



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

School District Examination Report:



**Saugus
Public Schools
Technical Report**

data driven

standards based

learner centered →



*The Education Management Audit Council
The Office for Educational Quality and Accountability*

2005 - 2007

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Office of Educational Quality and Accountability**

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After reviewing this report, the Educational Management Audit Council voted to accept its findings, with concerns, at its meeting on March 7, 2008.

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Executive Summary

The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA) examined the Saugus Public Schools in October 2007. With an English language arts (ELA) proficiency index of 86 proficiency index (PI) points and a math proficiency index of 73 PI points based on the 2007 MCAS test results, the district is considered a ‘Moderate’ performing school system based on the Department of Education’s rating system (found in Appendix A of this report), with achievement below the state average. On the 2007 MCAS tests, 62 percent of Saugus’ students scored at or above the proficiency standard in ELA and 46 percent did so in math.

District Overview

The town of Saugus is located in Essex County in eastern Massachusetts. Iron works played a role historically in the growth of the town, and the Saugus River supports the largest lobster fishing fleet in the state. The Route 1 corridor of this suburban town, heavily travelled by commuters to Boston, is renowned for its many retail stores and restaurants. The principal sources of employment within the community are in the sectors of education, health, and social services, and retail trade. The town has a Board of Selectmen/Town Manager/Representative Town Meeting form of government.

According to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR), Saugus had a median family income of \$65,782 in 1999, compared to the statewide median family income of \$63,706, ranking it 154 out of the 351 cities and towns in the commonwealth. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the town had a total population of 26,078, with a population of 4,324 school-age children, or 17 percent of the total. Of the total households in Saugus, 30 percent were households with children under 18 years of age. Nineteen percent of the population age 25 years or older held a bachelor’s degree or higher, compared to 33 percent statewide.

According to the Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE), in 2006-2007 the Saugus Public Schools had a total enrollment of 3,074. The demographic composition in the district was: 87.9 percent White, 5.5 percent Hispanic, 2.9 percent Asian, 2.2 percent African-American, 0.2 percent Native American, 0.2 Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 1.0 percent multi-race, non-Hispanic; 0.8 percent limited English proficient (LEP), 14.1 percent low income, and 15.0 percent special education. Eighty-four percent of school-age children in Saugus attended public

schools. The district does not participate in school choice. In 2006-2007, a total of 209 Saugus students attended public schools outside the district, including 137 students who attended Northeast Metro Tech High School, 14 students who attended Essex Agricultural and Technical High School, and 47 students who attended charter schools.

The district has six schools serving grades pre-kindergarten through 12, including two elementary schools serving grades pre-kindergarten through 5, two elementary schools serving grades kindergarten through 5, one middle school serving grades 6 through 8, and one high school serving grades 9 through 12. The administrative team consists of a superintendent, a business manager, and a director of pupil personnel. Each school has a principal, and the high school and the middle school have two assistant principals each. The district has a five-member school committee.

In FY 2007, Saugus's per pupil expenditure (preliminary), based on appropriations from all funds, was \$10,825, compared to \$11,789 statewide, ranking it 166 out of the 302 of 328 school districts reporting data. The district exceeded the state net school spending requirement in each year of the review period. From FY 2005 to FY 2007, net school spending increased from \$26,715,129 to \$29,767,040; Chapter 70 aid increased from \$3,382,514 to \$3,844,289; the required local contribution increased from \$21,830,995 to \$22,578,923; and the foundation enrollment decreased from 3,228 to 3,151. Chapter 70 aid as a percentage of actual net school spending increased from 12.7 to 12.9 percent over this period. From FY 2005 to FY 2006, total curriculum and instruction expenditures as a percentage of total net school spending increased from 59 to 60 percent.

Context

Saugus has a small town atmosphere away from the congested traffic on Route 1. The town relies on a commercial tax base with a rate almost triple the rate of residential taxes to support its schools. According to local newspapers, seeking political office in Saugus is a volatile issue, and residents continue to reelect long-standing incumbent candidates who campaign on a platform of keeping residential taxes down.

With the exception of one new school, Veterans Memorial, the school buildings in Saugus are aged, and most have at least one significant problem such as recurrent flooding, space issues, and

lack of books, school librarians, classroom resources, and infrastructure to support technology. The town maintains the aging schools sufficiently in that they are clean and well kept.

The comparatively low level of higher education attainment of adult residents of the town may influence the value of voter priorities, which, according to school department interviewees, rank as follows: 1) the low tax rate; 2) school sports; and 3) the quality of education. Parents told EQA team members that the respective parent-teacher organizations (PTOs) now raise major funds in most schools, and while this once supported the funding of “extras like field trips,” the money now supports needed essentials such as classroom furniture, which the school budget no longer funds.

The superintendent has been in Saugus for almost 10 years, and he described the relationship with the Saugus Educational Association (SEA) as being “hostile” until recently. Although he sought to retire in June 2007, he agreed to extend his contract for the 2007-2008 school year and will retire at the end of the year. During his term of service, he worked to raise the salary range of professional school employees to be competitive with surrounding towns to foster stability in the work force. Despite that, teachers and administrators in Saugus have a high rate of mobility, as they perceive the lack of support for education there as an issue that is not going to change. Five of six school principals in the district have been in Saugus for five years or less. In this prevailing climate, during the last five years the SEA has advocated various forms of “work to rule” for its teachers, which has prolonged a negative climate as well as limited the time available for teacher collaboration and professional development.

During the review period, the school district has experienced declining school budgets, and in 2007-2008, it had to cut \$3.2 million from its budget. At the same time, the superintendent negotiated contracts that will end in 2012. Settling the teacher contract was contingent upon the SEA agreeing to accept the state’s Group Insurance Commission (GIC) as the health insurance carrier. The town’s finances had reached the point where the town could no longer remain self-insured, and through the intervention of the Department of Revenue, the town will be able to join the GIC in January 1, 2008, which is earlier than allowed for other municipalities in the state. The town will continue to pay 90 percent of the cost of health insurance for five more years, after which the premium will be renegotiated.

Due to the reductions in the school budget over the last five years, the school department has lost staff members at all levels and in all areas of the district. Most recently, the district reassigned all former curriculum coordinators to full-time classroom positions, with the exception of the director of fine arts and music. According to interviewees, previous cost cuts occurred primarily at the elementary level. This round of cuts reduced student access to gym, art, music, and intervention by reading specialists. The scheduling of reading specialists no longer provides reading intervention for at-risk students and now supplies preparation time for teachers to fulfill the terms of the SEA contract. In 2007-2008, budget cuts hit hardest at the middle school, which has not been making adequate yearly progress (AYP) and has been underperforming for six years. In fact, during the last five years the middle school has lost 29 positions, 13 of which were cut prior to the start of the 2007-2008 school year. The budget cuts and resulting layoffs have left less than adequate time in the middle school schedule for teacher collaboration and for student support through grade team meetings. The middle school has many empty classrooms and class size has significantly increased.

According to parents interviewed, these ongoing budget cuts have undermined confidence in the district's ability to provide a well-rounded, supportive, and rigorous education without them having to pay additional fees for transportation and student activities. Parents told the EQA team that, as a result, more and more parents are withdrawing their students from the Saugus Public Schools and opting to pay tuition in private schools.

Recommendations

As a result of its examination, the EQA arrived at recommendations for the district, which were presented to the superintendent subsequent to the examination. They are as follows.

- Restore central office positions in the area of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Presently, the district has nobody working in these areas, which denies the district leadership and support in the most important areas of education.
- Restore support structure, grades K-12, in curriculum alignment, and place rigor back in the area of instruction.
- Institute an effective evaluation system compliant with state law to ensure quality of instruction.

The EQA Examination Process

The Massachusetts Legislature created the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability in July 2000 to provide independent and objective programmatic and financial audits of the 350-plus school districts that serve the cities and towns of the commonwealth. The agency is the accountability component of the Education Reform Act of 1993 envisioned in that legislation. The EQA works under the direction of a five-person citizen council, appointed by the governor, known as the Educational Management Audit Council (EMAC).

From October 22-25, 2007, the EQA conducted an independent examination of the Saugus Public Schools for the period 2005-2007, with a primary focus on 2007. This examination was based on the EQA's six major standards of inquiry that address the quality of educational management, which are: 1) Leadership, Governance, and Communication; 2) Curriculum and Instruction; 3) Assessment and Program Evaluation; 4) Human Resource Management and Professional Development; 5) Access, Participation, and Student Academic Support; and 6) Financial and Asset Management Effectiveness and Efficiency. The report is based on the source documents, correspondence sent prior to the on-site visit, interviews with the representatives from the school committee, the district leadership team, school administrators, and teachers, and additional documents submitted while in the district. The report does not consider documents, revised data, or comments that may have surfaced after the on-site visit.

For the period under examination, 2005-2007, Saugus Public Schools is considered to be a 'Moderate' performing school district, marked by student achievement that was 'High' in English language arts (ELA) and 'Moderate' in math on the 2007 MCAS tests. Over the examination period, student performance improved by two and one-half PI points in ELA and one-half PI point in math, which narrowed the district's proficiency gaps by 15 percent in ELA and two percent in math.

The following provides a summary of the district's performance on the 2007 Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests and the findings of the EQA examination.

Summary of Analysis of MCAS Student Achievement Data

Are all eligible students participating in required state assessments?

On the 2007 MCAS tests in ELA, math, and STE, eligible students in Saugus participated at levels that met or exceeded the state's 95 percent requirement.

Are the district's students reaching proficiency levels on the MCAS examination?

On average, over three-fifths of the students in Saugus Public Schools attained proficiency in English language arts (ELA) on the 2007 MCAS tests, nearly half of Saugus students attained proficiency in math, and approximately one-third attained proficiency in science and technology/engineering (STE). Eighty-eight percent of the Class of 2007 attained a Competency Determination.

- Saugus' ELA proficiency index on the 2007 MCAS tests was 86 proficiency index (PI) points. This resulted in a proficiency gap, the difference between its proficiency index and the target of 100, of 14 PI points, the same as the state's average proficiency gap in ELA. This gap would require an average improvement in performance of two PI points annually to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP).
- In 2007, Saugus' math proficiency index on the MCAS tests was 73 PI points, resulting in a proficiency gap of 27 PI points, three points wider than the state's average proficiency gap in math. This gap would require an average improvement of nearly four PI points per year to achieve AYP.
- Saugus' STE proficiency index in 2007 was 69 PI points, resulting in a proficiency gap of 31 PI points, three points wider than that statewide.

Has the district's MCAS test performance improved over time?

Between 2004 and 2007, Saugus' MCAS performance showed a slight decline in English language arts, slight improvement in math, and a decline in science and technology/engineering.

- Over the three-year period 2004-2007, ELA performance in Saugus declined slightly, by less than one-half PI point, which widened the proficiency gap by three percent. The percentage of students attaining proficiency in ELA decreased from 67 percent in 2004 to 55 percent in 2006 before increasing to 64 percent in 2007.

- Math performance in Saugus showed slight improvement over this period. Although there was no change in the proficiency index, the percentage of students attaining proficiency in math rose from 43 percent in 2004 to 47 percent in 2007.
- Between 2004 and 2007, Saugus had a decline in STE performance, at an average of two PI points annually over the three-year period. This resulted in a widening of the proficiency gap by 23 percent. The percentage of students attaining proficiency in STE decreased from 43 percent in 2004 to 32 percent in 2007.

Do MCAS test results vary among subgroups of students?

MCAS performance in 2007 varied considerably among subgroups of Saugus students. Of the six measurable subgroups in Saugus, the gap in performance between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups was 25 PI points in ELA and 32 PI points in math (regular education students, students with disabilities, respectively).

- The proficiency gaps in Saugus in 2007 in both ELA and math were wider than the district average for students with disabilities, Hispanic students, and low-income students (those participating in the free or reduced-cost lunch program).
- The proficiency gaps in ELA and math were narrower than the district average for regular education students, White students, and non low-income students.

Has the equity of MCAS test performance among the district's student subgroups improved over time?

In Saugus, the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in ELA narrowed from 27 PI points in 2004 to 25 PI points in 2007, and the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in math widened from 31 to 33 PI points over this period.

- Student with disabilities, Hispanic students, and low-income students had improved performance in ELA between 2004 and 2007. The more improved subgroup in ELA was Hispanic students, whose proficiency gap narrowed by 10 PI points.

- In math, the performance of Hispanic and non low-income students in Saugus improved between 2004 and 2007. The more improved subgroup in math was also Hispanic students, whose proficiency gap narrowed by close to nine PI points.

Fidelity of Implementation

A characteristic of effective educational organizations (schools and districts) is the strong alignment of goals, plans, processes, and actions—from the policymakers to the classroom. Therefore, the EQA has developed a protocol for assessing the alignment of these elements. The *fidelity of implementation* is an indicator of the consistency of execution of a district's expectations: its stated goals, plans, curricula, and various processes, down to the level of instruction. When these various components are consistent and highly aligned, a high level of fidelity of implementation exists. When these are inconsistent and poorly aligned, a low or poor level of fidelity of implementation exists. The classroom observation protocol is designed to collect evidence of district and school goals, plans, and expectations in the instructional setting.

The level of fidelity of implementation in Saugus was low. According to the district's strategic plan, the district's goals are to develop a facilities plan to raise structural, environmental, occupational, and educational standards; increase community awareness of the achievements and needs of the schools; improve student achievement as measured by standardized testing; improve and maintain a culture of trust, mutual respect, acceptance, and scholarship for students, parents, and staff members; maximize the acquisition, utilization, and integration of technology in the schools; and increase program offerings for students. School Improvement Plans (SIPs) iterated these district goals, which were focused on raising student achievement, especially making adequate yearly progress (AYP) in math; restoring lost programs at the middle school; improving the use of technology; and improving the school climate in each school. According to interviews with the superintendent, principals, teachers, and parents, the reductions in the budget in the last few years had dismantled curriculum implementation and supervision throughout the district, reduced the middle school staff to a critical level, and left the district with few options but to ask fewer people to take on more responsibilities, increase class sizes, and reduce resources to bare bones levels. The years of reduction in the budget coincided with contentious relations with the teachers' union, which had mandated four years of "work to rule" status. Combined with a failed override, the necessity for an emergency transfer of health coverage to the state Group Insurance

Commission (GIC), and new administrators in all but three schools in the last five years, from central office's perspective the district was trying to cope with the cutbacks and downturns in an effort to do the best it could with the resources it had available.

Administrators predicted that EQA examiners would see more formative assessment used in teaching reading and the beginning of the implementation of more consistency in the math curriculum at grades 4 and 5. The three elementary principals stated that the superintendent expected them to develop a horizontally aligned curriculum in ELA, math, and science with formative assessments and to develop common assessments. According to administrators, teachers at the middle school were trying to cope with larger classes, loss of planning time, too few resources, and new staff members. At the same time, the middle school was in the most precarious position, having failed to make AYP in math and moving from 'corrective action' status to 'restructuring' status. Although teachers were all focused on improving student achievement, they had no idea how that would realistically happen with significant cuts in personnel, a number of new math teachers, and dwindling resources including insufficient books for each child so they could take them home to do homework. Teachers were discouraged and trying to cope as best they could. According to administrators, at the high school the staff was focused on creating functional systems of data analysis and curriculum review and revision, creating consistency within departments, raising student achievement, and increasing accountability for teachers, students, and parents.

Similar negative yet common themes were repeated by teachers at all levels of the school district. They cited the lack of ongoing professional development focused on data analysis and improved instruction, the loss of support from curriculum coordinators at the middle school, the loss of planning time especially at the middle school, and increased class size. Teachers also stated that they had few classroom supplies, including an inadequate number of books for classroom instruction, which was most critical at the middle school. Although improving the use of technology was one of the district goals, technology use was almost non-existent at the middle school, spotty at the elementary level with the exception of the one new school (Veteran's Memorial), and progressing at the high school through the solicitation from and donation of equipment by local businesses, which the high school was able to use. Parents from school councils, especially at the elementary and middle levels, told examiners that they were having

fundraisers that formerly provided only extras such as field trips or special performances. Parents agreed that they were now being asked to fund essential purchases of school staples, which they felt the school budget should be providing for the schools. Parents expressed the concern that funding issues were undermining parents' confidence in the town's support of the schools, especially at the middle school. They told the EQA that many parents were withdrawing their children and sending them to non-public schools, reflected in declining numbers of students in the district.

In conclusion, the district is experiencing a low level of fidelity of implementation since most of the systems in the district are not working well enough to produce the desired results. These systems include K-12 assessment, curriculum alignment, professional development to improve instruction, program evaluation to save funds as well as to improve instruction, and the evaluation of personnel. Additionally, the process of negotiating contracts and developing systems for financial planning are putting additional stress on the entire system, resulting in reductions of personnel and the need to address cumulative reductions in the school district budget.

Standard Summaries

Leadership, Governance, and Communication

The EQA examiners gave the Saugus Public Schools an overall rating of 'Unsatisfactory' on this standard. They rated the district as 'Satisfactory' on one, 'Needs Improvement' on five, and 'Unsatisfactory' on eight of the 14 performance indicators in this standard.

According to interviewees, the Saugus Public Schools seemed to lack a coordinated administrative team effort during the period under review. The district appeared to operate as a system of autonomous schools rather than as a school system. Administrators commented that until 2006-2007, the elementary principals met rarely, if at all, as a team to discuss common issues, concerns, and strategies. Throughout the EQA review process, leadership personnel and teachers provided information that indicated the district lacked a systems approach in areas such as program evaluation, data analysis, vertical articulation of curriculum, replacement of textbooks and equipment, professional development, school building maintenance, and capital improvements.

Some interviewees indicated that the superintendent had a passing familiarity with issues rather than being “on top of the issues.” One example cited was the information that the superintendent requested from the principals after the development of their School Improvement Plans (SIPs). The superintendent mentioned that he did not read the School Improvement Plans but instead had the principals share with him only those items they considered “out of the ordinary.” Administrators stated that very little discussion about student assessment results occurred among them. In addition, the superintendent remarked that he did not include statements about MCAS test results or progress toward attainment of SIP goals in the few principal evaluations he wrote during the three years under review. Furthermore, the superintendent did not have the principals present any status reports to the school committee on progress made toward attaining the SIP goals.

Administrators reported that the superintendent established a volunteer committee to assist him with the development of the strategic plan. According to some interviewees, the committee was not representative of all key stakeholder groups and was inconsistent throughout the development process. This strategic plan was not standards based nor did it align with the School Improvement Plans of the district’s six schools.

Interviewees expressed the need to improve vertical articulation of the curriculum across grades K-12. The interviewees stated that budget reductions resulted in the elimination of an elementary curriculum specialist and an increase in the teaching assignments, from part time to full time, of the grades 6-12 curriculum specialists. The interviewees also mentioned that the current schedule of the curriculum specialists, who teach at the high school, limited their availability to the teachers in their respective departments at the middle school.

Some interviewees stated that the school committee assumed a passive role rather than take a proactive leadership role as a strong advocate for the school department’s budget. School committee members indicated that their regular meetings and budget work session were open to the public and received coverage from two local newspapers and from local cable television.

Interviewees periodically commented about the “perception of mistrust” the community had of its town leaders and the impact it had on both the school department and the municipal departments. However, the superintendent and the town manager spoke favorably about their

working relationship with one another and the positive relationship between subordinate leaders in the schools (e.g., finance manager and principals) and municipal departments (e.g., police and fire). In contrast, members of the administrative team described an adversarial relationship between the school committee and the Saugus Teachers' Association, especially regarding the negotiations on the last collective bargaining agreement.

Curriculum and Instruction

The EQA examiners gave the Saugus Public Schools an overall rating of 'Needs Improvement' on this standard. They rated the district as 'Needs Improvement' on seven and 'Unsatisfactory' on four of the 11 performance indicators in this standard.

The documented curriculum in Saugus lacked a common format and many components to make it effective and complete. The curriculum was most complete at the high school level and least viable at the elementary level, where gaps existed in the mathematics sequence, the curriculum in English language arts (ELA) was not current, and the science curriculum consisted of the textbook publisher's program. At the middle school, the documented curriculum consisted of a course description in each domain at each grade level. In mathematics, pacing guides accompanied the descriptions. The grade 6 mathematics text was outdated and unaligned with the state framework.

Curricula in all tested areas did not align horizontally and vertically. Horizontal and vertical alignment was strongest at the high school level where curriculum documents were complete and accountability tools were in place. At the middle school level, content and expectations were uniform within a course at a grade level, and there was a sequential progression in knowledge and skills from course to course within a discipline. At the elementary level, with the exception of that written by the publishers of textbooks, curricula were largely undocumented, and little existed to ensure horizontal and vertical alignment.

The district lacked infrastructure to enable vertical alignment of the curriculum at the junctures between the elementary and middle school levels and the middle and high school levels. The capacity for curriculum leadership in Saugus had eroded due to lack of funding. The principals were the curriculum leaders of their schools, but they performed this role with ever diminishing support. Saugus lacked a cyclical process for the regular and timely review of district curricula.

Curriculum development was often *ad hoc*, fragmentary, incomplete, and dependent upon initiative, with the exception of the high school.

Saugus used program requirements and summative achievement data to allocate instructional time. The time allotments for ELA and mathematics increased at the elementary level, and the district added a twice-weekly long block at the high school to accommodate lab periods and to permit more in depth learning. A common understanding about high expectations for student work and mastery was not evident in Saugus. Elementary administrators defined high expectations as encouraging all students to exceed their own last efforts and not underestimating what students could do. Secondary administrators equated high expectations with the setting of higher standards for graduation and eligibility for accelerated programs.

Activities such as analysis of student achievement results, instructional monitoring, resource acquisition, and professional development were loosely linked at the district level. These activities were integrated more systematically at the high school level, and at the K-3 grade span through the adoption of the early reading program beginning in 2004-2005.

Educational technology was obsolete, often in disrepair, inadequately provided, and inequitably distributed across the district. Saugus implemented a philosophy of inclusion, minimizing the separation of special education students from the mainstream program, but district support for this model was insufficient and dwindling, especially with budget reductions. Achievement and graduation rates were low for district special education students and the dropout rate was high.

Assessment and Program Evaluation

The EQA examiners gave the Saugus Public Schools an overall rating of ‘Needs Improvement’ on this standard. They rated the district as ‘Satisfactory’ on one, ‘Needs Improvement’ on four, and ‘Unsatisfactory’ on three of the eight performance indicators in this standard.

The Saugus Public Schools lacked a systematic method to collect and analyze student assessment results across the district. The district leadership did not designate a person with statistical analysis skills to direct the data analysis effort. When MCAS data became available, building administrators used TestWiz to analyze the data and disseminated the analysis to the staff. Administrators learned how to use TestWiz on their own or with the help of other administrators.

Building administrators and their teachers used MCAS test data and other internal assessment results to make changes in instructional programming.

At the elementary level, administrators focused on mathematics as an area of need. The math curriculum needed alignment to the state framework and consistency from grade to grade and school to school. A trend analysis of MCAS results in literacy revealed the need for an early intervention program. The district implemented a new reading program and adopted the DIBELS assessment program in grades K-3. Time allocations in literacy and math increased to 90 minutes to accommodate the implementation of new programs. Increases in time for ELA and mathematics resulted in less time for science and social studies.

The middle school added “success blocks” to its programming. Due to staff reductions, students had fewer special subject teachers and the “success blocks” allowed the school to provide an extra quarter of each core subject area for students in grades 6 and 7. The high school changed to a modified block schedule where two long blocks per week accommodated lab periods, in-depth learning, and cooperative learning. High school administrators scheduled common planning time for staff members, developed pacing guides for all courses, and standardized midyear and final exams.

The district had no procedures to carry out any systematic, sequential, multiyear, or system-wide reviews to measure the effectiveness of its instructional or support programs. District leaders relied on assessment results, mainly those from the MCAS tests, to monitor student achievement and improve programs.

The budget largely determined decision-making regarding instructional programs and student support services. Budget cuts in art, music, and physical education affected the teacher preparation periods at the elementary schools. The reading support staff had to cover teacher preparation periods, which diminished the effectiveness of student support services. The loss of staff members changed teaming at the middle school from three teams per grade level to two. Budget cuts ruled out common planning time for teachers to engage in discussions about curriculum, instruction, assessments, and transitions. The middle school lacked basic resources such as textbooks and technology. The high school used grants and business partnerships to bolster its academic programs and technology.

The district informed the community about test results through individual school report cards and the annual school report. Parents received individual quarterly progress reports and student report cards. Administrators shared annual MCAS test results with the school committee. Local newspapers publicized school test results and other information. The school district had a website and all schools had Connect-ED. Interviewees stated that the community did not trust the spending of the school department or the town, and did not support overrides or additional money for its schools. According to all interviewees, education was not seen as a top priority for the town.

Human Resource Management and Professional Development

The EQA examiners gave the Saugus Public Schools an overall rating of ‘Needs Improvement’ on this standard. They rated the district as ‘Needs Improvement’ on seven and ‘Unsatisfactory’ on six of the 13 performance indicators in this standard.

The Saugus Public Schools was lacking a number of effective systems in human resource areas such as supervision and evaluation, support for new and recently transferred teachers or those on waiver, and professional development, the latter due to lack of funding and time available within the school day and school year.

The school committee formally evaluated the superintendent four times in nine years. The superintendent did not evaluate the administrators annually. Administrators were not required to submit in writing the goals that they hoped to accomplish each year, they were not evaluated on the accomplishment of those goals or SIP goals, and the improvement of student achievement had little or no impact on whether the principal or administrator continued to be employed in that leadership position. Collegial relationships were just beginning with the hiring of three of four elementary principals, who were choosing to work together as a team, which would also serve to improve horizontal alignment in the district.

Many teachers had been in Saugus their whole careers although they were rarely evaluated. The EQA examiners found very few evaluations in teachers’ files. Although the principals in Saugus had similar prior training, such as in Skillful Teacher methods, in the past, the district lacked coordination in the supervision and evaluation of teachers. Furthermore, Saugus lacked supervision of new principals, who had the responsibility of completing many evaluations for the

first time and were, according to interviewees, influenced by the ways things had historically been done in the district.

Most of the newer teachers were recruited locally or from the Department of Education website. Many of the new teachers interviewed had remarkably similar backgrounds in that they lived in Saugus or grew up there, or knew many people there. Sometimes they were making a career change; often they attained a master's degree from a college that gave credit for experience, and usually had not yet student taught under the supervision of a college program.

Despite the fact that the district had more new teachers each year, it did not have an efficient and updated mentoring program, provided no updated training for mentoring teachers, lacked central coordination and supervision as a program, and was unable to fund mentors for all of the staff members who needed one.

Programs for professional development were reactive and filled with meeting mandatory requirements, rather than developed by looking at the needs of each school or the district as a whole. Most teachers in Saugus had not received much professional development in MCAS data analysis. MCAS data analysis was more participatory at the high school, which had resident lead teachers to lead the other teachers through an analysis of the data. Overall, very little disaggregated data analysis was done across the district with the exception of grades K-3 where teachers were receiving ongoing in-service to learn to analyze and use DIBELS data. In addition, professional development funding and time for collaboration was minimal across the district, providing little opportunity for teachers to learn and implement more effective practices that would provide support structures for students in need or raise the rigor of academics.

Resources and staffing appeared to vary widely from school to school and were not connected to student achievement scores. For example, the middle school was visibly the most lacking in the areas of staffing, stability of personnel, textbooks and resources, technology, common planning time within the school day, and facilities. Yet the middle school was also the only school in the district where students had not made adequate yearly progress (AYP) for a number of years, and the school was in restructuring due to low math achievement.

Some elementary schools with extremely well organized and active PTOs or business partners had been better able to withstand the adverse effects of reductions in the school department budget, while others had not fared as well, resulting in a lack of equity among school buildings. Some elementary schools in more affluent areas of the town were better able to adapt to cutbacks in staffing and resources through fundraising efforts and through support from stay-at-home mothers and fathers who signed up as parent volunteers to supervise students in the library or lunchrooms. In contrast, the new school elementary school was well equipped and able to provide many opportunities that the other schools could not provide, even with successful fundraising efforts. It was staffed and resourced well with the exception that it had double the number of students but no full-time assistant principal.

Access, Participation, and Student Academic Support

The EQA examiners gave the Saugus Public Schools an overall rating of ‘Needs Improvement’ on this standard. They rated the district as ‘Satisfactory’ on five, ‘Needs Improvement’ on seven, and ‘Unsatisfactory’ on one of the 13 performance indicators in this standard.

Although struggling with the detrimental effects of chronic budget cuts, the district endeavored to provide an adequate range of educational services and supplemental programs to meet student learning needs and improve academic achievement. A variety of early intervention services, remedial, and supplementary programs in both regular and special education were utilized across the district. In some cases, however, staffing reductions and/or funding limitations have affected the quality and/or timeliness of support services such as remedial/developmental reading and MCAS remediation. The district has increased the use, particularly in the elementary schools, of standardized diagnostic and formative assessments in reading (DIBELS). This has served to generate more and better student achievement data and to identify students performing below grade level. The district’s limited English proficient (LEP) student population has grown steadily, and although the district has made efforts to develop an appropriate program, the need to continue to expand the quality and range of LEP support services remains, as indicated by the DOE Coordinated Program Review (CPR) and statements of administrators and staff members.

Administrators and staff members acknowledged that the district conducted little regular or systematic analysis of subgroup participation in advanced and/or accelerated academic programs.

They could not accurately describe the degree to which subgroup enrollment or achievement rates paralleled those of the overall student population. A review of the data revealed that students from the district's two primary subgroups, the low-income and special education populations, were significantly underrepresented in higher level programs. It was also noted that the elimination of gifted and talented programs in the elementary schools and the reduction of honors level courses at the middle school has adversely affected the ability of all students to access higher level programs.

All schools in the district had developed comprehensive attendance policies and accompanying implementation procedures. Each school's student handbook contained detailed attendance policies, enforcement practices, and academic consequences for exceeding absence limits. Administrators consistently followed procedures used by the schools to support student attendance and punctuality expectations, including notification letters, phone calls, and parent conferences. With the exception of the high school, average daily attendance rates in the district were at or just above state averages. In contrast, in 2007 the student attendance rate at Saugus High School was below the state average, and the average number of days absent and the percentage of students who were chronically absent from school in grades 7-12 were above the state averages. Disaggregated analysis of district attendance data indicated considerably higher absenteeism rates among the special education and low-income student populations at all grade levels.

Comprehensive policies, procedures, and practices relative to student discipline, promotion, retention, suspension, and exclusion were presented in all student handbooks in a clear, detailed manner. School policies were annually reviewed, and student handbooks were distributed to all families served. The use of the Connect-ED telephone system, email, and expanded school websites enhanced communication between schools and parents. In addition, the high school used K-12 Planet (a school to home electronic portal) that greatly enhanced parent access to student information. Analysis of data revealed that Saugus High School's 2007 dropout and out-of-school suspension rates were both well above state averages. When questioned, school administrators responded that they were not aware of this. They indicated that the district lacked any formal dropout prevention policies or programs and instead attempted to deal with at-risk students on an individual case-by-case basis.

Financial and Asset Management Effectiveness and Efficiency

The EQA examiners gave the Saugus Public Schools an overall rating of ‘Needs Improvement’ on this standard. They rated the district as ‘Satisfactory’ on two, ‘Needs Improvement’ on five, and ‘Unsatisfactory’ on six of the 13 performance indicators in this standard.

The budget process in Saugus was open and clear, and included input from all school teachers and administrators; however, this input did not survive the budget cuts as the budget development went forward. The resulting budget document was clear, current, and understandable but not complete as it did not contain revolving fund figures or future trends.

The decision-making in the budget review process did not appear to be based upon student assessment data, as the EQA examiners could find no evidence nor was any presented of the use of aggregated or disaggregated student assessment data in the development of the district’s final budget approved at town meeting. Because of the cuts made during the period under review, the school district budgets did not reflect the school committee’s initial priorities nor the district’s consideration of student achievement early in the budget development.

The town officials stated that the town was at its levy limit, and two override votes in the last five years had failed. In effect, the town manager, who felt that he had allotted the maximum amount of dollars possible to the school district, controlled the school district budget through recommendations to the finance committee and the town meeting.

The school district received approximately 37 percent of the town’s revenues during the period under review. The increases in funds in the administrative and educational parts of the district’s budget for the years under review did not allow for maintenance of educational effort by the district. Educational services to students had been reduced during each of the years under review. School administrators and town officials told EQA examiners that attempted overrides had been defeated in a general election by a margin of more than two to one. Any grant funds received were mainly from entitlement grants as the district did not actively seek out competitive grants.

Budget reductions were a common concern expressed repeatedly to the EQA examiners. On several occasions interviewees stated that in the last three years the district eliminated 58 staff positions, increased class sizes to as many as 29 students in some classes, reduced or eliminated

programs and services, provided inadequate funds for supplies, textbooks and equipment, and expended no budget monies for professional development. The FY 2008 budget was approximately \$3 million under maintenance of student services budget.

All maintenance of school facilities was under the control of the town manager, as requests for maintenance were forwarded to the head of a maintenance crew who reported only to the town manager. The district's schools were well lit and well maintained. The examiners were told that all six schools were deficient in the electrical service needed to support modern educational equipment. Five of the six schools did not have the facilities to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The Belmonte Middle School has had a serious water problem in its school auditorium, which had been flooded at least twice. The school has had to install and keep four large water pumps operating constantly in order to keep groundwater out of the school. An abatement of a crawl space mold problem under the school involved filling the space with concrete; this has prevented installation of new technology in the school because of the impossibility of installing additional electrical lines through that space. Parents expressed to the examiners their perception that the mold problem still existed.

The district had developed a crisis plan, drafted by a committee that included representatives of the police and fire departments, a local hospital representative, and school personnel. The crisis plan covered fire, flood, intrusions into school buildings, and weather related emergencies. The plan was distributed to all school staff members, the police and fire officials, and local hospital administrators. Teachers were instructed to keep the plan in a prominent place in their classrooms, although few were observed by EQA examiners, with the exception of the elementary schools. Three of the elementary schools were not locked when the examiners arrived. All of the schools had a remote entry system monitored by remote cameras.

Analysis of MCAS Student Achievement Data

The EQA's analysis of student achievement data focuses on the MCAS test results for 2004-2007, with primary attention paid to the 2007 MCAS tests. This analysis is framed by the following five essential questions:

- 1. Achievement: Are the district's students reaching proficiency levels on the MCAS examination?**
- 2. Equity of Achievement: Do MCAS test results vary among subgroups of students?**
- 3. Improvement: Has the district's MCAS test performance improved over time?**
- 4. Equity of Improvement: Has the equity of MCAS test performance among the district's student subgroups improved over time?**
- 5. Participation: Are all eligible students participating in required state assessments?**

In order to respond accurately to these questions, the EQA subjected the most current state and district MCAS test results to a series of analyses to determine whether there were differences between the mean results of district students and those of students statewide or among student subgroups within the district. Descriptive analyses of the 2007 MCAS test results revealed differences between the achievement of students in Saugus and the average scores of students in Massachusetts.

To highlight those differences, the data were then summarized in several ways: a performance-level based summary of student achievement in Saugus; and comparative analyses of subject-area, grade, school, and subgroup achievement in relation to that of students statewide, in relation to the district averages, and in relation to other subject areas, grades, and subgroups.

The EQA then subjected the data to gap analysis, a statistical method that describes the relationship between student aggregate and subgroup performance and the state standard or target of 100 percent proficiency on the MCAS tests. Gap analysis also describes the relative achievement of different entities at a specific point in time, as well as how those relationships change over time. Gap analysis consists of several separate indicators, each of which builds on the others, and can be applied to a district, school, or subgroup of students.

The basis for gap analysis is the *proficiency index*, which is a measure of student performance that shows whether students have attained or are making progress toward proficiency, or meeting the state standard. The unit of measure is proficiency index (PI) points, and a score of 100 indicates that all students in the aggregate or in a subgroup are proficient. It can be calculated for

overall achievement as well as achievement in an individual subject. Please see Appendix A for more detailed information about the proficiency index.

The *proficiency gap* is a measure of the number of proficiency index points by which student achievement must improve to meet the goal of proficiency for all students. It is the gap or difference between the current level of proficiency as measured by the proficiency index and the target of 100. A gap of zero indicates that all students in the aggregate or in a subgroup are proficient.

The *performance gap* is a measure of the range of, or variance in, achievement among different student subgroups within a district or school at a specific point in time. It measures the differences between the proficiency index of the highest-performing subgroup and those of the other subgroups. It also measures the difference in performance between any two entities. When the performance gap narrows over time, equity increases; when it widens over time, equity decreases.

