeing which towns not only have terrific schools, but relatively affordable homes. You might expect to see Concord and Lexington high on a best schools list. But maybe not Foxborough Regional or Ayer. And Boxborough tied with Brookline? With our numbers it makes sense.

How we did our chart

We took a number of factors and ranked them, from 4 to 1. For instance, high MCAS scores earned 4 points. But high home prices were a negative and tallied only a 1. We added the scores up and, as we learned in freshman French, voila! The results speak for themselves.

The factors we used were:

MCAS scores, for 10th and 4th grades: We added the percent of test takers who finished in the advanced group for three 10th grade tests and two 4th grade tests.

Teacher-pupil ratios.

Diversity: School districts more diverse than the state average garnered 1 point, less diverse no points.

Average assessed values for single-family homes: For regionals and charters, the average is for all towns in the district.

Pts.: Are the points given for each factor, from a high of 4 to a low of 1.

(Districts were not included if any data was missing.)

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School district	MCAS 10th	Pts	MCAS 4th	Pts	Student teacher ratio	Pts	Diversity	Avg. assessed value	Pts	Total score
Concord	172	4	77	4	12.4 to 1	4	1	\$899,866	1	14
Foxborough Regional Charter	142	4	42	3	13.9 to 1	2	1	\$374,254	4	14
Lexington	191	4	69	4	11.9 to 1	4	1	\$702,346	1	14
Sharon	189	4	45	4	13.3 to 1	3	1	\$442,045	2	14
Arlington	144	4	57	4	13.8 to 1	2	1	\$465,952	2	13
Ayer	91	2	30	3	12.6 to 1	3	1	\$289,597	4	13
Bedford	145	4	52	4	12.5 to 1	3	1	\$516,168	1	13
Boxborough	176	4	71	4	13.4 to 1	3	1	\$545,872	1	13
Brookline	145	4	45	4	12.9 to 1	3	1	\$1,025,974	1	13
Burlington	104	3	27	3	12.3 to 1	4	1	\$405,679	2	13
Canton	122	3	50	4	13.5 to 1	3	1	\$490,391	2	13
Carlisle	172	4	65	4	11.7 to 1	4	0	\$777,301	1	13
Holliston	137	4	34	3	13.4 to 1	3	0	\$398,244	3	13
Marlborough	87	2	24	2	12.4 to 1	4	1	\$343,030	4	13
Newton	142	4	52	4	13.3 to 1	3	1	\$807,541	1	13
Shrewsbury	135	4	68	4	16.0 to 1	1	1	\$395,048	3	13
Stoughton	68	2	27	3	13.0 to 1	3	1	\$330,135	4	13
Tyngsborough	198	4	30	3	14.3 to 1	2	0	\$352,139	4	13
Waltham	92	3	21	2	10.7 to 1	4	1	\$400,700	3	13
Westborough	168	4	40	3	13.3 to 1	3	1	\$437,650	2	13
Weston	158	4	57	4	12.5 to 1	3	1	\$1,387,707	1	13
Woburn	66	2	30	3	13.0 to 1	3	1	\$349,505	4	13
Acton	176	4	64	4	18.7 to 1	1	1	\$507,466	2	12
Andover	131	4	46	4	13.7 to 1	2	1	\$580,087	1	12
Chelmsford	127	3	58	4	15.8 to 1	1	1	\$360,280	3	12
Cohasset	154	4	47	4	13.2 to 1	3	0	\$866,984	1	12
Framingham	98	3	26	2	12.8 to 1	3	1	\$369,018	3	12
Franklin	135	4	60	4	15.7 to 1	1	0	\$384,792	3	12
Lincoln	130	4	26	2	9.6 to 1	4	1	\$1,059,665	1	12
Manchester Essex	169	4	64	4	13.3 to 1	3	0	\$791,948	1	12
Milford	87	2	22	2	13.0 to 1	3	1	\$315,396	4	12
Nashoba	161	4	29	3	13.5 to 1	3	0	\$427,567	2	12

