

Renewal Inspection Report

ABBY KELLEY FOSTER
CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL
WORCESTER, MA



MAY 7-10, 2007

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ABOUT THE RENEWAL PROCESS AND SITE VISIT REPORT

Beginning in the spring of the third year of its charter (and ending August 1st following its fourth year), a school may apply for renewal of its charter for another five-year term. Following guidelines set forth in the *Application for Renewal of a Public School Charter*, an application for renewal should be an articulate, affirmative response, based on clear, credible evidence, to the questions that guide charter school accountability. It must also offer compelling answers to questions about the school's plans for the future. The application should be a sound, well-supported explanation of why the Board of Education should renew a school's charter.

Once this application has met a minimal review of its clarity and coherence, the Department of Education will appoint an evaluation team to conduct a 3-4 day visit of the school to corroborate and augment the school's application for renewal. This report is the result of one such evaluation.

The renewal site visit process and report provide a detailed and current portrait of a public charter school at the time of its application for renewal. While the renewal site visit report itself is a vital source of information within the renewal process, it is most effective when used in conjunction with the longitudinal school performance data available to the Department of Education. The combination of more general long-term data with the detailed information gathered at the renewal visit constitutes an evidence base rigorous enough to inform decisions about the future of public charter schools responsible for the education of students in the Commonwealth. In keeping with Massachusetts Board of Education's commitment to a public charter school accountability system that is based in robust and diverse performance data, the renewal site visit report does not make recommendations about whether or not a school should be renewed. It presents a detailed picture of the present state of the school as one of several key sources of information to be considered by the Board of Education in its renewal decision.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

The first section of this report describes the school's setting. Included in this section are information on the origin and history of the charter, student demographics, staffing and the school's educational program. This is also an opportunity to include any organizational history, such as changes in the Board and leadership or challenges the school has faced, and its response to those challenges.

The core of the report is the Renewal Inspection Team's findings. Findings are the team's assessment of the school's strengths and areas for improvement that, in their judgment, have the greatest bearing on the school's achievement of its defined goals. Findings are organized under each of the renewal questions: *Is the academic program a success? Is the school a viable organization? Is the school faithful to the terms of its charter?* The team's comments on the fourth question, *If the school is renewed, what are its plans for the next five years?*, reflect their judgment of the quality of the school's proposed new goals and their assessment of the school's capacity to fulfill those goals. Each finding is a bolded statement followed by explanatory paragraphs reporting the evidence supporting the team's judgments. Finally, **Appendix A** illustrates the team's schedule during the renewal visit.

RENEWAL INSPECTION TEAM

Tom Harvey, Ed. D., team leader, is a consultant for SchoolWorks and an adjunct faculty member at Endicott College. His career in Maine included positions in teaching, coaching, school counseling and school administration at levels spanning kindergarten through post-graduate.

Lincoln DeMoura, Ed. D., is an examiner for the Massachusetts Office of Educational Quality and Accountability. He served the public schools of Taunton, Mashpee and Norton in capacities that included teacher, principal, assistant superintendent and superintendent and has had extensive experience in curriculum development and school finance.

Susan Henry, a National Board Certified teacher, is a consultant for SchoolWorks and a doctoral student at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. She has taught grades 1-6, as well as graduate students at Lesley University, and helped found a district school and a Massachusetts charter school.

Pamela Herrup is a consultant for SchoolWorks. She was formerly employed at Boston College, the Massachusetts Department of Education, the New York City Public Schools and in New York City Government.

Joseph Nigro is an examiner for the Massachusetts Office of Educational Quality and Accountability and a program supervisor for The Education Cooperative in its teacher licensure program. He has had a long career in public education as a science teacher and science department chair.

Patty O’Leary is a consultant for SchoolWorks and an examiner for the Massachusetts Office of Educational Quality and Accountability. She has been a classroom teacher, reading specialist and an elementary school principal.

Zita Samuels is a professional grant writer and evaluator and a consultant for SchoolWorks. She was an administrator in the public schools of Somerville, Massachusetts for many years, supervising Title I, adult education and reading programs.

Fred Wetzel, Ph.D., is an examiner for the Massachusetts Office of Educational Quality and Accountability. He was Director of Academic Services in the New England Office of the College Board, Academic Dean and psychology teacher at St. Johnsbury Academy in Vermont and Executive Director of Upper Valley Teacher Institute.

SETTING

Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School (AKFCPS, or Abby Kelley Foster) opened in September 1998 in Worcester, Massachusetts and is now completing its ninth year of operation. The original charter was renewed in 2003. By adding one grade per year, the school has grown from its founding K-5 enrollment of 546 students and now serves 1,176 students in grades K-12. The school leases two former mill buildings. One houses elementary grades K-4 and the other accommodates middle and high school students in grades 5-12. The charter was amended to allow an increase in enrollment to 1,426 students, beginning in September 2007, and will make Abby Kelley Foster the largest charter school in Massachusetts. The enrollment increase involved changing the original school policy of accepting new students in grades K-5 only. Applications are now accepted at the middle and high school levels, as well.

The school draws the majority of its students (82%) from the city of Worcester. The remainder comes from 18 towns in the region with the largest number (41 students, or 3%) from Auburn. The student population is 45 percent White, 27 percent African American, 22 percent Hispanic, five percent Asian and one percent Native American. Of the total student population, 1.8 percent are English language learners, 9.5 percent are special education students and 45.5 percent have free and reduced lunch eligibility. The school is a Title I targeted assistance school.

Enrollment is determined by lottery, with preference given to siblings of current students and students residing in towns cited in the school's charter. The school's formal enrollment drive for the 2007-2008 closed in February 2007 and resulted in the receipt of 521 applications for 262 open seats. As of March 2007, the waitlist consisted of 837 prospective students seeking admission in all grades, except grade 9. Student turnover was 10 percent in 2002-03, 14 percent in 2003-04, 11 percent in 2004-05 and 12 percent in 2005-06. According to the school, turnover results from families who relocate, students with discipline issues and the demands of the academic program.

Abby Kelley Foster has 78 teachers, of whom 73.1 percent are licensed in their teaching assignments. Of the school's 78 teachers in core academic areas, 96.1 percent have been identified as highly qualified. There are six Title I teachers, four special education teachers and 21 instructional assistants. Nearly half the school's teachers have been at the school for two years or less.

Since the last charter renewal, there have been several changes in the school's leadership. During the 2005-06 school year, the Board of Trustees reorganized the leadership to comprise a superintendent of schools and three principals (elementary, middle and high). The Administrative Council includes these individuals, along with the business manager and the director of governmental relations. The Board consists of seven members, including three founders.

The educational program at Abby Kelley Foster is focused on providing students with a classical liberal arts education that includes art, music and foreign languages, including French and Latin. In addition, there is a strong character education component throughout the grades. The school has a newly-developed written curriculum across all grades and subjects that is aligned with the standards in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Students attend school 190 days each year, ten days above state requirements.

The school is fiscally stable and reports net assets of nearly \$8 million. Total revenues substantially exceed total expenditures annually. Abby Kelley Foster received an unqualified independent audit report for the prior fiscal year.

FINDINGS

This report is based on the Renewal Inspection Team's (the team's) three-and-a-half-day visit at Abby Kelly Foster. During that time, the team conducted 41 classroom observations: 18 in the elementary school; 15 in the middle school; and, 8 in the high school. The team also conducted focus group interviews with 6 members of the Board of Trustees, 8 members of the Administrative Council, 16 teachers, 11 parents (representing students across the grades), 3 groups of students (elementary, middle and high school, totaling 25 students), 3 principals, 3 counselors/psychologists and 13 special education staff members. Members of the team also conducted individual interviews with the superintendent, business manager, director of government relations, coordinator of student support, director of special education, the middle school principal, one master teacher, the school and community liaison and the Title I director. In addition, several brief unscheduled interviews were held with a variety of individuals to pursue specific information. As the schedule permitted, a number of short drop-in visits to classrooms were also made.

The Renewal Inspection Team also examined a variety of documents. These included financial statements, test results (MCAS and SAT10), the school's 2005-2006 Annual Report, Accountability Plan and Renewal Application, the reports of the previous site visits, demographic and enrollment data and a variety of other school documents (e.g., student work, professional development schedules, curriculum guides, minutes of the Board, parent satisfaction survey). The team also analyzed teacher qualifications and experience, and considered the school's plans for the future, including the new Abby Kelley Foster Accountability Plan.

RENEWAL QUESTION 1: IS THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM A SUCCESS?