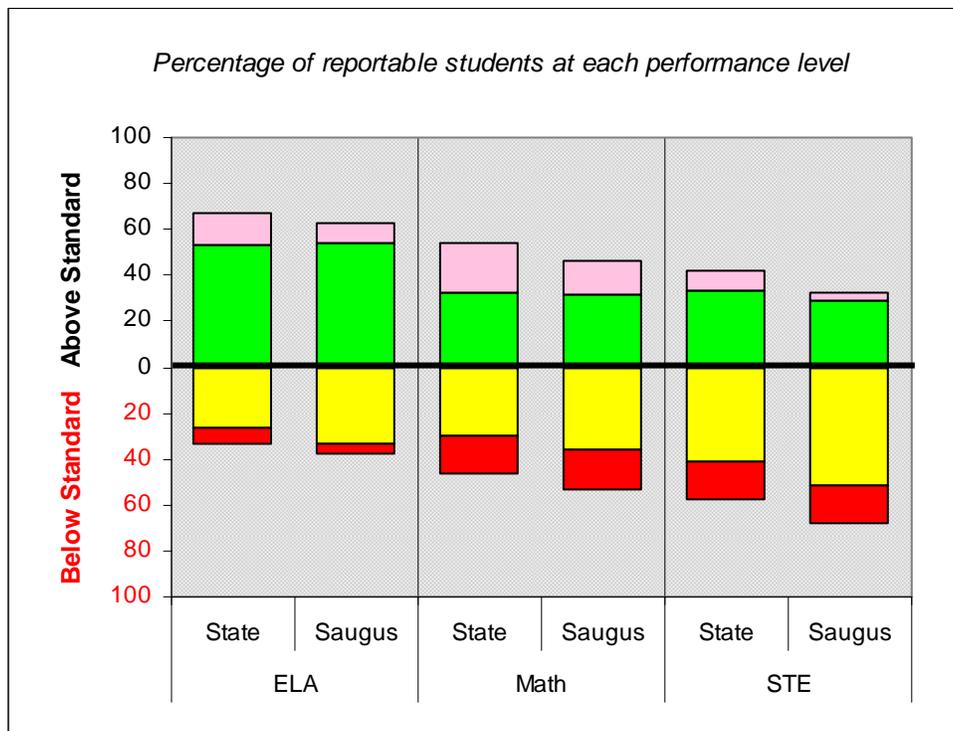
Achievement

Are the district's students reaching proficiency levels on the MCAS examination?

Findings:

- On average, over three-fifths of the students in Saugus Public Schools attained proficiency in English language arts (ELA) on the 2007 MCAS tests, nearly half of Saugus students attained proficiency in math, and approximately one-third attained proficiency in science and technology/engineering (STE). Eighty-eight percent of the Class of 2007 attained a Competency Determination.
- Saugus' ELA proficiency index on the 2007 MCAS tests was 86 proficiency index (PI) points. This resulted in a proficiency gap, the difference between its proficiency index and the target of 100, of 14 PI points, the same as the state's average proficiency gap in ELA. This gap would require an average improvement in performance of two PI points annually to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP).
- In 2007, Saugus' math proficiency index on the MCAS tests was 73 PI points, resulting in a proficiency gap of 27 PI points, three points wider than the state's average proficiency gap in math. This gap would require an average improvement of nearly four PI points per year to achieve AYP.
- Saugus' STE proficiency index in 2007 was 69 PI points, resulting in a proficiency gap of 31 PI points, three points wider than that statewide.

Figure/Table 1: MCAS Test Performance by Subject, 2007



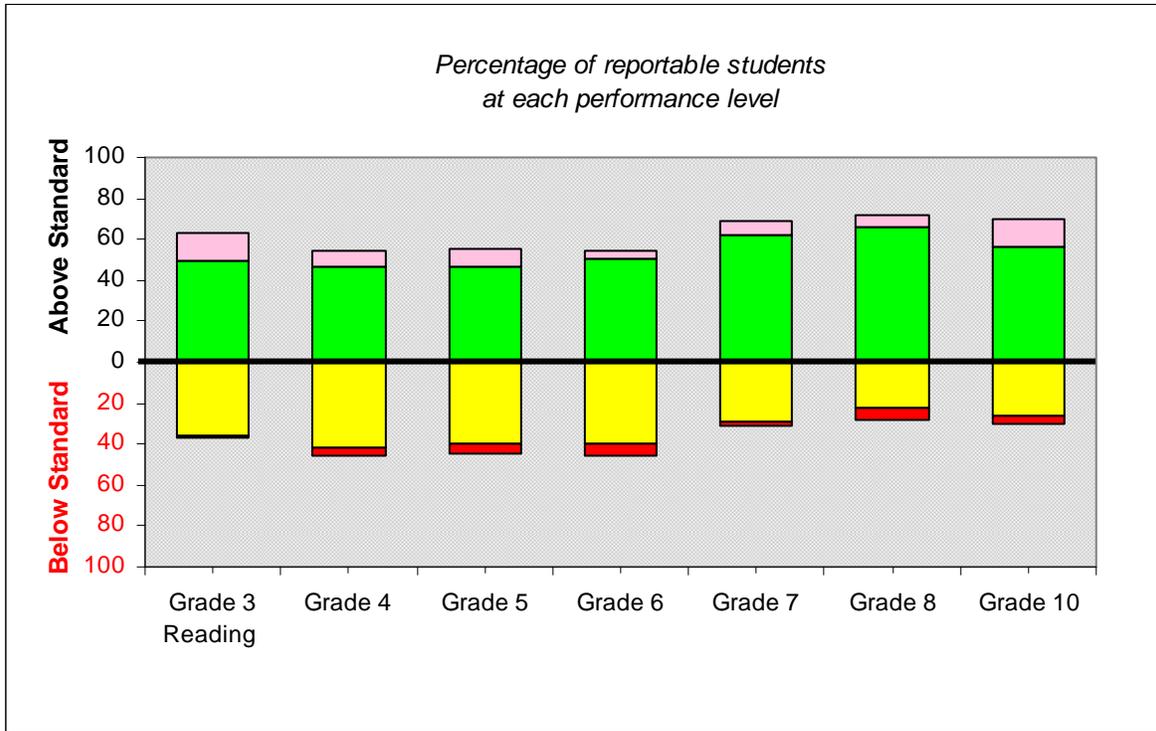
		ELA		Math		STE	
		State	Saugus	State	Saugus	State	Saugus
	Advanced	13	8	22	15	9	3
	Proficient	53	54	32	31	34	29
	Needs Improvement	27	33	30	36	41	51
	Warning/Failing	7	4	17	18	17	17
Percent Attaining Proficiency		66	62	54	46	43	32
Proficiency Index (PI)		85.7	85.7	76.1	72.8	72.1	68.5

In 2007, achievement in English language arts (ELA), math, and science and technology/engineering (STE) was lower in Saugus than statewide. In Saugus, 62 percent of students attained proficiency in ELA, compared to 66 percent statewide; 46 percent attained proficiency in math, compared to 54 percent statewide; and 32 percent attained proficiency in STE, compared to 43 percent statewide.

The 2007 proficiency index for Saugus students in ELA was 86 PI points, the same as that statewide; in math, it was 73 PI points, compared to 76 points statewide; and in STE, it was 69 PI points, compared to 72 points statewide.

The ELA proficiency gap for Saugus students in 2007 was 14 PI points, the same as that statewide, and would require an average improvement of two PI points annually to make AYP. Saugus' math proficiency gap in 2007 was 27 PI points, compared to 24 PI points statewide, and would require an average improvement of nearly four PI points per year to make AYP. Saugus' STE proficiency gap was 31 PI points, compared to 28 PI points statewide.

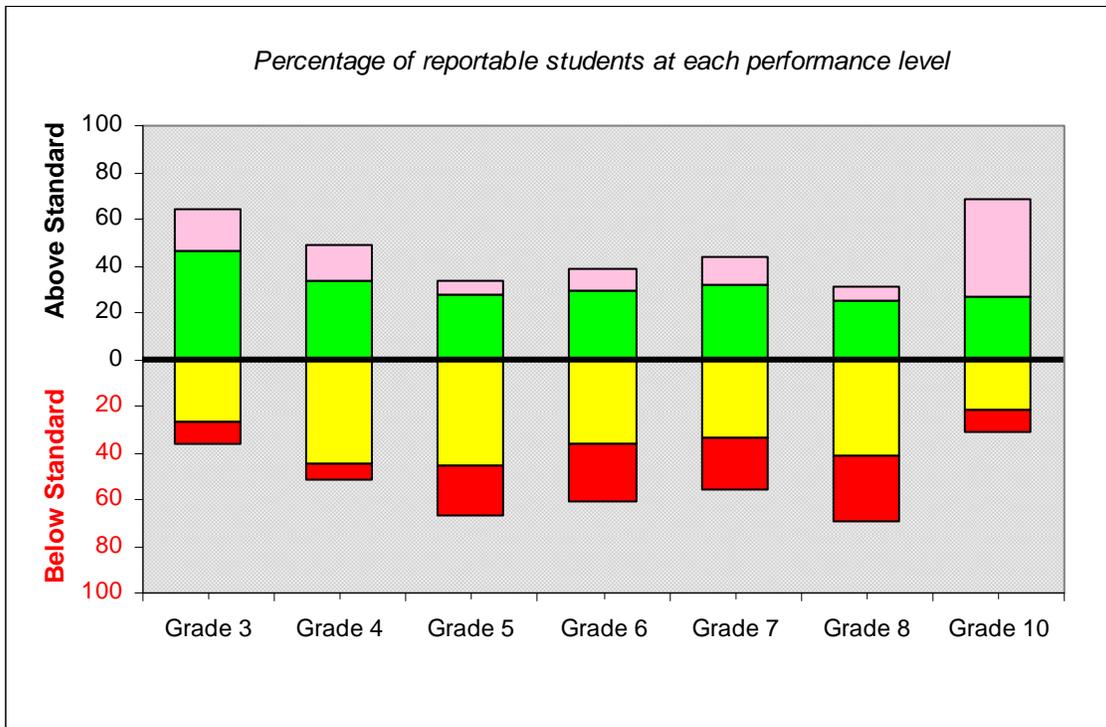
Figure/Table 2: MCAS English Language Arts (ELA) Test Performance by Grade, 2007



		Grade 3 Reading	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 10
	Advanced	14	8	9	4	6	6	13
	Proficient	50	47	46	51	62	66	56
	Needs Improvement	36	42	40	40	29	22	26
	Warning/Failing	1	4	5	6	3	6	4
	Percent Attaining Proficiency	64	55	55	55	68	72	69

The percentage of Saugus students attaining proficiency in ELA in 2007 varied by grade level, ranging from a low of 55 percent at grades 4, 5, and 6 to a high of 72 percent at grade 8.

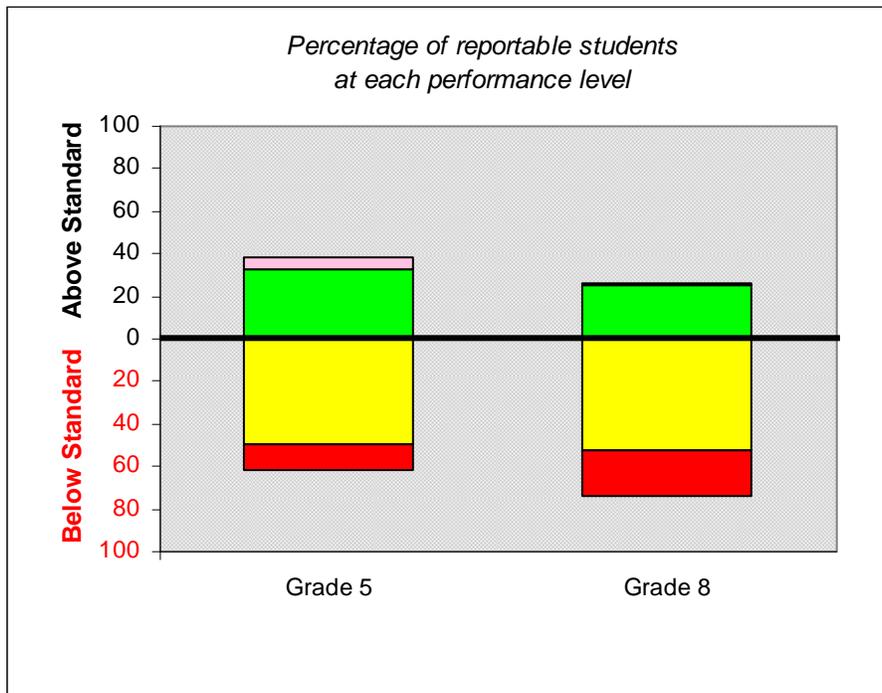
Figure/Table 3: MCAS Math Test Performance by Grade, 2007



		Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 10
	Advanced	18	15	6	10	12	6	42
	Proficient	46	34	27	29	32	25	27
	Needs Improvement	27	44	45	36	33	42	22
	Warning/Failing	10	7	21	25	23	27	10
	Percent Attaining Proficiency	64	49	33	39	44	31	69

The percentage of Saugus students attaining proficiency in math in 2007 varied even more by grade level, ranging from a low of 31 percent at grade 8 to a high of 69 percent at grade 10.

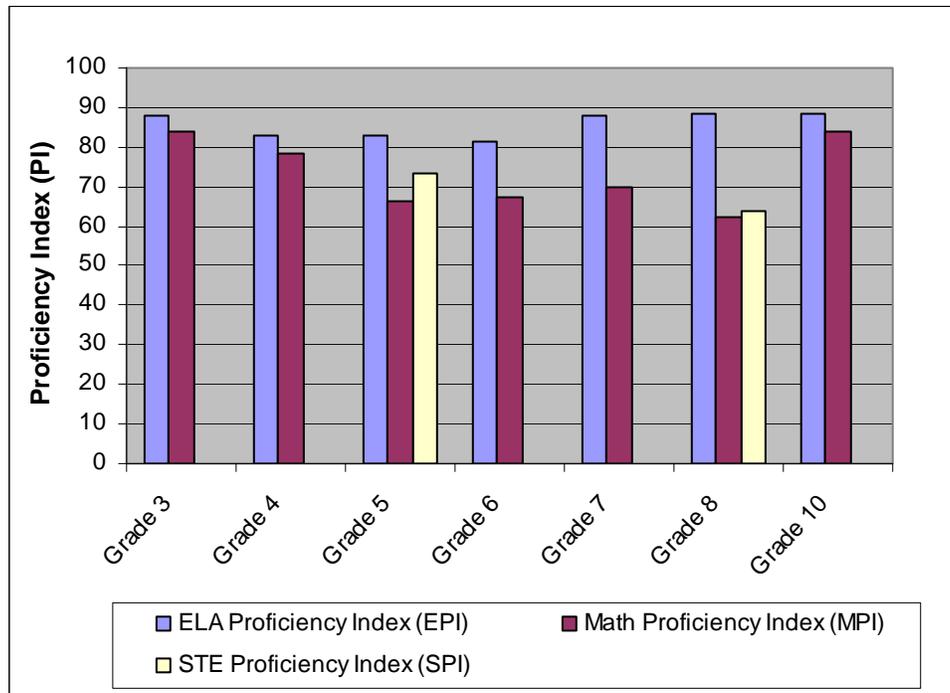
Figure/Table 4: MCAS Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) Test Performance by Grade, 2007



		Grade 5	Grade 8
	Advanced	6	0
	Proficient	33	25
	Needs Improvement	49	53
	Warning/Failing	12	21
	Percent Attaining Proficiency	39	25

In Saugus in 2007, 39 percent of grade 5 students attained proficiency in STE, and 25 percent of grade 8 students did so.

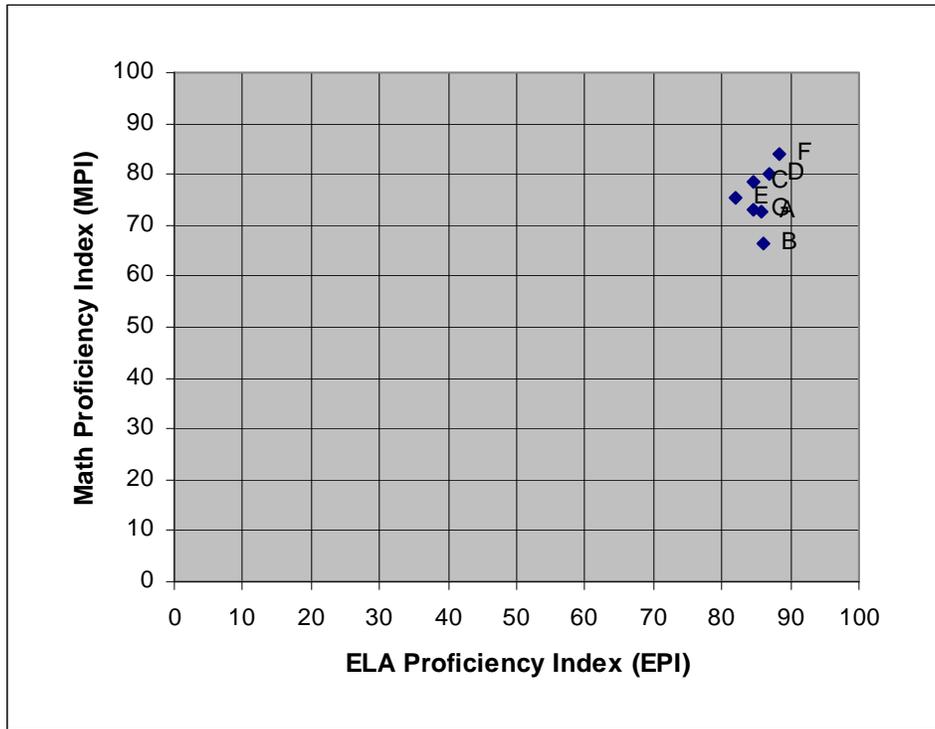
Figure/Table 5: MCAS Proficiency Indices by Grade and Subject, 2007



	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 10
ELA Proficiency Index (EPI)	88.0	82.8	83.1	81.3	88.1	88.4	88.3
Math Proficiency Index (MPI)	83.7	78.5	66.5	67.3	70.0	62.1	84.0
STE Proficiency Index (SPI)			73.2			64.0	

The performance of Saugus students on the 2007 MCAS tests at every grade level was strongest in ELA and weakest in math. Saugus' ELA proficiency gap in 2007 ranged from a low of 12 PI points at grades 3, 7, 8, and 10 to a high of 19 PI points at grade 6. Saugus' math proficiency gap ranged from a low of 16 PI points at grades 3 and 10 to a high of 38 PI points at grade 8. Saugus' STE proficiency gap was 27 PI points at grade 5 and 36 PI points at grade 8.

Figure/Table 6: MCAS ELA Proficiency Index (EPI) vs. Math Proficiency Index (MPI) by School, 2007



		ELA PI	Math PI	Number of Tests
A	Saugus district average	85.7	72.8	3,525
B	Belmonte Middle	86.0	66.4	1,582
C	Douglas Waybright Elem	84.5	78.4	280
D	Saugushurst Elem	86.8	79.9	314
E	Oaklandvale Elem	82.0	75.2	250
F	Saugus High	88.3	84.0	478
G	Veterans Memorial Elem	84.5	73.2	621

MCAS performance in ELA among Saugus’ schools was fairly comparable in 2007, while math performance varied. The ELA proficiency gap ranged from a low of 12 PI points at Saugus High School to a high of 18 PI points at Oaklandvale Elementary School. The math proficiency gap in 2007 ranged from a low of 16 PI points at Saugus High School to a high of 34 PI points at Belmonte Middle School.

Equity of Achievement

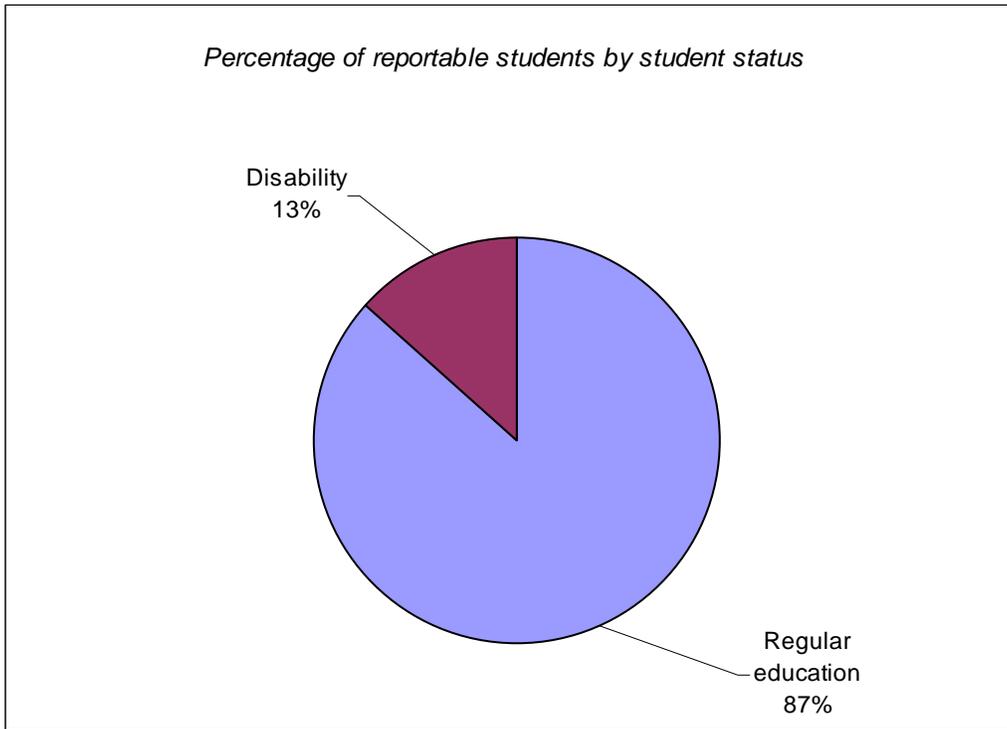
Do MCAS test results vary among subgroups of students?

Findings:

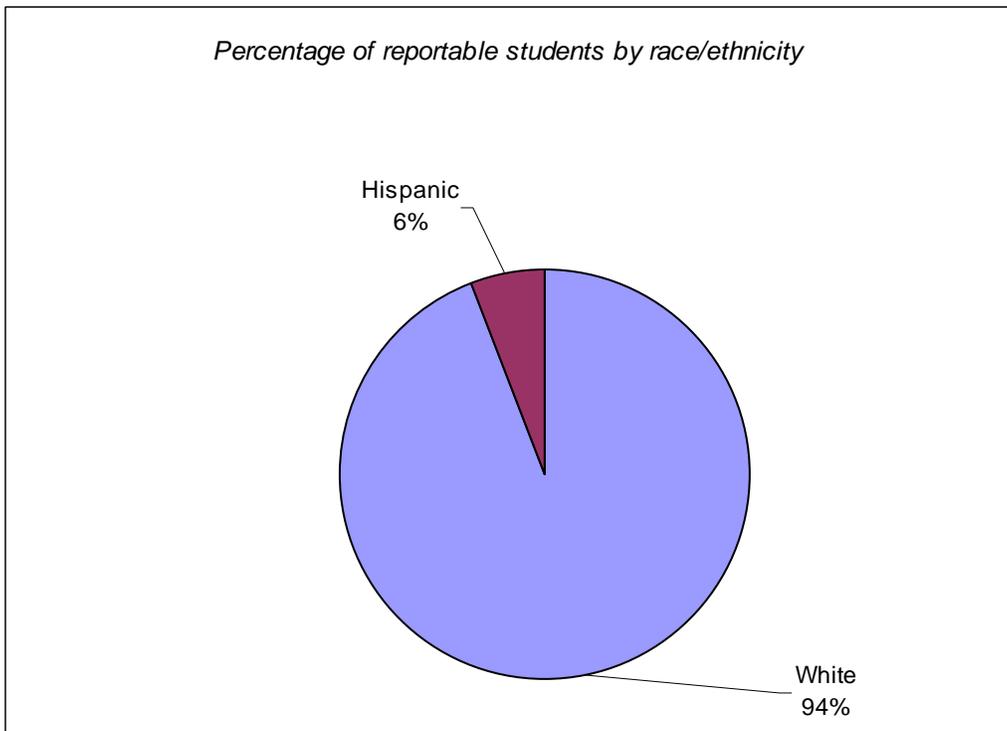
- MCAS performance in 2007 varied considerably among subgroups of Saugus students. Of the six measurable subgroups in Saugus, the gap in performance between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups was 25 PI points in ELA and 32 PI points in math (regular education students, students with disabilities, respectively).
- The proficiency gaps in Saugus in 2007 in both ELA and math were wider than the district average for students with disabilities, Hispanic students, and low-income students (those participating in the free or reduced-cost lunch program).
- The proficiency gaps in ELA and math were narrower than the district average for regular education students, White students, and non low-income students.

Figures 7 A-C/Table 7: Student Population by Reportable Subgroups, 2007

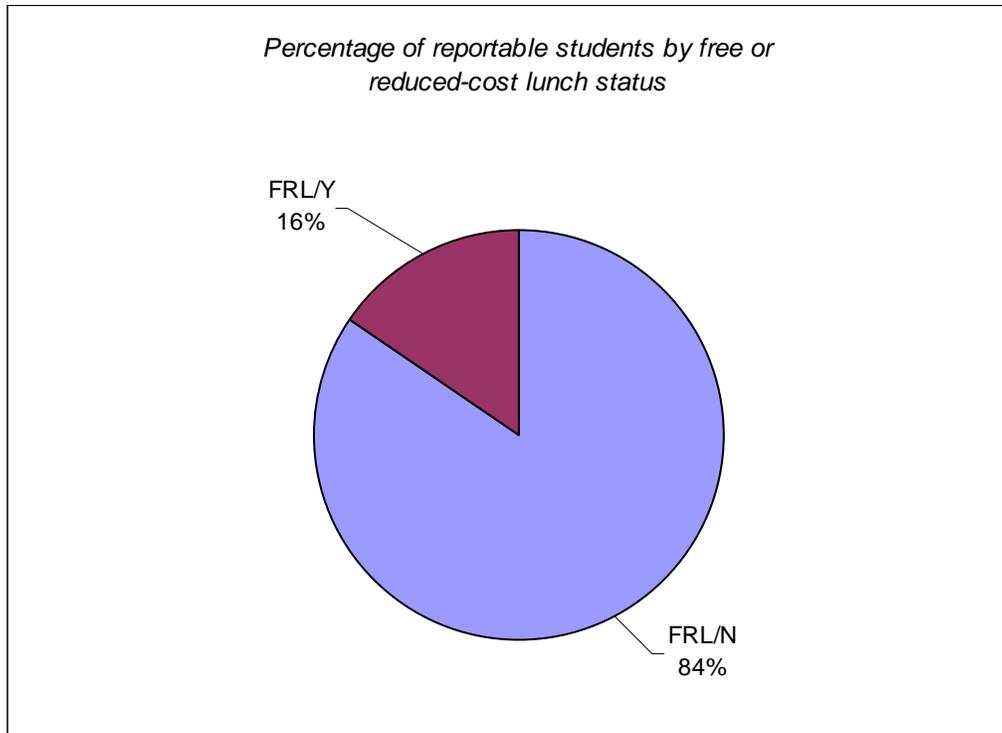
A.



B.



C.

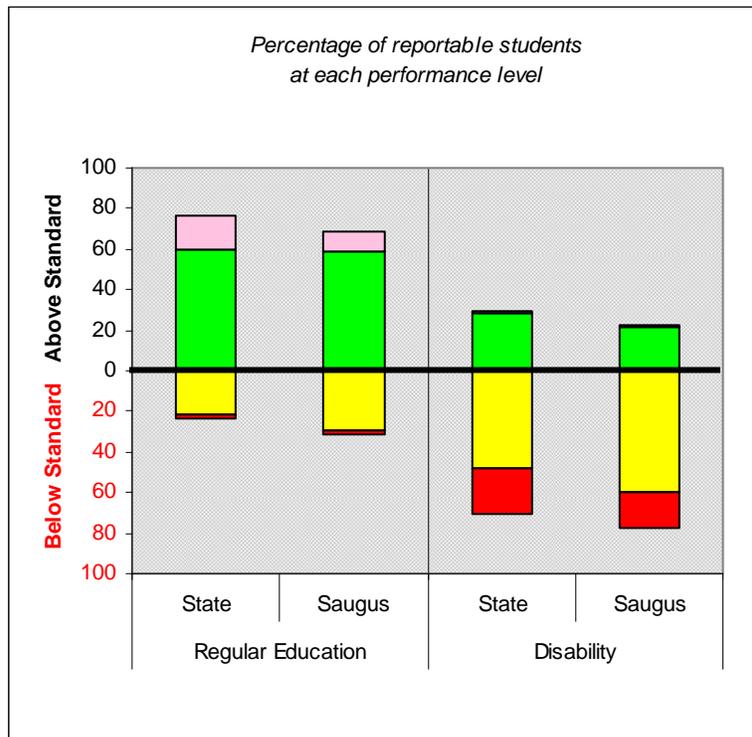


	Subgroup	Number of Students
Student status	Regular education	1,539
	Disability	238
Race/ethnicity	White	1,568
	Hispanic	95
Free or reduced-cost lunch status	FRL/N	1,509
	FRL/Y	277

Note: Data include students in tested grades levels only.

In Saugus in 2007, 13 percent of the students tested were students with disabilities. The vast majority of the students tested were White, with six percent Hispanic. Sixteen percent of the tested students participated in the free or reduced-cost lunch program.

Figure/Table 8: MCAS English Language Arts (ELA) Test Performance by Student Status Subgroup, 2007

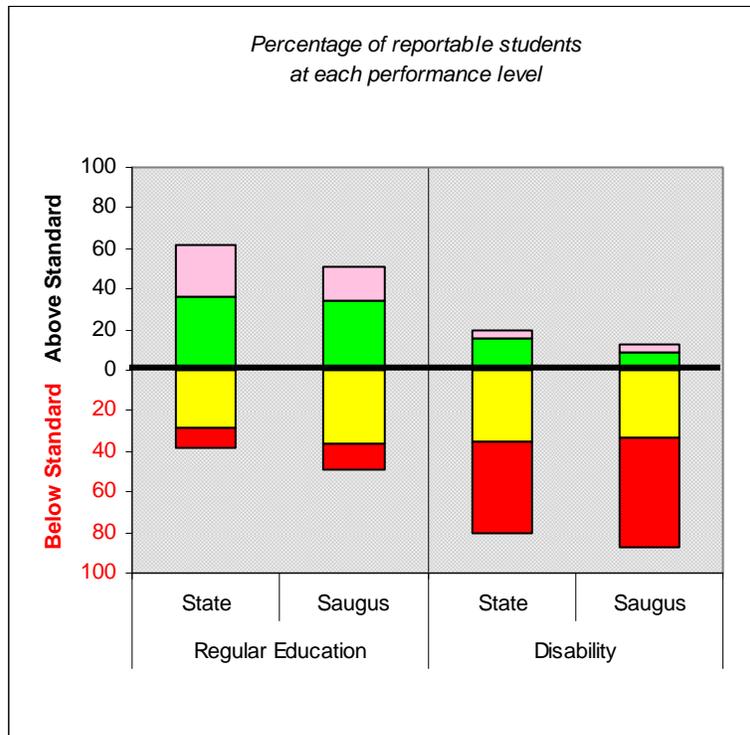


		Regular Education		Disability	
		State	Saugus	State	Saugus
	Advanced	16	9	2	1
	Proficient	60	59	28	21
	Needs Improvement	21	30	48	60
	Warning/Failing	2	2	22	18
Percent Attaining Proficiency		76	68	30	22
Proficiency Index (EPI)		91.3	89.0	64.8	64.0

In Saugus in 2007, the proficiency rate in ELA of regular education students was three times greater than that of students with disabilities. Sixty-eight percent of regular education students and 22 percent of students with disabilities attained proficiency in ELA on the 2007 MCAS tests.

Saugus' ELA proficiency gap in 2007 was 11 PI points for regular education students, compared to nine PI points statewide, and 36 PI points for students with disabilities, compared to 35 PI points statewide. The performance gap in ELA between Saugus' regular education students and students with disabilities was 25 PI points.

Figure/Table 9: MCAS Math Test Performance by Student Status Subgroup, 2007

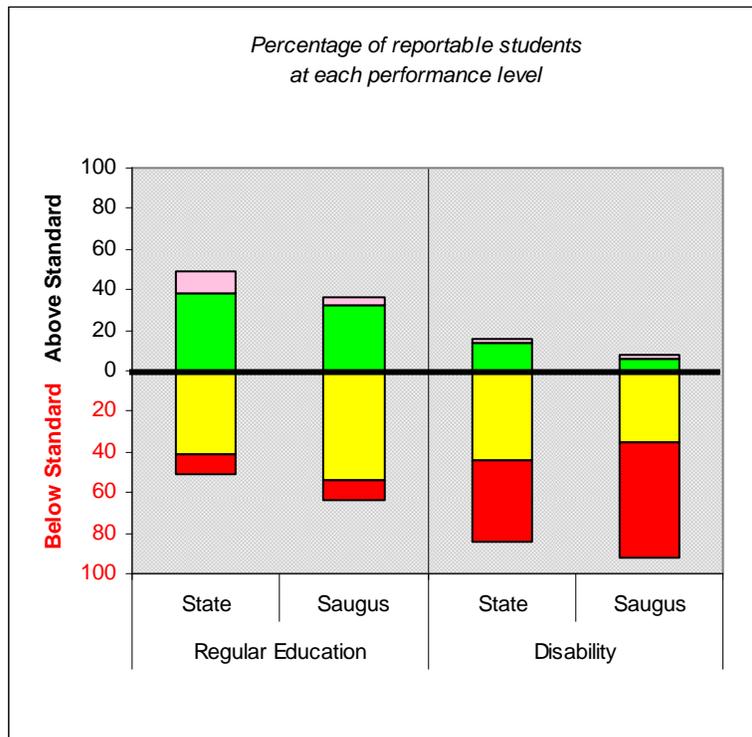


		Regular Education		Disability	
		State	Saugus	State	Saugus
	Advanced	26	17	4	4
	Proficient	36	35	16	9
	Needs Improvement	28	36	36	33
	Warning/Failing	10	13	44	54
Percent Attaining Proficiency		62	52	20	13
Proficiency Index (MPI)		82.2	76.8	51.0	44.9

In Saugus in 2007, the proficiency rate in math of regular education students was four times greater than that of students with disabilities. Fifty-two percent of regular education students and 13 percent of students with disabilities attained proficiency in math on the MCAS tests in 2007.

Saugus' math proficiency gap in 2007 was 23 PI points for regular education students, compared to 18 PI points statewide, and 55 PI points for students with disabilities, compared to 49 PI points statewide. The performance gap in math between Saugus' regular education students and students with disabilities was 32 PI points.

Figure/Table 10: MCAS Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) Test Performance by Student Status Subgroup, 2007

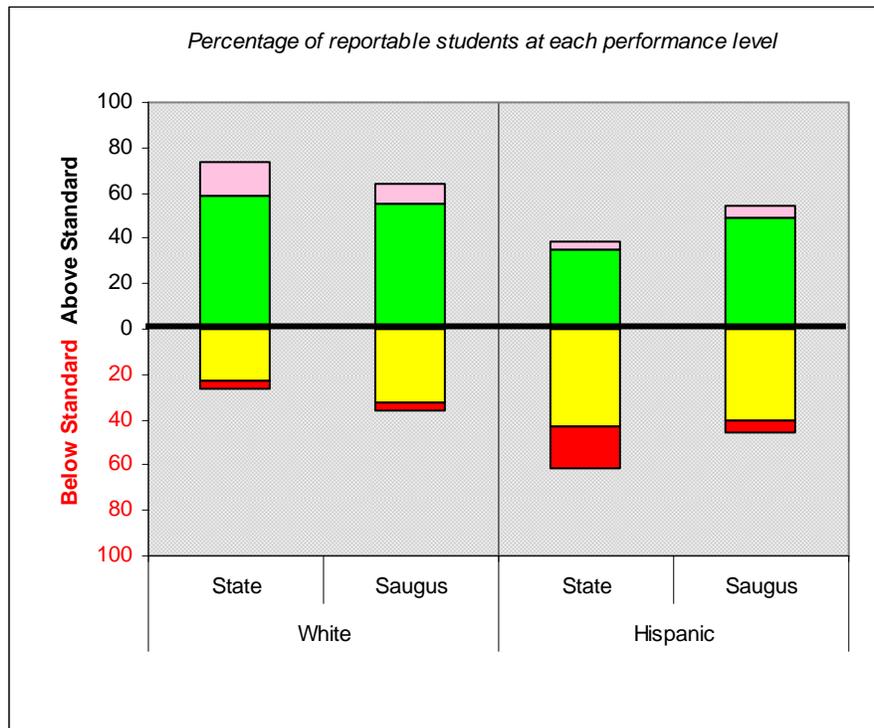


		Regular Education		Disability	
		State	Saugus	State	Saugus
	Advanced	10	3	2	2
	Proficient	39	33	14	6
	Needs Improvement	41	54	44	35
	Warning/Failing	10	10	40	58
Percent Attaining Proficiency		49	36	16	8
Proficiency Index (SPI)		77.5	72.6	51.8	42.0

In Saugus in 2007, the proficiency rate in science and technology/engineering of regular education students was four and one-half times greater than that of students with disabilities. Thirty-six percent of regular education students and eight percent of students with disabilities attained proficiency in STE on the 2007 MCAS tests.

Saugus' STE proficiency gap in 2007 was 27 PI points for regular education students, compared to 22 PI points statewide, and 58 PI points for students with disabilities, compared to 48 PI points statewide. The performance gap in STE between Saugus' regular education students and students with disabilities was 31 PI points.