Northborough	158	4	28	3	13.9 to 1	2	1	\$419,623	2	12
Quincy	73	2	20	2	13.1 to 1	3	1	\$347,187	4	12
South Shore Charter	112	3	26	2	12.3 to 1	4	1	\$413,514	2	12
Wayland	163	4	54	4	13.7 to 1	2	1	\$647,717	1	12
Wellesley	147	4	63	4	13.7 to 1	2	1	\$1,046,131	1	12
Westford	162	4	74	4	15.0 to 1	1	1	\$459,180	2	12
Westwood	158	4	59	4	13.5 to 1	3	0	\$660,075	1	12
Amesbury	99	3	22	2	14.1 to 1	2	0	\$332,153	4	11
Ashland	130	4	20	2	15.3 to 1	1	1	\$396,346	3	11
Avon	59	1	18	1	12.0 to 1	4	1	\$296,215	4	11
Bellingham	62	2	43	3	14.6 to 1	2	0	\$304,992	4	11
Belmont	186	4	62	4	15.6 to 1	1	1	\$752,843	1	11
Berlin	112	3	28	3	13.0 to 1	3	0	\$440,764	2	11
Braintree	88	2	43	3	14.2 to 1	2	1	\$381,163	3	11
Danvers	85	2	27	3	13.3 to 1	3	0	\$391,693	3	11
Dover	170	4	61	4	14.2 to 1	2	0	\$1,135,325	1	11
Groton-Dunstable	144	4	52	4	15.6 to 1	1	0	\$432,821	2	11
Hudson	69	2	19	2	13.1 to 1	3	0	\$342,897	4	11
Marshfield	99	3	47	4	14.6 to 1	2	0	\$407,044	2	11
Natick	119	3	52	4	14.2 to 1	2	0	\$471,009	2	11
Plymouth	60	2	27	3	13.9 to 1	2	0	\$343,049	4	11
Revere	61	2	23	2	13.9 to 1	2	1	\$295,419	4	11
Rockport	82	2	52	4	12.2 to 1	4	0	\$536,393	1	11
Salem	41	1	15	1	11.1 to 1	4	1	\$324,588	4	11
Scituate	108	3	60	4	13.2 to 1	3	0	\$535,312	1	11
Sherborn	170	4	56	4	13.9 to 1	2	0	\$753,398	1	11
Southborough	158	4	49	4	14.2 to 1	2	0	\$556,432	1	11
Triton	98	3	29	3	13.6 to 1	3	0	\$459,026	2	11
Wakefield	102	3	41	3	14.0 to 1	2	0	\$398,887	3	11
Watertown	92	3	11	1	11.5 to 1	4	1	\$455,292	2	11
West Bridgewater	100	3	29	3	15.8 to 1	1	0	\$336,997	4	11
Weymouth	76	2	48	4	15.4 to 1	1	0	\$327,217	4	11
Whitman-Hanson	94	3	27	3	16.6 to 1	1	0	\$324,112	4	11
Wilmington	106	3	26	2	13.5 to 1	3	0	\$381,506	3	11
Winchester	163	4	87	4	14.7 to 1	1	1	\$757,878	1	11
Billerica	86	2	23	2	14.0 to 1	2	0	\$342,720	4	10
Cambridge	76	2	21	2	11.1 to 1	4	1	\$957,780	1	10
Chelsea	25	1	24	2	13.7 to 1	2	1	\$249,400	4	10
Dedham	111	3	18	1	12.8 to 1	3	1	\$412,306	2	10
Dracut	73	2	32	3	16.8 to 1	1	0	\$299,527	4	10
East Bridgewater	85	2	30	3	16.7 to 1	1	0	\$341,990	4	10
Everett	41	1	17	1	13.3 to 1	3	1	\$228,772	4	10
Hanover	73	2	40	3	13.1 to 1	3	0	\$447,906	2	10
Harvard	194	4	58	4	15.3 to 1	1	0	\$619,531	1	10
Hingham	131	4	45	4	14.8 to 1	1	0	\$668,473	1	10
Holbrook	39	1	23	2	13.7 to 1	2	1	\$280,435	4	10
Hopkinton	172	4	39	3	14.9 to 1	1	0	\$499,540	2	10
Ipswich	99	3	35	3	14.2 to 1	2	0	\$490,464	2	10
Lakeville	87	2	27	3	17.4 to 1	1	0	\$347,841	4	10
Lawrence	15	1	13	1	13.4 to 1	3	1	\$212,015	4	10
Lowell	42	1	9	1	13.1 to 1	3	1	\$251,742	4	10
Lynnfield	131	4	58	4	15.8 to 1	1	0	\$571,401	1	10
Malden	61	2	13	1	14.2 to 1	2	1	\$335,400	4	10
Mansfield	122	3	35	3	15.4 to 1	1	0	\$403,713	3	10
Marblehead	133	4	39	3	13.7 to 1	2	0	\$697,696	1	10
Maynard	89	2	26	2	14.2 to 1	2	0	\$337,368	4	10
Medway	116	3	33	3	15.1 to 1	1	0	\$379,138	3	10
Melrose	99	3	34	3	15.5 to 1	1	0	\$405,033	3	10