- 1. Students at Abby Kelley Foster demonstrated mixed performance on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) and there are fluctuations in students' performance on the English language arts and mathematics MCAS tests. Tenth graders demonstrated the strongest performance on both the English language arts and mathematics tests.**

The performance of third graders at Abby Kelley Foster on the reading MCAS test has been inconsistent. In 2003, 42 percent achieved proficiency on the test, while 57 and 52 percent, respectively, did so in 2004 and 2005. In 2006, the percentage of students achieving proficiency or better decreased to 46 percent.

Between 2003 and 2005, no student performed in the advanced category on the test. However, 13 percent did so in 2006. Despite this, there was an overall decrease in the percentage of third graders demonstrating proficiency in this year.

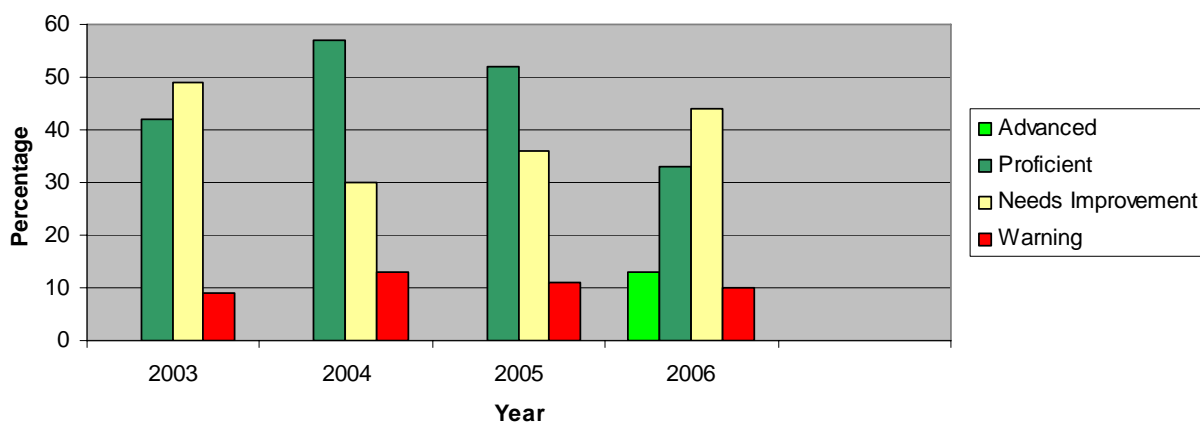
Except for 2003, third graders at Abby Kelley Foster outperformed their peers in Worcester Public Schools. The students, however, were consistently outperformed by their peers statewide.

Table 1: Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School MCAS 2003-2006
Percentage of Students in each MCAS Performance Category
Grade 3 – Reading

		N	%A	%P	%NI	%W
2003	AKFCPS	98	NA	42	49	9
	Worcester	1,932	NA	48	42	10
	State		NA	63	30	7
2004	AKFCPS	92	NA	57	30	13
	Worcester	1,859	NA	39	48	13
	State			63	30	7
2005	AKFCPS	141	NA	52	36	11
	Worcester	1,727	NA	39	46	15
	State		NA	62	31	7
2006	AKFCPS	145	13	33	44	10
	Worcester	1,727	8	26	44	22
	State		18	40	34	8

N = number of students tested; A = Advanced; P = Proficient; NI = Needs Improvement; W = Warning

Chart 1: Abbey Kelley Foster Charter Public School MCAS 2003-2006
Percentage of Student in each MCAS Performance Category
Grade 3—Reading



In 2006, third graders at Abby Kelley Foster did not perform well on the baseline mathematics MCAS test. Thirty-two percent scored in the proficient and advanced categories. Despite their low performance, students at Abby Kelley Foster performed slightly better than their peers in Worcester Public Schools. Third graders, statewide, outperformed students at Abby Kelley Foster, with 52 percent scoring proficient and advanced.

Table 2: Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School MCAS 2003-2006
Percentage of Students in each MCAS Performance Category
Grade 3 – Mathematics

		N	%A	%P	%NI	%W
2006	AKFCPS	144	1	31	42	26
	Worcester	1,731	2	28	35	35
	State		4	48	32	16

N = number of students tested; A = Advanced; P = Proficient; NI = Needs Improvement; W = Warning

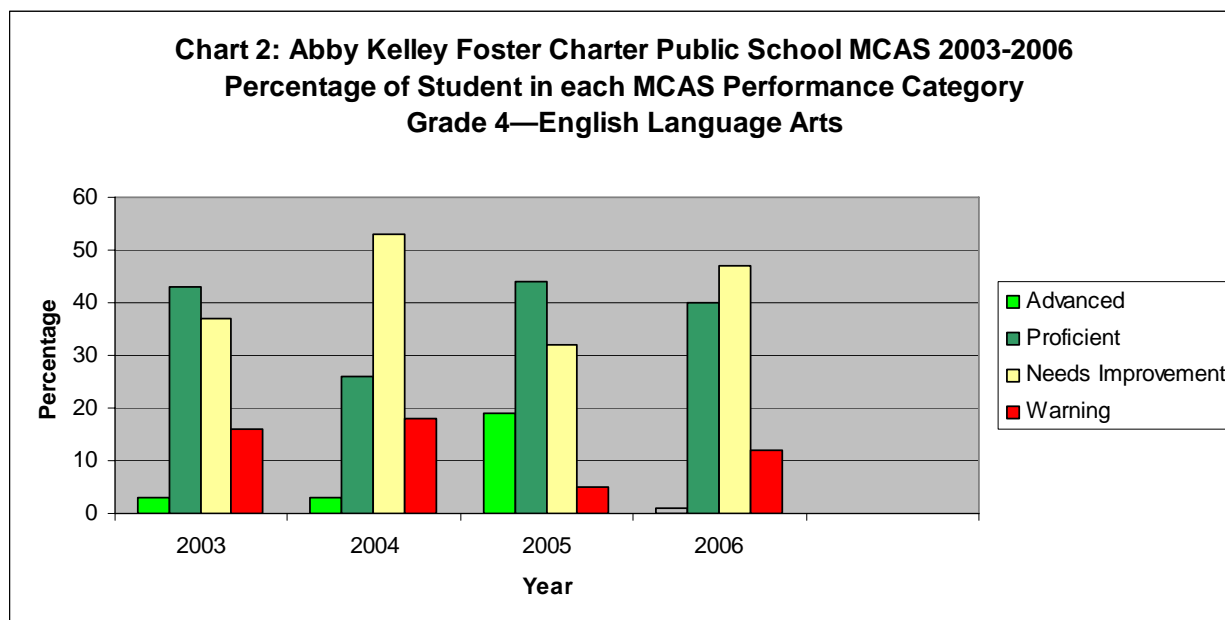
Fourth graders at Abby Kelley Foster did not demonstrate any steady improvement on the English language arts MCAS test. In fact, their performance has been inconsistent, with 46 percent scoring advanced and proficient in 2003, compared to 29 percent in 2004, 63 percent in 2005 and 41 percent in 2006.

Except for 2004, fourth graders at Abby Kelley Foster outperformed their peers in the Worcester Public Schools. However, statewide, fourth graders significantly outperformed students at Abby Kelley Foster every year except for 2005, when 63 percent of fourth graders at Abby Kelley Foster scored advanced and proficient, compared to 50 percent of their peers statewide.