Figure/Table 11: MCAS English Language Arts (ELA) Test Performance by Race/Ethnicity Subgroup, 2007

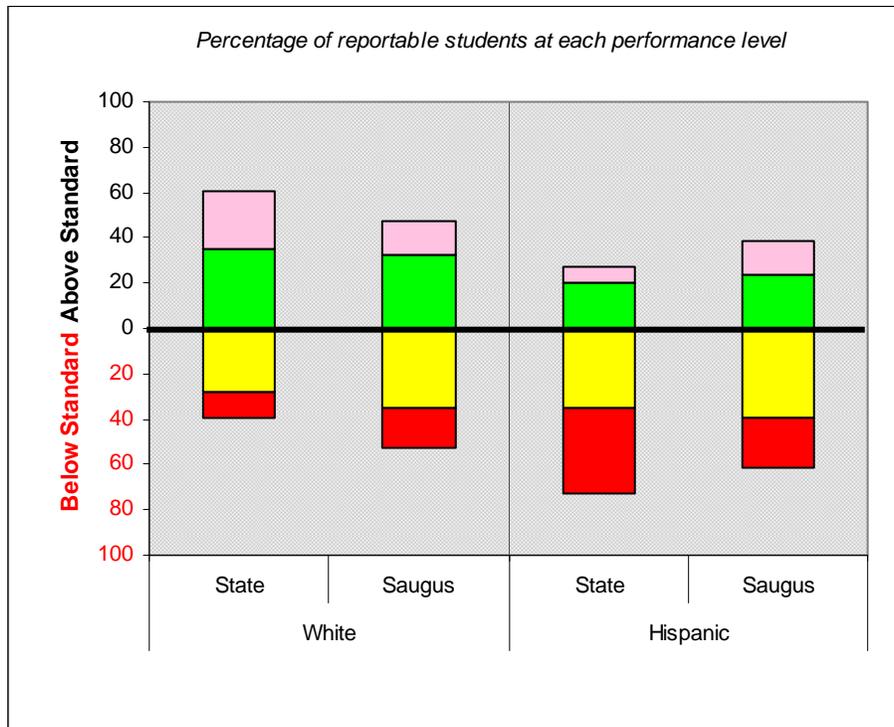


		White		Hispanic	
		State	Saugus	State	Saugus
	Advanced	16	9	3	5
	Proficient	58	55	35	49
	Needs Improvement	22	33	43	40
	Warning/Failing	4	4	19	5
Percent Attaining Proficiency		74	64	38	54
Proficiency Index (EPI)		89.8	86.1	69.8	82.9

White students in Saugus had somewhat stronger performance in ELA than Hispanic students, as 64 percent of White students and 54 percent of Hispanic students attained proficiency in ELA on the 2007 MCAS tests.

Hispanic students in Saugus performed substantially better than Hispanic students statewide. Saugus' ELA proficiency gap in 2007 was 14 PI points for White students, compared to 10 PI points statewide, and 17 PI points for Hispanic students, compared to 30 PI points statewide. The performance gap in ELA between Saugus' White and Hispanic students was three PI points.

Figure/Table 12: MCAS Math Test Performance by Race/Ethnicity Subgroup, 2007

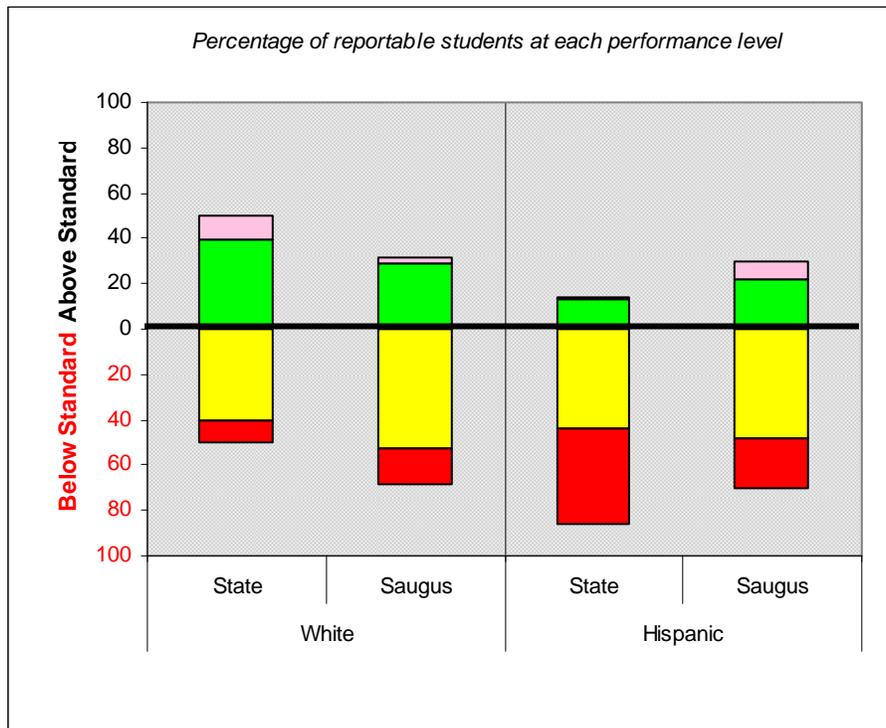


		White		Hispanic	
		State	Saugus	State	Saugus
	Advanced	25	15	7	15
	Proficient	35	32	20	24
	Needs Improvement	28	35	35	40
	Warning/Failing	11	17	37	22
Percent Attaining Proficiency		60	47	27	39
Proficiency Index (MPI)		80.9	73.4	56.9	67.2

White students in Saugus likewise had somewhat stronger performance in math than Hispanic students, as 47 percent of White students and 39 percent of Hispanic students attained proficiency in math on the MCAS tests in 2007.

Similar to ELA, Hispanic students in Saugus performed better in math than Hispanic students statewide. Saugus' math proficiency gap in 2007 was 27 PI points for White students, compared to 19 PI points statewide, and 33 PI points for Hispanic students, compared to 43 PI points statewide. The performance gap in math between Saugus' White and Hispanic students was six PI points.

Figure/Table 13: MCAS Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) Test Performance by Race/Ethnicity Subgroup, 2007

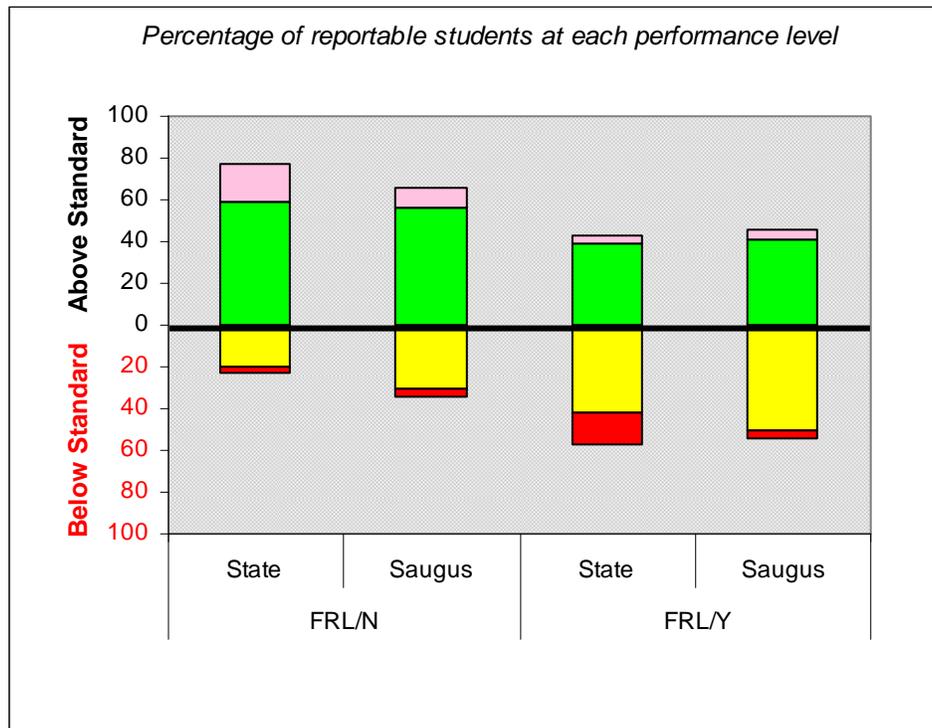


		White		Hispanic	
		State	Saugus	State	Saugus
	Advanced	10	3	2	7
	Proficient	39	29	13	22
	Needs Improvement	40	52	44	48
	Warning/Failing	10	16	41	22
Percent Attaining Proficiency		49	32	15	29
Proficiency Index (SPI)		78.0	68.7	50.6	63.9

White students in Saugus also had somewhat stronger performance in STE than Hispanic students, as 32 percent of White students and 29 percent of Hispanic students attained proficiency in STE on the 2007 MCAS tests.

Hispanic students in Saugus also performed better in STE than Hispanic students statewide. Saugus' STE proficiency gap in 2007 was 31 PI points for White students, compared to 22 PI points statewide, and 36 PI points for Hispanic students, compared to 49 PI points statewide. The performance gap in STE between Saugus' White and Hispanic students was five PI points.

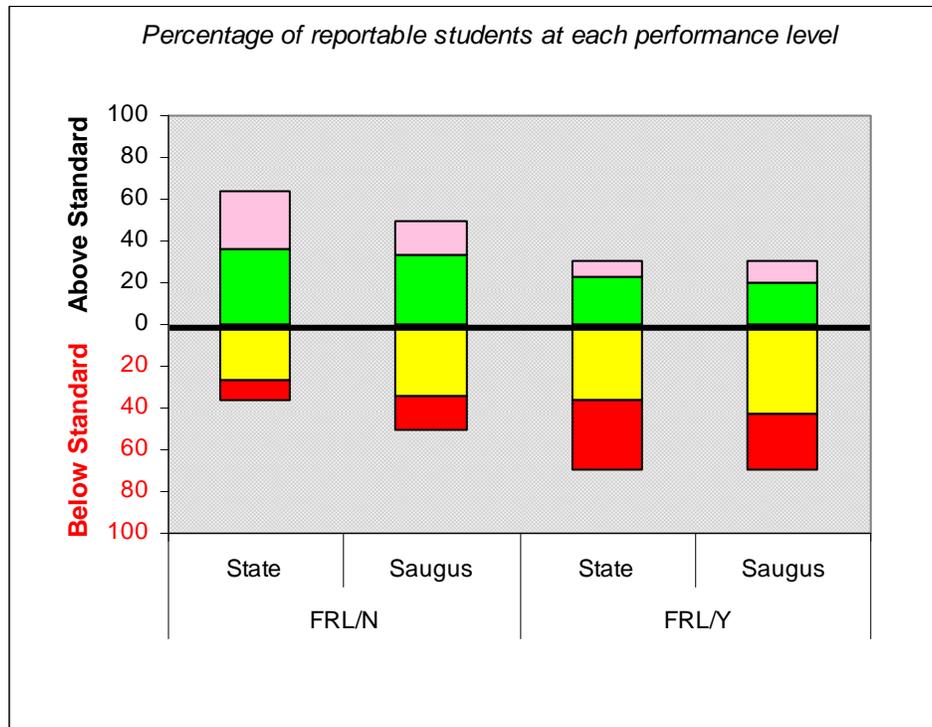
Figure/Table 14: MCAS English Language Arts (ELA) Test Performance by Socioeconomic Status Subgroup, 2007



		FRL/N		FRL/Y	
		State	Saugus	State	Saugus
	Advanced	17	9	4	5
	Proficient	59	57	39	41
	Needs Improvement	20	30	42	50
	Warning/Failing	3	4	15	4
Percent Attaining Proficiency		76	66	43	46
Proficiency Index (EPI)		91.0	86.8	73.4	79.4

In Saugus in 2007, 46 percent of low-income (FRL/Y) students attained proficiency in ELA on the MCAS tests, compared to 66 percent of non low-income (FRL/N) students. The ELA proficiency gap was 21 PI points for low-income students, compared to 27 PI points statewide, and 13 PI points for non low-income students, compared to nine PI points statewide. Saugus' performance gap in ELA between the two subgroups was eight PI points.

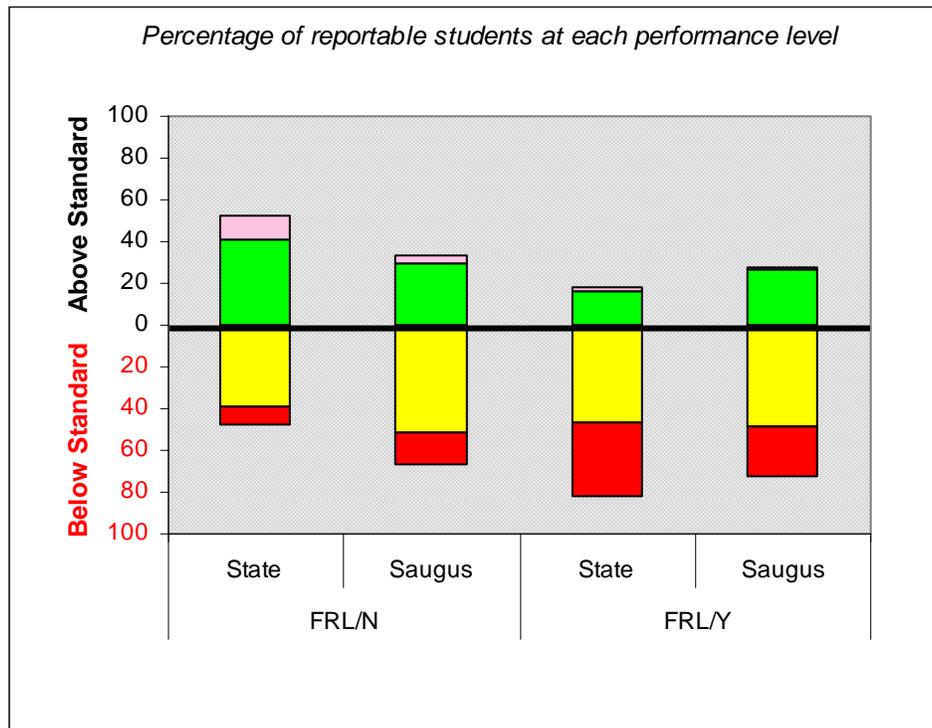
Figure/Table 15: MCAS Math Test Performance by Socioeconomic Status Subgroup, 2007



		FRL/N		FRL/Y	
		State	Saugus	State	Saugus
	Advanced	27	16	8	10
	Proficient	36	33	23	20
	Needs Improvement	27	35	37	43
	Warning/Failing	10	16	33	27
Percent Attaining Proficiency		63	49	31	30
Proficiency Index (MPI)		82.7	74.6	60.3	62.5

In Saugus in 2007, 30 percent of low-income (FRL/Y) students attained proficiency in math on the MCAS tests, compared to 49 percent of non low-income (FRL/N) students. The proficiency gap in math was 37 PI points for low-income students, compared to 40 PI points statewide, and 25 PI points for non low-income students, compared to 17 PI points statewide. The performance gap in math between the two subgroups in Saugus was 12 PI points.

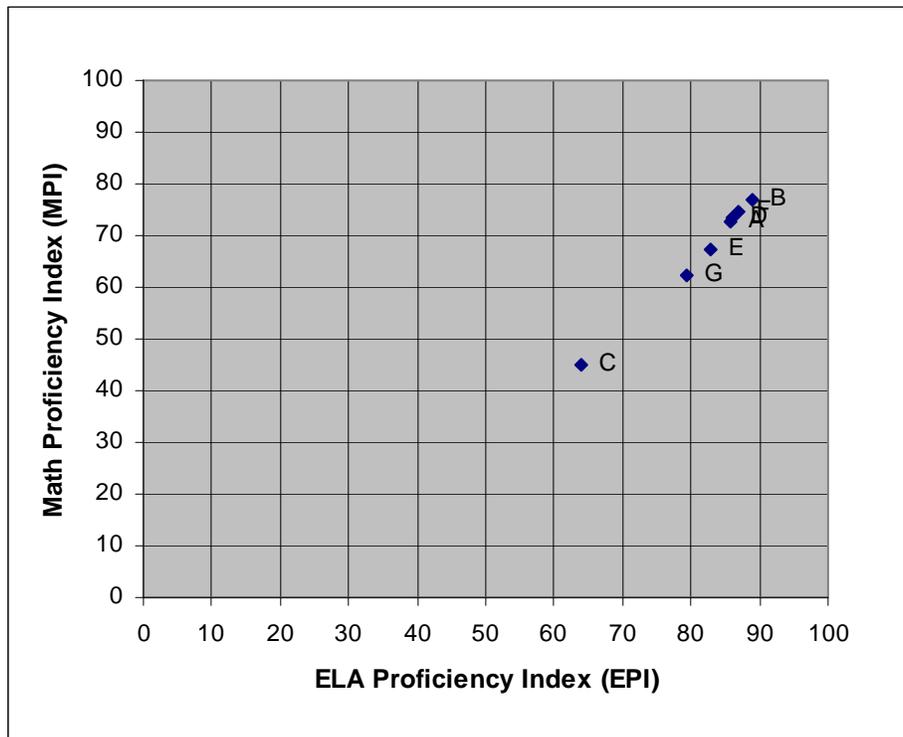
Figure/Table 16: MCAS Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) Test Performance by Socioeconomic Status Subgroup, 2007



		FRL/N		FRL/Y	
		State	Saugus	State	Saugus
	Advanced	11	3	2	1
	Proficient	41	30	17	27
	Needs Improvement	39	52	47	48
	Warning/Failing	9	16	34	24
Percent Attaining Proficiency		52	33	19	28
Proficiency Index (SPI)		79.4	69.3	55.2	63.6

In Saugus in 2007, 28 percent of low-income (FRL/Y) students attained proficiency in STE on the MCAS tests, compared to 33 percent of non low-income (FRL/N) students. The proficiency gap in STE was 36 PI points for low-income students, compared to 45 PI points statewide, and 31 PI points for non low-income students, compared to 21 PI points statewide. Saugus' performance gap in STE between the two subgroups was five PI points.

Figure/Table 17: MCAS ELA Proficiency Index vs. Math Proficiency Index by Subgroup, 2007



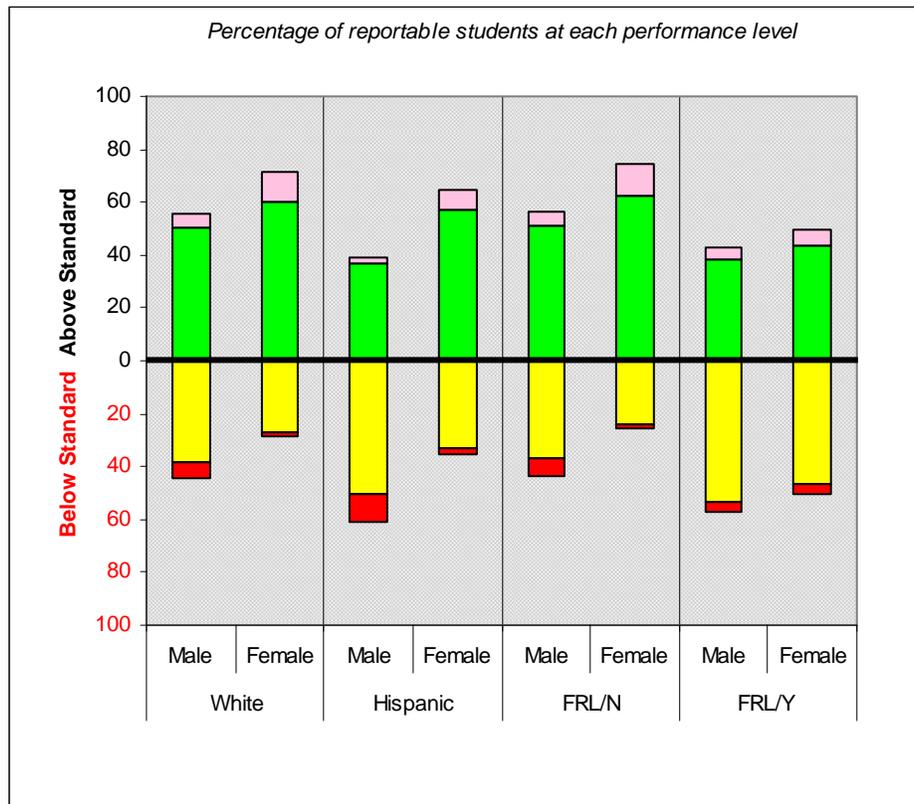
		ELA PI	Math PI	Number of Tests
A	Saugus	85.7	72.8	3,525
B	Regular Education	89.0	76.8	3,076
C	Disability	64.0	44.9	431
D	White	86.1	73.4	3,102
E	Hispanic	82.9	67.2	185
F	FRL/N	86.8	74.6	2,987
G	FRL/Y	79.4	62.5	536

The gap in performance between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in Saugus in 2007 was 25 PI points in ELA (regular education students, students with disabilities, respectively) and 32 PI points in math (regular education students, students with disabilities, respectively).

Regular education students, White students, and non low-income students in Saugus performed above the district average in both ELA and math in 2007, while students with disabilities, Hispanic students, and low-income students performed below the district average in both subjects.

Each subgroup in Saugus had stronger performance in ELA than in math on the 2007 MCAS tests. The gap between performance in ELA and math was narrowest for regular education and non low-income students (12 PI points) and widest for students with disabilities (19 PI points).

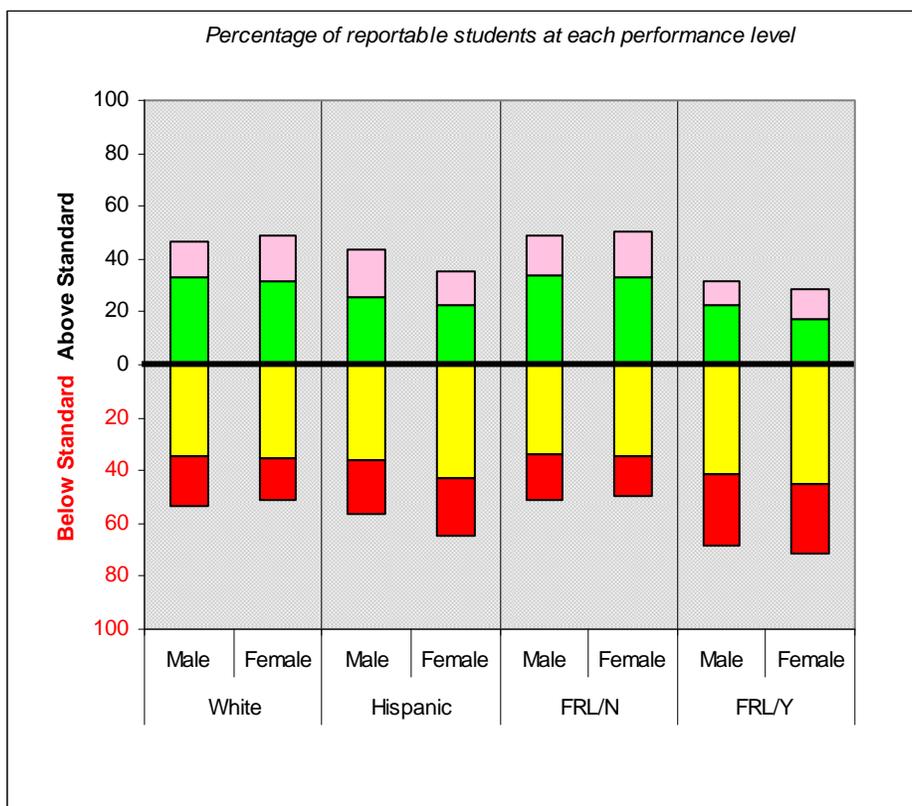
Figure/Table 18: MCAS English Language Arts (ELA) Test Performance by Race/Ethnicity and Socioeconomic Status by Gender, 2007



		White		Hispanic		FRL/N		FRL/Y	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
	Advanced	5	12	3	7	6	12	4	6
	Proficient	50	60	37	57	51	62	38	44
	Needs Improvement	38	27	50	33	37	24	53	47
	Warning/ Failing	6	1	11	2	7	1	4	3
Percent Attaining Proficiency		55	72	40	64	57	74	42	50
Proficiency Index (EPI)		82.2	90.1	76.3	87.5	82.6	91.1	77.3	81.7
Number of Tests		784	768	38	54	744	751	141	126

On the 2007 MCAS tests in ELA, Saugus' female students outperformed male students in all racial/ethnic and socioeconomic subgroups by fairly wide margins. The performance gap in ELA between female and male students was narrowest for low-income students (four PI points) and widest for Hispanic students (11 PI points).

Figure/Table 19: MCAS Math Test Performance by Race/Ethnicity and Socioeconomic Status by Gender, 2007



		White		Hispanic		FRL/N		FRL/Y	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
	Advanced	14	17	18	13	15	17	9	11
	Proficient	33	32	26	22	34	33	23	17
	Needs Improvement	34	36	36	43	34	35	42	45
	Warning/ Failing	19	16	21	22	17	15	27	27
Percent Attaining Proficiency		47	49	44	35	49	50	32	28
Proficiency Index (MPI)		72.3	74.4	69.9	65.3	73.7	75.6	64.1	60.6
Number of Tests		782	768	39	54	742	750	142	127

Performance on the 2007 MCAS tests in math was more comparable for female and male students. Saugus' female students outperformed male students in the White and non-low-income subgroups, and male students outperformed female students in the Hispanic and low-income subgroups. The performance gap in math between female and male students was narrowest for White and non low-income students (two PI points in favor of females) and widest for Hispanic students (four and one-half PI points in favor of males).

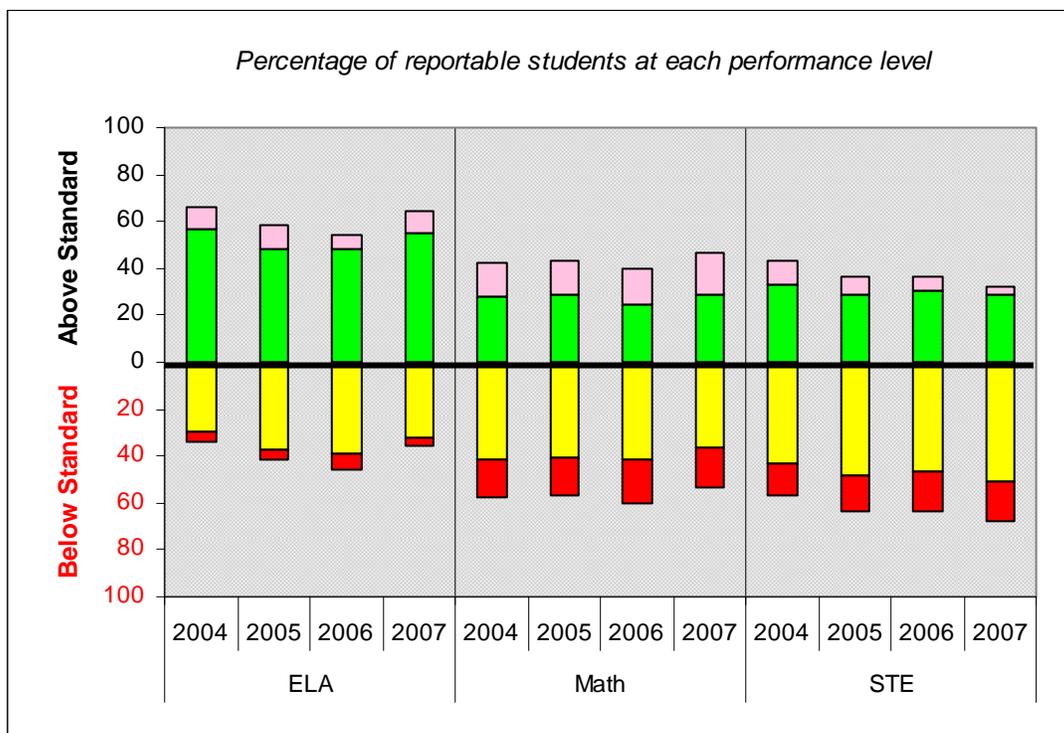
Improvement

Has the district's MCAS test performance improved over time?

Findings:

- Between 2004 and 2007, Saugus' MCAS performance showed a slight decline in English language arts, slight improvement in math, and a decline in science and technology/engineering.
- Over the three-year period 2004-2007, ELA performance in Saugus declined slightly, by less than one-half PI point, which widened the proficiency gap by three percent. The percentage of students attaining proficiency in ELA decreased from 67 percent in 2004 to 55 percent in 2006 before increasing to 64 percent in 2007.
- Math performance in Saugus showed slight improvement over this period. Although there was no change in the proficiency index, the percentage of students attaining proficiency in math rose from 43 percent in 2004 to 47 percent in 2007.
- Between 2004 and 2007, Saugus had a decline in STE performance, at an average of two PI points annually over the three-year period. This resulted in a widening of the proficiency gap by 23 percent. The percentage of students attaining proficiency in STE decreased from 43 percent in 2004 to 32 percent in 2007.

Figure/Table 20: MCAS Test Performance by Subject, 2004-2007



		ELA				Math				STE			
		2004	2005	2006	2007	2004	2005	2006	2007	2004	2005	2006	2007
	Advanced	10	10	6	9	15	15	15	18	10	8	6	3
	Proficient	57	48	49	55	28	28	25	29	33	29	30	29
	Needs Improvement	29	37	39	32	42	41	41	36	43	48	47	51
	Warning/ Failing	4	4	7	3	16	16	19	17	14	16	16	17
Percent Attaining Proficiency		67	58	55	64	43	43	40	47	43	37	36	32
Proficiency Index (PI)		86.8	84.0	81.0	86.4	72.6	72.0	69.6	72.6	74.4	70.7	70.3	68.5

Note: Trend data include grades at which testing was administered in each subject in all four years; therefore, the 2007 ELA and math data may differ from those reported in Figure/Table 1.

The percentage of Saugus students attaining proficiency in ELA decreased from 67 percent in 2004 to 64 percent in 2007. Over this period, the proficiency gap in ELA widened by three percent from slightly more than 13 to nearly 14 PI points.

The percentage of Saugus students attaining proficiency in math increased from 43 percent in 2004 to 47 percent in 2007. The proficiency gap in math stayed at 27 PI points, however.

The percentage of Saugus students attaining proficiency in STE decreased from 43 percent in 2004 to 32 percent in 2007. The proficiency gap in STE widened by 23 percent over this period, from 26 to 31 PI points.

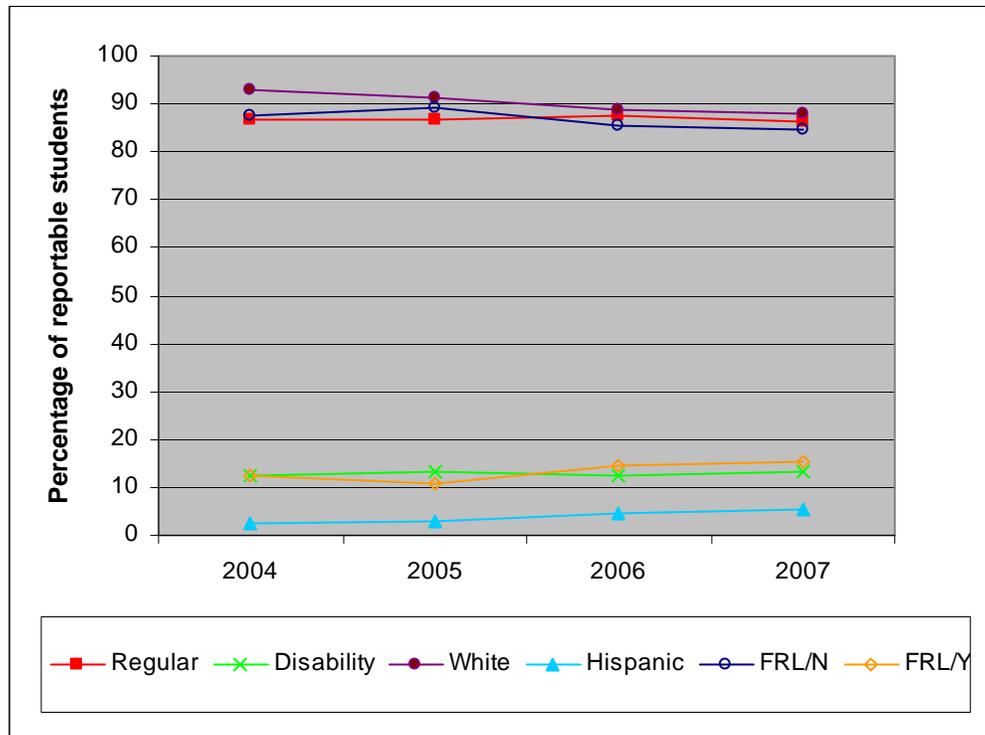
Equity of Improvement

Has the equity of MCAS test performance among the district's student subgroups improved over time?

Findings:

- In Saugus, the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in ELA narrowed from 27 PI points in 2004 to 25 PI points in 2007, and the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in math widened from 31 to 33 PI points over this period.
- Student with disabilities, Hispanic students, and low-income students had improved performance in ELA between 2004 and 2007. The more improved subgroup in ELA was Hispanic students, whose proficiency gap narrowed by 10 PI points.
- In math, the performance of Hispanic and non low-income students in Saugus improved between 2004 and 2007. The more improved subgroup in math was also Hispanic students, whose proficiency gap narrowed by close to nine PI points.

Figure/Table 21: Student Population by Reportable Subgroups, 2004-2007



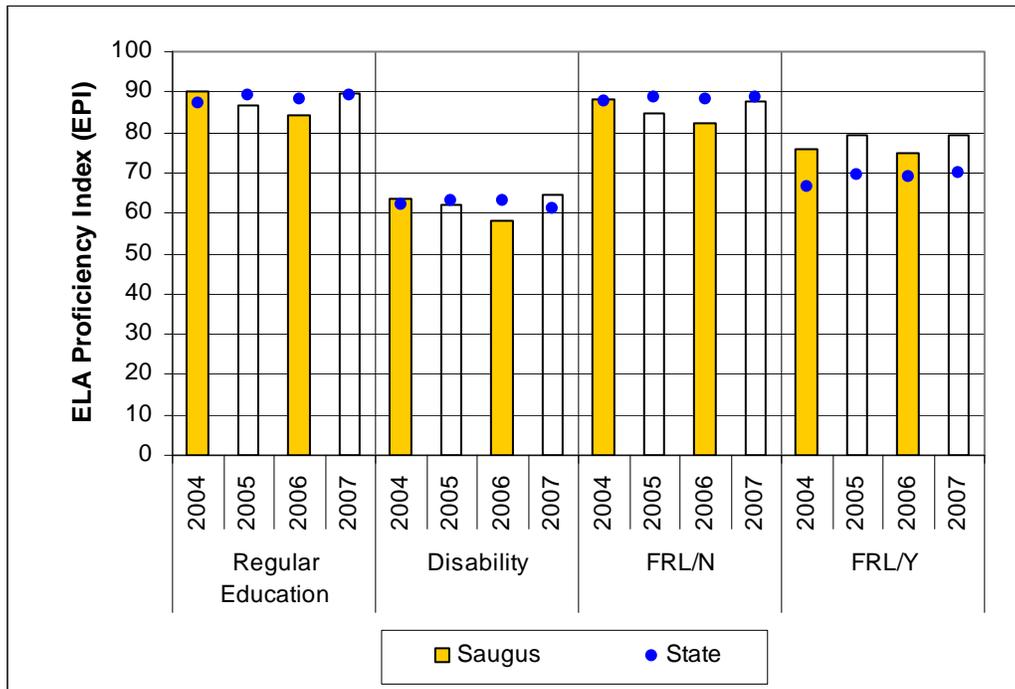
	Number of Students				Percentage of students			
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2004	2005	2006	2007
Saugus	1,595	1,520	1,785	1,786	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Regular	1,385	1,320	1,562	1,539	86.8	86.8	87.5	86.2
Disability	199	200	220	238	12.5	13.2	12.3	13.3
White	1,485	1,385	1,583	1,568	93.1	91.1	88.7	87.8
Hispanic	40	44	79	95	2.5	2.9	4.4	5.3
FRL/N	1,399	1,356	1,523	1,509	87.7	89.2	85.3	84.5
FRL/Y	196	164	262	277	12.3	10.8	14.7	15.5

Note: The 2007 percentages of students reported here may differ from those reported in Figure/Table 7; the percentages shown here are based on the total number of students in the district, whereas the percentages shown in Figure 7 are based on the number of students in reportable subgroups. Data include students in tested grades only.