Mystic Valley Regional Charter	87	2	25	2	13.8 to 1	2	1	\$396,484	3	10
Needham	167	4	41	3	15.1 to 1	1	1	\$693,458	1	10
North Andover	110	3	28	3	19.5 to 1	1	1	\$501,396	2	10
North Reading	114	3	34	3	14.5 to 1	2	0	\$490,247	2	10
Norwell	152	4	45	4	16.4 to 1	1	0	\$608,488	1	10
Peabody	60	1	25	2	14.2 to 1	2	1	\$335,932	4	10
Pentucket	98	3	35	3	14.1 to 1	2	0	\$415,012	2	10
Randolph	49	1	12	1	12.5 to 1	3	1	\$291,281	4	10
Reading	117	3	33	3	14.6 to 1	2	0	\$443,438	2	10
Sudbury	130	4	61	4	15.1 to 1	1	0	\$662,080	1	10
Tewksbury	84	2	27	3	17.8 to 1	1	0	\$347,635	4	10
Winthrop	90	2	27	3	14.6 to 1	2	0	\$364,933	3	10
Abington	76	2	24	2	15.8 to 1	1	0	\$337,804	4	9
Boston	54	1	11	1	12.8 to 1	3	1	\$389,186	3	9
Boylston	112	3	15	1	14.0 to 1	2	0	\$388,205	3	9
Brockton	57	1	18	1	13.8 to 1	2	1	\$239,460	4	9
Carver	82	2	17	1	13.8 to 1	2	0	\$301,922	4	9
Easton	101	3	40	3	15.0 to 1	1	0	\$413,767	2	9
Foxborough	107	3	26	2	14.2 to 1	2	0	\$413,120	2	9
Hamilton-Wenham	116	3	19	2	12.7 to 1	3	0	\$582,225	1	9
Hull	85	2	22	2	13.0 to 1	3	0	\$411,749	2	9
Littleton	113	3	23	2	17.9 to 1	1	0	\$384,156	3	9
Lynn	39	1	13	1	13.9 to 1	2	1	\$260,462	4	9
Mattapoisett	81	2	31	3	13.7 to 1	2	0	\$507,716	2	9
Medfield	168	4	40	3	15.0 to 1	1	0	\$581,710	1	9
Mendon-Upton	112	3	19	2	15.4 to 1	1	0	\$393,609	3	9
Methuen	55	1	21	2	14.7 to 1	1	1	\$300,473	4	9
Millis	136	4	16	1	15.6 to 1	1	0	\$379,589	3	9
Milton	70	2	53	4	15.1 to 1	1	1	\$529,533	1	9
Newburyport	128	3	15	1	13.5 to 1	3	0	\$468,605	2	9
Norton	110	3	11	1	15.4 to 1	1	0	\$327,236	4	9
Rochester	81	2	19	2	14.2 to 1	2	0	\$379,313	3	9
Saugus	64	2	19	2	15.1 to 1	1	1	\$363,391	3	9
Somerville	52	1	14	1	12.4 to 1	4	1	\$417,270	2	9
Swampscott	90	2	33	3	13.2 to 1	3	0	\$525,418	1	9
Walpole	114	3	26	2	14.0 to 1	2	0	\$442,102	2	9
Wareham	53	1	18	1	14.2 to 1	2	1	\$299,808	4	9
Beverly	70	2	26	2	14.3 to 1	2	0	\$446,817	2	8
Bridgewater-Raynham	90	2	25	2	18.1 to 1	1	0	\$353,319	3	8
Duxbury	126	3	33	3	15.1 to 1	1	0	\$653,955	1	8
Freetown	87	2	14	1	17.6 to 1	1	0	\$320,809	4	8
Georgetown	113	3	26	2	16.2 to 1	1	0	\$422,140	2	8
Haverhill	53	1	16	1	14.9 to 1	1	1	\$293,847	4	8
Medford	58	1	18	1	14.3 to 1	2	1	\$372,453	3	8
Middleborough	56	1	19	2	15.5 to 1	1	0	\$309,399	4	8
Pembroke	79	2	19	2	16.7 to 1	1	0	\$363,801	3	8
Prospect Hill Academy Charter	86	2	16	1	13.4 to 1	3	1	\$687,525	1	8
Stoneham	86	2	23	2	14.3 to 1	2	0	\$409,562	2	8
Gloucester	43	1	16	1	13.6 to 1	3	0	\$501,745	2	7
Marion	81	2	16	1	13.2 to 1	3	0	\$645,061	1	7
Rockland	57	1	18	1	16.2 to 1	1	0	\$296,459	4	7

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