Table 3: Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School MCAS 2003-2006
Percentage of Students in each MCAS Performance Category
Grade 4 – English Language Arts

		N	%A	%P	%NI	%W
2003	AKFCPS	97	3	43	37	16
	Worcester	1,970	5	38	42	14
	State		10	45	34	10
2004	AKFCPS	118	3	26	53	18
	Worcester	1,848	4	29	48	20
	State		11	45	35	9
2005	AKFCPS	94	19	44	32	5
	Worcester	1,757	3	24	52	21
	State		10	40	40	10
2006	AKFCPS	137	1	40	47	12
	Worcester	1,678	2	25	48	24
	State		8	42	39	12

N = number of students tested; A = Advanced; P = Proficient; NI = Needs Improvement; W = Warning



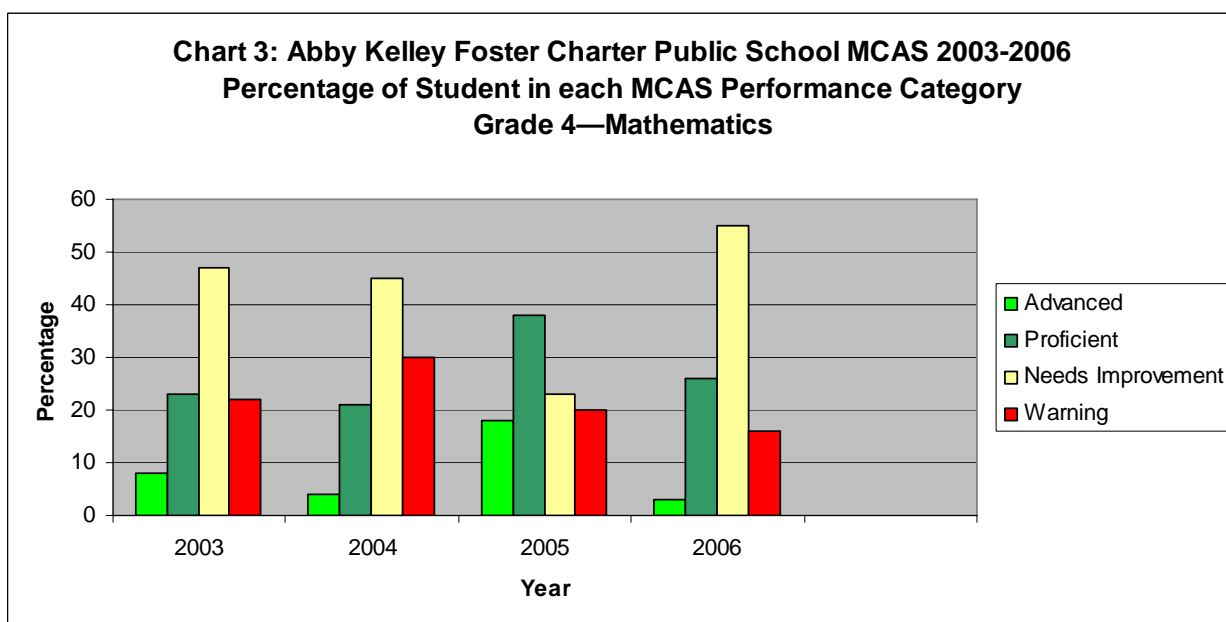
Fourth graders at Abby Kelley Foster demonstrated low performance on the mathematics MCAS test for all years except for 2005, when 56 percent scored advanced and proficient. Thirty-one percent, 25 percent, and 29 percent demonstrated proficiency or better on the test.

Again, the fourth graders outperformed their peers in Worcester Public Schools but were outperformed by their peers statewide, except in 2005.

Table 4: Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School MCAS 2003-2006
Percentage of Students in each MCAS Performance Category
Grade 4 – Mathematics

		N	%A	%P	%NI	%W
2003	AKFCPS	97	8	23	47	22
	Worcester	2,002	5	21	51	22
	State		12	28	43	16
2004	AKFCPS	118	4	21	45	30
	Worcester	1,855	4	17	49	30
	State		14	28	44	14
2005	AKFCPS	94	18	38	23	20
	Worcester	1,761	6	17	46	31
	State		14	27	44	15
2006	AKFCPS	137	3	26	55	16
	Worcester	1,681	6	17	46	31
	State		15	25	45	15

N = number of students tested; A = Advanced; P = Proficient; NI = Needs Improvement; W = Warning



The performance of fifth graders on the English language arts MCAS test is stronger than their performance on the mathematics MCAS test. Fifty percent scored advanced and proficient for ELA, while 24 percent did so for mathematics.

The students were outperformed by their peers statewide in both mathematics and English language arts. They performed better, however, on the ELA test than their peers in Worcester Public Schools (50 percent, compared to 36 percent) but failed to do so in mathematics – 24 percent and 29 percent for Abby Kelley Foster and Worcester Public School, respectively.

**Table 5: Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School MCAS 2006
Percentage of Students in each MCAS Performance Category
Grade 5 – English Language Arts**

		N	%A	%P	%NI	%W
2006	AKFCPS	127	4	46	41	9
	Worcester	1,669	5	31	44	20
	State		15	44	31	9

N = number of students tested; A = Advanced; P = Proficient; NI = Needs Improvement; W = Warning

**Table 6: Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School MCAS 2006
Percentage of Students in each MCAS Performance Category
Grade 5– Mathematics**

		N	%A	%P	%NI	%W
2006	AKFCPS	127	7	17	39	38
	Worcester	1,673	9	20	29	42
	State		17	26	34	23

N = number of students tested; A = Advanced; P = Proficient; NI = Needs Improvement; W = Warning

The performance of sixth graders on the English language arts MCAS is similar to their peers in the Worcester Public Schools. Statewide, sixth graders outperformed students at Abby Kelley Foster on the ELA MCAS test.

Students' performance on the mathematics MCAS is similar to their performance on the baseline ELA MCAS test, in that there is very little difference between the performance of sixth graders at Abby Kelley Foster and their peers in Worcester Public Schools. Statewide, sixth graders, consistently outperformed the students at Abby Kelley Foster and Worcester Public Schools.

**Table 7: Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School MCAS 2006
Percentage of Students in each MCAS Performance Category
Grade 6– English Language Arts**

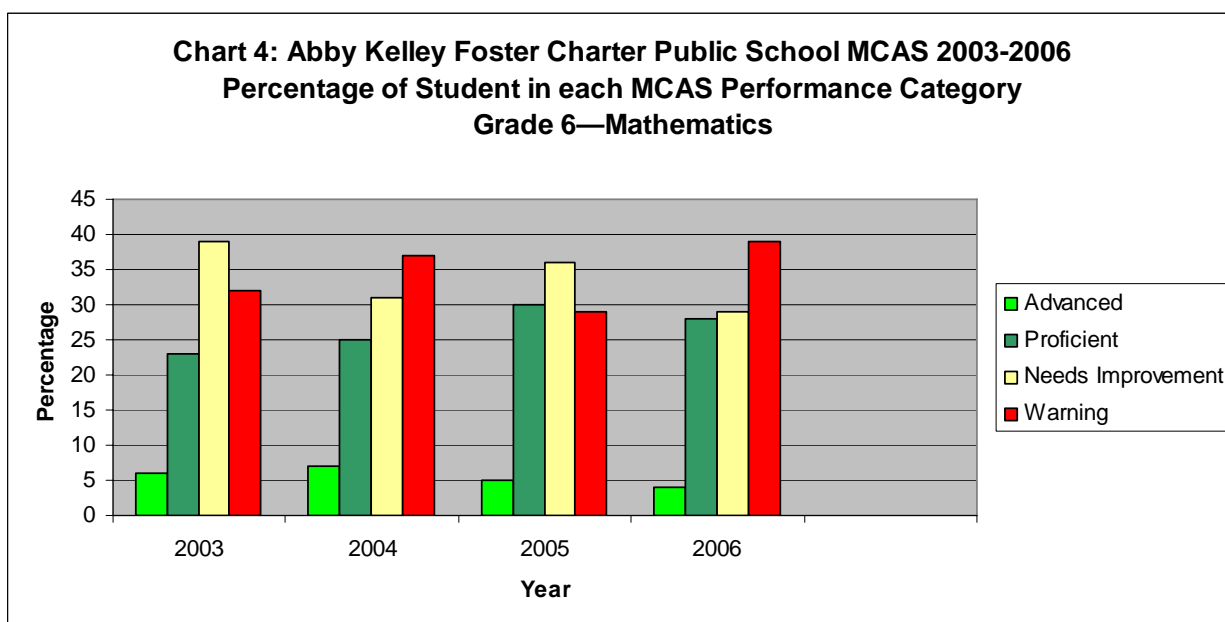
		N	%A	%P	%NI	%W
2006	AKFCPS	113	3	39	41	18
	Worcester	1,726	4	39	40	17
	State		10	54	28	8

N = number of students tested; A = Advanced; P = Proficient; NI = Needs Improvement; W = Warning

**Table 8: Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School MCAS 2003-2006
Percentage of Students in each MCAS Performance Category
Grade 6 – Mathematics**

		N	%A	%P	%NI	%W
2003	AKFCPS	69	6	23	39	32
	Worcester	2,023	9	21	35	35
	State		16	26	32	26
2004	AKFCPS	71	7	25	31	37
	Worcester	1,944	9	19	31	41
	State		17	25	32	25
2005	AKFCPS	80	5	30	36	29
	Worcester	1,904	11	26	30	34
	State		17	29	30	23
2006	AKFCPS	114	4	28	29	39
	Worcester	1,728	9	22	30	39
	State		17	29	29	25