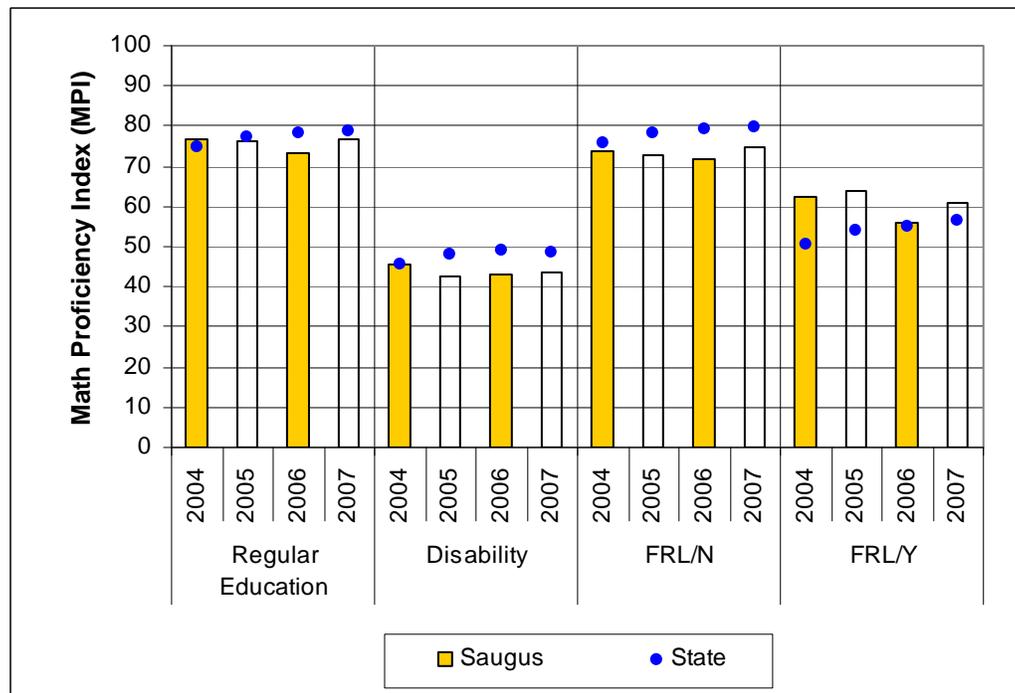
Between 2004 and 2007 in Saugus, the proportion of regular education students and students with disabilities was relatively stable. The proportion of White students decreased by more than five percentage points and that of Hispanic students increased by nearly three percentage points. The proportion of low-income students increased by over three percentage points.

Figures 22 A-D/Table 22: MCAS Proficiency Indices by Subgroup, 2004-2007

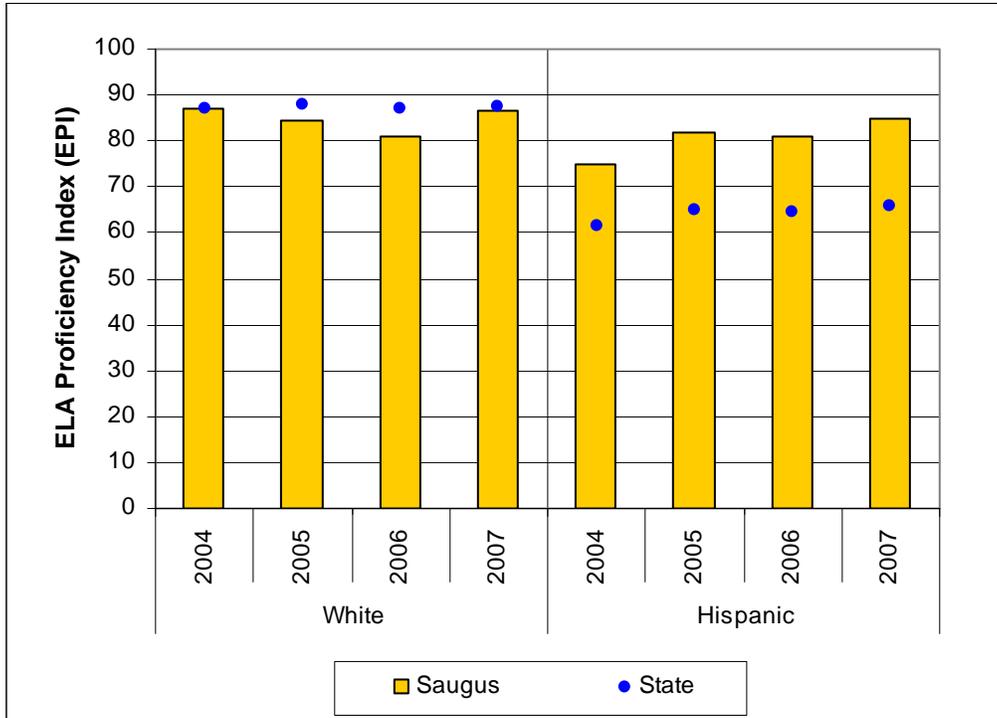
A. ELA Proficiency Index (EPI) by Student Status and Free or Reduced-Cost Lunch Subgroups



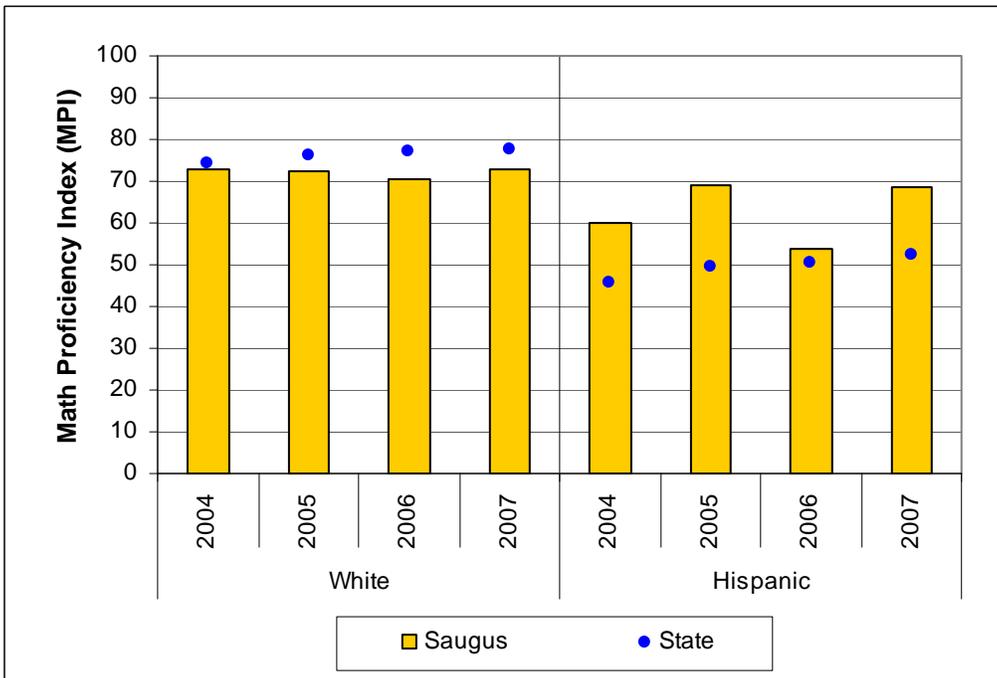
B. Math Proficiency Index (MPI) by Student Status and Free or Reduced-Cost Lunch Subgroups



C. ELA Proficiency Index (EPI) by Race/Ethnicity Subgroup



D. Math Proficiency Index (MPI) by Race/Ethnicity Subgroup

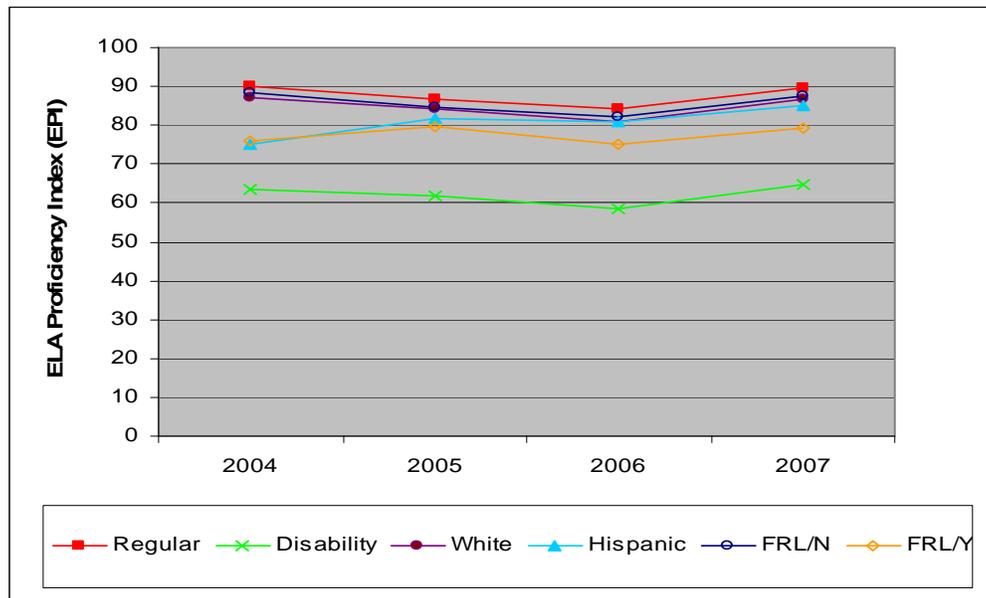


State				Saugus			
Subgroup	Year	EPI	MPI	Subgroup	Year	EPI	MPI
Regular Education	2004	87.3	74.7	Regular Education	2004	90.2	76.8
	2005	89.2	77.4		2005	86.7	76.4
	2006	88.3	78.2		2006	84.4	73.1
	2007	89.0	78.9		2007	89.7	76.7
Disability	2004	62.1	45.3	Disability	2004	63.5	45.6
	2005	63.3	47.9		2005	61.9	42.4
	2006	62.9	49.0		2006	58.3	43.3
	2007	61.2	48.4		2007	64.6	43.5
FRL/N	2004	87.9	75.9	FRL/N	2004	88.3	74.0
	2005	88.9	78.1		2005	84.7	72.9
	2006	88.3	79.0		2006	82.1	72.0
	2007	88.6	79.7		2007	87.5	74.6
FRL/Y	2004	66.6	50.7	FRL/Y	2004	76.1	62.3
	2005	69.7	53.9		2005	79.5	64.1
	2006	68.8	55.0		2006	75.0	55.7
	2007	70.0	56.3		2007	79.2	61.0
White	2004	86.9	74.4	White	2004	87.0	72.9
	2005	87.7	76.2		2005	84.3	72.2
	2006	87.1	77.2		2006	80.9	70.6
	2007	87.4	77.8		2007	86.7	72.9
Hispanic	2004	61.4	45.7	Hispanic	2004	75.0	60.0
	2005	64.8	49.3		2005	81.8	69.2
	2006	64.6	50.6		2006	81.0	54.0
	2007	65.8	52.2		2007	84.9	68.6

Note: Trend data include grades at which testing was administered in each subject in all four years; therefore, 2007 data may differ from those reported in Figure/Tables 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, and 15.

Hispanic students constituted the only student subgroup in Saugus with improved performance in both ELA and math between 2004 and 2007, as their performance improved by 10 PI points in ELA and by eight and one-half points in math.. Over this period, the performance of regular education students declined by one-half PI point in ELA and by one-tenth PI point in math, and the performance of students with disabilities improved by one PI point in ELA and declined by two points in math. The performance of non low-income students declined by less than one PI point in ELA and improved by less than one PI point in math, and the performance of low-income students improved by three PI points in ELA and declined by one PI point in math. The performance of White students declined by less than one-half PI point in ELA and remained the same in math.

Figure/Table 23: MCAS English Language Arts Proficiency Index (EPI) by Subgroup, 2004-2007



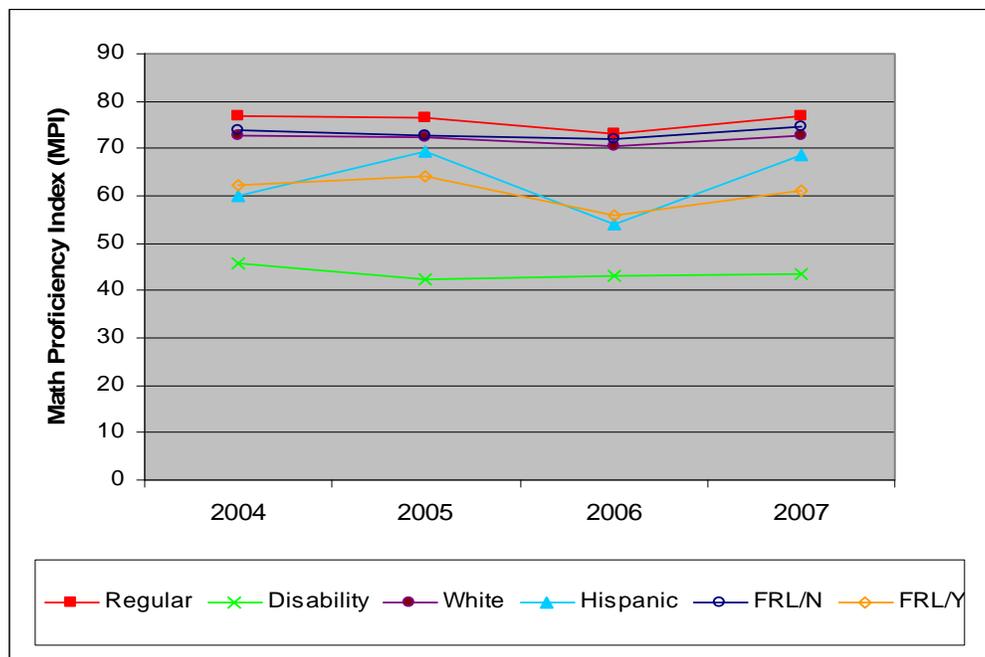
	ELA Proficiency Index (EPI)				Percent Attaining Proficiency			
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2004	2005	2006	2007
Saugus	86.8	84.0	81.0	86.4	66	59	54	64
Regular	90.2	86.7	84.4	89.7	73	64	60	71
Disability	63.5	61.9	58.3	64.6	22	14	16	22
White	87.0	84.3	80.9	86.7	67	59	54	65
Hispanic	75.0	81.8	81.0	84.9	42	55	52	61
FRL/N	88.3	84.7	82.1	87.5	70	60	56	67
FRL/Y	76.1	79.5	75.0	79.2	45	47	46	49

Note: Trend data include grades at which testing was administered in each subject in all four years; therefore, 2007 data may differ from those reported in Figure/Tables 8, 11, and 14.

Students with disabilities, Hispanic students, and low-income students had improved performance in ELA between 2004 and 2007. The ELA proficiency gap for Saugus' Hispanic students narrowed from 25 to 15 PI points, an improvement rate of 40 percent, over this period. The proficiency gap in ELA for low-income students narrowed by 13 percent from 24 to 21 PI points, and for students with disabilities it narrowed by three percent from 37 to 35 PI points. The ELA proficiency gap for non low-income students widened by seven percent from 12 to 13 PI points; for regular education students it widened by one-half PI point, or five percent; and for White students it also widened by one-half PI point, or two percent.

Between 2004 and 2007, the performance gap in ELA between regular education students and students with disabilities narrowed by two PI points; between White and Hispanic students it narrowed by 10 PI points; and between non low-income and low-income students it narrowed by four PI points.

Figure/Table 24: MCAS Math Proficiency Index (MPI) by Subgroup, 2004-2007



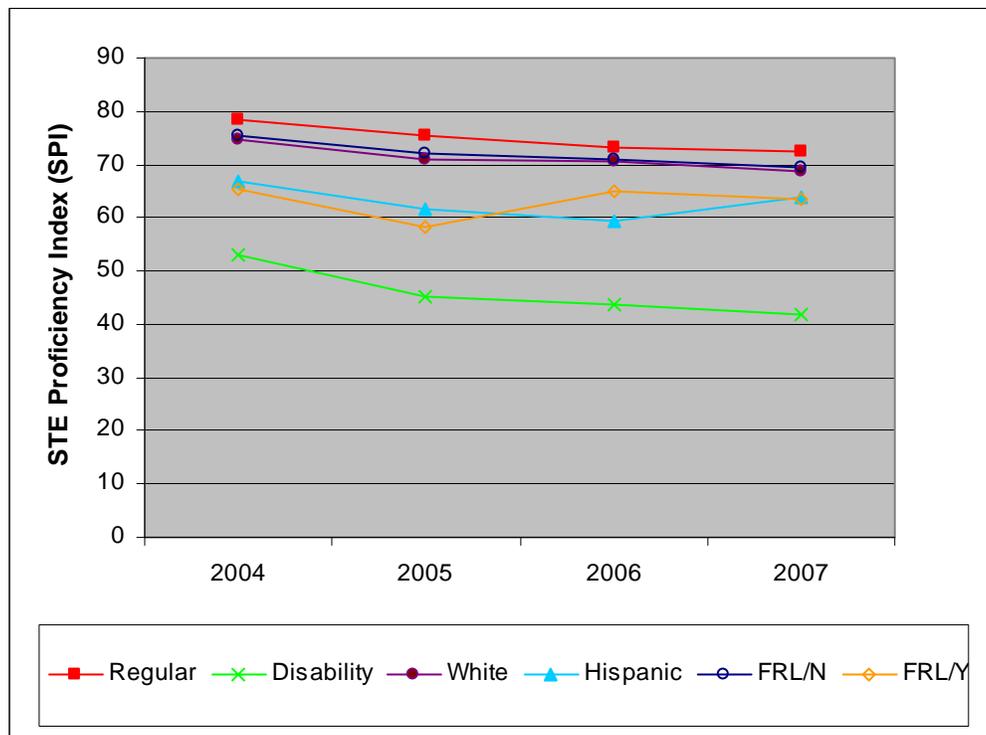
	Math Proficiency Index (MPI)				Percent Attaining Proficiency			
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2004	2005	2006	2007
Saugus	72.6	72.0	69.6	72.6	43	43	40	46
Regular	76.8	76.4	73.1	76.7	48	48	44	51
Disability	45.6	42.4	43.3	43.5	9	9	12	11
White	72.9	72.2	70.6	72.9	43	44	41	47
Hispanic	60.0	69.2	54.0	68.6	30	40	23	41
FRL/N	74.0	72.9	72.0	74.6	45	45	43	50
FRL/Y	62.3	64.1	55.7	61.0	27	31	22	27

Note: Trend data include grades at which testing was administered in each subject in all four years; therefore, 2007 data may differ from those reported in Figure/Tables 9, 12, and 15.

In math, the performance of Hispanic and non low-income student subgroups in Saugus improved between 2004 and 2007. The math proficiency gap for Saugus’ Hispanic students narrowed from 40 to 31 PI points over this period, an improvement rate of 22 percent, and for non low-income students it narrowed by two percent from 26 to 25 PI points. The proficiency gap in math for regular education students remained at 23 PI points, and for White students it remained at 27 PI points. The gap for students with disabilities widened by four percent from 54 to 57 PI points, and for low-income students it widened by three percent from 38 to 39 PI points.

Between 2004 and 2007, the performance gap in math between White and Hispanic students narrowed by nine PI points; between regular education students and students with disabilities it widened by two PI points; and between non low-income and low-income students it also widened by two PI points.

Figure/Table 25: MCAS STE Proficiency Index (SPI) by Subgroup, 2004-2007



	STE Proficiency Index (SPI)				Percent Attaining Proficiency			
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2004	2005	2006	2007
Saugus	74.4	70.7	70.3	68.5	43	36	37	32
Regular	78.4	75.6	73.2	72.6	49	42	40	36
Disability	53.2	45.3	43.6	42.0	14	7	10	8
White	74.8	71.0	70.7	68.7	44	37	37	32
Hispanic	66.7	61.8	59.4	63.9	42	21	17	30
FRL/N	75.5	72.2	71.1	69.3	45	38	38	33
FRL/Y	65.4	58.1	65.1	63.6	32	19	31	28

In science and technology/engineering, performance of all student subgroups in Saugus declined between 2004 and 2007. The STE proficiency gap for Saugus' regular education students widened by 27 percent from 22 to 27 PI points over this period, and for students with disabilities it widened by 24 percent from 47 to 58 PI points. The proficiency gap in STE for White students widened by 24 percent from 25 to 31 PI points, and for Hispanic student it widened by eight percent from 33 to 36 PI points. The gap for non low-income students widened by 25 percent from 25 to 31 PI points, and for low-income students it widened by five percent from 35 to 36 PI points.

Between 2004 and 2007, the performance gap in STE between White and Hispanic students narrowed by three PI points; between non low-income and low-income students it narrowed by four PI points; and between regular education students and students with disabilities it widened by five PI points.

Participation

Are all eligible students participating in required state assessments?

Finding:

- On the 2007 MCAS tests in ELA, math, and STE, eligible students in Saugus participated at levels that met or exceeded the state's 95 percent requirement.

n-Values by Subgroup and Performance Level, 2007

Subgroup	Performance Level	ELA	Math	STE
Saugus	ALL LEVELS	1,763	1,762	524
	Advanced	149	267	16
	Proficient	956	551	152
	Needs Improvement	589	632	268
	Warning/Failing	69	312	88
Regular Education	Advanced	146	259	15
	Proficient	909	531	148
	Needs Improvement	454	553	245
	Warning/Failing	29	195	47
Disability	Advanced	3	8	1
	Proficient	46	20	4
	Needs Improvement	129	71	23
	Warning/Failing	38	116	38
Limited English Proficient	Advanced	0	0	0
	Proficient	1	0	0
	Needs Improvement	6	8	0
	Warning/Failing	2	1	3
White	Advanced	133	236	14
	Proficient	855	501	133
	Needs Improvement	506	542	243
	Warning/Failing	58	271	75
Hispanic	Advanced	5	14	2
	Proficient	45	22	6
	Needs Improvement	37	37	13
	Warning/Failing	5	20	6
African-American	Advanced	2	4	0
	Proficient	20	9	4
	Needs Improvement	17	18	4
	Warning/Failing	4	12	3
Asian	Advanced	4	8	0
	Proficient	24	11	9
	Needs Improvement	15	25	4
	Warning/Failing	2	1	3
Free or Reduced-Cost Lunch/No	Advanced	135	240	15
	Proficient	846	497	131
	Needs Improvement	455	515	229
	Warning/Failing	59	240	69
Free or Reduced-Cost Lunch/Yes	Advanced	14	27	1
	Proficient	109	54	21
	Needs Improvement	134	116	38
	Warning/Failing	10	72	19
Male	Advanced	48	123	7
	Proficient	434	282	89
	Needs Improvement	347	312	126
	Warning/Failing	56	167	42
Female	Advanced	101	144	9
	Proficient	521	269	63
	Needs Improvement	242	319	141
	Warning/Failing	13	145	46

n-Values by Grade and Year, 2004-2007

Grade	Year	ELA	Math	STE
Grade 3	2004	264	0	0
	2005	254	0	0
	2006	253	252	0
	2007	230	230	0
Grade 4	2004	280	280	0
	2005	256	256	0
	2006	253	253	0
	2007	249	250	0
Grade 5	2004	0	0	279
	2005	0	0	275
	2006	252	253	253
	2007	253	253	253
Grade 6	2004	0	265	0
	2005	0	280	0
	2006	275	276	0
	2007	251	251	0
Grade 7	2004	288	0	0
	2005	253	0	0
	2006	279	278	0
	2007	268	268	0
Grade 8	2004	0	245	245
	2005	0	285	285
	2006	259	258	259
	2007	273	271	271
Grade 10	2004	217	219	0
	2005	202	202	0
	2006	191	190	0
	2007	239	239	0
All Grades	2004	1,049	1,009	524
	2005	965	1,023	560
	2006	1,762	1,760	512
	2007	1,763	1,762	524

Notes

Trend data include grades for which testing was administered for each subject in all four years. The following grades are included in the trend data for 2004-2007 reported in Figure/Tables 20-25 and in the table of n-values by grade and year:

English language arts (ELA): 3, 4, 7, 10

Math: 4, 6, 8, 10

Science and technology/engineering (STE): 5, 8

The highest performance level for grade 3 reading in 2006 and 2007 was Advanced/Above Proficient; this level did not exist in prior years, when the highest level was Proficient.

Subgroup inclusion is based on the number of students and the number of schools in the district. To be included as reportable, a subgroup must have at least 10 times the number of schools in the district. Subgroup inclusion for all years of the trend data is based on the 2007 data.

N-values represent the number of tests taken unless otherwise specified.

Rounded values may result in slight apparent discrepancies.

Standard Findings and Summaries

Standard I: Leadership, Governance, and Communication															
Ratings ▼ Indicators ►	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	Total
Excellent															
Satisfactory													✓		1
Needs Improvement		✓							✓		✓	✓		✓	5
Unsatisfactory	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓					8

I. Leadership, Governance, and Communication

School committee, district leadership, and school leadership established, implemented, and continuously evaluated the cost effectiveness and efficiency of policies and procedures that were standards-based, focused on student achievement data and designed to promote continuous improvement of instructional practice and high achievement for all students. Leadership actions and decisions related to the attainment of district and school goals were routinely communicated to the community and promoted public confidence, financial commitment and community support needed to achieve high student and staff performance.

Standard Rating: Unsatisfactory

Findings:

- Administrators acknowledged that the School Improvement Plans did not align with the Saugus Public Schools 2004-2009 Strategic Plan.
- The district lacked a systems approach in areas such as program evaluation, professional development, textbook replacement, technology, preventative maintenance, and capital improvements.
- Severe budget reductions resulted in the elimination of 58 staff positions; larger class sizes; loss of some programs and services; inadequate funds for textbooks, supplies and equipment; and no funds in the district's budget for professional development.
- Given the size and complexity of the district, it lacked adequate staffing and support in central office as well as adequate districtwide leadership, such as curriculum coordinators, a human resources director, and a staff member dedicated to data analysis and reporting.

- Many interviewees across the district commented that education was not one of the top two priorities in the community.
- An adversarial relationship existed between the school committee and the teachers' association, diverting administrators' attention and energy away from instructional leadership.
- The district did not comply with the requirement that all principals be evaluated every year.
- No accountability was evident pertaining to improving student achievement and progress made toward attaining the goals in the School Improvement Plans.

Summary

According to interviewees, the Saugus Public Schools seemed to lack a coordinated administrative team effort during the period under review. The district appeared to operate as a system of autonomous schools rather than as a school system. Administrators commented that until 2006-2007, the elementary principals met rarely, if at all, as a team to discuss common issues, concerns, and strategies. Throughout the EQA review process, leadership personnel and teachers provided information that indicated the district lacked a systems approach in areas such as program evaluation, data analysis, vertical articulation of curriculum, replacement of textbooks and equipment, professional development, school building maintenance, and capital improvements.

Some interviewees indicated that the superintendent had a passing familiarity with issues rather than being "on top of the issues." One example cited was the information that the superintendent requested from the principals after the development of their School Improvement Plans (SIPs). The superintendent mentioned that he did not read the School Improvement Plans but instead had the principals share with him only those items they considered "out of the ordinary." Administrators stated that very little discussion about student assessment results occurred among them. In addition, the superintendent remarked that he did not include statements about MCAS test results or progress toward attainment of SIP goals in the few principal evaluations he wrote during the three years under review. Furthermore, the superintendent did not have the principals present any status reports to the school committee on progress made toward attaining the SIP goals.

Administrators reported that the superintendent established a volunteer committee to assist him with the development of the strategic plan. According to some interviewees, the committee was not representative of all key stakeholder groups and was inconsistent throughout the development process. This strategic plan was not standards based nor did it align with the School Improvement Plans of the district's six schools.

Interviewees expressed the need to improve vertical articulation of the curriculum across grades K-12. The interviewees stated that budget reductions resulted in the elimination of an elementary curriculum specialist and an increase in the teaching assignments, from part time to full time, of the grades 6-12 curriculum specialists. The interviewees also mentioned that the current schedule of the curriculum specialists, who teach at the high school, limited their availability to the teachers in their respective departments at the middle school.

Some interviewees stated that the school committee assumed a passive role rather than take a proactive leadership role as a strong advocate for the school department's budget. School committee members indicated that their regular meetings and budget work session were open to the public and received coverage from two local newspapers and from local cable television.

Interviewees periodically commented about the "perception of mistrust" the community had of its town leaders and the impact it had on both the school department and the municipal departments. However, the superintendent and the town manager spoke favorably about their working relationship with one another and the positive relationship between subordinate leaders in the schools (e.g., finance manager and principals) and municipal departments (e.g., police and fire). In contrast, members of the administrative team described an adversarial relationship between the school committee and the Saugus Teachers' Association, especially regarding the negotiations on the last collective bargaining agreement.

Indicators

1. The district and school leaders had a clearly understood vision and/or mission, goals, and priorities included in the District Improvement Plan (DIP). The standards-based plan and the analysis of student achievement data drove the development, implementation, and modification of educational programs.

Rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

The vision statement in the district's strategic plan declared, "A place of excellence where children are able to achieve their full potential." In addition, the strategic plan contained the following mission statement: "The mission of the Saugus Public Schools is to educate, challenge, and empower all students to be life-long learners and to achieve excellence with integrity in the 21st century as productive, caring, and contributing members of society." The strategic plan had six strategic goals: 1) "Develop a facilities plan to bring all school buildings up to structural, environmental, occupational and educational standards through renovation or replacement;" 2) "Increase community awareness of the achievement and needs of the schools;" 3) "Improve student achievement as measured by standardized testing;" 4) "Improve and maintain a culture of trust, mutual respect, acceptance and scholarship for students, parents and staff;" 5) "Maximize the acquisition, utilization and integration of technology in the Saugus Public Schools;" and 6) "Increase program offerings for students, parents and the entire Saugus community." Objectives ranging from five to eight in number accompanied each of the strategic goals.

Although the district and school leaders had a clearly understood vision and mission in the Saugus Public Schools 2004-2009 Strategic Plan, the superintendent and the administrators acknowledged that "the strategic plan was not a standards-based plan" and not driven by the analysis of student assessment data. The goals and objectives lacked items such as benchmarks, evaluation measures, deadlines, person(s) responsible, and resources. According to the superintendent, the team which developed the strategic plan did not include representation from all the major stakeholder groups in the community; it consisted of volunteers whose participation and attendance at strategic planning sessions was not consistent throughout the development process.

On the one hand, interviewees mentioned that in some instances the analysis of student achievement drove the development, implementation, and modification of educational programs (e.g., pacing guides, increased math instructional time, and standardized common midyear and final exams). On the other hand, interviewees remarked that the use of data to improve student achievement varied from school to school, with very little, if any, use of disaggregated data.

The superintendent evaluated the goals and objectives in the strategic plan at the end of the first and third years. As an example, the superintendent cited the Building Assessment Committee Report developed to address the first strategic goal. The EQA team reviewed both the evaluation report and the building assessment report. When the EQA team questioned the superintendent about the alignment of the goals in the strategic plan and the goals in the School Improvement Plans, he indicated that they did not align. Other interviewees confirmed this statement. The EQA team members found no common template in use for the development of the strategic plan and the individual School Improvement Plans.

2. School committee members were informed and knowledgeable about their responsibilities under the Education Reform Act, and relied on student achievement data and other educationally relevant data as the foundation of their policy-making and decision-making.

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

School committee members stated that they were informed and knowledgeable about their responsibilities under the Education Reform Act. The superintendent and the school committee members indicated that newly elected members attended the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) orientation session. School committee members stated that they received and reviewed the MASC manual and the *Massachusetts General Laws Pertaining to Education*. They commented that the superintendent provided them with information about education reform matters in their agenda packets and made available to them the district's policy manual, the association/union contracts, and the School Improvement Plans. The school committee members and the superintendent mentioned that once a year they jointly attended a meeting with town officials at which they had an opportunity to discuss with their legislative

representatives matters under consideration “on the Hill” and issues of importance to the community of Saugus.

The school committee members stated that they did not rely on student achievement data and other educationally relevant data as the foundation of their policymaking and decision-making. Furthermore, interviewees commented that the school committee rarely referenced the goals and objectives in the strategic plan and School Improvement Plans in its policymaking and decision-making. School committee members stated that on various occasions the limited funds allocated to the school department’s budget influenced their decisions. They acknowledged that they did receive presentations on the MCAS test results from the principals each year during the period under review.

3. The district was highly effective at data selection, data generation, data gathering and interpretation, data use, and data-driven decision-making.

Rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

The district was not effective at data selection, data generation, data gathering and interpretation, data use, and data-driven decision-making. The superintendent said, “The district has no system for data analysis.” He commented that the district did not have a specific individual responsible for overseeing the collection, analysis, and use of assessment data, although he remarked that some “pockets of data analysis” existed in the district. He cited as an example the lack of data usage in the decision to eliminate the 13 staff positions at the middle school in 2006-2007, even though student performance results on the MCAS tests, especially in math, needed improvement. The leadership personnel’s rationale for the staff reductions at the middle school in 2006-2007 focused on the fact that the elementary schools and the high school had borne the brunt of the budget cuts in the previous two years.

The superintendent indicated that the principals had received training in TestWiz. The principals stated that they individually sought out their own training in TestWiz, along with other professional development, due to the limitations of the school district’s budget.

Leadership personnel cited the MCAS tests, the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) at grades K-2, and the Gates-MacGinitie at grades 6-8 as the standardized assessments used in the district. Administrators stated that until 2006-2007, the elementary schools used the Stanford math tests in grades 3 and 5; due to budget constraints, the district eliminated these. At the high school, administrators commented that the departments administered standardized common assessments, and both midyear and final exams.

According to the administrators, the sharing of the MCAS test results varied at the different levels. At the elementary schools, the principals downloaded the test results and used TestWiz to examine the data. Starting in 2006-2007, the four elementary principals met to discuss the results and to share strategies. Each elementary principal then met with his/her staff at a faculty meeting to share the MCAS test results. Grade-level meetings with teachers later followed these meetings. At the middle school, after downloading and examining the MCAS test results using TestWiz, the principal shared these results with the curriculum specialists. He then presented the MCAS results to teachers at a faculty meeting. Following the faculty meeting, teachers analyzed the test results at grade 6 and 7 team meetings and grade 8 department meetings. The high school principal followed a similar process to the one used at the middle school, except that following the faculty meeting on the MCAS test results, the curriculum specialists met with the teachers in their respective departments to further analyze the test results.

4. Each school used an approved School Improvement Plan (SIP) that was aligned with the DIP and was based on the analysis of student achievement data. (Only for multi-school districts)

Rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

Each of the schools had a School Improvement Plan (SIP) during the period under review, but the SIPs did not align with the district strategic plan. The format of the SIPs varied among the six schools and differed from that of the strategic plan. Although a review of the SIPs showed that each school had at least one goal that focused on improving student achievement, the goals and objectives lacked various elements of a standards-based structure. In many instances, goals and objectives did not include benchmarks, means of evaluation, timetables, person(s) responsible, and resources needed.

Several examples were noted of SIP goals or objectives that focused on improving student achievement. At Saugus High School, one goal for the English department was to continue efforts to improve MCAS scores by analyzing data from the spring administration to isolate trends or problems, and by continuing to emphasize the five-paragraph essay and open-response type essays. Belmonte Middle School had as a goal to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) in math for the special education subgroup. Lynnhurst Elementary School had as a goal for improving student achievement the development of a method by which the progress of students can be gauged in relation to their peers in Saugus as well as those at the state and national levels. Oaklandvale Elementary School had as a goal to initiate changes that align classroom curriculum with the frameworks. Veterans Memorial Elementary School had as a goal to make AYP in mathematics. Waybright Elementary School had as a goal to improve its MCAS scores and continue to make AYP.

The superintendent reported that the principals shared their SIPs with him each year. He stated that he did not read the SIPs, but rather requested that each principal meet with him and share anything out of the ordinary in the SIP. The principals confirmed the process described by the superintendent. The superintendent told the EQA examiners that he shared all the SIPs with the members of the school committee. During the interview with the school committee, the members acknowledged receiving copies of all the SIPs.

5. The district leadership promoted equity by treating schools' populations and allocations differently and allocating more and better resources to their students and schools with greater needs.

Rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

The district leadership did not promote equity by treating the schools' populations and allocations differently and allocating more and better resources to students and schools with greater needs. Almost all interviewees expressed concern about the lack of an adequate budget during each of the years under review to meet the needs of all the students in the school system. The superintendent stated, "The elementary schools took the hit in 2003." That year, the Ballard and the Evans elementary schools closed as elementary redistricting took place in Saugus, and

elementary class size increased. According to the superintendent, in 2006 and 2007 it was the middle school's turn to take the hit. As a result, effective July 1, 2007, the district eliminated 13 staff positions at the Belmonte Middle School. In addition, some teachers reported that the school had insufficient textbooks for students. Observations by the EQA team members confirmed teachers' statements regarding inadequate textbooks at the middle school. Although the superintendent acknowledged the less than satisfactory performance of middle school students on the MCAS math tests, he indicated that all schools in Saugus needed additional resources. Furthermore, the superintendent commented, "We are trying to do the best we can with what we have."

Some interviewees, when questioned about equity, indicated that the Veterans Memorial Elementary School, the largest of the four elementary schools in student enrollment and the school with the largest special education student population, needed an assistant principal. The superintendent remarked that he was sensitive to this issue and mentioned that the school had a teaching assistant to the principal (a full-time teacher who received a stipend).

The 2006 Coordinated Program Review (CPR) by the Department of Education included information about the lack of programs and services for English language learner (ELL) students in the district. The superintendent stated that the school system presently had 52 ELL students. The superintendent also stated that an ELL teacher now provided services to these students in grades K-12. In 2006-2007, the district initiated a home language survey.

Administrators commented favorably about the additional positions and services derived from the special education and Title I grants. The superintendent echoed the sentiments of the other administrators and mentioned that the school system received approximately \$500,000 from special education grants for "some faculty positions; contracted services such as OT-PT, speech therapy, and adjustment counseling; and professional development."

According to the superintendent, in 2006-2007 the Saugus Public Schools received \$250,000 in Title I funds. The district used these funds for one teacher at the Veterans Memorial Elementary School, two part-time teachers at the Oaklandvale and Veterans Memorial elementary schools, tutors for the elementary schools, professional development programs, and supplies.

Interviewees at all levels of the district expressed the need for the district to do more to promote equity.

6. The superintendent annually recommended and the school committee annually approved educationally sound budgets based primarily on the analysis of student achievement data and advocated for these budgets with the appropriating authority and community.

Rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

During the period under review, the superintendent initially presented a proposed budget that focused on the needs of the school system, but not based primarily on the analysis of student achievement data. When questioned about the school budget, school committee members, the superintendent, the town manager, the administrators, and the teachers stated that the school budget was inadequate. Interviewees mentioned that in the last three years, the school system had to eliminate 58 staff positions. Also, interviewees indicated that the less than adequate school department budgets had resulted in cutbacks in programs and services, larger class sizes, inability to replace outdated textbooks, increased or new fees, teachers purchasing some of their own supplies and materials, inability to repair inoperable media equipment and computers, and very little professional development for staff members.

Both the superintendent and the town manager mentioned that in 2006-2007, the community had the opportunity to vote on an approximately \$5 million override (approximately \$2.5 million for the school department and \$2.5 million for the municipal departments). Some of the other interviewees characterized the override vote as a “resounding defeat.” When questioned about the failure of the override, interviewees expressed opinions such as “low taxes versus education,” “lack of respect by the community,” and “distrust of town leaders.” One interviewee opined that “the rank order of priorities in Saugus is: 1) tax base, 2) athletics youth programs and hockey), 3) public safety, and 4) education.”

The superintendent stated that the budget development process had the principals and their respective staffs preparing site budgets based upon needs, including “hopes and dreams.” The principals submitted these budget proposals to the superintendent and finance manager. According to the superintendent, the initial budget presentation to the school committee included

everything submitted by the administrators. The superintendent indicated that during the budget review process the school committee interjected its priorities, which nearly always included staffing, such as a special education teacher and a nurse in every school. Leadership personnel and school committee members remarked that as the school committee reduced the proposed budget, it made little reference to the analysis of student achievement data. Once the school committee members agreed to a budget they felt they could support, the superintendent made the school department's budget presentation to the finance committee. After the budget presentation, the school committee conducted its annual public hearing on the budget, followed by its vote on the budget. School committee members and the superintendent stated that later additional reductions to the FY 2008 school budget bottom line were required, which voters approved at town meeting. As of the time of the EQA visit, the school committee members had not voted the revised budget figure for FY 2008 as the public hearing on the budget is held before the document is sent to town hall.

Administrators stated that during the winter of each of the years under review, the superintendent had placed a freeze on the school department budget. During the budget freeze, only priority and emergency items received funding.

Interviewees commented that the school committee held budget review sessions open to the public, and were covered on cable television, both live and tape delayed, and in the local newspapers, the *Saugus Advertiser* and *The Daily Item* of Lynn.

Administrators and teachers in focus groups reported that once the school committee members voted the school department budget, the school committee largely took a passive rather than active role for gaining its support in the community.

7. The leadership periodically reported to the school committee, staff, and community on the extent of its attainment of the goals in the DIP and the SIPs, particularly regarding student achievement.

Rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

Leadership personnel did not periodically report to the school committee, the staff, and the community on the extent of attainment of the goals in the DIP and the SIPs, especially regarding student achievement. The superintendent stated that since the development of the strategic plan, he made two presentations on the status of the strategic goals in the plan at the end of the first and third years. Many interviewees indicated a lack of awareness of the district's strategic plan and the two follow-up reports pertaining to its goals.

Leadership personnel confirmed that each year principals made annual reports to the school committee. These reports included an analysis of the MCAS data for the respective school year and a comparison with the previous year's MCAS test results. According to the administrators, very little discussion, if any, had to do with the other goals and objectives in their SIPs. School committee members concurred when asked about the annual reports by the principals.

Administrators stated that the community had access to the annual presentations made by the principals to the school committee, since representatives from the local newspapers attended the school committee meetings and cable television provided coverage of these sessions.

Interviewees expressed different opinions regarding the information received by staff members about progress made toward attainment of the goals in the SIPs. In some schools, interviewees stated that they did not receive any feedback as to the status of the goals in the SIPs. In other schools, interviewees reported that their principals gave updates on the goals and objectives, once or twice a year, usually at faculty and school council meetings, but not to the school committee or superintendent.

8. District and school leadership used and effectively implemented practices that required all staff to regularly use aggregated and disaggregated student assessment data to improve instructional programs and services for all student populations.

Rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

The district and school leadership used and effectively implemented some practices that required all staff members to use aggregate student assessment data in order to improve instructional

programs and services to students. However, interviewees provided little, if any, evidence that personnel in the school system used disaggregated student assessment data to improve instructional programs and services for all student populations. The superintendent stated that the district needed a data specialist to establish and oversee a program across grades preK-12 for the collection, analysis, and use of data. Furthermore, the superintendent said that this position would assist teachers in the use of both aggregated and disaggregated assessment data. Currently, the superintendent reported that he was unaware of how much use, if any, the district made of disaggregated data. In addition, principals and teachers presented little evidence of the use of disaggregated student assessment data.

The superintendent and other administrators stated that principals analyzed the MCAS test results using TestWiz, sometimes in conjunction with the curriculum specialists, and then shared the results with their staffs at faculty meetings. Following these faculty meetings, principals met with teachers at grade-level and team meetings and curriculum specialists met with teachers at department meetings to discuss the MCAS test results, examine the item analyses, and make modifications to instruction, pacing guides, and curriculum.

In addition to the analysis of the MCAS test results, leadership personnel mentioned that principals and teachers administered and analyzed the results from the DIBELS (grades K-2) and the Gates-MacGinitie (grades 6-8) tests. Elementary principals reported that prior to 2006-2007, the district had administered the Stanford math test at grades 3 and 5. The analysis of the results assisted teachers in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of students in math. However, principals stated that due to budget constraints, the district no longer administered the Stanford math tests.

At the high school, interviewees stated that to ensure that all teachers taught the same material in the same course, such as Geometry, teachers developed common midyear and final exams for each department. High school personnel mentioned that upon completion of these exams, teachers analyzed the results in order to improve instruction and make modifications to programs.

9. District and school leaders monitored student achievement data throughout the year, considered the goals identified in the DIP and the SIPs, and implemented or modified programs, policies, and services as required.

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

District and school leaders stated that they monitored student achievement throughout the year and implemented or modified programs, policies, and services as required. Administrators commented that, at times, budget freezes or the lack of resources hampered the implementation or modification of programs, policies, and services, especially in the areas of personnel, textbooks, and supplies.

Very few building-level administrators remarked about the consideration of the goals in the strategic plan and SIPs in planning for new or modifying existing programs and services. The superintendent told the EQA examiners that the administrative team discussed student achievement results on several occasions at administrative council meetings. He also said that each of the principals kept him informed, usually at informal meetings, about potential changes in programs and services they intended to implement in their schools. According to the superintendent, rarely did a principal reference any goals in his or her SIP during these meetings.

Principals cited a variety of changes to programs and services that resulted from the analysis of student assessment data. At the elementary level, principals commented about the implementation of the DIBELS at grades K-2 and its expansion to grade 3 in 2007-2008, and the restructuring of the school schedule from 40 to 90 minutes for ELA instruction and from 40 to 60 minutes for math. The high school modified the math sequence (probability, statistics, and geometry) and implemented daily teacher preparation periods.

Middle school administrators discussed the implementation of a success block in which students go back to one core teacher in English, math, science, and social studies each quarter of the year for 30 minutes for additional instructional time. They also mentioned the addition of a required MCAS review math class for those students in the 'Warning' and the lower end of the 'Needs Improvement' categories, the assignment of a math specialist each Wednesday "to monitor what was happening in the middle school in math," and the beginning of midyear and final exams.

According to the administrators, some examples of changes to programs and services at the high school included the creation of common planning time and the implementation of a modified block schedule as well as pacing guides and standardized midyear and final exams. Administrators reported that each classroom had a computer, mostly from community and business donations made to the high school. In addition, the high school implemented K-12 Planet software that allowed e-mail communication between teachers and parents.

10. The performance of the superintendent, administrators, and principals was annually evaluated based on MCAS results, other student achievement data, and the attainment of the goals in the DIP and the SIPs.

Rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

The performance evaluation of the superintendent, administrators, and principals did not occur annually. The superintendent stated that he received only one evaluation from the school committee during the period under review, in 2005-2006. The appraisal instrument covered seven categories: a) relationship with the school committee; b) personal qualities and characteristics; c) personnel management; d) educational leadership; e) general management; f) communications/public relations; and g) budget management. The appraisal instrument included the following rating scale for each category: 5 = commendable, 4 = exceeds expectation, 3 = satisfactory, 2 = needs improvement, and 1 = unsatisfactory.

The evaluation of the superintendent included, among other things, statements about student achievement and about some of the goals in the strategic plan. In addition, the evaluation had statements under “positive comments” and “areas of improvement.” However, the evaluation had neither the signature of the chairperson of the school committee nor that of the superintendent. Furthermore, no date appeared on the evaluation. School committee members told EQA examiners they had evaluated the superintendent only once in the past three years. They stated that each member submitted his or her input on the superintendent’s evaluation to the chairperson, who in turn prepared a composite evaluation and then shared it, along with one other member of the committee, with the superintendent.

The superintendent said that he did not evaluate all of the administrators during each of the three years under review. In addition, he did not evaluate the administrators based on MCAS results, other relevant student achievement data, or progress toward attainment of the goals in the SIPs. A review of the administrators' evaluations written by the superintendent and covering a period of 18 months showed that the evaluations were narrative in form, included some of the Principles of Effective Leadership, and were almost completely informative. The 14 personnel files of administrators the EQA team reviewed contained only five evaluations completed during the last three years.

11. The superintendent effectively delegated the educational and operational leadership of the schools to the principals and program directors and used student achievement data to assess the success of their leadership.

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The superintendent effectively delegated the educational and operational leadership of the schools to the principals and program directors. However, the superintendent did not use student achievement data to assess the success of their leadership. When questioned by EQA team members about the criteria used to evaluate administrators, the superintendent stated that he did not use student achievement results in assessing their performance. Furthermore, the superintendent stated that he could not recall writing any statements in the administrators' evaluations about progress made toward the attainment of the goals and objectives in their SIPs. Most of the administrators told the EQA examiners that they had not received a written evaluation during the period under review. Those administrators who had received evaluations commented that they contained no statements pertaining to improving student achievement and attaining SIP goals.

Administrators spoke favorably about the delegation of duties and responsibilities to them by the superintendent. Both the superintendent and the other administrators mentioned the delineation of duties and responsibilities included in the administrators' job descriptions. In addition, the administrators commented about various additional assignments and tasks that the superintendent discussed with each of them. The administrators stated that, because of the large number of staff

reductions in the school system over the past three years, each of them had “to wear a number of different hats.” Furthermore, administrators remarked about the delegation of duties, especially in the areas of budget development, recruitment and selection of staff, curriculum development, staff evaluations, and SIP preparation.

12. The school committee and superintendent created a culture of collaboration and developed contracts and agreements that encouraged all stakeholders to work together to support and sustain improved student achievement.

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The school committee and the superintendent did not create a culture of collaboration in the development of contracts and agreements, encouraging all stakeholders to work together to support and sustain improved student achievement. Interviewees characterized the atmosphere surrounding the last round of negotiations on a successor agreement between the school committee and teachers’ association as “horrible,” “bitter,” “extremely adversarial,” “acrimonious,” and “contentious.” In addition, interviewees mentioned that the members of the teachers’ association consistently participated in some form of ‘work to rule’ and threatened a job action. School committee members, teacher association representatives, and administrators all confirmed the threatened job actions. In addition, school committee members stated that teacher association representatives attended school committee meetings and made statements causing the school committee to disallow comments from the public at its meetings. Furthermore, some administrators indicated that they had numerous “insignificant” grievances filed by the teachers’ association during the period under review. Interviewees did comment, however, that since the recent ratification of the teachers’ contract “things had settled down.”

The superintendent cited two initiatives during the period under review where the stakeholders collaborated to support and sustain improved student achievement. The first initiative involved the development and implementation of the district strategic plan for 2004-2009. The second initiative involving stakeholder groups was an attempt to gain support for an override in 2006-2007 of approximately \$5 million to support both school and municipal expenditures. Interviewees reported that despite this effort, the override failed.

13. The district formed partnerships with community human service agencies and benefactors, such as corporate and civic sponsors, to provide at-risk students and families access to health, social, recreational, and supplemental educational services.

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district formed partnerships with community human services agencies and benefactors, such as corporate and civic sponsors, to provide at-risk students and families access to health, social, recreational, and supplemental educational services. Administrators commented about a number of collaborations and partnerships that provided support to the school system. They first mentioned the Saugus Business Education Collaborative, a formal organization comprised of members of both the business and education communities who raised money for mini-grants and the adopt-a-school program. The Saugus Business Partnership, consisting of five to six of the largest businesses in the town (e.g., Resco and the Hilltop restaurant), encouraged school personnel to request funds from it for student programs and services. The superintendent mentioned the partnership between the Saugus Federal Credit Union and the Hilltop restaurant to adopt the Oaklandvale Elementary School as another example.

Administrators commented about the assistance and support they received from their partnerships with the Essex District Attorney's Office and the Department of Social Services. They also discussed the large number of youngsters who participated each year in the local youth and recreation programs. In addition, leadership personnel referenced the Saugus Speaks Out organization, which focused on substance abuse issues. Furthermore, the superintendent referred to the school district's affiliation with the North Shore Children's Hospital.

14. The superintendent created and disseminated a comprehensive safety plan in collaboration with the community and plans were reviewed annually with the police and fire departments prior to each school year. School and district safety plans were aligned.

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The superintendent created and disseminated a comprehensive safety plan in collaboration with the community, which the district reviewed annually with the police and fire departments prior to

each school year. The superintendent said that the district and school safety plans were aligned. Administrators reported that all staff members had a copy of the Saugus Public Schools Emergency Response to Critical Incidents Quick Reference Chart at their desks, which contained 22 flip-charted sections addressing various emergencies. In interviews, teachers told the EQA examiners that the booklets were in their desks, in the closet, or located in a safe and secure place in the classroom.

Although administrators stated that each classroom had emergency exit procedures posted near the classroom doors, the EQA examiners observed that some classrooms had no visible emergency exit postings on the walls. Although the school system had a lockdown procedure, administrators mentioned that in some schools, especially at the elementary level, such a drill had not occurred. When questioned about bus evacuation drills, leadership personnel expressed uncertainty about such drills since a contracted vendor provided the bus service.

The superintendent commented that from September to July during each year of the period under review, the school department had a liaison with the police and fire departments. The superintendent also indicated that every school had a crisis management plan and team. Building-level administrators verified this statement.

Standard II: Curriculum and Instruction												
Ratings ▼ Indicators ►	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	Total
Excellent												
Satisfactory												
Needs Improvement	✓		✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓	7
Unsatisfactory		✓			✓		✓		✓			4

II. Curriculum and Instruction

The curricula and instructional practices in the district were developed and implemented to attain high levels of achievement for all students. They were aligned with components of the state curriculum frameworks and revised to promote higher levels of student achievement.

Standard Rating: Needs Improvement

Findings:

- The district lacked a cyclical process and infrastructure for K-12 curriculum development and modification. In the last three years, the district has reduced or eliminated many curriculum leadership roles.
- Resources were not allocated according to need in Saugus. Although the white, special education, and low income subgroups failed to make AYP in grade 8 mathematics at the middle school, no additional resources were provided to the school and two effective mathematics teachers were allowed to transfer.
- The district lacked a plan and sufficient funds for the acquisition, replacement, and distribution of technology. The provision of technology resources was inequitable among the four elementary schools, and between the middle school and high school.
- Saugus enrolled a high percentage of special education students in full inclusion programs, but lacked the resources to sustain and support them. Achievement and graduation rates were significantly lower and the dropout rate was higher for special education students in comparison to the state averages.

Summary

The documented curriculum in Saugus lacked a common format and many components to make it effective and complete. The curriculum was most complete at the high school level and least

viable at the elementary level, where gaps existed in the mathematics sequence, the curriculum in English language arts (ELA) was not current, and the science curriculum consisted of the textbook publisher's program. At the middle school, the documented curriculum consisted of a course description in each domain at each grade level. In mathematics, pacing guides accompanied the descriptions. The grade 6 mathematics text was outdated and unaligned with the state framework.

Curricula in all tested areas did not align horizontally and vertically. Horizontal and vertical alignment was strongest at the high school level where curriculum documents were complete and accountability tools were in place. At the middle school level, content and expectations were uniform within a course at a grade level, and there was a sequential progression in knowledge and skills from course to course within a discipline. At the elementary level, with the exception of that written by the publishers of textbooks, curricula were largely undocumented, and little existed to ensure horizontal and vertical alignment.

The district lacked infrastructure to enable vertical alignment of the curriculum at the junctures between the elementary and middle school levels and the middle and high school levels. The capacity for curriculum leadership in Saugus had eroded due to lack of funding. The principals were the curriculum leaders of their schools, but they performed this role with ever diminishing support. Saugus lacked a cyclical process for the regular and timely review of district curricula. Curriculum development was often *ad hoc*, fragmentary, incomplete, and dependent upon initiative, with the exception of the high school.

Saugus used program requirements and summative achievement data to allocate instructional time. The time allotments for ELA and mathematics increased at the elementary level, and the district added a twice-weekly long block at the high school to accommodate lab periods and to permit more in depth learning. A common understanding about high expectations for student work and mastery was not evident in Saugus. Elementary administrators defined high expectations as encouraging all students to exceed their own last efforts and not underestimating what students could do. Secondary administrators equated high expectations with the setting of higher standards for graduation and eligibility for accelerated programs.

Activities such as analysis of student achievement results, instructional monitoring, resource acquisition, and professional development were loosely linked at the district level. These activities were integrated more systematically at the high school level, and at the K-3 grade span through the adoption of the early reading program beginning in 2004-2005.

Educational technology was obsolete, often in disrepair, inadequately provided, and inequitably distributed across the district. Saugus implemented a philosophy of inclusion, minimizing the separation of special education students from the mainstream program, but district support for this model was insufficient and dwindling, especially with budget reductions. Achievement and graduation rates were low for district special education students and the dropout rate was high.

Indicators

1. The district implemented curricula for all grade levels in tested core content areas that clearly addressed all the components of the state curriculum frameworks. The curricula document contained, at a minimum, components that addressed: objectives, resources, instructional strategies, timelines, articulation maps, and measurable outcomes or assessments.

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The documented curriculum in Saugus lacked a common format and many components to make it effective. The curriculum was most complete at the high school level and included objectives such as resources, strategies, pacing guides, and common midterm and final examinations. It was least developed at the elementary level, where gaps existed in the mathematics sequence, the curriculum in English language arts (ELA) lacked up to date written documentation, and the science curriculum consisted of only the textbook publisher's program.

At the elementary level (K-5), the documented ELA curriculum consisted of outdated schematics for language, literature, and composition from kindergarten through grade 5, and reading and writing checklists from pre-kindergarten through grade 2. Diagrams illustrated the correlation between the Silver Burdette and Houghton Mifflin series then in use with the state's ELA framework. Stories from the series were labeled by title, author, and grade level in a central box connected by arrows to an array of peripheral boxes addressing strands such as genre, theme, and reading vocabulary. Each strand box contained page references to the texts, and directions to the

teacher for suggested activities. Accompanying diagrams contained assessment strategies and writing activities related to the stories. Appendices included generic instructional strategies, templates for organizing written responses, sample rubrics, and relevant articles from professional journals. The checklists consisted of reading and writing skills arranged in a developmentally rational order, and rated on a five-point scale from ‘emergent’ to ‘independent.’

Few teachers interviewed by the EQA team were familiar with the schematics and checklists presented by the district. Administrators told the EQA team that a former elementary curriculum specialist had produced these documents in consultation with grade-level teachers more than seven years ago. In practice, teachers relied on the manuals for the McMillan/McGraw Hill reading series, adopted by the district in 2005 for grades K-3. Interviewees told the EQA that this series aligned with the state frameworks and replaced the Silver Burdette and Ginn series. They further stated that the taught curriculum for grades 4 and 5 consisted of common anthologies, trade books, and grammar texts, but the ELA program at these grades was undocumented.

Administrators told the EQA team that the prior elementary curriculum specialist had expertise in ELA and in curriculum development and had focused primarily on this domain. Subsequently, in 2006-2007, the four elementary principals targeted revising the mathematics curriculum, based on student performance on the MCAS tests. They worked with the successor curriculum specialist and elementary teachers to develop pacing guides and common assessments. They also established a work plan beginning with grade 4 and continuing next with grade 3 because these grades were subject to MCAS testing. The principals explained that the work on pacing guides and common assessments would progress next to grade 5, and subsequently to grades 2, 1, and kindergarten. The pacing guides were monthly calendars indicating when chapters from the Scott Foresman/Addison Wesley series should be taught; the assessments were teacher-made chapter tests. One administrator said, “We are planting seeds. This is still work in progress.”

The K-5 science curriculum in Saugus was undocumented. The district adopted the McGraw Hill science program in 2005, and elementary principals told the EQA team that teachers were still using the guides and manuals for the series as their primary references and resources. One administrator described science as a “do it yourself curriculum,” another referred to the science

curriculum as “the orphan.” Central office administrators stated that the district badly needed curriculum development in science at the elementary level.

At the middle school, the documented ELA curriculum consisted of a course description for each grade level, including broad learning objectives, and generic descriptions of evaluation techniques and resources. For example, for grade 7 ELA, fostering an appreciation for literature, classroom participation, and grammar textbook were cited under the categories of learning objectives, evaluation technique, and resources. There were no pacing guides. In mathematics, each grade level had a syllabus listing broad learning objectives, texts, and topics by chapter, accompanied by a pacing guide organized by term specifying the number of days allotted to each chapter. The grade 6 mathematics text was outdated and unaligned with the state framework. In science, the curriculum consisted of both broad and specific learning objectives and generic statements of methods of instruction and assessment. The syllabus for grade 8 technology/engineering was more comprehensive, including standards, lessons, and assignments. One curriculum specialist stated that it should be a model for curriculum development because the district did not have a template. The science program had no pacing guides. Middle school administrators told the EQA team that teachers administered common midterm and final examinations in all subjects in grade 8 and common finals in all subjects in grade 7; common assessments were optional in grade 6. The EQA examiners reviewed copies of some middle school common assessments.

At the high school level, curriculum documents in all of the tested areas contained all of the required components including objectives, resources, and strategies. Each course had pacing guides, and at this level teachers used common midterm and final examinations.

2. The district’s curricula in all tested areas were aligned horizontally and vertically.

Rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

Curricula in all tested areas did not align horizontally and vertically. Horizontal and vertical alignment were strongest at the high school level where curriculum documents were complete in all domains and accountability tools such as pacing guides and common assessments were in place. At the middle school level, content and expectations were uniform within a course at one

grade level and each discipline possessed a sequential progression in knowledge and skills from course to course. Curricula at the elementary level were largely undocumented, and little existed except for publishers' programs to ensure horizontal and vertical alignment. The district lacked infrastructure to create vertical alignment of the curriculum at the junctures between the elementary and middle school levels and the middle and high school levels.

Horizontal and vertical alignment of curricula within and between the elementary schools was informal and loose, in the absence of current and complete curriculum documents in all core subject areas. Elementary principals told the EQA they insisted on "faithfulness to the core McMillan/McGraw Hill ELA program" and implementation of the grouping and intervention strategies based on the results of the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) assessments in grades 1-3. They also expected adherence to the pacing guides in grades 3 and 4 mathematics. In answer to a question, they stated that it was more difficult to ensure uniformity in grades 3 and 4 ELA because there was no written districtwide curriculum for these grades. There was also no district elementary curriculum in science beyond the McGraw Hill program adopted in 2005, and science had received less supervisory attention in the district because it had been subordinated to ELA and mathematics, which until recently were the primary subjects of the MCAS tests.

The elementary principals told the EQA team that they decided to work together as a team of four to promote consistency at elementary grade levels and from grade to grade both within their schools and from one elementary school to another. In interviews, the principals stated that they hoped to standardize the curriculum to ensure that all Saugus children would have the same educational experience. In the interest of the larger goal, they focused initially on mathematics because it was an area of need, and, as one principal said, they could "take on one small attainable piece at a time." New pacing guides and common assessments for grades 3 and 4 resulted from this collaboration. One principal noted "it's slow going, but in the right direction."

At the middle level, teachers of the same discipline at a grade level followed the same syllabus and pacing guide. Although the middle school curriculum documents lacked some components and detail, a sequence of skills was evident from grade to grade and from course to course. At the high school level, teachers of the same course followed a detailed syllabus, complied with a

prescriptive pacing guide, and administered common midterm and final examinations. The progression of skills from course to course and from grade to grade was more implicit than explicit at the high school level, but evident upon examination of the syllabi in core courses at successive grade levels. For example, there was a developmental progression from the five-paragraph essay in grade 9 ELA to the research paper in grade 10.

Except for occasional *ad hoc* conversations between teachers from the elementary and middle schools and administrators, the district lacked a formal structure for ensuring vertical continuity of curricula from the elementary to the middle school level. For example, the elementary curriculum specialist did not meet regularly with the grade 6-12 secondary specialists, and there was no K-12 curriculum steering committee. The grade 6-12 secondary specialists facilitated articulation between the middle school and high school levels, but in interviews with the EQA examiners these specialists stated that they were based at the high school and had little time to devote to the middle school. One stated, “We are really 9-12 specialists with some 6-8 responsibilities.” In 2007-2008, the grade 6-12 specialists assumed full-time teaching responsibilities because of budget reductions and were unavailable to the middle school except to answer routine questions, to recommend materials, and to notify teachers about workshops.

3. Each school in the district had a curriculum leader who oversaw the use, alignment, consistency, and effectiveness of delivery of the district’s curricula that focused on improvement for all of its students.

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The capacity for curriculum leadership in Saugus has eroded because of lack of funding. At one time, Saugus had an assistant superintendent with some curricular responsibilities and full-time K-12 curriculum specialists. In the 1990s the structure changed to a full-time elementary specialist and grade 6-12 specialists. In 2002, the grade 6-12 specialist positions were reduced to part-time status, except in ELA and mathematics, and the assistant superintendency was eliminated upon the retirement of the incumbent. In 2005, the grade 6-12 ELA and mathematics specialist positions were also reduced to part-time. In 2007-2008, the elementary specialist and the grade 6-12 specialists were assigned full-time teaching responsibilities, retaining their titles

and stipends in curtailed roles. The district principals identified themselves as the curriculum leaders for their respective schools, but said that they were performing this role with ever diminishing support.

In interviews with the EQA team, the four elementary principals stated that they had organized themselves for curriculum leadership. At their own initiative, they decided that each would assume responsibility for a domain. They explained that this division of responsibility had made them more effective. For example, the principal assuming responsibility for mathematics had taken the lead in developing the pacing guides and common assessments for grades 3 and 4. The principals stated that they oversaw the implementation of the curriculum through classroom walk-throughs and by participating in informal grade-level discussions. Elementary teachers confirmed that the principals often visited their classrooms and sometimes provided teachers informal feedback.

At the middle school, the principal and two assistants divided curricular leadership responsibilities based on their areas of expertise. They stated that they supervised curricular implementation through classroom walk-throughs, although middle school teachers said that the visits were infrequent. Middle school administrators also stated that the loss of the grade 6-12 specialists' time would impede curriculum development. Teachers, under the direction of the secondary curriculum specialists, had created all of the current middle school course syllabi and pacing guides.

At the high school, teachers were required to submit evidence of adherence to the pacing guides to the principal at two-week intervals. The principal visited classrooms to oversee implementation of the curricula, reviewed common midterm examinations and grade distributions at least quarterly to ensure that students were making expected progress, and discussed low student achievement and skewed grade distributions with individual teachers. High school teachers confirmed the classroom visits and indicated that the principal was vigilant about their abiding by the pacing guides and course curricula.

4. Each school provided active leadership and support for effective instructional strategies, techniques, and methods grounded in research and focused on improved achievement for all students.

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The formal teacher evaluation process in Saugus was flawed and both administrators and teachers reported that it was not a vehicle for improving instruction and student achievement. Systems of active informal supervision to improve teaching and learning varied by level; supervision of instruction was regular and systematic at the high school level, irregular and random at the elementary level, and not evident at the middle school level.

The EQA examiners found few specific and targeted recommendations for professional growth and improvement in a review of a representative sample of teacher evaluations. Teachers told the EQA team that the evaluation process was not useful to them. One stated that evaluations were “positive glosses” and that the process was “just a formality.” An administrator stated that the Saugus teacher evaluation process, originally based on Research for Better Teaching (RBT) principles, had “fallen apart for lack of training.” Other administrators agreed that the clinical supervision model, consisting of pre- and post-conferences, was not explicitly used and that many teachers and administrators did not know RBT’s Skillful Teacher common vocabulary for characterizing instructional moves.

At the high school level, administrators and curriculum specialists visited classes on a regular schedule and regularly provided teachers verbal or written feedback on fidelity of implementation of the curriculum and improvement of instructional techniques. High school teachers confirmed that administrators were often present in their classrooms and frequently made comments. They went on to say that curriculum specialists usually made recommendations and acknowledged best practices, but added that these specialists were now teaching full time and were unable to observe regularly unless relieved by a substitute teacher.

High school administrators told the EQA team that they identified and assisted struggling teachers through direct informal observations and a review of instructional plans and student results. The documents reviewed included lesson plans, pacing guides, midterm and final

examinations, and grade distributions. Administrators stated, and high school teachers confirmed, that the high school mentoring program provided valuable collegial support for new and beginning teachers. One teacher stated that his mentor had “saved his life” and “really taught him how to teach.”

At the elementary level, the principals stated that they made walk-throughs in classrooms to help improve instruction and results. The practices varied from school to school in the absence of a district protocol governing the frequency, duration, and purpose of these visits and the manner of feedback to the teachers. Elementary teachers confirmed that their principals were often in the classrooms, but stated that they often did not know why. Feedback was irregular and usually verbal. Some teachers reported that they received no feedback or comments following a visit. One principal told the EQA team that he visited half the classes each day on a regular schedule and had devised a form to provide immediate feedback. He went on to say he had worked to develop trust and that the system he created relied upon the good will and professionalism of his staff because the district had not standardized a process for walk-throughs.

At the middle school, administrators stated that they made visits whenever possible. Middle school teachers reported that these visits were rare because the administrators were preoccupied with big issues such as the effects of large classes, insufficient supplies and materials, and an aging building with environmental problems. Administrators told the EQA team that the grade 6-12 curriculum specialists had been helpful to teachers, and expressed concern about the virtual elimination of their role at the middle school level.

5. The district had an established, documented process for the regular and timely review and revision of curricula that was based on valid research, the analysis of the MCAS test results, and other assessments, and focused on improved achievement for all subgroups.

Rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

Saugus lacked a comprehensive K-12 process for the regular and timely review of curricula with the exception of the high school, where well developed systems were in place. Otherwise, curriculum development was often *ad hoc*, fragmentary, incomplete, and dependent upon individual initiative. The district relied almost exclusively upon MCAS test results to measure

student performance and to identify curricular strengths and needs. With the exception of special education, there was little recognition of subgroup needs and Saugus did not formally track the performance of subgroups in order to improve programs and services.

Administrators told the EQA team that Saugus did not have a steering committee and a regular cycle for K-12 curriculum development and revision. At one time the district had a five-year cycle for textbook replacement, but this was extended to eight years due to lack of funds; eventually a regular cycle for revision was abandoned. One administrator stated that textbook renewal was equivalent to curriculum development in the district because “the text was the curriculum.”

In the absence of an infrastructure to provide expertise and a K-12 perspective, programs were adopted at a grade or grade span without full consideration of the relationship to other programs. For example, beginning in 2004-2005, elementary and special education administrators and teachers collaborated to institute the DIBELS assessment in grades K-3 by 2007-2008 and provided training from the Hansen Initiative for Language and Learning (HILL) at Massachusetts General Hospital, funded by a grant. The program, underwritten at first with special education grants, was subsequently funded through a combination of special education and district funds and other grants. At the same time, the McMillan/McGraw Hill reading program was adopted for grades K-3. This research-based program included an intensive level for the most skill-deficient readers.

Administrators told the EQA team that teachers used the DIBELS results to form and disband classroom instructional groups. Although the DIBELS measured decoding and fluency better than comprehension, the district did not have a plan to purchase another measure of comprehension such as the Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE) as a supplement. In addition, there was no conscious plan to review and revise the ELA curriculum in grades 4 and 5 at the elementary level, given the changes in practice and emphasis in grades K-3. Administrators stated that this review would occur only if they initiated it and was subject to funding. One said, “Anything that happens is because we do it.”

Saugus did not track the performance of its student subgroups to identify their needs and improve programs and services. In 2007, the low income, special education, and white student

subgroups failed to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) in ELA and mathematics at the middle school level, but administrators were not aware of any plans to use the MCAS results diagnostically and programmatically. Two effective middle school mathematics teachers were transferred to the high school. The district did, however, provide the middle school with math manipulatives, MCAS math workbooks, and professional development offered through Salem State College and Leslie University.

The Department of Education found that English language learner (ELL) students were underserved in the district and that there was not full compliance with regulation. After an unsuccessful attempt to recruit and retain an ELL specialist, the district engaged an uncertified candidate on a waiver to address the needs of this low incident population. Many teachers and administrators told the EQA team that the growing population of ELL students (52 at the time of the EQA visit) was not well served in Saugus. One teacher described the situation as “tragic.”

6. The district analyzed student achievement data and allocated instructional time in the tested core content areas that focused on improved rates of proficiency for all students.

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The district used program requirements and summative achievement data to allocate instructional time. The time allotments for ELA and mathematics were increased at the elementary level based on evidence of need. The middle school added “success blocks” to increase time in the core areas, but it was uncertain if the middle school was meeting the 990-hour requirement as a secondary school. The superintendent appealed to the DOE asking that it consider the middle school to be an elementary school, requiring 900 student hours for 2007-2008. At the high school level, the district added a twice-weekly long block to accommodate lab periods and to permit more in-depth learning. There were significant constraints on time at the elementary and middle school levels. At the high school level, there were inconsistencies in use of the long block. The district offered little professional development on extended learning time, and did not evaluate the effectiveness.

Over the last three years, the district increased time allocations in ELA and mathematics at the elementary level. It instituted a literacy block of 90 minutes to accomplish the objectives of the

new reading program. The time was consecutive in all schools in grades 1-3 and non-consecutive in some schools in grades 4 and 5. Instructional time in mathematics was increased to 75 minutes in grade 4, 60 minutes in grade 3, and at least 40 minutes in grades 1 and 2. Administrators stated that the superintendent directed the changes based on a trend analysis of district MCAS test results in mathematics.

Given the boundaries of the school day, increases in time for ELA and mathematics resulted in reduced time for science and social studies. In 2007, 61 percent of Saugus grade 5 students did not achieve proficiency on the MCAS science and technology/engineering (STE) test. The elementary science program was textbook based. When asked, elementary principals stated that if it were determined that student performance would improve with a more experiential approach using kits, it would be impossible to keep within the allotted time of approximately two hours each week for science. The time for social studies amounted to slightly more than one hour each week. Middle school teachers told the EQA examiners that students often lacked the prerequisite skills for the grade 6 social studies program because the district had reallocated social studies time at the elementary level. One elementary principal said, “We’re at the breaking point. There just aren’t enough hours without increasing the length of the school day.”

In 2006-2007, the Department of Education cited the Belmonte Middle School for failure to comply with time and learning requirements. Under a non-precedent setting agreement between the teachers’ association and the school committee, the passing and starting times were adjusted to meet the requirement of 990 hours of instruction. In 2007-2008, the Saugus school committee reclassified the middle school as an elementary school subject to the 900-hour requirement as a transition measure for one year. Administrators stated that while this change was legitimate and helped the district to comply with statute, it was not in the best interests of students, and might negatively affect NCLB ‘highly qualified’ status for the middle school teachers.

The high school principal instituted a modified block schedule five years ago by majority vote of the faculty. Under this schedule, the 50-minute period expanded to 90 minutes on two days each week. High school administrators stated that the school used the block for science and language lab student performances, individualized projects, and extended learning opportunities.

High school administrators told the EQA team that more recently trained teachers appreciated and used the time more effectively than did veteran teachers. High school teachers told the EQA team that there had been minimal district professional development on use of the long block. One teacher stated that he learned some strategies from department colleagues, but hoped to increase his repertoire.

The teachers further said that their use of the time was inconsistent. For example, some teachers allowed students to begin their homework or gave a test during part of the period, while others did not. Administrators stated that while there has been no formal evaluation of the effectiveness of the extended block schedule since it was instituted, the informal feedback from staff, students, and parents has been positive. Most teachers agreed with this assessment.