N = number of students tested; A = Advanced; P = Proficient; NI = Needs Improvement; W = Warning

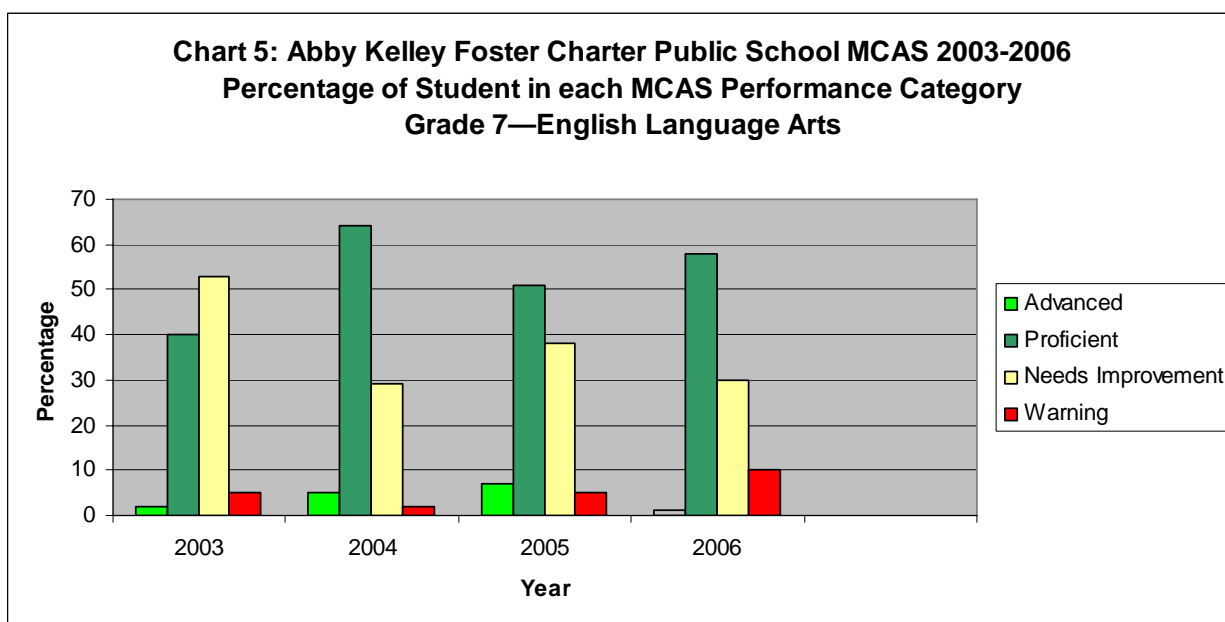


Seventh graders consistently performed strongly on the ELA MCAS test for three of the four years of the current charter term. In 2003, 42 percent of students scored advanced and proficient, the lowest performance for seventh graders at Abby Kelley Foster. In 2004, there was a significant increase (27 percentage points) in student performance on the ELA test, with 69 percent scoring in the top two categories of the MCAS. Even though there was an 11 percent point decrease in student performance in 2005, seventh graders at Abby Kelley Foster still did well on the test, with 58 percent scoring advanced and proficient. Abby Kelley Foster maintained this performance in 2006, with 59 percent of students performing in the top two categories.

Table 9: Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School MCAS 2003-2006
Percentage of Students in each MCAS Performance Category
Grade 7 – English Language Arts

		N	%A	%P	%NI	%W
2003	AKFCPS	55	2	40	53	5
	Worcester	1,982	2	35	44	19
	State		8	57	28	7
2004	AKFCPS	56	5	64	29	2
	Worcester	1,846	3	36	40	21
	State		9	59	25	7
2005	AKFCPS	61	7	51	38	5
	Worcester	1,799	3	36	42	19
	State		10	56	27	7
2006	AKFCPS	67	1	58	30	10
	Worcester	1,741	2	36	38	23
	State		10	55	26	9

N = number of students tested; A = Advanced; P = Proficient; NI = Needs Improvement; W = Warning



The performance of seventh graders on the mathematics MCAS test is not very strong. In 2006, 30 percent scored advanced and proficient. Like their peers in the lower grades, seventh graders outperformed students in Worcester Public Schools. They did not, however, perform as well as seventh graders statewide on the test.

Table 10: Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School MCAS 2006
Percentage of Students in each MCAS Performance Category
Grade 7– Mathematics

		N	%A	%P	%NI	%W
2006	AKFCPS	68	9	21	26	44
	Worcester	1,741	5	15	29	50
	State		12	28	33	28

N = number of students tested; A = Advanced; P = Proficient; NI = Needs Improvement; W = Warning

Eighth graders at Abby Kelley Foster demonstrated strong performance on the ELA MCAS test, with 68 percent of students scoring in the advanced and proficient categories. Students did not perform well, however, on the mathematics MCAS test for all four years of the charter term. Students' performance ranged from 15 percent for advanced and proficient (2004) to 39 percent (2003). Despite their low performance on the mathematics MCAS, students at Abby Kelley Foster outperformed their peers in Worcester Public Schools.

Table 11: Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School MCAS 2006
Percentage of Students in each MCAS Performance Category
Grade 8– English Language Arts

		N	%A	%P	%NI	%W
2006	AKFCPS	54	11	57	24	7
	Worcester	1,763	4	43	34	19
	State		12	62	19	7

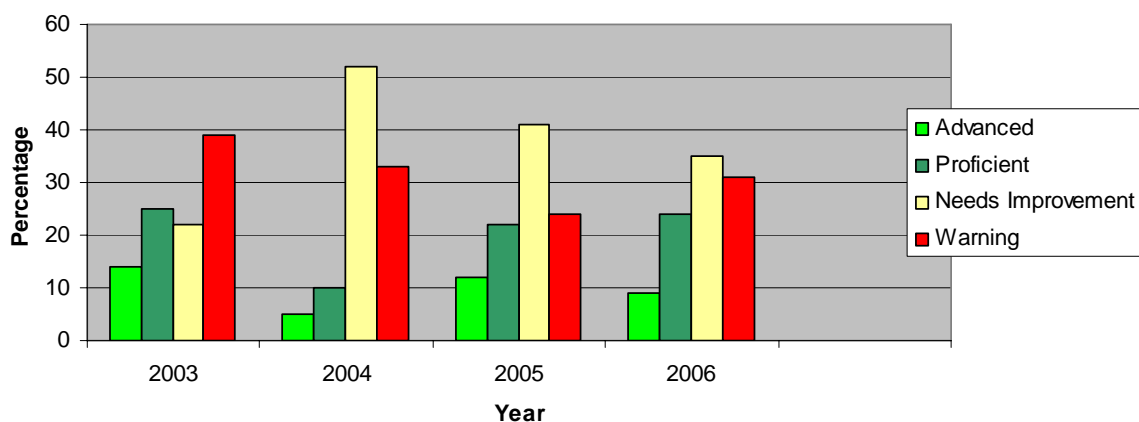
N = number of students tested; A = Advanced; P = Proficient; NI = Needs Improvement; W = Warning

Table 12: Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School MCAS 2003-2006
Percentage of Students in each MCAS Performance Category
Grade 8– Mathematics

		N	%A	%P	%NI	%W
2003	AKFCPS	59	14	25	22	39
	Worcester	1,917	3	12	26	60
	State		12	25	30	33
2004	AKFCPS	42	5	10	52	33
	Worcester	1,964	3	11	29	57
	State		13	26	32	29
2005	AKFCPS	49	12	22	41	24
	Worcester	1,845	5	14	26	56
	State		13	26	30	31
2006	AKFCPS	54	9	24	35	31
	Worcester	1,774	5	14	25	56
	State		12	28	31	29

N = number of students tested; A = Advanced; P = Proficient; NI = Needs Improvement; W = Warning

Chart 6: Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School MCAS 2003-2006
Percentage of Student in each MCAS Performance Category
Grade 8: Mathematics



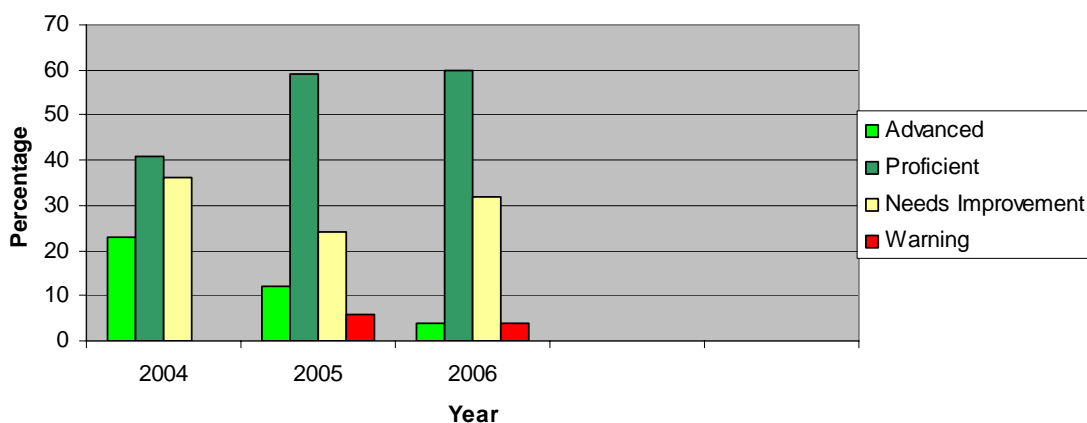
Tenth graders at Abby Kelley Foster consistently demonstrated strong performance on the ELA MCAS test. The percent of students scoring advanced and proficient was: 64 percent in 2004, 71 percent in 2005 and 64 percent in 2006. The students consistently outperformed tenth graders in Worcester Public Schools. They also outperformed their peers statewide in 2004 and 2005.