7. Appropriate educational technology was available and used as an integral part of the instructional process.

Rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

In Saugus, educational technology was largely obsolete, often in disrepair, inadequately provided, and inequitably distributed. The EQA team saw use of technology in 11 percent of 44 randomly selected districtwide classrooms, and the student-to-computer ratio in these classrooms was 20.7 to 1.

Administrators stated that over 60 percent of the approximately 300 computers used for student instruction were at least five years old. These computers were incapable of running the latest software programs, and often did not function properly. The district shared a technology director with the town, resulting in delays in restoring computers to service and maintaining the server.

In 2006-2007, the funds allotted for hardware and software renewal were not expended because of a budget freeze. Following the reductions made after failure of the override in 2007, only \$3,000 was allocated for new technology across the district for the 2007-2008 school year. This provision was described as a “placeholder in the budget.” Administrators estimated that the district would fully expend the amount set aside for contracted computer repairs in the 2007-2008 budget within the first quarter of the year.

There was no district plan governing distribution and renewal of technology. As a result, there were inequities among the schools. The high school had approximately 150 classroom computers and six computer labs while the middle school had one SmartBoard, and according to administrators and teachers computers were so outdated that they were of no practical use. Middle school teachers told the EQA team that technology was virtually unavailable to them. While technology was not adequate across the elementary level, the Oaklandvale and Waybright elementary schools used corporate donations to augment their resources, while the other two elementary schools had much less. Oaklandvale had the best provisions at the elementary level with at least one Internet-connected computer and a SmartBoard in every classroom.

Administrators stated that the district needed a budget of at least \$100,000 annually for hardware and software upgrades and infrastructure improvements. All of the computers at the high school had been purchased with grant funds or donations rather than the local education agency budget. The district also required the full-time services of a technology director.

8. District and school leaders actively monitored teachers' instruction for evidence of practices that reflected high expectations for students' work and mastery.

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

A common understanding of high expectations for student work and mastery was lacking across the district. For example, at the elementary level administrators defined high expectations as encouraging all students to exceed their own last efforts and not underestimating what students could do. At the secondary level, administrators equated high expectations for student work and mastery with setting high standards for graduation and eligibility for accelerated programs. At the elementary level, principals monitored teachers' instruction for evidence of high expectations through informal walk-throughs, occasional reviews of teachers' plan books, and discussions about setting expectations at faculty and grade-level meetings. At the secondary level, administrators reviewed pacing guides in accelerated courses to ensure that teachers were expecting a rapid rate of learning and analyzed grade distributions to maintain rigor and prevent grade inflation.

In interviews with the EQA team, elementary principals stated that they believed that all students could learn, and they expected teachers to encourage students to take risks and accept challenges. They went on to say that they reviewed teachers' plans to ensure that they incorporated higher-order thinking skills in learning activities and provided extension activities for students who finished work before the others. They expected teachers to ask students what they needed to do to improve their work and to provide models. They also stated that they expected teachers to call on many students, especially those who had not answered.

At the secondary level, administrators cited raising the credit requirements for graduation and the prerequisites for enrollment in honors and Advanced Placement (AP) courses as evidence of high expectations. They went on to say that these changes protected the value of the diploma and increased the pace of learning in accelerated courses by "eliminating students who did not belong because they could not or would not do the work."

At the same time, opportunities for advancement were diminishing in the district with the elimination of the gifted program, and the honors level mathematics sequence in grades 7 and 8 in 2007 and 2008.

9. The district created inclusive classrooms or programs for student populations, through an integrated services model, minimizing separation from the mainstream.

Rating: Unsatisfactory

Saugus had implemented a philosophy of inclusion, minimizing the separation of special education students from the mainstream program, but the district's support of the inclusion model was insufficient and dwindling under budget reductions. Achievement and graduation rates for district special education were low and the dropout rate was high.

According to DOE statistics for 2006, Saugus had a higher rate of special education students enrolled in full inclusion programs (55.4 percent) than the state average (49.1 percent.). However, the graduation rate for Saugus special education students (45.9 percent) was lower than the state average (61.1 percent), and the dropout rate for Saugus special education students was higher (19.4 versus 5.1 percent.). According to the MCAS test results for 2007, Saugus special education students performed below the state average for special education students in all

subjects tested. The proficiency gap between Saugus special education and Saugus regular education students was significant at every grade level and subject. Over time, the gap closed marginally in ELA, remained the same in mathematics, and widened in science.

In interviews with the EQA examiners, high school administrators maintained that the special education dropout rates were inflated because the Department of Education had double-counted the dropouts. That is, some of the same names appeared on the dropouts lists in successive years. The administrators went on to say they had attempted to correct these data and offered to furnish the EQA team copies of relevant correspondence with the Department of Education. This documentation was not provided to the team during the four-day EQA site visit.

As cited, budget reductions resulting in personnel losses and larger class sizes compromised support for the inclusion model. Administrators stated that the district had eliminated most paraprofessional positions with the exception of those supporting students requiring one-to-one assistance. Middle school teachers stated that special education students requiring advantageous class sizes to learn were “drowning” in large classes of up to 32 students. With the loss of the physical education and art specialists at the elementary level in 2007-2008, reading intervention specialists stepped in for the regular classrooms so they could receive their “prep” time by contract. Of necessity, the intervention teachers now provided whole class instruction during this time rather than needs-based individual and small group remediation or intervention.

10. Through the ongoing use of formative and summative student assessment data, the district monitored the effectiveness of teachers’ instruction and provided resources, professional development, and support to improve and maintain high levels of instructional quality and delivery.

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Analysis of student achievement results, instructional monitoring, resource acquisition, and professional development were loosely affiliated rather than tightly connected at the district level in Saugus. These areas were integrated more systematically at the K-3 grade span through the adoption of the early reading program beginning in 2004-2005, and at the high school level.

When a trend analysis of MCAS test results in literacy substantiated the need for a reading intervention program at the early elementary level, special and regular education teachers and administrators collaborated to adopt the DIBELS assessment program, with the intent of increasing student performance. The Hill Institute provided ongoing professional development for teachers on use of the DIBELS, how to form instructional groups, and how to measure student progress. They also made recommendations on ELA instructional purchases.

At the high school, the results of common midterm and final examinations and MCAS tests were used to adjust the curriculum and pacing guides in the content areas, and to provide information on the effectiveness of teachers' instruction. Administrators stated and teachers confirmed that administrators and curriculum specialist conferred with them on the progress of their students and helped them to make instructional modifications. Administrators further stated that initially student needs formed the basis of budget proposals, substantiated with performance data, but this budget did not survive reductions in spending by the town. Professional development was limited in the district, but the topics were determined at the high school by students' instructional needs. If the district professional development program did not offer appropriate opportunities, high school administrators directed teachers to external workshop and courses.

11. Random observations of classrooms revealed that teachers used a variety of effective techniques and strategies to address differences in learning style, and that instruction was student-focused, reflected high expectations, and called for engaged learning and participation on the part of students.

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the site visit, the EQA examiners observed 44 randomly selected classrooms and recorded the presence or absence of 33 attributes reflected in the Principles of Effective Teaching. They were grouped into the following five categories: classroom management; instructional practice; expectations; student activity, work, and behavior; and classroom climate for learning. Examiners recorded the attributes observed in each of the five categories during their time spent in the classroom. Observations were conducted at the district's six schools as follows: Twenty-five at the elementary level, 11 at the middle school level, and eight at the high

school level. In total, the EQA examiners observed 21 ELA classrooms, 16 math classrooms, six science classrooms, and one classroom of another subject. In calculating the presence of observed practices, where appropriate, the practices that would not be applicable were noted and were removed from the total to obtain a proper basis for determining the percentage.

At the elementary school level, although teachers from grade to grade were using similar texts, the quality of instruction and the implementation of the program differed widely from teacher to teacher, even at the same grade. The most variation occurred with new teachers or those who had recently been transferred to a new grade. In these cases, there was heavy reliance on worksheets and whole class instruction. In math the variation was wider because elementary teachers were in various stages of mapping the math curriculum and implementing a new program.

At the middle school, teachers of ELA and math primarily followed assigned textbooks and the instruction was almost entirely teacher centered, whole group instruction, except for students in special needs classes, where the instruction was more individualized. The math instruction was textbook driven. The classrooms were bare of alternative instructional materials such as manipulatives. Most teachers, especially the new ones, complained that there were not enough textbooks for each student to take one home, and as a solution they duplicated and collated re-teaching worksheets from blackline master books and students used them as a text and for homework a majority of the time. According to the principal, the majority of math teachers at the middle school were new to the school and to teaching math, and two of them who were interviewed had never student taught. Although teachers were collaborative, there was no common planning time at the middle school when experienced teachers could informally mentor new staff members.

At the high school, department heads and the principals monitored implementation of the curriculum and the quality of instruction. Teachers had recently mapped the curriculum in most subject areas, so the curriculum was written in each subject area. Department heads and the principals monitored student achievement through periodic exams. Each department had common planning time when department heads were able to lead teachers in discussions about improving instruction and raising student achievement.

Classroom management refers to the maintenance of order and structure within the classroom. Classroom rules and routines are established and internalized, and students take responsibility for their work with or without teacher direction. The teacher models and promotes respectful behavior and maintains safety in the classroom. Instructional time is maximized due to smooth transitions between activities. Other adults working in the classroom have an active instructional role. Classroom management was strongest at the elementary level. Positive indicators of classroom management were evident in 71 percent of the classrooms observed districtwide, with 80 percent at the elementary level, 60 percent at the middle school level, and 61 percent at the high school level. The students exhibited many behaviors that interfered with learning, and the teacher either ignored the behavior or could not use attention skills to stop it.

Instructional practice was the largest category reviewed by the examiners. Effective instructional practice is considered evident when the teacher implements instructional strategies that reflect school and/or district priorities. The teacher makes learning goals clear to students, and students understand their relevance. The teacher increases the level of learning by using a variety of instructional techniques. Instructional time is allocated and used effectively, and the pace of instruction is appropriate to students' varied rates of learning. The teacher elicits student contributions and uses a variety of questioning techniques that encourage elaboration, thought, and broad involvement. The teacher checks for student understanding and corrects misunderstandings, and provides clear and explicit directions that are understood by students. English language acquisition and language development are embedded in all subject areas. The teacher uses available technology appropriately to deliver instruction. Positive indicators of instructional practice were evident in 63 percent of the classrooms observed districtwide, with 72 percent at the elementary level, 47 percent at the middle school level, and 56 percent at the high school level.

Overall, the EQA examiners rated instructional practice lower than classroom management. Instructional practice was more varied at the elementary level but primarily teacher-directed. At the elementary level, although teachers used new materials in ELA and math, parallel instructional strategies were not likewise updated. The EQA examiners observed students filling out worksheets, using workbooks, or using old materials such as SRA skill cards. Most teachers used word walls to increase vocabulary instruction, but very few (21 percent) used technology to

deliver instruction. At the middle school, the EQA examiners observed the use of a variety of instructional techniques in only nine percent of classrooms visited. The middle school classrooms had very few resources such as adequate textbooks for each student and alternative teaching materials. The district's inability to provision adequately for materials, staffing, professional development, and technology resulted in a preponderance of teacher-directed instruction with little student-to-student interaction. Instruction at the high school was focused on schools goals. The EQA examiners observed frequent checking for understanding (100 percent), and instructional strategies focused on school priorities (50 percent), even though there was little variety of instruction (13 percent). Compared to the middle school, the high school had much better provisioning of resources and staff to accommodate diverse learners needing re-teaching, acceleration, or advanced academic work.

Expectations refers to the maintenance of high standards for students by teachers. The teacher communicates and enforces expectations and guidelines for student work and behavior, and the teacher encourages students and expresses confidence in their ability to do challenging work. Instructional time focuses on having students produce high quality work, and the teacher provides models and rubrics to exemplify such work. High quality student work is shown to be valued through activities such as celebration, citation, exhibition, and publication. Positive indicators of expectations for students were evident in 59 percent of the classrooms observed districtwide, with 70 percent at the elementary level, 38 percent at the middle school level, and 53 percent at the high school level.

Expectations for high quality work were greatest at the elementary level, where high expectations were stated (88 percent), extra time was provided (92 percent), and teachers consistently encouraged students (84 percent). Expectations were lowest at the middle school, and although students were encouraged to do their best, high quality work was not mentioned nor was any displayed in most classrooms (nine percent). At the high school, students were encouraged to do their best and to focus on some explicitly stated goals (88 percent), but examiners observed few evident benchmarks, models, or rubrics used as guides to improvement (25 percent), even though in some subjects such as ELA and math, time on task had been increased in preparation for taking the MCAS tests.

Positive *student activity, work, and behavior* are considered evident when students are actively engaged in the learning process. They show an understanding of the lesson's objective, and they demonstrate ownership of learning by asking their own questions. Students are able to recall information from prior learning and make connections to new learning. They make appropriate use of technology in the classroom. The interaction between students is respectful, and they are purposefully and productively engaged in learning. Student work reflects quality, complexity, and care. Positive indicators of student activity, work, and behavior were evident in 62 percent of the classrooms districtwide, with 72 percent at the elementary level, 40 percent at the middle school level, and 59 percent at the high school level.

Student engagement was high at the elementary level (96 percent), although the use of flexible grouping was minimal and whole group instruction was predominant. Student work was organized, and interaction between students was respectful (96 percent). At the middle school, students were less likely to show an understanding of the learning goals (73 percent) and less actively engaged (45 percent), although still respectful to each other (73 percent). At the high school, students understood the learning goals (88 percent), were engaged (88 percent), were asked to recall and make connections between prior and new learning (63 percent), and were also respectful of one another (88 percent).

Finally, indicators of positive *classroom climate for learning* are considered evident when the teacher creates an inclusive environment where all students are accepted and where the space is used to accommodate a range of learning activities. The teacher uses positive reinforcement to enhance students' self-esteem and self-confidence, and appeals to students' interests or curiosity to motivate them. The classroom is well provisioned and includes multiple resources that address different learning styles. Positive indicators of classroom climate for learning were evident in 63 percent of the classrooms observed districtwide, with 76 percent at the elementary school level, 39 percent at the middle school level, and 58 percent at the high school level.

At the elementary level, the classroom climate for learning was inclusive and welcoming (96 percent), and classrooms were well provisioned with resources (52 percent). The middle school, which was not making AYP, was the least well provisioned and resourced with staff and materials (nine percent), and it had practically no technology. At the high school, according to

examiners' observations, teachers used positive reinforcement (75 percent), focused on supporting students in an inclusive environment (100 percent), and appealed to student curiosity to motivate them (75 percent). The classrooms, however, were not provisioned well with books and materials.

Summary of Classroom Observations

	Number of Classrooms				Average Class Size	Average Paraprofs. per Class	Computers		
	ELA	Math	Science/ Other	Total			Total Number	Number for Student Use	Average Students per Computer
Elementary	14	8	3	25	21.6	0.1	50	44	12.3
Middle	5	4	2	11	24.5	0.3	10	2	134.5
High	2	4	2	8	17.5	0.1	8	0	0
Total	21	16	7	44	21.6	0.2	68	46	20.7

	Classroom Management	Instructional Practice	Expectations	Student Activity, Work, and Behavior	Classroom Climate for Learning
Elementary					
Total observations	93	195	86	126	95
Maximum possible	116	270	123	174	125
Avg. percent of observations	80%	72%	70%	72%	76%
Middle					
Total observations	32	57	21	31	21
Maximum possible	53	121	55	77	54
Avg. percent of observations	60%	47%	38%	40%	39%
High					
Total observations	23	49	21	33	23
Maximum possible	38	88	40	56	40
Avg. percent of observations	61%	56%	53%	59%	58%
Total					
Total observations	148	301	128	190	139
Maximum possible	207	479	218	307	219
Avg. percent of observations	71%	63%	59%	62%	63%

Standard III: Assessment and Program Evaluation									
Ratings ▼ Indicators ►	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Excellent									
Satisfactory			✓						1
Needs Improvement	✓	✓		✓	✓				4
Unsatisfactory						✓	✓	✓	3

III. Assessment and Program Evaluation

The district and school leadership used student assessment results, local benchmarks, and other pertinent data to improve student achievement and inform all aspects of its decision-making including: policy development and implementation, instructional programs, assessment practices, procedures, and supervision.

Standard Rating: Needs Improvement

Findings:

- The district annually communicated assessment results and shared other reports on student achievement to the parents, the school committee, and the community.
- To some degree, the district collected and analyzed aggregate data and used assessment results to improve student achievement. The use of disaggregated data to improve subgroup achievement was minimal.
- The district did not have a designated person responsible for the collection, analysis, and dissemination of data; instead, this became the responsibility of the principals. Therefore, the district was constrained in its ability to effectively and efficiently fulfill its data reporting and school improvement planning requirements as well as conduct its own analyses of data.
- The community lacked an understanding of the needs of the school system and the support it required to improve student achievement.
- The district did not have a formal or systemic process to evaluate programs. It did not engage in external or internal program audits other than those mandated by the state.

- Budget cuts curtailed the ability of administrators in the district to use formative and summative assessments at all grade levels and to make effective decisions in assigning staff, prioritizing goals, and allocating time and resources.

Summary

The Saugus Public Schools lacked a systematic method to collect and analyze student assessment results across the district. The district leadership did not designate a person with statistical analysis skills to direct the data analysis effort. When MCAS data became available, building administrators used TestWiz to analyze the data and disseminated the analysis to the staff. Administrators learned how to use TestWiz on their own or with the help of other administrators. Building administrators and their teachers used MCAS test data and other internal assessment results to make changes in instructional programming.

At the elementary level, administrators focused on mathematics as an area of need. The math curriculum needed alignment to the state framework and consistency from grade to grade and school to school. A trend analysis of MCAS results in literacy revealed the need for an early intervention program. The district implemented a new reading program and adopted the DIBELS assessment program in grades K-3. Time allocations in literacy and math increased to 90 minutes to accommodate the implementation of new programs. Increases in time for ELA and mathematics resulted in less time for science and social studies.

The middle school added “success blocks” to its programming. Due to staff reductions, students had fewer special subject teachers and the “success blocks” allowed the school to provide an extra quarter of each core subject area for students in grades 6 and 7. The high school changed to a modified block schedule where two long blocks per week accommodated lab periods, in-depth learning, and cooperative learning. High school administrators scheduled common planning time for staff members, developed pacing guides for all courses, and standardized midyear and final exams.

The district had no procedures to carry out any systematic, sequential, multiyear, or system-wide reviews to measure the effectiveness of its instructional or support programs. District leaders relied on assessment results, mainly those from the MCAS tests, to monitor student achievement and improve programs.

The budget largely determined decision-making regarding instructional programs and student support services. Budget cuts in art, music, and physical education affected the teacher preparation periods at the elementary schools. The reading support staff had to cover teacher preparation periods, which diminished the effectiveness of student support services. The loss of staff members changed teaming at the middle school from three teams per grade level to two. Budget cuts ruled out common planning time for teachers to engage in discussions about curriculum, instruction, assessments, and transitions. The middle school lacked basic resources such as textbooks and technology. The high school used grants and business partnerships to bolster its academic programs and technology.

The district informed the community about test results through individual school report cards and the annual school report. Parents received individual quarterly progress reports and student report cards. Administrators shared annual MCAS test results with the school committee. Local newspapers publicized school test results and other information. The school district had a website and all schools had Connect-ED. Interviewees stated that the community did not trust the spending of the school department or the town, and did not support overrides or additional money for its schools. According to all interviewees, education was not seen as a top priority for the town.

Indicators

1. District assessment policies and practices were characterized by the continuous collection, analysis, and use of student assessment results by district and school leadership.

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the period under review, the district had minimal practices and procedures for the collection, analysis, and use of student assessment data, including MCAS data. According to the superintendent, there was no designated data person in the district. Instead, building principals had the responsibility of collecting and analyzing the data. The district's major summative assessment was the MCAS testing. Administrators and teacher interviewees indicated that data collection, analysis, and use of student assessment data were ongoing processes at each level, and they primarily looked at aggregate data. Interviewees indicated that the building principals

and/or other designated personnel had the responsibility to disseminate MCAS data analyses to staff members, to schedule department or staff meetings and grade-level meetings for data review, and to facilitate analysis for implications to curriculum and instruction. Identification of individual students in need of support plans and academic support programming were included in this process. Building administrators used TestWiz to analyze the MCAS data and shared the results with the teaching staffs. The district did not provide formal training in the use of TestWiz. Administrators stated that they learned on their own or with the help of other administrators who had past training and knew how to use the program.

The district lacked a cohesive system of formative and summative assessment. It did have a fragmented system, which it used on a limited basis. For example, the elementary schools used the DIBELS in grades K-2 and began to use it in grade 3 in 2007-2008. The district used the Gates-MacGinitie in grades 1-8 and the Stanford Achievement Test in grades 3 and 5 to identify students in need of remediation. Due to budget reductions, the district did not fund the Stanford and the Gates-MacGinitie for the 2007-2008 school year in grades 1-5. In 2006-2007, the district developed common math assessments and pacing guides for grades 3 and 4. The middle school used common midterms and finals in grade 8. It administered the Gates-MacGinitie for placement in developmental reading. The high school used common midterms and finals, the PSAT, the SAT, and Advanced Placement tests. The district administered the Massachusetts English Language Assessment-Oral (MELA-O) and the Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment (MEPA) as needed for limited English proficient (LEP) students, which the speech therapist administered. The district had just begun the process of developing and implementing an ELL program that employed one teacher working on waiver to serve 52 students. The district also conducted preschool and kindergarten screenings, and it had appropriate testing for special education students.

2. District and school leadership required all students to participate in all appropriate assessments.

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

According to the 2007 student MCAS test participation data, the district had high participation with the exception of limited English proficient students. Students in the ‘all student,’ ‘regular,’ and ‘disability’ categories enjoyed high rates of participation, ranging from 98.3 to 99.0 percent in ELA, math, and science and technology. The participation rates for LEP students were substantially lower, 60 percent in both ELA and math and 50 percent in science and technology. Interviewees were not sure of the cause for the low participation rates.

According to interviewees, the district and school leadership expected all students to participate in local assessments and the MCAS tests. Parents learned of the testing through newsletters and notices with grades tested, the dates, and the time. Interviewees stated they started alerting parents early in the school year regarding the importance of the MCAS tests and of the requirement for mandatory participation of all students. Interviewees stated that the staff prepared students for the tests and reviewed strategies with students for taking the tests. Individual schools provided a variety of incentives to encourage attendance on test days. High school and middle school administrators notified parents by letter and the direct Connect-Ed system. The high school handbook listed MCAS, SAT, and PSAT testing dates. Prior to the tests, the high school had assemblies with the students, and on test days the school provided breakfast for students. Middle school students had a snack break between testing sessions and administrators conducted walk-throughs as students took the tests. The elementary schools used similar incentives. For example, one elementary school rated students on effort and provided a field trip after the testing period ended.

3. Through the use of district-generated reporting instruments and report cards, district and school leaders implemented assessment systems to measure the attainment of goals, progress, and effectiveness. These assessment reports were focused on student achievement and were communicated to all appropriate staff and community members.

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district’s leaders used MCAS, DIBELS, and local assessment data to measure student progress. Local assessments included teacher-generated tests, quizzes, projects, common assessments, and common midyear and final exams in grades 8-12. The elementary schools

communicated individual student achievement to parents with quarterly progress reports and report cards for grades 1-5. The kindergarten reported out three times during the school year. Administrators stated that the report cards for grades 1 and 2 needed updating, since they were not standards based. They stated that the report cards for grades 3-5 had more clarity. The Title I program issued narrative progress reports midyear and at the end of the year. The schools had two parent/teacher conferences scheduled for the first and third terms of the year. The middle schools provided individual student progress reports halfway through a term or whenever necessary. Teachers issued quarterly report cards. The middle school scheduled parent conferences for two nights and one afternoon. In addition, the school had orientations and back to school nights, and the guidance personnel had monthly coffees for parents. The high school provided progress reports and quarterly report cards. Furthermore, the high school had the ability to post grades daily on the web by using K-12 Planet, and parents could access their child's progress or lack of it, homework, and messages from the teacher on a daily basis, if desired.

The district's schools had the ability to reach parents through the Connect-ED program. Administrators used the Connect-ED program to deliver important school information and contact parents in an emergency. Each school had a website that provided information to parents and community members. In addition to progress reports and report cards, school leaders annually presented MCAS results, assessment analyses, and recommendations to the school committee. Local cable televised the meetings and news reporters attended the meetings.

Additionally, the superintendent provided the EQA team with a four-page Saugus Public Schools annual report for 2006. The report included a brief synopsis on MCAS results, AYP status, the DIBELS assessment, class size, building issues, budget issues, school partnerships, the Coordinated Program Review (CPR), new personnel, and district retirements. The district posted its 2006 annual report and other pertinent information about the Saugus schools on its website.

4. In addition to the MCAS test, the district and school leadership regularly used local benchmarks and other assessment tools to measure student progress and analyzed and disseminated the results in a timely manner to appropriate staff.

Rating: Needs improvement

Evidence

A review of the district documents revealed that the school system did not have a uniform set of local benchmarks for each subject in grades K-12. The district had fragmented and variable assessment tools to measure student progress. According to interviews and a list presented to the EQA team, the MCAS testing was the major summative assessment instrument for the district. The individual schools analyzed the MCAS data, and the staffs received assessment results and analyses. In interviews, teachers stated that they used the results to make adjustments in instruction. For example, teachers taught geometry concepts before the MCAS test administration because the item analysis showed that students were not adequately prepared.

As cited, the elementary schools implemented and used the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) in grades K-2, and in 2007-2008 began to use it in grade 3. Teachers tracked benchmark assessment scores for students and used them to identify students who were 'emerging,' 'at risk,' 'some risk,' 'low risk,' or 'established.' Interviewed teachers stated that they used the results to group students for instruction according to their needs.

In grades 3 and 4, teachers developed and used common math assessments. Elementary school principals told the EQA that as a team in 2005-2006, they began the process of aligning the mathematics curriculum across the four schools and with the state curriculum framework. At grades 3 and 4, teachers developed pacing guides and common assessments, grade 3 developed two common assessments, and grade 4 had them for all math units.

The middle school administered the Gates-MacGinitie in grade 6 and used the results to place students in its developmental reading program. The middle school had common midyear and final exams in grade 8, but in grades 6 and 7 midyear and final exams were optional. The high school had common midyear and final exams in all content courses and administrators used a Scantron machine to produce quick item analyses of both tests for the staff to analyze.

5. The district and school leadership used student assessment results and other pertinent data to measure the effectiveness of instructional and support programs.

Rating: Needs improvement

Evidence

Evidence was lacking that the district and schools routinely and systematically used assessment data to measure the overall effectiveness of its instructional or support programs. The district primarily used student assessment results to place students or assess progress over time. Only in grades K-3 did the district use formative assessment to make instructional decisions. The district used the assessment data in pockets to varying degrees to measure the effectiveness of instructional and support programs.

The elementary, middle, and high schools had various processes in place by which administrators and staff analyzed data and made modifications to some school programs. For example, at the elementary level the district provided grade 3 staff members with the released questions from the grade 4 MCAS tests. In turn, grade 3 staff members reviewed grade 4 weaknesses in answering test questions. Teachers discussed which areas they could introduce in their regularly implemented grade 3 program to ensure better preparation for the following year.

The high school did not conduct a formal analysis of SAT and PSAT scores. High school staff members told the EQA that they did assess the English curriculum in grades 11 and 12 to ensure alignment with the writing skills portion of the new SAT. Furthermore, high school departments analyzed the results of midyear and final examinations in order to assess student achievement and assure that all classes covered the same content. Interviewees stated that they had eight AP courses and teachers were trained. Individual courses were audited and their syllabi, curriculum, and pacing guides were approved. There was no evaluation of the whole AP program, and a review of scores from recent years showed that only 50 percent of the students taking the test scored '3' or better.

6. The district and school leadership regularly engaged in internal and external audits or assessments to inform the effectiveness of its program implementation and service delivery systems. The data from these assessments were provided to all appropriate staff.

Rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

During the period under review, district leadership did not engage in any formal internal and external audits to inform the effectiveness of its program implementation and service delivery

systems. Primarily, leadership continually looked at assessment results with the staff at the building level in order to make program changes and adjustments. The district had no systemic process for internally auditing programs.

The district went through a CPR in January 2006 that revealed several non-compliance issues. The district did not annually evaluate the Title I program as required until 2006-2007. The district has just begun creating an ELL program, and interviews revealed that there were minimal services in place for students who could not speak English. From interviews, the EQA team learned that the director of special education met regularly with staff members to informally review and evaluate programs and services, and the district used these results to make program modifications and improvements.

According to high school administrators, the district made changes to the alternative program based on MCAS results, because students were isolated and needed to pass the MCAS tests. Teachers and administrators helped students earn their way into regular education programs. Furthermore, they stated that they did not “baby down” the curriculum and exposed students to the regular curriculum. Administrators assured the EQA that students in alternative classes had content-specific certified teachers for each subject.

Interviewees indicated that the district reviewed its math program for grade 4 due to students’ low performance on the MCAS test and realized that the curriculum lacked alignment. The grade 4 teachers met across the district to reorder concepts taught and developed a pacing guide and common assessments. Teachers started using the guides and assessments in the 2006-2007 school year. A comparison of the MCAS scores revealed a significant improvement. In 2007, 48 percent of grade 4 students in the district attained proficiency, compared to 21 percent in 2006.

7. The district and school leadership annually reviewed student assessment results and other pertinent data to maximize effectiveness in assigning staff, prioritizing goals, and allocating time and resources.

Rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

According to administrators, budget cuts primarily drove district decisions regarding staff assignment, prioritization of goals, and time and resource allocation. For example, support personnel at the elementary level had to provide teachers' prep time because of the cutbacks in art, music, and gym. This decision to reallocate reading teachers resulted in limited opportunity to provide intervention and support services.

Initial budget proposals by the principals had recommendations for offering a sound educational program. Cuts in personnel increased class size in regular education, and special education and ELL students at the middle school were often in classes of 30 or more, which affected the teacher's ability to provide more individualized assistance. According to interviewees, the town did not have the money to fund the principals' priorities. Building administrators stated that they had to use business partnerships, the PTO, and other sources of funding to augment their instructional programs or do without. As a response to low math scores, the district increased time in ELA and math, which resulted in reduced time for science and social studies. Students entering middle school were less prepared in these subject areas because they had less prior knowledge.

The middle school implemented academic success blocks in 2005-2006 to provide an extra term for each core subject area for students in grades 6 and 7, as well as an MCAS review course that began as a pullout course for those who needed it and then became mandatory for all students in grades 7 and 8. Students took this course one day a week throughout the school year. The high school implemented a modified block program to provide additional time on task for students to do lab work, cooperative learning, and research.

Through a grant, the high school purchased 30 computers to outfit a new lab. The high school added the following resources to enhance its academic programs: SmartBoards, graphing calculators, online textbook materials, online quizzes, online tutorials, and Easy Grade Pro software and K-12 Planet software as faculty tools.

8. District and school leadership routinely used program evaluation results to initiate, modify, or discontinue programs and services to continuously improve the delivery of instruction and student achievement.

Rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

According to administrators and documents reviewed, the district had no formal or systemic process to evaluate school programs. The district had to discontinue many services due to budget cuts. Instead, school administrators at each level reviewed student assessment results and used those results to target specific areas for improvement. Administrators stated that they discussed instruction and student achievement in department, grade-level, and staff meetings; on professional days; and in other venues. These discussions led to some new initiatives and modifications of programs that resulted in some improvements in instruction and student achievement.

Elementary school administrators cited the mathematics program for grades 3 and 4 as one example of looking at data and making changes to an instructional program. Teachers modified the math sequence in grade 4, then developed a pacing guide and common assessments. On the 2007 MCAS math test at grade 4, the percentage of students attaining proficiency increased from 21 percent in 2006 to 48 percent in 2007.

At the high school, administrators decided to discontinue the Economics course. They stated that the course content overlapped with the Personal Finance course. The high school did not do a formal study of SAT and PSAT scores but did assess the ELA curriculum in grades 11 and 12 to ensure that it aligned with the writing skills required for the new version of the SAT.

A review of the high school's alternative program revealed that students were isolated and needed rigor in their academic subjects. Administrators stated that these students needed to pass the MCAS tests. High school staff members helped alternative education students earn their way back and integrated them into mainstream classes. This gave them exposure to the same curriculum as regular education students.

New initiatives were limited due to lack of funding, and high school administrators obtained grants from the private sector to purchase SmartBoards, wireless notebooks, and online textbook materials to help teachers integrate technology into the curriculum.

Standard IV: Human Resource Management and Professional Development														
Ratings ▼ Indicators ►	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Total
Excellent														
Satisfactory														
Needs Improvement	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓					✓	7
Unsatisfactory					✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		6

IV. Human Resource Management and Professional Development

The district identified, attracted and recruited effective personnel, and structured its environment to support, develop, improve, promote and retain qualified and effective professional staff who were successful in advancing achievement for all students.

Standard Rating: Needs Improvement

Findings:

- The district has been unable to count on a sustainable budget, which had negative implications for adequate staffing, hiring and retaining qualified staff, updating textbooks and technology, and purchasing adequate resources.
- Equity between schools was lacking regarding staffing, facilities, access to technology, and the ability to raise funds from parents in order to make up for needed resources.
- Effective systems of supervision and evaluation were not evident throughout the district, with the exception of the high school. Very few evaluations were completed in a timely way, providing evidence that a system of checks was lacking, and the information was not being used to plan professional development.
- Time for collaboration within the school day was reduced and in-service relegated to after-school hours at the middle school, which had a negative impact on systems to address student needs, professional development, communication with parents, and collaboration among teachers to raise student achievement.
- Professional development funding was minimal and was reduced to what the district could offer in-house or from the receipt of grant money.

- The district provided formal mentoring only to new teachers in their first year of service, and it was not available for teachers on waiver or for the large number of teachers who had changed teaching positions due to reductions in the budget.
- Five of the six principals were new appointments within the last five years, yet the district had no formal plan for mentoring new principals.
- Administrators and teachers had few opportunities to access ongoing professional development geared toward developing better systems, such as those for mentoring, evaluation, supervision, and curriculum alignment, creating support programs such as an English language learner (ELL) program, and sustaining programmatic changes.

Summary

The Saugus Public Schools was lacking a number of effective systems in human resource areas such as supervision and evaluation, support for new and recently transferred teachers or those on waiver, and professional development, the latter due to lack of funding and time available within the school day and school year.

The school committee formally evaluated the superintendent four times in nine years. The superintendent did not evaluate the administrators annually. Administrators were not required to submit in writing the goals that they hoped to accomplish each year, they were not evaluated on the accomplishment of those goals or SIP goals, and the improvement of student achievement had little or no impact on whether the principal or administrator continued to be employed in that leadership position. Collegial relationships were just beginning with the hiring of three of four elementary principals, who were choosing to work together as a team, which would also serve to improve horizontal alignment in the district.

Many teachers had been in Saugus their whole careers although they were rarely evaluated. The EQA examiners found very few evaluations in teachers' files. Although the principals in Saugus had similar prior training, such as in Skillful Teacher methods, in the past, the district lacked coordination in the supervision and evaluation of teachers. Furthermore, Saugus lacked supervision of new principals, who had the responsibility of completing many evaluations for the first time and were, according to interviewees, influenced by the ways things had historically been done in the district.

Most of the newer teachers were recruited locally or from the Department of Education website. Many of the new teachers interviewed had remarkably similar backgrounds in that they lived in Saugus or grew up there, or knew many people there. Sometimes they were making a career change; often they attained a master's degree from a college that gave credit for experience, and usually had not yet student taught under the supervision of a college program.

Despite the fact that the district had more new teachers each year, it did not have an efficient and updated mentoring program, provided no updated training for mentoring teachers, lacked central coordination and supervision as a program, and was unable to fund mentors for all of the staff members who needed one.

Programs for professional development were reactive and filled with meeting mandatory requirements, rather than developed by looking at the needs of each school or the district as a whole. Most teachers in Saugus had not received much professional development in MCAS data analysis. MCAS data analysis was more participatory at the high school, which had resident lead teachers to lead the other teachers through an analysis of the data. Overall, very little disaggregated data analysis was done across the district with the exception of grades K-3 where teachers were receiving ongoing in-service to learn to analyze and use DIBELS data. In addition, professional development funding and time for collaboration was minimal across the district, providing little opportunity for teachers to learn and implement more effective practices that would provide support structures for students in need or raise the rigor of academics.

Resources and staffing appeared to vary widely from school to school and were not connected to student achievement scores. For example, the middle school was visibly the most lacking in the areas of staffing, stability of personnel, textbooks and resources, technology, common planning time within the school day, and facilities. Yet the middle school was also the only school in the district where students had not made adequate yearly progress (AYP) for a number of years, and the school was in restructuring due to low math achievement.

Some elementary schools with extremely well organized and active PTOs or business partners had been better able to withstand the adverse effects of reductions in the school department budget, while others had not fared as well, resulting in a lack of equity among school buildings. Some elementary schools in more affluent areas of the town were better able to adapt to cutbacks

in staffing and resources through fundraising efforts and through support from stay-at-home mothers and fathers who signed up as parent volunteers to supervise students in the library or lunchrooms. In contrast, the new school elementary school was well equipped and able to provide many opportunities that the other schools could not provide, even with successful fundraising efforts. It was staffed and resourced well with the exception that it had double the number of students but no full-time assistant principal.

Indicators

1. The district's policies and practices for the identification, recruitment, and selection of professional staff resulted in the employment of an effective teaching force that advanced student achievement.

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The district did little recruitment for professional staff members outside of the area. The superintendent and principals stated that many applicants applied to work in Saugus because they lived locally, grew up in Saugus, or were recommended to principals through networking with other school administrators. Interviewees told the EQA team that they looked for resumes on the DOE website and minimally used local newspapers or *The Boston Globe* to advertise for open positions. The district had been experiencing reductions in overall staff numbers for the past five years. For the most part, principals reassigned current employees with appropriate certifications into open positions. This situation did little to help principals create an effective teaching force that advanced student achievement. For example, the EQA examiners interviewed a teacher who had taught general music for eight years and was now a grade 3 classroom teacher because he had dual certification, even though he had no experience in reading, ELA, math, or science.

In 2007-2008, nine teachers in the district were on waiver, up from four in 2006-2007. Most teachers on waiver were in special education, but some “easy to find” teachers were also on waiver in areas such as history, physical education, and English as a second language (ESL). Teacher interviewees provided evidence that many new staff members had come to teaching as a career change or by following alternative pathways to certification and had no official or supervised student teaching experience. Those interviewed stated that “learning on the job” was

very important to them and yet Saugus minimally invested in mentoring, had no curriculum coaches, and had weak systems of supervision and evaluation.

The superintendent stated that the district rarely advertised openings in *The Boston Globe* and was more likely to hire someone locally, especially in the case of teachers. The district, with four elementary schools, hired three new elementary principals in 2005. Administrative candidates either had little experience and were looking for a place to start or grew up locally. Some stayed a while and others used Saugus as a “stepping stone” to higher salaries elsewhere. The current superintendent, who had been there for nine years, stated that he was “the first outsider” hired to be the superintendent of schools in Saugus.

2. All professional staff had appropriate Massachusetts licensure.

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The EQA examiners reviewed a sample of 38 randomly selected personnel files. The EQA examiners were looking for timeliness of the evaluations as well as whether they were signed by the evaluator and evaluatee, whether the evaluations contained components of education reform, and whether the evaluations were informative, instructive, and also promoted growth and overall effectiveness. Finally the EQA examiners checked to see whether the teachers had updated certification and whether the district had applied for a waiver for teachers without certification.

Out of the sample of 38, the EQA examiners found that the evaluations of eight teachers were not timely, and two long-time teachers had no completed evaluations at all. Most of the completed evaluations were informative in that they described the quality of classroom instruction. Two of the evaluations were instructive in that they made suggestions for improvement. Two of the evaluations adequately described professional growth and overall effectiveness. The evaluations that were completed did contain components of education reform.

Eighteen of the teachers in the sample had expired certifications, but upon contacting the DOE the district was able to determine that the teachers had updated their certifications, although the district had no record of this in the personnel folders. It was evident that the files were not being monitored on a regular basis by district administration.

With the exception of two district administrators, all had appropriate certification. One of the two had completed the appropriate DOE requirements through an approved graduate program, so attaining certification was a matter of finalizing some paperwork, and she was in the process of doing so.

It is important to note that curriculum supervisors in Saugus remained in the teachers' bargaining unit and had the authority to write the evaluations of teachers within their respective departments until 2005. In fact, this had been a long standing practice, and until two years ago they and not the school principals had been the primary evaluators. Furthermore, the district had no specific policy requiring curriculum supervisors to have completed any courses in supervision or evaluation or attained supervisor/director certification from the DOE, yet for many years they had been the only teacher evaluators.

According to the superintendent, the act of principals writing the evaluations of teachers in the middle and high schools had historically been grieved by the Saugus Education Association (SEA) as a change in working conditions or a violation of past practice. Restricting principals from writing evaluations of the teachers whom they supervised was a clear violation of state law according to education reform; this practice was changed in 2005 with the new SEA contract.

3. In the event of unfilled positions, professional staff were hired on professional waivers and were provided mentoring and support to attain the standard of substantial annual progress toward appropriate licensure.

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The district hired professional staff on waivers for unfilled positions. The district reported that in 2007-2008 it employed nine waived teachers: one in math, five in special education, one in history and special education (dual certifications required), one in physical education, and one in ESL (preK-6). This ESL teacher was the only ESL teacher hired in the district and served students in grades K-12. In 2006, the Coordinated Program Review (CPR) of the district included a citation for severe deficiencies in its ELL program.

Usually teachers were granted more than one year of waiver if the superintendent determined that they were making effective progress. Mentoring of teachers on waiver was only informal. Interviewees stated that in general, fellow teachers helped new staff members adjust to their new positions. The newest teachers, who were working on certification and who had not yet done any student teaching and likely needed more support at the beginning stages of employment, had no access to mentoring.

The 2005-2007 agreement between the Saugus School Committee and the Saugus Educators' Association represented a variety of teacher classifications, including permanent substitutes. Teachers working on waiver had no official mentor but could apply for up to \$500 per year for tuition reimbursement, provided the superintendent approved the course. If the district did not expend the total budget for reimbursement set by the SEA contract, teachers could receive more toward the cost of tuition, until the stipulated funds were expended.

4. The district provided teachers and administrators who were new to the district or their assignments with coaches or mentors in their respective roles and included an initial orientation that addressed the importance of the assessment and use of student data.

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

According to principals, the district provided mentors for most teachers new to the district and hired with at least provisional certification. The district had not provided mentor training for at least five years, so not all teachers used as mentors had received training. The teacher's contract stated that the number of mentors needed in each building for the following year was to be calculated and posted by May 31, so that veteran teachers could apply. According to the contract ending June 2007, 17 mentors were budgeted, and the stipend listed for each was \$1,327. Interviewees stated that if the need for mentors turned out to be greater than 17, some new teachers would not get an official mentor. The mentor assignments were only for the teacher's first year of permanent employment. As cited, teachers employed on a waiver were not eligible. Principals stated that they could choose mentors and match them with first-year teachers, according to subject area and grade level.

Since the programs were school-based, mentor handbooks were designed at the building level. The only mentor handbook presented to the EQA team with appropriate topics covering mentor-mentee guidelines was produced by the high school. The last districtwide mentoring guide, dated 2001-2002, which primarily focused on recertification, was obsolete. With the exception of the high school, the district presented little evidence that it held an initial orientation or mentoring meeting that addressed the importance of assessment and the use of data.

According to interviewees, the mentoring of new principals was informal. The district appointed three new elementary principals during the period under review. According to one new principal, the superintendent frequently called to check in on an almost alternating day schedule. This new principal felt supported and appreciated by the superintendent's efforts. New principals also stated that administrators at central office and other principals, especially the one veteran principal at the elementary level, were very willing to give advice and counsel. There was little evidence of much training for administrators and principals in data analysis, but the district held them responsible for doing it in their respective buildings. Each principal was also delegated the responsibility of providing induction or initial orientation to new staff members, which included review of safety and crisis management plans.

5. The district's professional development programs included development of data analysis skills and the use of item analysis and disaggregated data to address all students' achievement.

Rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

Overall, the district's professional development program was underfunded and grant dependent. The district held a variety of workshops during two in-service days per school year. The administrative team generated many proposals. The scope of mandatory professional development was limited by both time and funding.

The professional development committee (PDC), which approved most in-service offerings, decided whether professional development offered within the district would receive either in-service credit or professional development points (PDPs). During the period under review, the

district did not provide specific districtwide workshops on MCAS data analysis and there was little evidence presented that MCAS disaggregated data were being used.

The Hanson Initiative for Language and Learning (HILL) provided ongoing training, at a reduced cost, in using the DIBELS formative reading assessment in grades K-3 (grade 3 training in 2007-2008). The HILL operated within the graduate program in Communication Sciences and Disorders at the Massachusetts General Hospital Institute of Health Professions. The HILL was founded in 2001 to “address the achievement gap that existed in thousands of schools and the inability of teachers to adequately teach the literacy skills children need to read and write.” The HILL worked to address this gap by developing a school reform model based on the science of reading research.

Saugus worked with the HILL to develop its literacy program for the elementary level based on the DIBELS and scored the assessment using the University of Oregon website. Initially the district implemented this program as an attempt to assist with teaching reading at the elementary level, and it was a collaborative approach by special education and regular education to address the reading needs of the elementary students. Saugus initially funded it through the special education program improvement grant. In subsequent years, the district funded the program through a combination of grants such as Title IIA, Title V, and Special Education Program Improvement, along with some district professional development funds. Consultants from the HILL provided professional development, progress monitoring, training, analysis of DIBELS data, and sessions with various staff members to discuss the outcomes of the DIBELS. In addition, they worked with the elementary administrators to review the literacy schedules and adjust the teaching/learning time based on the needs of the students. They assisted in bringing professional development from national publishing companies into the district and worked with district staff members to implement literacy programs that complemented each other. At the time of the review, the district was in its third year of implementing DIBELS training.

Central office, through the director of pupil personnel services, provided mandatory training for the special education staff and other mandatory programs such as mental health issues for nurses, applied behavior analysis (ABA) data collection, and crisis prevention intervention restraint training. The district hired consultants from Teachers 21 to provide in-service training, such as

new teacher induction training, ELL Category 1 training, and differentiated instruction for the high school with a block schedule emphasis. Strengthening math skills at the middle school was a repeated topic for in-service training as well.

6. The district's human resources policies and practices encouraged professional growth and recognition and placed high priority on retaining effective professional staff and on creating promotional opportunities for effective teachers.

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Cuts in personnel, declining school budgets, and lack of faith in the sustainability of school department budgets counteracted whatever positive effect the district intended with staff recognition. Various stakeholders such as the town, school committee, citizenry, parents, and SEA were blamed for failure to support the school department budget. As a result, veteran teachers left for other districts because they were “less than optimistic” for future budgets that would restore or sustain the staff, services, and resources at acceptable levels. According to interviewees, employees who tended to stay in or return to Saugus schools did so because they lived there, or grew up there, or used it to gain experience.

According to interviewees, the declining number of staff members in the last five years was due to two failed tax overrides, retirements, and moving personnel out of eliminated positions to other positions. Interviewees stated that all of this had a devastating effect on the schools. For example, the middle school lost 29 staff members in the last three years, almost all of whom held teaching positions. Subsequently, the middle school offered fewer special subjects as options for students, had no common planning time during the school day to coordinate curriculum and instruction, had fewer staff members to cover non-instructional duties such as lunch supervision, and had no after-school academic programs or summer school options for students who needed more time for learning. In addition, the curriculum specialist positions, typically an opportunity for advancement by teachers, became part-time stipended positions.

7. The district's professional development program was informed by most or all of the following: the instructional program content; student, teacher, and administrator needs as indicated by program assessments; research-based practices; the staff evaluation process; and student achievement data.

Rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

According to interviewees, the amount of in-service offered was inadequate and minimally informed by teacher and administrator needs, program assessments, research-based practices, the staff evaluation process, and student achievement data, with the exception of the DIBELS data. Professional development was modestly supportive of instructional program content.

Interviewees stated that the district provided inadequate professional development. Professional development was minimally funded according to the agreements in the SEA contract, limited to that required by the DOE (such as restraint training and updating IEPs) or what was considered prudent, such as legal issues for administrators. In the teachers' contract effective September 1, 2000, teachers were eligible for tuition reimbursement of up to \$500 per year for courses the superintendent approved. This tuition cost budget was limited to \$50,000 in 2004-2005. Principals similarly had a pool of \$6,000 to share among them. The superintendent could expend \$1,500 annually for transportation costs related to professional development.

In-service not funded outside of the district was presented within the district by talented teachers and administrators who had the education, experience, and background to provide in-service sessions on various topics approved by the professional development committee. According to interviewees, the PDC, equally staffed by representatives from the SEA and administrators, approved all such in-service topics and presenters and decided which ones awarded in-service credit and which ones awarded professional development points (PDP)s.

8. Changes in the expectations for programs and practice were monitored and supported by changed supervision and evaluation standards and in the professional development plans of professional staff.

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the period under review, the curriculum specialists provided much assistance to principals for monitoring changes in expectations for programs and practice. As their teaching assignments had increased from two to five periods per day, they had less time to supervise, complete teacher evaluations, monitor, coach, and meet with staff members in grades 6-12 by department. The high school, where the principal implemented the use of pacing binders in each subject area, was the exception. Teachers submitted these binders to the office where curriculum supervisors and administrators checked them on a regular basis, which more frequent for non-professional status teachers. The district eliminated the sole elementary curriculum specialist position for 2007-2008. In 2007-2008, all but one curriculum director was reassigned to full classroom duties during the school day.

Hiring new staff to replace retirees traditionally occurred after July 1 of each year because of the late approval of the school department budget. This, combined with cutbacks in the number of staff members employed, resulted in the need to redeploy staff members during the summer, especially at the middle school, which experienced a reduction of 13 teachers for the 2007-2008 school year.

According to principals, teachers completed individual professional development plans (IPDPs), which the principals approved in alternating years. However, principals stated that there was only a loose connection between these plans and the SIP for each respective school.

9. The district's evaluation procedure for administrators' performance was aligned with the requirements of the Education Reform Act and was informative and instructive, and used to promote individual growth and overall effectiveness. Compensation and continued employment were linked to evidence of effectiveness, as measured by improvement in student performance and other relevant school data.

Rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

The district's evaluation procedure for administrators' performance aligned with the requirements of the Education Reform Act, but evaluations were not completed annually. Of the 14 files reviewed of present and former administrators who served during the period under

examination, eight had no completed evaluations for the last three years. Two of the files contained timely annual evaluations. The majority of administrators had one evaluation in the file, which was called an 18-month evaluation. Three of these evaluations were unsigned narratives and contained some, but not all, of the Principals of Effective Leadership. Six of the written evaluations were generally informative, and the EQA team considered one of them instructive, or used to promote individual growth and overall effectiveness.

According to the superintendent, the principals and other administrators worked on annual goals, but this was not evident in their files or from interviews with them about the evaluation process. According to interviewees, they were not required to develop a set of written goals each year on which to base evaluations. One of the principals interviewed stated that he did not have a current contract for 2007-2008. One of the current administrators was not certified for the position held, and another graduated from a certification program but needed to follow up on completing paperwork before the DOE could issue an appropriate certificate. According to interviewees, compensation and continued employment of the superintendent and principals was not linked to evidence of effectiveness, as measured by improvement in student performance and other relevant school data, such as progress on goals in the SIPs.

10. The district's evaluation procedure for teachers' performance was aligned with the requirements of the Education Reform Act and was informative and instructive and used to promote individual growth and overall effectiveness. The district provided opportunities for additional professional development and support to struggling teachers. After following due process, the district took action against persistently low-performing teachers.

Rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

The district's evaluation procedure for teacher's performance aligned with the requirements of the Education Reform Act. By contract, a non-professional status teacher was to be evaluated once per year for the first three years, and a professional status teacher was to be formally evaluated once every two years. The contract limited the classroom observations to no more than two visits annually and no longer than 45 minutes each, and at least one of the formal classroom observations was to be announced. The teacher and the evaluator were to meet at the beginning

of the school year to discuss the evaluator's goals and objectives for the coming year; such goals and objectives could be an element for evaluation within the framework of the Principles of Effective Teaching.

Elementary faculty members were evaluated by principals, special education staff members were evaluated by the director of pupil personnel services, and middle and high school faculty members were evaluated by principals, specialists, and directors. This represented a change in the contract beginning in 2005-2006. In prior years, evaluations of secondary personnel, by contract, had to be completed by specialists or directors of respective departments and not the principal. According to interviewees, principals had been prohibited from evaluating middle and secondary teachers, which was a clear violation of the Education Reform Act of 1993. This remained in the SEA agreement with the Saugus School Committee until September 1, 2005. The high school principal verified for the EQA examiners that when he was hired five years ago, he remembered having to evaluate a teacher's performance by standing outside of a closed door and looking through the window at what was happening in the classroom, due to the restrictions in the prior SEA contract.

In a review of 38 randomly selected teacher evaluation files, the EQA team found that 12 teachers had been evaluated in a timely way, which by contract was annually for non-professional status teachers and every two years for professional status teachers. Two of the teachers who were not new hires had no evaluations on file at all. Of the small number of teacher evaluations completed, all were informative and one was instructive in that it made a suggestion or recommendation for improved practice.

According to interviewees, prior to the period under review the administrators had received Understanding Teaching I training from Research for Better Teaching (RBT). Some of the new principals had also received that type of training prior to employment in Saugus. Interviewees agreed that with the exception of the high school, district administrators did not have a well developed system of supervision and evaluation. Most evaluations were very brief and rated all teachers as having met expectations. Principals were not sure that an administrator at central office read and reviewed teacher evaluations written by principals.

In contrast, principals at the high school stated that they read the evaluations written by curriculum specialists. Struggling teachers had limited options available to them such as perhaps taking a course in classroom management. When asked whether they had any veteran teachers on an improvement plan, principals and the director of pupil personnel responded that they did not. They told the EQA that they closely monitored teachers in the first three years and that they did not offer them a subsequent contract if their performance was inadequate.

11. Administrators in the district used effective systems of supervision to implement district and school programs and goals for improving student achievement in their respective assignments, and used these systems to address the strengths and needs of assigned staff.

Rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

Interviews with principals and administrators showed little evidence of an effective system of supervision operating within the district, with the exception of the high school. There was no formal or informal walk-through protocol used in the district. Principals stated that they tried to get into as many classrooms as possible per week but were not specific about their expectations for the instruction that they would see. Time for walk-throughs ranged from two times per month to one hour per week. One principal expressed the need to make classroom visits brief to prevent them from being mistaken for one of the informal observations allowed for the school year under the SEA contract. Many principals appeared occupied with long periods of bus or lunch duty due to cutbacks in staffing in all schools, especially because of the stipulation in the SEA contract that elementary teachers had 40 minutes and secondary teachers had 30 minutes of duty-free lunchtime. As a result, administrators and volunteers were called on to monitor the lunch period. In addition, monitoring non-instructional tasks clearly cut into the time that principals needed to be involved in as instructional leaders.

At the high school, the curriculum specialists, assistant principals, and principals, working as a team, were better able to monitor school expectations and implementation of programs and goals for the improvement of student achievement. Curriculum specialists had written many of the evaluations viewed in teacher files, providing evidence that they remained active as teacher evaluators. Interviewees stated that the implementation of K-12 Planet software improved

accountability at the high school. This software allowed parents to monitor how well their children were doing in each course, review homework assignments, and observe the completed homework and grades on quizzes and tests. Parents were also able to communicate frequently with teachers through e-mail. The EQA confirmed this improvement in communication of student performance between parents and teachers who told the EQA that it also served to support struggling students. In interviews, parents stated that not all teachers actively participated in using K-12 Planet, and when asked about this principals told the EQA that teacher participation was expected, closely monitored, and discussed. After receiving verbal warnings, teachers who still not use K-12 Planet received a letter of written reprimand.

In 2007, Belmonte Middle School was in year one of restructuring for subgroups in math since the school had not made adequate yearly progress (AYP) in math for subgroups since 2003. According to the NCLB definition, the district was supposed to provide technical assistance to the school and help the school make an improvement plan, and it was supposed to continue analyzing the school's needs and implement fundamental reforms, including a change in the school's governance and/or staffing, to improve student performance. Little evidence was presented that this district intervention was available. Lack of available time with curriculum specialists and elimination of common planning time during the school day appeared to decrease the amount of supervision and collaboration toward implementation of school programs for improving student achievement. As of 2007-2008, teachers had two hours of common planning time after school each month to collaborate on and address all subject areas. Some teacher time needed to be allocated to parent meetings on struggling students, and according to parents it was very difficult to communicate with teachers at the middle school. The middle school did not have the technology infrastructure to run a system like K-12 Planet to improve parent communication and to support students. Of additional concern was the fact that four new math teachers at the middle school were inexperienced and likely in need of coaching from a curriculum specialist, which was not available.

At the elementary level, there were new principals in three of four schools. None of them had assistant principals even though one of the elementary schools had a new principal and had twice as many students and teachers to supervise. Although elementary principals were working in collaboration to implement the DIBELS assessment, align the math curriculum, and implement a

new science program, the amount of collaboration time needed was demanding, and more so for the one who had a double-sized school without any central office personnel to coordinate the task across the district.

12. The district's employment (human resources), supervision, and professional development processes were linked and supported by appropriate levels of funding.

Rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

As cited, interviewees at all levels of the district stated that professional development was severely limited by both time and money and was lacking in most areas. Principals had no site-based funds for building-based professional development. The funding that was arranged by the director of pupil personnel services and reviewed by the PDC was intended to focus on meeting district needs, but it was too thinly spread. The district was providing some ongoing math professional development at the middle school, but at the same time, according to 2007 MCAS test results, the middle school was not meeting performance or improvement targets in math and performance was on the decline for the majority of students.

Although the district was able to submit a list of professional development offerings during the period under review, it was not evident how many teachers and administrators actually participated in professional development, outside of the two days scheduled in the district calendar.

Administrators stated that there were no funds available for their own professional development although each contract stipulated access to a pool of funds, depending on specific contract. Principals cited a summer institute at Shore Collaborative as their primary source of professional development, and they rated it positively. They also positively commented on annual legal updates with a lawyer, arranged by the director of pupil personnel services.

According to Schedule 1 of the End of Year Report, in FY 2006 the amount budgeted for district leadership in professional development was \$2,313, and the amount budgeted for teachers in professional development was \$195,370, which included substitute teacher coverage. In FY 2005, the professional development amount budgeted for district leadership was \$25,940, and the

amount budgeted for teachers was \$133,866, which included substitute teacher coverage. In FY 2004, the professional development amount budgeted for district leadership was \$22,000 and for teachers it was \$36,134, which did not include substitute teacher coverage. According to Schedule 19 for the same three years, no funds were spent for professional development. According to interviewees, most of the professional development funds came from grants, donations, and outside community agencies, such as collaboration with the HILL and the Saugus Business Alliance.

13. The district provided ongoing and regular training in dealing with crises and emergencies to all staff, provided procedures for substitutes, student-teachers, and volunteers responsible for students, and provided opportunities to practice emergency procedures with all students.

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The district provided ongoing and regular training in dealing with crises and emergencies to all staff members. According to principals, each teacher had a copy of the school's respective crisis plan, which they reviewed on an annual basis. There was no specific plan for training substitutes, student teachers, and volunteers; regular teachers were supposed to share this information with them. Primarily in two elementary schools, in some classrooms the crisis plan was in a prominent folder attached to the back of the classroom door. Such plans were not visible in middle school or high school classrooms. According to principals, in each school there were crisis management teams and an annual review of the plans.

All schools had a lockdown protocol but schools had not practiced a lockdown drill, with the exception of the high school. Fire drill exit rules were posted in all classrooms throughout the district with the exception of the high school, where fire drill rules were not clearly posted in any classroom visited. The principals told the EQA that each principal arranged fire drills about two times per year. The district had no arrangement with the bus company it contracted with to practice bus evacuation drills.

Standard V: Access, Participation, and Student Academic Support														
Ratings ▼ Indicators ►	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Total
Excellent														
Satisfactory				✓	✓	✓	✓			✓				5
Needs Improvement	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓		✓	✓		7
Unsatisfactory													✓	1

V. Access, Participation, and Student Academic Support

The district provided quality programs for all students that were comprehensive, accessible and rigorous. Student academic support services and district discipline and behavior practices addressed the needs of all students. The district was effective in maintaining high rates of attendance for students and staff and retained the participation of students through graduation.

Standard Rating: Needs Improvement

Findings:

- The district made limited use of data to assess program participation. The district analyzed aggregate data in the schools to varying degrees, but it made little use of disaggregated data.
- Although budget limitations have limited adoption of new programs, by combining grant monies with some local funding the district was able to introduce the DIBELS literacy program in grades K-2 (adding grade 3 in 2007-2008) and provide training to staff members in its administration and applications.
- Although the district has endeavored to remedy many of the deficiencies cited in the DOE's 2006 CPR, principals and teachers reported that the range and quality of the English language learner (ELL) program and support services was still not adequate to meet the needs of the district's growing ELL student population.
- The district has not yet analyzed its dropout, suspension, and attendance data carefully enough to develop a successful plan for improvement in these areas.
- As a consequence of severe budget cuts, advanced and/or accelerated programs were eliminated at the elementary level, substantially reduced at the middle level, and entrance to honors classes and, at the high school, AP classes have become more limiting, with stricter qualifying criteria and grade prerequisites.

- As a result of budget cuts and changes in programming, subgroup access to and representation in higher level academic programs has been reduced.

Summary

Although struggling with the detrimental effects of chronic budget cuts, the district endeavored to provide an adequate range of educational services and supplemental programs to meet student learning needs and improve academic achievement. A variety of early intervention services, remedial, and supplementary programs in both regular and special education were utilized across the district. In some cases, however, staffing reductions and/or funding limitations have affected the quality and/or timeliness of support services such as remedial/developmental reading and MCAS remediation. The district has increased the use, particularly in the elementary schools, of standardized diagnostic and formative assessments in reading (DIBELS). This has served to generate more and better student achievement data and to identify students performing below grade level. The district's limited English proficient (LEP) student population has grown steadily, and although the district has made efforts to develop an appropriate program, the need to continue to expand the quality and range of LEP support services remains, as indicated by the DOE Coordinated Program Review (CPR) and statements of administrators and staff members.

Administrators and staff members acknowledged that the district conducted little regular or systematic analysis of subgroup participation in advanced and/or accelerated academic programs. They could not accurately describe the degree to which subgroup enrollment or achievement rates paralleled those of the overall student population. A review of the data revealed that students from the district's two primary subgroups, the low-income and special education populations, were significantly underrepresented in higher level programs. It was also noted that the elimination of gifted and talented programs in the elementary schools and the reduction of honors level courses at the middle school has adversely affected the ability of all students to access higher level programs.

All schools in the district had developed comprehensive attendance policies and accompanying implementation procedures. Each school's student handbook contained detailed attendance policies, enforcement practices, and academic consequences for exceeding absence limits. Administrators consistently followed procedures used by the schools to support student attendance and punctuality expectations, including notification letters, phone calls, and parent

conferences. With the exception of the high school, average daily attendance rates in the district were at or just above state averages. In contrast, in 2007 the student attendance rate at Saugus High School was below the state average, and the average number of days absent and the percentage of students who were chronically absent from school in grades 7-12 were above the state averages. Disaggregated analysis of district attendance data indicated considerably higher absenteeism rates among the special education and low-income student populations at all grade levels.

Comprehensive policies, procedures, and practices relative to student discipline, promotion, retention, suspension, and exclusion were presented in all student handbooks in a clear, detailed manner. School policies were annually reviewed, and student handbooks were distributed to all families served. The use of the Connect-ED telephone system, email, and expanded school websites enhanced communication between schools and parents. In addition, the high school used K-12 Planet (a school to home electronic portal) that greatly enhanced parent access to student information. Analysis of data revealed that Saugus High School's 2007 dropout and out-of-school suspension rates were both well above state averages. When questioned, school administrators responded that they were not aware of this. They indicated that the district lacked any formal dropout prevention policies or programs and instead attempted to deal with at-risk students on an individual case-by-case basis.

Indicators

1. The district administration and staff used aggregated and disaggregated student achievement data on student participation and achievement to adjust instruction and policies for at-risk populations and provided additional programs and supports to assist their progress and academic achievement.

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The district made limited use of data to assess student academic achievement and program participation. In interviews, administrators acknowledged that the analysis of aggregate data was the primary vehicle used to inform adjustments and modifications to curriculum and instruction. Data disaggregation was employed to a much lesser extent and its use varied from school to

school. MCAS results served as the primary source of achievement data across the district. Building principals were responsible for the collection, analysis, and dissemination of the MCAS data. They indicated that they utilized TestWiz to perform item and curriculum analyses and generate reports for subsequent distribution to their staff members. Teachers confirmed that building administrators worked closely with them to interpret and apply MCAS results in evaluating and adjusting curriculum and instruction.

In addition, during the period under review, the DIBELS assessment was introduced in grades K-2. As part of this program, classroom teachers received ongoing professional development training in the analysis and application of student literacy data. Elementary teachers and administrators reported that the DIBELS had produced valuable diagnostic results that were used to enhance programs and services as well as to identify, monitor, and support at-risk students. As a consequence of budget cuts, the Stanford Achievement Test, which had long been utilized at the elementary level, was discontinued. Interviewees further indicated that in the past, the analysis and application of school and student results from state mandated (MCAS) and other standardized tests had been facilitated by the elementary curriculum coordinator, but that position was eliminated for the 2007-2008 school year due to budgetary limitations.

Beyond the MCAS tests, staff members at the Belmonte Middle School explained that the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Comprehension Test was the only assessment used to generate diagnostic student data and that they, along with teachers' evaluations, were used to identify pupils who needed additional academic support. At the high school, student performance on the MCAS, PSAT, SAT, and AP tests reportedly served as the primary sources of data relative to academic achievement. Interviewees acknowledged that in general they only collected and analyzed aggregate data.

In response to identified student performance deficiencies in mathematics and ELA at both the elementary and middle schools, additional instructional time had been devoted to both academic areas, according to administrators. The elementary grades increased instructional time in math to 60 minutes daily and added a weekly 90-minute literacy block. The middle school added a daily "success block" providing students expanded instructional time in each of the four core subject areas (mathematics, ELA, science, and social studies). At the high school, those interviewed

explained that staff members made significant modifications to mathematics and science courses for lower ability/at-risk learners. Additionally, they cited the “learning center” remedial class period, in-school tutorial services, remedial reading, and MCAS prep classes as programs and supports that promoted student academic progress and achievement.

2. At each grade level, the district used formative assessments and summative data to identify all students who did not meet expectations and provided these students with supplementary and/or remedial services that resulted in improved academic achievement and MCAS test proficiency.

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Overall MCAS scores, as well as subgroup performance, across the district remained essentially flat during the period under review. In 2007, special education and low-income students at the middle school failed to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) in ELA, and both the aggregate student population and the subgroup populations at the middle school failed to make AYP in mathematics. Saugus High School students, both those in the aggregate and in subgroups, succeeded in attaining AYP in 2007.

During the review period, the district began to utilize grade-level assessments to identify students who were not meeting academic expectations. District administrators reported that curriculum mapping and subsequent development of pacing guides to enhance vertical and horizontal curriculum alignment and instructional consistency in every subject and at every grade level had become a district priority. Interviewees described progress at the high school as the most extensive. Pacing guides in all subject areas were developed and common midyear and final examinations in all core academic subjects were developed and implemented. At the middle school, the process was described as “a work in progress.” Pacing guides were completed in some subjects (e.g., mathematics) and at some grades, and were under development in others. Common midyear and final assessments were utilized only at grade 8 and were “optional in grades 6 and 7.” Similarly, elementary staff members indicated that, despite the loss of the elementary curriculum coordinator, pacing guides were being developed in all content areas and grade levels, along with common unit assessments and grading rubrics.

District administrators reported that student data from both local and standardized assessments were regularly and carefully reviewed to inform adjustments to programs, instruction, or services. At the elementary grades, the results of DIBELS assessments, together with teacher referrals and classroom performance, were analyzed to inform grouping practices, identify at-risk students, and tailor individualized assistance, including Title I services and special education supports. Teachers and administrators explained that at grades K-3, DIBELS data indicated the students were meeting benchmarks with increasing success. Middle school staff members reported that the needs of those students who performed poorly on the MCAS tests or failed to meet grade-level expectations were addressed through IEP referrals, resource room support, the learning center, remedial and developmental reading, an after-school grant funded “homework club,” and, in part due to staffing cuts, greater use of an inclusion model.

Those interviewed explained that the high school offered a variety of services and programs to provide needed assistance to at-risk students. Based on MCAS scores, IEP recommendations, teacher referrals, and academic performance, any one or a combination of remedial supports were utilized. Those described as most effective included the student learning center for all students on IEPs or 504 plans, the MCAS remediation class (that provided additional weekly periods of review and reinforcement to students in the ‘Warning/Failing’ or ‘Needs Improvement’ categories), referrals to the reading laboratory, and the availability of specialized small group classes in all core subjects and grade levels (designed for students who required intensive, individualized instruction).

Further, all the district’s schools used individual student success plans (ISSPs) to develop and provide comprehensive and coordinated academic assistance to students whose MCAS performance had been unsatisfactory. A review of ISSPs confirmed that they were diagnostic and prescriptive documents and included identification of specific learning standard deficiencies and appropriate remedial strategies.

3. Early intervention programs in literacy were provided at the primary education level to ensure that all students were reading at the ‘Proficient’ level on the MCAS test by the end of Grade 4.

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Although hindered by an increasing lack of financial resources that resulted in the discontinuation of the Stanford Achievement Test and the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Assessment, the district endeavored during the period under review to enhance its early intervention literacy programs. Most notable was the adoption in grades K-3 of the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills program. Due in part to grant monies, teachers received training on test administration and the analysis and application of DIBELS assessment data. Administrators and teachers asserted that the program provided them with the ability to better assess early literacy skills, to identify students who required supplementary instruction, and to monitor at-risk students systematically while they received additional targeted instruction.

Interviewees explained that the district also used assessment data to modify instructional strategies, inform grouping practices, provide extra in-class support via reading teachers, and initiate Title I and/or special education services. Additionally, in 2005 the district adopted the McMillan/McGraw Hill reading series in grades K-3 to better align the curriculum with state literacy frameworks. Although the district's grade 3 MCAS reading results showed only slight improvement during the review period, interviewees believed that the impact of using the DIBELS, along with other curriculum enhancements, would become increasingly apparent as teacher training and full implementation of the program at all four elementary schools progressed. They pointed to the fact that students were meeting their DIBELS benchmarks with increasing success.

Those interviewed believed the increased use of ELA pacing guides, common unit assessments and rubrics, and the improved vertical and horizontal curriculum alignment across all four elementary schools directly supported their efforts to provide appropriate, consistent, and timely programs and services to ensure that all students could perform successfully on the grade 4 MCAS test in ELA.

4. The district immediately assessed the skills and needs of entering and mobile students when records were not available or accessible, and made educationally appropriate and effective placements.

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district reported that it was in full compliance with the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. The pupil personnel services/special education director, who oversaw the program, indicated that procedures were in place and were followed in each of the district's six schools ensuring the immediate registration, enrollment, and assessment of all eligible students. In interviews, administrators and guidance counselors confirmed that the district provided homeless children with transportation to and from school free of charge, a choice of which school they wished to attend regardless of which district they resided in, and free lunch at school. The district's population of mobile and homeless students was described as having been very small during the period under review. At the time of the EQA review, only five students were eligible for these services and only two of them had actually chosen to attend the Saugus Public Schools. The program director asserted that she worked in collaboration with surrounding communities to share costs and coordinate all appropriate services for students and their parents.

5. The district provided programs and services to alleviate the adverse effects of poverty (including delayed language development, lack of readiness skills, low self-esteem and aspirations, high mobility, and family instability) on students' social, emotional, and intellectual development.

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the period under review, administrators and staff members reported that the district had done much to alleviate the adverse effects of poverty on students' social, emotional, and intellectual development. With the help of at-risk grant funding from the Department of Education, the district established a pilot program to provide a wide range of programs and services to the targeted population. Interviewees described a formal collaboration subsequently formed with the North Shore Children's Hospital. This program focused primarily on students in the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten levels and brought hospital staff members directly into district elementary schools. They created structured playgroups and provided specialized counseling services to students and parents, as well as ongoing consultation services for school staff members. Administrators further described summer readiness sessions that offered no-cost activities, materials, and support services for students and their parents.

Staff members at the middle school stated that a number of supports were available during the school day to students in grades 6-8. These included rotating six-week small group sessions led by school counselors with carefully targeted student populations on a wide variety of developmentally appropriate topics. In addition to the usual range of support programs and services, high school members staff cited a counseling center at Saugus High School that, in conjunction with North Shore Children's Hospital, provided mental health services for students and outreach programs for parents.

Administrators further reported that for students with identified financial need, school and athletic fees were either reduced or waived as appropriate and that each school sponsored a number of fundraising activities, especially during the winter holidays, to assist needy families in the community.

6. The district directly involved parents and community organizations in the education of their children through their regular communication and outreach, and facilitated their participation by such means as holding meetings and events at convenient times and locations and providing translators, transportation, and child care.

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the period under review, efforts to enhance and increase the involvement of parents and community organizations in the schools were a priority in the district. The district's strategic plan, as well as the School Improvement Plans of individual schools, included goals that focused on a range of attributes of positive climate and improved communication initiatives. A review of those documents, together with interviews with administrators and staff members from across the school system, served to identify a number of specific efforts and actions taken at each of the schools to achieve these goals. At the elementary schools, actions included significantly increased parent volunteer opportunities, establishment of a pilot literacy volunteer program, creation of a parent volunteer library, expanded use of community members in monthly town meetings, creation of a series of biweekly student assemblies featuring performances or speaking engagements by community members, and introduction of an additional family night for parents and students. Further, elementary staff members cited the expanded use of electronic media, such

as each school's improved website, email, and the introduction of the Connect-ED telephone instant communication system, together with regular weekly school notices sent home with students, as evidence of their efforts to increase communication with parents and increase community involvement with the schools in order to enrich student experiences and well being.