Table 13: Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School MCAS 2004-2006
Percentage of Students in each MCAS Performance Category
Grade 10 – English Language Arts

		N	%A	%P	%NI	%W
2004	AKFCPS	22	23	41	36	0
	Worcester	1,613	7	30	39	24
	State		19	43	27	11
2005	AKFCPS	17	12	59	24	6
	Worcester	1,620	10	32	37	20
	State		23	42	25	10
2006	AKFCPS	25	4	60	32	4
	Worcester	1,727	6	41	39	14
	State		16	53	24	7

N = number of students tested; A = Advanced; P = Proficient; NI = Needs Improvement; W = Warning

Chart 7: Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School MCAS 2004-2006
Percentage of Student in each MCAS Performance Category
Grade 10: English Language Arts



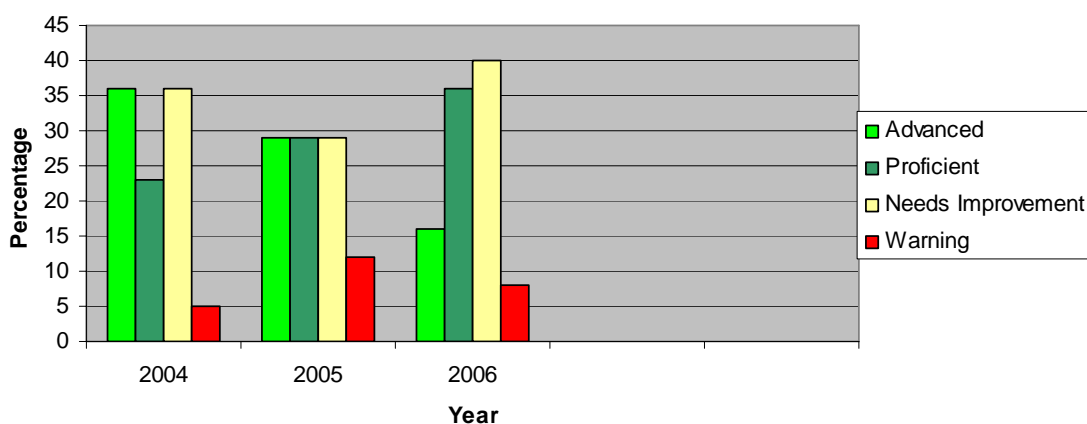
The performance of tenth graders on the mathematics MCAS is similar to their performance on the ELA test, in that they consistently performed well on the test. The students also outperformed their peers in Worcester Public Schools. Except for 2004, tenth graders statewide outperformed tenth graders at Abby Kelley Foster.

Table 14: Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School MCAS 2004-2006
Percentage of Students in each MCAS Performance Category
Grade 10 – Mathematics

		N	%A	%P	%NI	%W
2004	AKFCPS	22	36	23	36	5
	Worcester	1,627	11	19	34	36
	State		29	28	28	15
2005	AKFCPS	17	29	29	29	12
	Worcester	1,623	14	21	33	32
	State		35	27	24	15
2006	AKFCPS	25	16	36	40	8
	Worcester	1,695	17	24	31	27
	State		40	27	21	12

N = number of students tested; A = Advanced; P = Proficient; NI = Needs Improvement; W = Warning

Chart 8: Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School MCAS 2004-2006
Percentage of Student in each MCAS Performance Category
Grade 10--Mathematics



2. Abby Kelley Foster made Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) for the 2006 Cycle IV period.

Abby Kelley Foster made AYP for English language arts every year of its second charter. It made AYP for English language arts by meeting improvement and competency determination (CD) targets for students in the aggregate and for statistically significant subgroups.

The 2006 Cycle IV report indicated that Abby Kelley Foster has a composite performance index (CPI) of 80.4 for students in the aggregate. The school received a Cycle IV determination of “No Status,” given that the school has made AYP for four consecutive years.

Similar to its performance in ELA, Abby Kelley Foster made AYP for mathematics every year of its second charter. Again, it made AYP for mathematics by meeting both its and improvement and competency determination targets for students in the aggregate and for statistically significant subgroups. The CPI for students in the aggregate for Cycle IV is 67.3. Abby Kelley Foster received a determination of “No Status” for mathematics.

The school has a competency determination (CD) of 100 because all tenth graders have passed both the mathematics and ELA sections of the grade 10 MCAS exams.

**Table 15: Adequate Yearly Progress Report
Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School
2006 AYP Cycle IV Report**

English Language Arts												
Student Group	2006				Cycle IV (2005 & 2006) Data					2006		
	Participation				Performance			Improvement		CD Attainment		
	Enrolled	Assessed	%	Met Target	N	CPI	Met Target	CPI Change	Met Target	%	Met Target	AYP 2006
Aggregate	672	668	99	Yes	687	80.4	No	3.6	Yes	100	Yes	Yes
Lim. English Proficiency	28	28	-	-	33	59.8	-	-	-	-	-	-
Special Ed.	77	76	-	-	69	59.8	-	-	-	100	-	-
Low Income	313	312	100	Yes	335	76.9	No	8.3	Yes	100	N<6	Yes
Afr. Am/Black	161	160	99	Yes	156	74.5	No	3.5	Yes	100	N<6	Yes
Asian or Pacific Isl.	40	40	-	-	38	89.5	-	-	-	100	-	-
Hispanic	120	120	100	Yes	121	73.8	No	7.7	Yes	100	N<6	Yes
Nat. American	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
White	349	346	99	Yes	370	84.1	Yes	4.6	Yes	100	Yes	Yes

**Table 16: Adequate Yearly Progress Report
Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School
2006 AYP Cycle IV Report**

Mathematics												
Student Group	2006				Cycle IV (2005 & 2006) Data					2006		
	Participation				Performance			Improvement		CD Attainment		
	Enrolled	Assessed	%	Met Target	N	CPI	Met Target	CPI Change	Met Target	%	Met Target	AYP 2006
Aggregate	670	669	100	Yes	571	67.3	No	5.4	Yes	100	Yes	Yes
Lim. English Proficiency	28	28	-	-	19	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Special Ed.	77	76	-	-	65	49.2	-	-	-	100	-	-
Low Income	312	311	100	Yes	246	59.7	No	9.3	Yes	100	N<6	Yes
Afr. Am/Black	160	160	100	Yes	122	57.6	No	0.4	No	100	N<6	No
Asian or Pacific Isl.	40	40	-	-	29	89.7	-	-	-	100	-	-
Hispanic	119	118	99	Yes	94	54.5	No	12.2	Yes	100	N<6	Yes
Nat. American	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
White	349	349	100	Yes	325	72.5	Yes	7.6	Yes	100	Yes	Yes

**Table 17: Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School
Overview of AYP Performance (2003-2006)**

		2003	2004	2005	2006	Status
ELA	Aggregate	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No Status
	Subgroups	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Math	Aggregate	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No Status
	Subgroups	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	

3. For the most part, students at Abby Kelley Foster perform at or above the national norm (50 PR) on both the SAT-9 and SAT 10 assessments.

A review of the SAT-9 and SAT-10 results indicate that students at Abby Kelley Foster, with only a few exceptions, are performing at or above the norm. In 2004, for example, the class of 2011 scored in the 59th percentile for reading and 58th percentile for mathematics on the SAT-9. On the SAT-10, the class of 2011 scored in the 65th percentile for reading and 69th percentile for mathematics. In both instances, the students performed significantly above the norm.