The middle school reported a similar focus in which new or improved opportunities for parent access and involvement were created. Interviewees identified a spring orientation program, fall "back to school night," and increased parent volunteerism in the school store, in numerous fundraising endeavors, and in support of end of the year activities as examples of their efforts. Additionally, an upgraded school website, use of Connect-ED, quarterly guidance newsletters, increased collaboration with the Saugus Business Association, and monthly guidance department open house "coffees" for parents, held on a rotating time schedule to enhance attendance, were also highlighted by those interviewed as promoting the middle school's communication and outreach efforts.

High school administration and staff members also provided numerous examples of their increased efforts to involve parents more directly and actively in the education of their children. The introduction of K-12 Planet, a comprehensive school-to-home electronic portal that gives parents and students instant access to grades, attendance, homework assignments, and school activities, was described as a highly effective and extensively used communication tool. In addition, interviewees believed that the increased capacity for and use of email and Connect-ED did much to facilitate school-parent interactions. Finally, additional parent meetings and programs, at various convenient times of the day and evening throughout the course of the year, and the creation of limited but regular guidance department hours throughout the summer were also identified as important evidence of the high school's commitment to this goal.

Interviewees also explained that when needed, the pupil personnel services/special education director's office would provide parents with transportation and childcare as requested. Further, all schools had been supplied with the Easy Translator IV software package, making it possible to send all school messages and forms home to non-English speaking parents in the target language.

7. District administration and staff helped all students make effective transitions from one school, grade level, or program to another. This assistance was focused on maintaining or improving levels of student performance.

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the period under review, the district did much to improve school, grade level, and program transition practices and procedures for all students. Principals and staff members described a number of specific actions that had been taken in support of this goal. They stated that considerable work was underway to develop a comprehensive K-12 curriculum aligned both horizontally and vertically. Pacing guides including common assessments as benchmarks were in place in all core content areas at the high school and in process at the middle school and each of the elementary schools. Elementary principals indicated that the creation of consistent and uniform academic programs and practices was a very high priority for them and that significant progress had been achieved in the past two years. Content area specialists at the high school had once been primarily responsible for curriculum development and coordination in grades 6-12. Administrators and classroom teachers noted that staffing reductions had severely impeded their ability to perform those duties effectively, particularly at the middle school.

Interviewees identified a wide variety of annual orientations, school visitations, curriculum nights, and open house programs provided for students and their families to facilitate student academic and personal transitioning. Administrators, guidance staff members, and special education personnel cited numerous meetings held each spring and fall to carefully review the transition needs, including the IEPs, 504 plans, and student success plans, of students moving from grade to grade as well as from school to school. Cumulative folders followed each student as he/she progressed through the grade levels. Interviewees indicated that these procedures were particularly thorough and detailed at the transition points between grades 5 and 6 and grades 8 and 9 to ensure that students were placed in appropriate academic settings, identified learning needs were addressed, supports provided, and there was a continuity of services.

Principals and staff members highlighted new or expanded programs and practices that they believed contributed to enhanced student transitions across grade levels. For example, each

spring students in grade 5 from all four of the district's elementary schools attended an overnight environmental camp in New Hampshire where staff provided special academic and social activities that served to promote class unity and prepare students for their entrance to middle school. High school staff members identified a new "transition day" program in mid-August for incoming freshmen and their parents, as well as a series of freshman guidance breakfasts for students and parents, as being particularly noteworthy.

The DOE's 2006 CPR cited a number of items of concern relative to the district's ELL programs and services. Among the most notable were: a) no formal home language survey; b) no systematic approach to identifying and assessing ELL students; c) inadequate training for classroom teachers in English learner education; d) placing ELL students in general education classes without providing sheltered immersion services; d) incomplete ELL records; and e) lack of an ELL specialist in the district. According to those administrators and staff members interviewed, much has been done to respond to the deficiencies identified in the CPR report. A review of the district's Coordinated Program Review Progress Reports from March, May, August, and October 2007 confirmed that considerable progress had been made to remedy the identified noncompliance issues. Nevertheless, principals and teachers reported that the range and quality of support services available to ELL students were still not at desirable levels and that further improvements to the district's ELL program were warranted. They cited the need for substantial sheltered English immersion (SEI) training for all staff members as an especially high priority. Although hindered by limited funding, many of those interviewed expressed the belief that the district must make a greater commitment to its steadily growing population of ELL students.

8. The district had fair and equitable policies, procedures, and practices to reduce discipline referrals, grade retention, suspension, and exclusion.

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Although data were utilized to monitor individual student performance, interviews with district and building administrators revealed that, with the exception of special education students, systematic compilation and analysis of either aggregate or disaggregated student data was done

infrequently or not at all. For example, when asked, staff members were generally unaware of current rates or recent patterns of student attendance, suspension, or exclusion within the district or of how those data compared to state averages. Analysis of 2007 DOE data revealed that the high school's dropout rate (7.0 percent) was more than twice the state average (3.3 percent). The analysis also revealed that the out-of-school suspension rate (8.2 percent in Saugus versus the state average of 5.8 percent) and the student attendance rate (93.4 percent in Saugus versus the state average of 94.5 percent) also compared unfavorably to state averages.

A review of the high school, middle school, and elementary school student handbooks revealed that policies, procedures, and practices relative to discipline referrals, promotion, retention, suspension, and exclusion were consistent and equitable. Student handbooks were clear, detailed, and comprehensive. Interviewees explained that school administration, staffs, and school councils annually reviewed policies, and student handbooks were distributed to all families served. Each school utilized the district's student management software to compile attendance and disciplinary data. Staff members reported that attendance policies and procedures were enforced at all grade levels. A variety of warning and notification letters were promptly sent to parents when warranted. In serious circumstances, administrators phoned parents directly or held in-school meetings with parents. All schools utilized the Connect-ED automatic telephone system to facilitate communication between school and home. At the high school, the K-12 Planet electronic communication system reportedly was highly effective in improving and expanding home-school dialogue.

9. The district had policies, procedures, and practices to prevent or minimize dropping out, and to recover dropouts and return them to an educationally appropriate placement.

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The district lacked formal dropout prevention and recovery policies and procedures. Although administrators and staff members asserted that considerable attention and effort were devoted to working, on a case-by-case basis, with at-risk students and their families, no targeted programs or specialized services were in place to address this issue. Instead, they utilized regular support/intervention mechanisms such as guidance team meetings, ISSP revisions, teacher

assistance teams (TATs), and IEP meetings. In addition, because of the lack of systematic data collection and analysis, interviewees were uncertain about the aggregate dropout rate as well as the rate of the two primary subgroups, special education and low-income students. A review of DOE data revealed that in 2007, the high school dropout rate reached 7.0 percent compared to the state average of only 3.3 percent. When questioned, interviewees were uncertain of the factors that had contributed to the elevated dropout rate and had no plans to address the issue in any systematic manner.

10. The district implemented policies and programs that addressed the needs of transient and homeless students and provided them with timely and equitable access to quality programs.

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

According to central office administration, the district has averaged only four to five transient and homeless students each year throughout the period under review. Nevertheless, interviewees stated that the district took its responsibilities in this area seriously and that all of the services and supports required by state and federal statute were in place and provided to the target population. These included Title I and special education services, as well as collaborations with parents, foster parents, other school districts in which Saugus pupils were enrolled, and a variety of state and local agencies and organizations. The pupil personnel services/special education director who coordinated homeless and transient services indicated that she regularly worked with a number of educational and social service agencies, including the Department of Youth Services (DYS) and the Department of Social Services (DSS), in order to ensure that all necessary and appropriate educational and human services and supports were provided. Interviewees told EQA examiners that although very small, the district's homeless/transient population was monitored continually in order to maintain a high level of timely and equitable assistance, and that only two of the district's five homeless students were currently enrolled in the Saugus Public Schools.

11. District and school policies and practices promoted the importance of student attendance, and attendance was continuously monitored, reported, and acted upon.

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

A review of student handbooks revealed that clear and comprehensive attendance policies were in place and published in all the district's schools. The school committee reviewed and approved the policies. Administrators reported that every family received a copy of their school's handbook. High school and middle school policies were noticeably similar in that they contained detailed attendance procedures, enforcement and notification practices, and academic consequences when students exceeded absence limits. Interviewees indicated that they enforced attendance policies uniformly. At both the high school and middle school, students could be denied academic credit if they exceeded a specified number of unexcused absences in a term. In such cases, students at the middle school had the right to appeal to the building administration; at the high school a faculty review board heard student appeals. Teachers took student attendance daily in each building, using the district's student management software system. School administrators, guidance staff members, and special education staff members reviewed daily attendance and distributed it to all classroom teachers. Attendance letters, phone calls, and parent conferences were among the primary attendance strategies described as regularly employed in all of the schools.

The services of outside agencies were also enlisted when necessary. For example, interviewees reported that at the elementary and middle schools, counselors filed Child in Need of Services (CHINS) petitions in the most serious cases. They further explained that at all levels monthly collaborative meetings involving representatives from DSS, DYS, the Department of Mental Health (DMH), the police, and Saugus school administrators and staff members were held in order to deal more effectively with at-risk students and their families.

Nevertheless, according to those administrators and staff members interviewed, they compiled attendance data only in the aggregate and/or for specific students. Analysis of attendance patterns and subgroup attendance data was not a practice in the district.

DOE data revealed that although the overall district attendance rate (94.8 percent) was slightly above the state average (94.5 percent) in 2007, the attendance rate at the high school (93.4 percent) was below the state average. A similar pattern was observed for the average number of days absent and the percentage of students chronically absent (i.e., absent more than 10 percent

of the school year) in grades 7-12. Disaggregated data analysis revealed that the absenteeism rate of the district's special education students was considerably higher than that of the general population. Central office and building administrators acknowledged that they were not aware of these attendance statistics and patterns, and that they had conducted little detailed analysis of attendance data.

12. District and school policies and practices promoted and tracked the importance of staff attendance and participation, and appropriate provisions were made to ensure continuity of the instructional program.

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Although Saugus did not have a formal districtwide staff attendance policy, administrators indicated that they monitored faculty attendance in each of the schools and maintained records at the central office. Principals were expected to promote and enforce strong attendance expectations and to address situations in which excessive absence or unusual absence patterns were observed. Procedures to be followed in the case of teacher absence, such as the maintenance of substitute folders and student seating charts, were described in detail and included in faculty handbooks at the middle school and high school. Because the elementary schools did not have a faculty handbook, orientation meetings, faculty meetings, and the mentoring process served as the primary vehicles to communicate teacher attendance expectations and teacher absence procedures. Substitute hiring and teacher coverage were arranged through a centralized process. According to those interviewed, a sufficient number of substitutes was often unavailable in cases of teacher absence, and the district's comparatively low substitute pay rate was cited as a likely contributing factor. Principals explained that administrators in each building, along with the department heads at the high school, worked closely with substitutes and were responsible for facilitating and supporting the efforts of substitutes, ensuring that substitutes fully implemented lesson plans provided by the classroom teacher, and ensuring that they maintained instructional continuity.

In interviews with EQA examiners, both administrators and teachers asserted that they did not consider staff absenteeism to be a concern in the schools. Although overall faculty attendance

rates in the district approximated the state average, differences among the schools were apparent in the analysis of disaggregated data. For example, DOE data for 2007 revealed that the lowest faculty absence rate was in the elementary schools (5.7 percent or 10 days per year). The high school's faculty absence rate was 6.5 percent or 11.8 days per year. The highest incidence of faculty absence occurred at the middle school, where the rate was 7.9 percent or 14.8 days per year. When questioned, administrators at the middle school cited morale problems resulting from the elimination of 29 teaching positions over the past several years as a primary contributing factor.

13. District and school leadership implemented policies, procedures, and practices to increase proportionate subgroup representation in advanced and/or accelerated programs, in order to close the achievement gap.

Rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

Interviewees explained that the district curtailed or eliminated a number of advanced and accelerated academic programs because of progressively severe budget cuts during the period under review. At the elementary schools, for example, because of staffing reductions the availability of remedial and developmental reading services was substantially reduced. Utilizing grant funding, some of the elementary schools offered limited after-school enrichment programs in mathematics to students in grades 3-5.

The middle school's only remaining leveled academic program was in mathematics. Previously offered as Pre-algebra to eligible students in grade 7 and Algebra in grade 8, it was reduced to a one-year grade 8 offering for 2007-2008. Principals and teachers explained that the middle school would work to keep Algebra in the curriculum in subsequent years. EQA examiners observed class sizes averaging close to 30 students and heterogeneous groupings in all grades and classes as the norm at the Belmonte Middle School. Interviewees reported that, in conjunction with the Saugus Youth and Recreation Department, the middle school offered a small, tuition-based after-school program that included a "homework club" along with a few other enrichment activities.

Leveled and honors classes were offered at the high school and included courses in all major academic areas. In addition, a comprehensive range of alternative classes in all core curriculum areas were available to those special education students whose educational plans required them to receive intensive specialized instruction in small group settings. Advanced Placement (AP) courses were available to juniors and seniors in mathematics, English, science, social studies, and Spanish. Qualifying criteria and grade prerequisites for admission to honors level and AP courses, described in the program of studies, had become more strictly enforced, which limited the pool of students eligible to take such courses. Students who failed to meet the stated academic requirements were prohibited from enrolling in the accelerated programs. Interviewees explained that students who nonetheless wished to elect such classes could petition the high school principal directly, but they reported that waivers were infrequent.

AP classes at the high school had a total enrollment of 59 students in 2007, representing approximately seven percent of the entire school population. Only 50 percent of the students who took the AP examinations in 2007 earned a passing score of '3' or above. Interviewees presented little evidence that high school administrators initiated or employed any formal policies or practices to increase access to or subgroup representation in the more rigorous academic programs in order to narrow the achievement gap. Administrators acknowledged that little analysis of student subgroup representation in AP and honors classes was conducted and consequently could not accurately describe how closely subgroup enrollment and achievement rates paralleled those of the general student population. An EQA review of data from the College Board and the district revealed that subgroup enrollment and achievement rates did not parallel those of the general student population. Although the data showed gender balance, student subgroup representation, particularly that of special education students, was well below their proportional membership in the overall school population.

Standard VI: Financial and Asset Management Effectiveness and Efficiency														
Ratings ▼ Indicators ►	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Total
Excellent														
Satisfactory							✓			✓				2
Needs Improvement	✓					✓		✓	✓				✓	5
Unsatisfactory		✓	✓	✓	✓						✓	✓		6

VI. Financial and Asset Management Effectiveness and Efficiency

The district engaged in a participative, well-documented, and transparent budget process that used student achievement as a factor in the overall budget. The district acquired and used financial, physical, and competitive capital resources to provide for and sustain the advancement of achievement for all students enrolled in the district. The district regularly assessed the effectiveness and efficiency of its financial and capital assets and had the ability to meet reasonable changes and unanticipated events.

Standard Rating: Needs Improvement

Findings:

- Saugus Public Schools met its net school spending requirement each year during the period under review due to the town levies as a chargeback to the school district budget.
- School administrators and town officials said that the district budget was not adequate to provide Saugus students with the education they needed; therefore, the school committee did not vote to approve the FY 2008 budget as appropriated at the town meeting.
- Five of the six district schools were in need of renovation or replacement in the informed opinion of interviewees, which they based upon the lack of sufficient electrical service and noncompliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- The school district and the town have been struggling with a central computer that dates from the 1980s along with software from that same era. Interviewees told examiners that the town did not have money to update the system.
- Elimination of 58 positions during the period under review resulted in larger class sizes and a lack of program services and resources, hampering curriculum development and alignment throughout the school system.

Summary

The budget process in Saugus was open and clear, and included input from all school teachers and administrators; however, this input did not survive the budget cuts as the budget development went forward. The resulting budget document was clear, current, and understandable but not complete as it did not contain revolving fund figures or future trends.

The decision-making in the budget review process did not appear to be based upon student assessment data, as the EQA examiners could find no evidence nor was any presented of the use of aggregated or disaggregated student assessment data in the development of the district's final budget approved at town meeting. Because of the cuts made during the period under review, the school district budgets did not reflect the school committee's initial priorities nor the district's consideration of student achievement early in the budget development.

The town officials stated that the town was at its levy limit, and two override votes in the last five years had failed. In effect, the town manager, who felt that he had allotted the maximum amount of dollars possible to the school district, controlled the school district budget through recommendations to the finance committee and the town meeting.

The school district received approximately 37 percent of the town's revenues during the period under review. The increases in funds in the administrative and educational parts of the district's budget for the years under review did not allow for maintenance of educational effort by the district. Educational services to students had been reduced during each of the years under review. School administrators and town officials told EQA examiners that attempted overrides had been defeated in a general election by a margin of more than two to one. Any grant funds received were mainly from entitlement grants as the district did not actively seek out competitive grants.

Budget reductions were a common concern expressed repeatedly to the EQA examiners. On several occasions interviewees stated that in the last three years the district eliminated 58 staff positions, increased class sizes to as many as 29 students in some classes, reduced or eliminated programs and services, provided inadequate funds for supplies, textbooks and equipment, and expended no budget monies for professional development. The FY 2008 budget was approximately \$3 million under maintenance of student services budget.

All maintenance of school facilities was under the control of the town manager, as requests for maintenance were forwarded to the head of a maintenance crew who reported only to the town manager. The district's schools were well lit and well maintained. The examiners were told that all six schools were deficient in the electrical service needed to support modern educational equipment. Five of the six schools did not have the facilities to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The Belmonte Middle School has had a serious water problem in its school auditorium, which had been flooded at least twice. The school has had to install and keep four large water pumps operating constantly in order to keep groundwater out of the school. An abatement of a crawl space mold problem under the school involved filling the space with concrete; this has prevented installation of new technology in the school because of the impossibility of installing additional electrical lines through that space. Parents expressed to the examiners their perception that the mold problem still existed.

The district had developed a crisis plan, drafted by a committee that included representatives of the police and fire departments, a local hospital representative, and school personnel. The crisis plan covered fire, flood, intrusions into school buildings, and weather related emergencies. The plan was distributed to all school staff members, the police and fire officials, and local hospital administrators. Teachers were instructed to keep the plan in a prominent place in their classrooms, although few were observed by EQA examiners, with the exception of the elementary schools. Three of the elementary schools were not locked when the examiners arrived. All of the schools had a remote entry system monitored by remote cameras.

Indicators

1. The district's budget was developed through an open, participatory process, and the resulting document was clear, comprehensive, complete, current, and understandable. The budget also provided accurate information on all fund sources, as well as budgetary history and trends.

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

A review of the district's budgets for the period under review confirmed administrator statements that the budget was developed in an open, participatory process. The budget was clear

comprehensive, current, and understandable. The budget document was not complete, however, as it did not provide information or figures for revolving accounts or grants under the control of the school department. Monetary gifts to the district were not reported as part of the budget.

School principals and department heads received input from teachers in all six schools in the district. Administrators stated during individual interviews that this input reflected the needs of the district to improve the achievements of its students. The town manager then communicated to the school committee, through the superintendent, the amount that would be recommended to the finance committee and the town meeting. This figure for FY 2008 was \$3,046,401 less than that required for a maintenance of student services budget.

2. The budget was developed and resources were allocated based on the ongoing analysis of aggregate and disaggregated student assessment data to assure the budget's effectiveness in supporting improved achievement for all student populations.

Rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

Because of budget cuts necessitated by the town's fiscal condition and imposed on the school district by the town meeting, availability of funds drove the operating budget. Administrators told the EQA examiners that the development of the budget began with submissions of funding requests to the central office by departments and schools based on what they thought was essential to provide an excellent education to the students. There was no evidence presented that this determination of need used analysis of aggregated or disaggregated student achievement data. The superintendent then submitted this figure to the school committee in the first draft of the budget. The school committee added its priorities and then instructed the superintendent to present a budget that would fund the needs as presented. The school committee considered this version of the budget as that necessary to provide an adequate education to the students of Saugus. The superintendent then submitted a maintenance of effort budget to the school committee, which, after a public meeting, voted to approve it.

Because of the \$3,046,401 cut imposed to the maintenance of services budget, the school committee did not vote on the FY 2008 budget. Committee members told the examiners that

their refusal to vote that budget was in protest of the town meeting's cut to the maintenance of services budget.

3. The district's budget and supplemental funding were adequate to provide for effective instructional practices and to provide for adequate operational resources. The community annually provided sufficient financial resources to ensure educationally sound programs and facilities of quality, as evidenced by a sufficient district revenue levy and level of local spending for education.

Rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

During interviews, town officials, school administrators, and teachers told the EQA examiners that the district's funding was not adequate to provide for effective instructional practices and to provide for adequate operational resources. Town and school administrators told the EQA examiners that the school district received 37 percent of the town's total revenue for the period under review. Because of the cuts mandated by the town meeting connected to the town's fiscal condition, the schools lost 58 staff members during the period under review.

Due to the cuts in staffing, class size increased to an average of 29 in elementary schools such as the Lynnhurst and the Oaklandvale schools. All elementary schools eliminated special subjects such as art and music and reading intervention programs. Regular classroom teachers would now teach their own physical education. The middle school had to eliminate pre-algebra courses, and it lost 13 teachers after July 1, 2007. The district also eliminated all common planning time within the school day.

The grants received by the district were minimal and were mainly entitlement grants such as Title I and special education grants.

4. The district, as part of its budget development, implemented an evaluation-based review process to determine the cost effectiveness of all of its programs, initiatives, and activities. This process was based, in part, on student performance data and needs.

Rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

A review of documents submitted to the examiners failed to show an evaluation-based review process to determine the cost effectiveness of the district's programs, initiatives, and activities. The district did review its bus routes to save some monies in the bus contract. There was no evidence found in documents submitted that student performance data and needs were used as the basis of a cost effectiveness evaluation process for budget development.

Minutes of the school committee meetings submitted to the examiners did not show a consideration of a cost effectiveness evaluation of programs as part of the budget development process during the period under review. The following is an example of monies lost due to the lack of cost effectiveness evaluation. Two of the district's elementary schools are duplicates of each other with exactly the same footprint, yet one has an average monthly electric bill of approximately \$400 and the other has a monthly electric bill of approximately \$1,600. District administrators and town maintenance personnel told the examiners that they were not aware of this and could not explain why it was the case.

In interviews, administrators told examiners that during the period under review the district implemented a study of its special needs expenses and put programs into effect that reduced expenses. For example, the district instituted in-house special needs programs that allowed it to reduce special needs contracted services. The amount of money saved was not available to EQA examiners.

5. The district and community had appropriate written agreements and memoranda related to 603 CMR 10.0 that detailed the manner for calculating and the amounts to be used in calculating indirect charges levied on the school district budget by the community.

Rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

The district and community did not have a signed written agreement or memoranda related to 603 CMR 10.0 that detailed the manner for calculating the amounts to be used in calculating indirect charges levied on the school district budget by the community.

The examiners were given a planned memorandum developed during the period under review by the school department. This document was not signed by or accepted by either the school committee or the town officials, as they did not come to an agreement as to amounts or items to be levied upon the school district budget.

School district administrators stated that they had no control over the amounts of the chargebacks and that they did not receive information sufficient to verify that the charges were justified. The school district accepted the amounts developed by the town officials. In interviews with town officials, they told the EQA examiners that all figures for chargebacks to the school budget were the actual cost of services figures. The amounts levied onto the school district budget by the town, according to Schedule 19 of the End of Year Pupil and Financial Report, were \$8,672,264 in FY 2005, \$9,270,880 in FY 2006, and \$10,126,324 in FY 2007.

6. The combination of Chapter 70 Aid and local revenues, considering justified indirect charges, met or exceeded the Net School Spending (NSS) requirements of the education reform formula for the period under examination.

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

A review of state reports confirmed administrators' statements that the Saugus school district was above its net school spending (NSS) requirement for the period under review. In FY 2005, the NSS requirement was \$25,213,509 and the combined town and school district spending was \$30,087,098. In FY 2006, the NSS requirement was \$25,897,968 and the combined spending was \$31,052,011. Total figures for FY 2007 had not yet been posted to the DOE's website at the time of the review. The district received 37 percent of the town's revenue.

Although it met its NSS requirement, the school district had to eliminate 58 positions during the period under review. This resulted in the elimination of special subjects and curriculum support. Professional development money was also cut drastically and eliminated in some areas. A shortage of textbooks existed across the district, which meant that there were not books for all students in the class or for all students taking a specific course, which prevented the teacher from assigning textbook homework because students could not bring the books home. District

administrators and the town officials agreed that at least four if not five of the school buildings were in need of replacement or renovation.

7. Regular, timely, accurate, and complete financial reports were made to the school committee, appropriate administrators and staff, and the public. In addition, required local, state, and federal financial reports, and statements were accurate and filed on time.

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The EQA examiners were told that the school district business department presented to the school committee accurate financial reports on a monthly basis. This was confirmed by a review of school committee meeting minutes. Various school administrators stated that they received reports of expenditures and remaining unexpended funds. The special needs administrator and Title I administrator also received financial reports each month. The EQA examiners reviewed sample reports.

Reports on school finances were presented to the town's finance committee and to the town meeting as required, but at least yearly. A review of end of year reports and outside auditor reports confirmed the administrators' statements that required local, state, and federal financial reports and statements were accurate and were filed on time.

8. The district used efficient accounting technology that integrated the district-level financial information of each school and program, and the district used forecast mechanisms and control procedures to ensure that spending was within fiscal budget limits. District administrators were able to regularly and accurately track spending and other financial transactions.

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The district was using a computer system and DOS-based software dating from the 1980s for its accounting in conjunction with the town finance office. School administrators told the EQA examiners that payroll information, teacher attendance, purchase orders, and warrants were sent

to the town payroll clerk and accountant electronically. Town officials later confirmed this fact and added that, for verification, the same information was carried to them on paper sheets.

The business office sent monthly updates to all the schools to advise them of their up to date spending and remaining account balances. The business office and each of the schools also developed Excel spreadsheets as an aid in tracking expenditures.

9. The district had a system in place to pursue, acquire, monitor, and coordinate all local, state, federal, and private competitive grants and monitored special revenue funds, revolving accounts, and the fees related to them to ensure that they were managed efficiently and used effectively for the purposes intended.

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The school district administrators stated that no one person had the responsibility to pursue and coordinate all local, state, federal, and private competitive grants. A part-time Title I coordinator received and monitored this grant and was responsible for the end of year report and amendments. A pupil personnel/special needs coordinator was responsible for receiving, monitoring, and writing that end of year report. Interviewees told examiners that if any staff member wanted to pursue a grant, the district allowed it and encouraged it.

The district had a series of fees with revolving accounts set up for each of them. Fees varied from \$25 dollars for a fine arts mini course to \$350 for some sports, with a \$1,500 limit for families with multiple children in the schools. The business department monitored receipt of these fees.

10. The district had a system in place to ensure that state procurement laws were followed, that appropriate staff had MCPPO credentials, and that all assets and expenditures were monitored and tracked to insure efficient and maximum effective utilization. The district also competitively procured independent financial auditing services at least every five years, shared the results of these audits, and consistently implemented their recommendations. All procurement, tracking, monitoring systems, and external audits were accurate, current, and timely.

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

A review of the district's procurement policies revealed that they mirrored the state procurement laws. Administrators told the examiners that they strictly adhered to these policies.

The town manager was the procurement officer for the town and the school district and possessed the proper credentials. All expenditures required a purchase order signed by two central office administrators and one town official. Warrants were signed by the school committee and were paid after the town official reviewed invoices.

The auditing company during the period under review was the Melanson Heath & Company, hired by the town manager after a series of interviews with different companies. The results of the audits were shared and all audit recommendations were consistently implemented. All procurement, tracking, monitoring systems, and external audits were accurate, current, and timely.

11. The district had a formal preventative maintenance program to maximize and prolong the effective use of the district's capital and major facility assets, to ensure that educational and program facilities were clean, safe, well-lit, well-maintained, and conducive to promoting student learning and achievement.

Rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

The examiners did not find and were not presented with evidence of a formal maintenance program. School district maintenance was under the control of the town manager. The chief

maintenance person reported directly to the town manager, and 75 percent of that salary was charged back to the school district budget.

In FY 2005 maintenance chargebacks from the town to the school department budget were \$414,682. Town officials stated in interviews with the EQA team that preventive maintenance of heating systems, elevators, and copy machines was contracted out and performed every year.

Interviewees also told the EQA team that funds were insufficient to institute a preventive maintenance program, since all available funds were utilized to “keep things running.”

The Saugus High School, which was built in 1953 and renovated in 1972, was clean, well lit, and well maintained and had an environment that was conducive to promoting student learning and achievement. Examiners found that in some classes fire evacuation routes were not visible.

Belmonte Middle School, which was built in 1964, was clean and well maintained. The middle school had a major problem with water flowing into the school auditorium, and four large water pumps needed to run constantly in order to keep that area dry. Examiners found water stains running down walls from classroom windows in some areas of the school. Parents in interviews with the EQA examiners stated that they believed that mold and air quality were still problematic at this school.

The Veterans Elementary School, which was built in 2001 and renovated in 2006, was clean, well lit, well maintained, and conducive to promoting student learning and achievement. The Lynnhurst Elementary School, which was built in 1964 and renovated in 2006, was clean, well lit, well maintained, and conducive to student learning and achievement. The Waybright Elementary School, which was built in 1965, was clean, well lit, well maintained, and conducive to student learning and achievement. The Oaklandvale Elementary School, which was built in 1962, was well lit with the exception of its exterior lighting. It was clean, well maintained, and conducive to student learning and achievement.

12. The district had a long-term capital plan that clearly and accurately reflected the future capital development and improvement needs, including educational and program facilities of adequate size. The plan was reviewed and revised as needed with input from all appropriate stakeholders.

Rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

No long-term capital plan was found by or presented to the EQA examiners. The superintendent and the town manager told the EQA examiners that there was no capital plan. The superintendent led the development of a strategic plan with an *ad hoc* committee of volunteers from the school system during the first year of the period under review. This plan did not include appropriate stakeholders such as town officials or town citizens. The administrative team reviewed the plan during the first and third years.

The strategic plan developed at that time focused on building needs and monies required to replace or refurbish the school district buildings. This strategic plan had no benchmarks, the goals were not evaluated, it had little means of measuring progress, and it lacked assignment of assessment responsibilities or resources. School administrators and town officials told EQA examiners during separate interviews that there were no funds to implement a capital plan so no work had been done to develop one.

13. The schools were secure and had systems to ensure student safety.

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The EQA examiners visited all Saugus schools and examined them for safety and systems to ensure student safety. The district had developed a crisis plan, drafted by a committee that included representatives of the police and fire departments, a local hospital representative, and school personnel. This crisis plan covered fire, flood, intrusions into school buildings, and weather related emergencies.

The plan was distributed to all school staff members, the police and fire officials, and local hospital administrators. Teachers were instructed to keep the plan in a prominent place in their

classrooms, although few were observed by examiners, with the exception of the elementary level, as they did instructional inventories in all of the district schools. Administrators reviewed the plans with teachers during school meetings, but staff members at only half the schools explained them to substitute teachers and no one had explained them to school volunteers. In three of the district's schools, the administrators told the EQA examiners that they had gone over the plan with substitutes on an individual basis as they were assigned to their buildings. Building administrators stated that all schools held fire drills on a quarterly basis. The examiners were told that the high school held one simulated lockdown drill without students present. Interviewees stated that none of the other five schools in the district had held lockdown drills.

Three of the elementary schools were not locked when the examiners arrived. All of the schools had a remote entry system monitored by remote cameras. In three of the schools, school personnel opened doors after activation of an entry bell. At one elementary school, the back door was unlocked but the door was within view of the school's office. At all schools, the administration requested examiners to sign in and sign out. Not all school staff members wore identity badges.

Appendix A: Proficiency Index (PI)

The proficiency index is a metric used to measure and compare all schools and school districts regarding their performance on the MCAS tests. The proficiency index is a measure of the level of achievement a district, school, grade, or subgroup has made in relation to the ‘Proficient’ achievement level on the MCAS tests. There are three indices: the English Language Arts Proficiency Index (EPI), the Math Proficiency Index (MPI), and the Science and Technology/Engineering Index (SPI).

The proficiency index is calculated as follows:

Percentage of students scoring 200-208 on test	x 0 = A
Percentage of students scoring 210-218 on test	x 25 = B
Percentage of students scoring 220-228 on test	x 50 = C
Percentage of students scoring 230-238 on test	x 75 = D
Percentage of students scoring 240 or more on test	x 100 = E

The proficiency index equals the sum of $A + B + C + D + E = PI$

Example: The Anywhere High School had the following results on the 2007 MCAS tests in a given content area:

12 percent of all students scored 200-208; therefore,	12 percent x 0 =	0
15 percent of all students scored 210-218; therefore,	15 percent x 25 =	3.75
21 percent of all students scored 220-228; therefore,	21 percent x 50 =	10.5
34 percent of all students scored 230-238; therefore,	34 percent x 75 =	25.5
18 percent of all students scored 240 or more; therefore,	18 percent x 100 =	18.0

The proficiency index is calculated by adding: $0 + 3.75 + 10.5 + 25.5 + 18 = 57.75$. The proficiency index for the Anywhere High School would be 57.75.

The EPI is calculated using the ELA results for all eligible students taking the ELA exam. The MPI is calculated using the math results for all students taking the math exam. The SPI is calculated using the STE results for all students taking the STE exam.

<u>Proficiency Category</u>	<u>Proficiency Index</u>
Very High (VH)	90.0-100
High (H)	80.0-89.9
Moderate (M)	70.0-79.9
Low (L)	60.0-69.9
Very Low (VL)	40.0-59.9
Critically Low (CL)	0-39.9

Appendix B: Chapter 70 Trends, FY 1998 – FY 2007

	Foundation Enrollment	Pct Chg	Foundation Budget	Pct Chg	Required Local Contribution	Chapter 70 Aid	Pct Chg	Required Net School Spending (NSS)	Pct Chg	Actual Net School Spending	Pct Chg	Dollars Over/Under Requirement	Percent Over/Under
FY98	3,166	0.1	18,299,780	2.8	17,324,378	2,579,206	10.1	19,903,584	5.8	19,757,733	0.9	-145,851	-0.7
FY99	3,217	1.6	19,213,395	5.0	18,335,461	2,900,906	12.5	21,236,367	6.7	20,674,365	4.6	-562,002	-2.6
FY00	3,235	0.6	19,296,539	0.4	18,961,944	3,386,156	16.7	22,348,100	5.2	22,137,501	7.1	-210,599	-0.9
FY01	3,247	0.4	19,973,026	3.5	19,547,745	3,954,381	16.8	23,502,126	5.2	24,176,222	9.2	674,096	2.9
FY02	3,232	-0.5	20,764,286	4.0	20,238,033	4,228,143	6.9	24,466,176	4.1	25,429,191	5.2	963,015	3.9
FY03	3,241	0.3	21,175,332	2.0	20,977,976	4,228,143	0.0	25,206,119	3.0	26,255,789	3.3	1,049,670	4.2
FY04	3,277	1.1	21,635,703	2.2	21,339,160	3,382,514	-20.0	24,721,674	-1.9	26,951,287	2.6	2,229,613	9.0
FY05	3,228	-1.5	22,215,782	2.7	21,830,995	3,382,514	0.0	25,213,509	2.0	26,715,129		1,501,620	6.0
FY06	3,116	-3.5	22,412,040	0.9	22,359,654	3,538,314	4.6	25,897,968	2.7	27,460,603	-0.9	1,562,635	6.0
FY07	3,151	1.1	24,160,470	7.8	22,578,923	3,844,289	8.6	26,423,212	2.0	29,767,040	8.4	3,343,828	12.7

	<u>Dollars Per Foundation Enrollment</u>			<u>Percentage of Foundation</u>			<u>Chapter 70 Aid as Percent of Actual NSS</u>
	<u>Foundation Budget</u>	<u>Ch 70 Aid</u>	<u>Actual NSS</u>	<u>Ch 70</u>	<u>Required NSS</u>	<u>Actual NSS</u>	
FY98	5,780	815	6,241	14.1	108.8	108.0	13.1
FY99	5,972	902	6,427	15.1	110.5	107.6	14.0
FY00	5,965	1,047	6,843	17.5	115.8	114.7	15.3
FY01	6,151	1,218	7,446	19.8	117.7	121.0	16.4
FY02	6,425	1,308	7,868	20.4	117.8	122.5	16.6
FY03	6,534	1,305	8,101	20.0	119.0	124.0	16.1
FY04	6,602	1,032	8,224	15.6	114.3	124.6	12.6
FY05	6,882	1,048	8,276	15.2	113.5	120.3	12.7
FY06	7,193	1,136	8,813		115.6	122.5	12.9
FY07	7,668	1,220	9,447	15.9	109.4	123.2	12.9

Foundation enrollment is reported in October of the prior fiscal year (e.g., FY07 enrollment = Oct 1, 2005 headcount).

Foundation budget is the state's estimate of the minimum amount needed in each district to provide an adequate educational program.

Required Net School Spending is the annual minimum that must be spent on schools, including carryovers from prior years.

Net School Spending includes municipal indirect spending for schools but excludes capital expenditures and transportation.