In 2004, the class of 2012 performed below the national norm in both reading and mathematics on the SAT-9. The students, however, demonstrated a stronger performance on the SAT-10 in 2006: at the 50th percentile in reading and 60th percentile for mathematics.

There was significant difference in the performance of students in the class of 2016 on the SAT-9 and SAT-10. In 2004, the students performed significantly above the norm on the SAT-9 but, in 2006, significantly below the norm on the SAT-10.

(It is important to note that the team cannot do a comparative analysis of the SAT-9 and SAT-10 results because both tests are based on different norm groups; thereby, making it impossible for the team to make a valid comparison.)

**Table 18: Fall 2004 Reading & Mathematics
SAT-9 Results (Percentile Rank)**

Class (grade in spring '07)	Reading	Mathematics
2008 (grade 11)	52	55
2009 (grade 10)	55	54
2010 (grade 9)	52	47
2011 (grade 8)	59	58
2012 (grade 7)	44	46
2013 (grade 6)	59	66
2014 (grade 5)	52	49
2015 (grade 4)	55	46
2016 (grade 3)	64	56
2017 (grade 2)	43	52
MEAN	53.5	52.9

**Table 19: Fall 2006 Reading & Mathematics
SAT-10 Results (Percentile Rank)**

Class (grade in spring '07)	Reading	Mathematics
2008 (grade 11)	71	64
2009 (grade 10)	78	62
2010 (grade 9)	70	64
2011 (grade 8)	65	69
2012 (grade 7)	50	60
2013 (grade 6)	57	64
2014 (grade 5)	58	66
2015 (grade 4)	64	69
2016 (grade 3)	42	42
2017 (grade 2)	58	49
MEAN	61.3	60.9

4. The school has a curriculum aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks across all grades and subjects.

The school's curriculum documents were prepared during the current academic year. The process entailed a compilation of the written and unwritten curriculum that had been in place at the school for the past several years and was motivated by a desire to gain instructional consistency within and across grades and subjects. Under the leadership of the superintendent, the principals and master teachers prepared a template that was used throughout the school. Teachers in grades kindergarten through 12 helped to compile the curriculum, which is contained in a series of colorful binders. K-12 content areas include ELA, mathematics, social studies, science, physical education, art, music, and Latin (which begins in grade 7 and was tied to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for foreign languages). Grades K-4 have all the content areas in binders for each grade and the middle school and high school have separate binders in some content areas, such as middle school ELA and high school ELA. There is also a binder for overall scope and sequence for each subject.

The recently completed standardized curriculum documents for all grades and subjects consist of a series of units. Each unit includes the unit name, the number of weeks for completion, the materials to be used, the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks addressed, student objectives, and a list of assessments (e.g., assignments, weekly tests, class participation and daily work). The curriculum is aligned horizontally (within grades) and vertically (across grades). Benchmark assessments were created to monitor students' acquisition of the skills, concepts and knowledge embedded with the curriculum. Mastery levels for assessments were generally specified at 75 percent.

In interviews, teachers said that they are using the new curricular documents and appreciate having standardized guides to help create their lesson plans and prepare students for what is required in the next grade. One teacher commented, "I now truly know my curriculum." The superintendent told the team that the curriculum is still considered a pilot document and will be revised after being in use for a year. The team discovered that Performance Objective 2 under the academic success section in the 2007-08 Accountability Plan focuses on ongoing evaluation

of the school's curriculum. The performance measures under this objective specify the school's intent to review "one core subject annually on a five year rotating schedule," and to have the curriculum committee "hold a minimum of five meetings during the academic year to review curriculum materials, professional development opportunities and student assessments."

The Renewal Inspection Team noted that implementation of the new curriculum was somewhat uneven, as evidenced by the discovery that learning objectives were prominent and well-marked in about half of elementary classes observed (with 60 percent in the middle school and 80 percent in the high school) and learning objectives were explained or stated in 50 percent of elementary classes observed (with 46 percent in the middle school and 85 percent in the high school).

The team examined binders with student work samples. Most of these contained prepared worksheets that generally required only short answer or multiple-choice responses. Some, however, did call for open-ended responses that required several sentences of writing. There were writing samples (e.g., essays describing the virtues of the month and the creation of ten Abby Kelley Foster moral laws) in support of the character education program. There were some extended projects and poetry writing, such as limericks and writing to prompts. One such prompt was *It's a Wonderful World . . . True or False* and students had to present their reasons for their choices. Some assignments had rubrics.

Other features of the program of study at Abby Kelley Foster include Advanced Placement (AP) courses in the high school and interventions for students (such as Title I and services for special education students and English language learners) where needed. The school has created a gifted and talented summer program for high achieving students and has made arrangements for challenging advanced high school students through arrangements with Quinsigamond Community College and the Virtual High School.

In terms of instructional materials, the elementary and middle schools use Saxon Math and Glencoe for mathematics and Open Court for reading. Prior to last year, Reading Mastery was used in K-2 and Open Court was used in the upper grades. After visiting a number of high achieving schools and investigating several programs, the school's reading committee recommended that Open Court be used in grades K-6 to maintain continuity throughout the grades.

5. Classroom instruction was largely whole class and teacher-directed.

Conventional whole class teacher-directed instructional strategies were observed in most of the 41 classrooms observed. Cooperative learning in groups was observed in one percent of elementary classes, 31 percent of middle school classes and 38 percent of high school classes. Accommodations for students at different levels and for diverse learners were observed in 18 percent of elementary classes, 20 percent of middle school classes and 25 percent of high school classes. Hands-on activities were seen in 71 percent of elementary classes, 36 percent of middle school classes. Independent practice was noted in more than 50 percent of classes observed across the school, which (in some instances) was provided for students at varying levels of achievement. High school students did report that the work is challenging and that they have small classes and much teacher support. Elementary and middle school students thought that the work was "just right."

Teachers' lesson plans showed a standardized template for lesson design that included space for accommodations for individual students' needs, although, as indicated above, these accommodations were not consistently observed. Lesson plans included objectives aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. However, these were not generally communicated to students (see above). Teachers are required to submit lesson plans weekly. They are reviewed by the principals for content and for format by the master teachers. Lesson plans are also reviewed by team leaders and department heads.

There were ample materials in all classrooms and teachers consistently reported that they had sufficient resources. Limited open-ended questioning was observed, since most teachers' questions called for simple responses. The majority of teachers observed checked for student knowledge and comprehension. There was limited informal assessment seen during the visit. Relationships between students and teachers were positive and there was evidence of good classroom rapport and strong classroom management. Student engagement (the degree to which students were participating and actively attending) appeared high in the elementary school, mixed in the middle school and low in the high school.

6. Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School uses a variety of assessments to address individual student needs. However, the data are not consistently used to inform classroom instruction.

One of the school's recent initiatives is the All School Review (ASR), which is a comprehensive student appraisal system that requires all homeroom teachers to investigate and record (on an index card) the educational, social and emotional strengths and needs of each of their students, and then present their findings on each student to a team of teachers, support staff and administrators – the All School Review Team (ASRT). During the process, the ASRT makes judgments on which students are in need of services and/or support and assign each case to a specific school program or staff member for follow-up. A database is used to document the team's decisions and also to monitor the progress of each student intervention. The initial ASR meetings are held at the beginning of the school year (October) and, in January, the ASRT reconvenes to conduct follow-up studies on each of the students identified for services. The administration, faculty and staff at Abby Kelley Foster embrace the ASR process and value it as a system to help meet the needs of all students.

The school's formal assessments include MCAS in grades required, the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT 10) in grades K-12 and Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) in K-6. There are also informal assessments in classrooms (e.g., weekly tests and unit tests in various subject areas).

The DIBELS test has been used since 2004 as the basis of some of the school's remediation efforts. This year, all students in grades K-6 were assessed on the DIBELS for reading. The DIBELS is a set of individualized measures of early literacy development, such as phonological awareness, alphabetic principle and fluency with connected text. As a result of these measures – along with the Open Court assessments – students are placed in homogeneous reading groups for instruction.

The results of the SAT 10 are generally used to track student progress from year to year and identify students who may need additional support in reading and mathematics. The state assessment, MCAS, provides another measure of student attainment. Because achievement on mathematics assessments was lower than expected, the middle school schedule was changed to accommodate an extra mathematics period for students three times each week.

The school also uses test scores to determine if students need academic interventions such as Title I, after-school or Saturday support. Test scores are also used for proficiency grouping for reading and mathematics in classrooms and to identify students for the various summer programs – one of which is for gifted and talented youth. However, item analysis is not systemically used to target specific subgroups or student deficits.

The team found evidence that several teachers have used data. The Latin teacher, for example, used the national Latin exam to help develop the Latin curriculum. A ninth grade mathematics teacher developed a competency test from a mathematics report. Another mathematics teacher uses Test Whiz software to see how he might adjust the seventh grade curriculum. Finally, several ELA teachers examine writing samples to determine gaps in instruction.

Although fourth grade teachers reported that they used test data to guide instruction, the third grade teachers interviewed did not. In focus groups of teachers across grade levels, they were not able to consistently communicate awareness and understanding of the use of data from the Stanford or MCAS tests and in use of Test Whiz software. One mentioned that “We don’t dig deeply” and another stated that there was a “lack of analysis.” Some teachers do use Test Whiz software for item analysis but it is not systemic and there is no consistency or mandate that assessment data be used to drive instruction more precisely than following the curriculum only.

The superintendent indicated that data are used globally to identify low-achieving students.

The Renewal Team concluded that, although students are assessed and there is much data, there does not appear to be systematic disaggregation and analysis of data (including item analysis and interpretation) used to target specific student weaknesses in achievement, or drive the planning and development of instruction. Longitudinal cohort analysis does not appear to have been accomplished (with the exception of 4th grade MCAS) nor analysis by subgroups (special education, low-income, English language learners). The latter is particularly important because achievement of subgroups has lagged the majority at the school.

The school issues report cards four times each year with mid-quarter reports for feedback on student progress. Weekly progress reports are available for struggling students (if parents wish them) and failure warnings are provided. The school has grading policies for high school and middle school ELA and mathematics. For ELA, the report card grade consists of 40 percent writing, 25 percent quizzes and tests, 25 percent homework and 10 percent effort. For mathematics, the grade consists of 40 percent tests, 30 percent quizzes, 20 percent homework and 10 percent effort.

RENEWAL QUESTION 2: IS THE SCHOOL A VIABLE ORGANIZATION?

1. The school superintendent has played a pivotal role in building a collaborative leadership team that is implementing the school's mission.

Last year, the Board determined that a new administrative leadership structure was needed to move the school forward and to improve planning and decision making as a function of the school's growth. The former elementary principal, an experienced educator, was elevated to the newly-created position of superintendent and, with his vision and input, a new principal was hired for each level – elementary, middle and high school. The new superintendent saw the need to add other staff, including community outreach liaisons (because of a need to connect to parents and community agencies such as Juvenile Justice), master teachers and team leaders (who are also teachers). The superintendent also initiated the development of the school's new curriculum guides and the All School Review, and wrote new job descriptions for school leaders – changes that were all supported by the Board. He is also organizing the plan to improve and expand facilities to include an athletic complex.

Led by the superintendent, the Administrative Council meets weekly to review curriculum, academic support, test results, finances, long-term plans, student and faculty concerns, etc. Decision making is collaborative and members of the Council reported that they are able to offer ideas and input. The Council includes the three principals, the director of governmental relations and the business manager who, along with the director of special education, report directly to the superintendent. The master teachers and guidance counselors report to their respective principals, as do mentor teachers and team leaders (one per grade K-8) who lead meetings with teachers on their teams. The school has developed a set of job descriptions that provide clear roles and responsibilities that are recognized by school leaders, trustees and faculty. The superintendent also was responsible for discharging 15 teachers last school year (5 during the school year and 10 at its conclusion) for underperformance, resulting in the challenges of a cadre of new faculty, and making the role of the master and mentor teachers key for their induction to the school.

The Board of Trustees has seven members (with the superintendent ex officio). Board members serve for three-year terms with a four-year term limit. Board members interviewed indicated that they would like to expand the Board to nine, but it has been difficult to recruit committed candidates for membership. Information on all aspects of the school is mailed to the Board by the business manager in advance of each meeting. At the April meeting, a budget, along with the school's proposed salary scale, were approved for the FY2008 school year. Retention of teachers has presented an ongoing challenge and the development of a competitive salary schedule has been one response. This has resulted in an 11 percent increase in the salary line for FY2008.

The budget process begins in February when principals, department heads and team leaders speak with teachers who submit individual requests. The superintendent and business manager develop the budget, which is brought to the Board each April. The school follows a sound protocol of effective business practices, including adhering to the requirements of Chapter 30B (although it is not mandated for charter schools). According to the business manager, procedures have been standardized in a fiscal policy manual and there is a comprehensive annual audit. The school is fiscally sound, with a surplus of more than one million dollars, which has been set aside

for facilities improvement. Although there is no preventive maintenance plan at the present time, a capital plan for the next five years is being developed with input from the Board.

An education committee – comprised of members of the Board and Administrative Council – meets monthly (prior to Board meetings) to address educational, curriculum and programming concerns in the school. The Board also has finance/facilities and character education subcommittees. From interviews and through examination of Board minutes, it was evident that the Board is deeply involved with appropriate issues of governance (e.g., oversight of management, finance and facilities). Several founding members are still on the Board.

The Board, along with other stakeholders, expressed confidence in the leadership of the superintendent who was described as visible, approachable and having a sense of humor. The Board, using a Board effectiveness survey, conducted a self-evaluation. They received a mid-year review from the superintendent that served as his evaluation.

Within the last two years, the bold and experienced leadership of the superintendent and the Board of Trustees has positioned the school for the future. It is the judgment of the Renewal Inspection Team that the school's leadership has the potential of moving the school toward higher levels of attainment. The superintendent describes a clear vision for the school's future and appears to have gained the trust and support of the Board, staff and parents. One of the concerns of the team, however, is that the dramatic changes in school administration and leadership of the past two years have resulted in many new initiatives (e.g., curriculum, facilities, staffing, professional development) that are in various stages of completion and implementation and, consequently, lack some focus and connection. Not all of these processes have been informed by the use of data and prioritized. It is not clear what evaluation of these initiatives is planned.

2. Long-term goals have been articulated by the superintendent and trustees but there is limited evidence of written action plans for goal attainment.

The superintendent has developed a five-year strategic plan for the school (presented to the Board in March) that covers the categories of personnel, facility, curriculum, student life and mission. Under each of the categories is a series of bullets that essentially list the tasks to be accomplished or ideas to be considered. Some of the bullets under personnel, for example, include: improve supervision and mentoring; improve the art of teaching; examine instructional strategies vs. learning styles; and, nurture hidden talents. Under facility, there are two bullets: secure and improve high school and explore "green" building. Some of the bullets under curriculum are: develop a five-year plan for review and renewal of subject areas; develop block scheduling; continue improvement of curriculum integration K-12; and, utilize community/college resources. Although attainment of these goals are likely to enable the mission, the team was concerned that the plan does not have sufficient definition and prioritization in terms of clear goals and objectives, with milestones, timelines and persons responsible for execution.

3. The school has a safe and supportive climate that strives to address the social, emotional and academic needs of all students.

The buildings at Abby Kelley Foster are clean and secure and students, parents and teachers commented on their sense of safety. Entry is accessible only through the main doors to each building and visitors are in full view of the security guards. Parents noted that teachers meet students at the door and they feel welcome in the school. Both students and parents commented that adults are supportive and the school is “like a family.”

The school makes many efforts to address the social, emotional and academic needs of students. In addition to conventional academic assessments, the All School Review is the primary vehicle for homeroom teachers to look at all their students and target those who appear to have academic, social and emotional issues. When concerns about students persist, a next step is to initiate the Intervention Planning Team (IPT) process – a regular education initiative that involves faculty, support staff and parents to provide students with targeted interventions that will help them succeed in school. The school has a procedure and facilitator for this process. When needed, a full evaluation to determine if a student has a disability requiring an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) takes place. Children who need services receive appropriate support, e.g., Title I, English as a second language and special education. Students also reported that, when needed, teachers give them extra attention and help. Intervention classes after school and on Saturdays are available on a voluntary basis for students for ELA and mathematics MCAS preparation and required for students identified as in need of additional assistance.

The school conducts four summer programs: one for students who need academic support; one for gifted, talented and creative students; a music program; and, Al’s Wonderful Adventure – a social/emotional support program for boys and girls who need male and female role models in their lives.

The curriculum is enriched through extracurricular and co-curricular programs, such as the seventh grade’s participation in Nature’s Classroom; performances, such as *Annie*, which involves elementary and middle school students; the Student Council, which leads community service projects; the Latin Club that participated successfully in the Massachusetts Junior Classical League; athletics, including soccer, cross country, cheerleading and basketball; and, musical offerings, such as orchestra middle and upper school bands and a string ensemble.

For the past two years, the school has employed two school/community outreach workers – one for the elementary school and one for the middle/high school to provide support for parents and students. Some of the duties of these individuals are to conduct social skills groups, act as a liaison with parents, make home visits, support the character education virtues, assist with discipline and monitor behavior on buses. They also participate on the All School Review Team and work in summer programs.

There are 84 students with disabilities, representing 7.2 percent of the student population, who have IEPs. Most of the services they receive are inclusionary. During the visit, the team observed eight classes (above Kindergarten) in which a second adult was present in the classroom, providing either special education or Title I services. Abby Kelley Foster has a Learning Center (LC) – a regular classroom that has been partitioned into three instructional spaces. When observed, one student (whose ELA classes are all pull-out to the LC) was working one-on-one

with a special education teacher. Other small groups were working on mathematics and social studies. In addition to teachers and instructional assistants, there are speech and language therapists, occupational and physical therapists and two psychologists. Some of the specialists are outside contractors.

According to the special education director, most of the identified students do not require significant service time and the school does not have any substantially separate classrooms. Only three students required the alternate MCAS assessment last year. Accommodations for special education students in regular education classes were cited on teachers' lesson plans but these accommodations were not evident to the team in classroom observations.

The school has separate behavior management systems for elementary and middle/high school students. The middle and high school code of conduct is based on the ten character virtues and a set of classroom rules. Students receive demerits for infractions that can lead to loss of privileges and restrictions from participation in extracurricular activities. In the elementary school, there is a color-coded system. Each student starts the day with a green, representing a clean slate. Changes of color are given for infractions that may result in loss of privileges and parental notification.

Parents are pleased with the level of communication they have with the school. They receive newsletters from principals and know that teachers are available to assist children after school. Teachers call parents at the beginning of the school year to introduce themselves and often communicate via e-mail. Parents are required to sign off on weekly tests if students score below 70 percent. Although there are some concerns about facilities, parents generally feel that the school has met their expectations, is academically strong and that their children are ahead of where they might be had they remained in local public schools. On the most recent parent satisfaction survey (November 2006), approximately 90 percent or more of parents agreed or strongly agreed with 12 of 13 indicators, such as satisfaction with overall education and academics, understanding of mission, availability of faculty and safety of students. Only 76 percent of parents would like to see more school events with parental participation. The remainder (24 percent) reported being neutral on this issue.

4. Professional development activities are widespread and supported by the school.

Teachers have individual professional development plans and are generally approved when they request permission to attend conferences and trainings. These are selected based on individual teacher-identified needs and interests and related to their disciplines. Following the conference, teachers are expected to report back to colleagues at the school to share what they have learned. However, there is no further follow-up or monitoring of the degree of implementation in their classrooms.

Orientation for new teachers takes place for three days each summer prior to the opening of school. There is an additional five days of training for all staff. During the year, the school sponsors professional development for groups of teachers. In January and February, for example, 37 elementary teachers completed 12 hours of on-site Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) Category I training. In March, this training was provided for 30 middle and high school teachers. During the 2007-2008 school year, SEI Category II training will be provided for all staff. New teachers are scheduled to have the Category I training in August, prior to the opening of school.

On March 27, the school had a professional development day in which the elementary school had a presentation on differentiated instruction. All of the school's 55 middle school teachers were sent to the New England League of Middle Schools' conference in Providence on the same date. Monthly professional development in November, February and March was devoted to work on the curriculum documents. The school also provided 15 hours of training for elementary teachers in the Open Court reading program.

Teachers have other opportunities for professional growth during common planning time, which is scheduled by grade level. These meetings are led by team leaders, who are classroom teachers, responsible for collecting agenda items and facilitating the sessions. Some recent topics at these meetings were portfolios and curriculum guides, students in need of academic assistance and MCAS preparation. In general, meetings on the first Wednesday of each month are faculty meetings. Team meetings take place on the second Wednesday. Professional development occurs on the third Wednesday and mentor/master teacher meetings on the fourth. The daily morning staff meetings in each school include opportunities for teachers or administrators to share expertise by making brief presentations of best practice. Some recent topics were strategies for having students move around in classrooms (elementary), rubrics for a geometry project (middle), and computer strategies (high school). Three master teachers are available to work with first- and second-year teachers. There is a teacher mentoring system, as well.

5. Although teachers are observed (formally and informally) and receive constructive feedback, there is not a written supervision/evaluation policy in place.

Formal teacher observations with pre- and post-conferences take place three times each year and are conducted by principals. These observations are rated on a checklist with symbols for superior, satisfactory, approximately, unsatisfactory and unable to determine. The 24 indicators rated appear on a five-category checklist that covers preparation, lesson design and development, presentation of information, student-active learning and classroom management. There is a section for comments. Master teachers also conduct less formal observations of teachers with fewer than three years of experience. They use a nine-item checklist that contains indicators such as: objective is clearly posted; lesson plans are available; ask high order questions; and, develop challenging assignments.

In interviews, teachers reported that the feedback they received as a result of these observations is generally productive and helpful and that they receive specific suggestions, such as improving questioning techniques. In addition to the observations, there are informal classroom visits and frequent (sometimes daily) walkthroughs conducted by administrators and master teachers. However, the school lacks a formal supervision/evaluation policy that is tied to articulation of teacher goals, provides guidance for long-term professional growth and is tied to a summative evaluation at the end of the school year.

RENEWAL QUESTION 3: IS THE SCHOOL FAITHFUL TO THE TERMS OF THE CHARTER?

1. The school's mission is evident throughout the school and was articulated and supported by all stakeholders.

The mission of the Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School is to assist parents in their role as primary educators of their children by providing a classical liberal arts education grounded in the great works of Western Civilization and aimed at academic excellence, musical competence, and character formation.

The school demonstrates its commitment to families in a variety of ways. Most recently, the appointment of two community outreach liaisons (elementary and middle/high school) who provide outreach to parents and coordinate services to families where needed has been the most tangible evidence of this commitment. Parents are expected to read the Parent Student Handbook (one for each of the three levels) and, by virtue of signing a Parent/Student/School Compact, pledge to maintain high expectations, demonstrate consistent interest in their child's progress, support their child's and the school's best efforts, model the school's character virtues, support and work with school staff and support the school's uniform policy. Parents receive monthly newsletters from the principals. Both students and parents indicated that the school has a family-like atmosphere. Parents interviewed were very positive about the music program and the character program. They feel that it reinforces what they are trying to teach children at home.

In terms of the school's emphasis on academic excellence, the superintendent cited that all students in both the 2006 and 2007 graduating classes have passed MCAS and have been admitted to one or more colleges. Student recognition was prominent in hallway displays, such as the Middle School Honor Roll, You're a Star, the Wall of Fame and Student of the Month.

One of the hallmarks of the school's emphasis on a classical education is the requirement that all students begin the study of Latin in grade 7. In addition to the language, topics in the Latin curriculum include Roman history, mythology, culture and the Roman calendar. Also in keeping with the classical education theme, students read classical literature and learn about Greek government and society.

The music program is pervasive throughout the school. In music classes (required for all students through grade 10), there is emphasis on theory, music history (including ancient musical traditions), a variety of genres and performance. Topics in the high school and middle school music curriculum are aligned with the topics covered in the history curriculum. All students learn to read music and music is integrated into courses across all grade levels – particularly social studies. Students also have opportunities to take music lessons during the school day. Most of the students interviewed were doing so. Many have also participated in musical performances. One class observed provided an introduction to jazz, including types of jazz progressions. Students in grade 3 learn to play the recorder and Grade 10 students learn keyboarding and also have opportunities to compose both the music and lyrics to a song. Parents interviewed think highly of the music program. Currently, there are six full time music teachers in the school.

A faculty team is actively working on a revision of the character education curriculum. The superintendent told the team that the school plans to have a character education coordinator on Board during the upcoming school year. The ten character virtues are prominently painted

on the walls in each building and one of these virtues is emphasized each month. Posters, artwork and student writing were evident to illustrate the recent character education themes of self-discipline and kindness. The ten values are: responsibility, respect, self-discipline, perseverance, courage, honesty, kindness, fairness, friendship and citizenship. Although the character virtues are still articulated at the high school level, they are generally incorporated into the service learning program. All but one of the high school students interviewed is involved in one service project, at least. High school students are also required to complete two semesters of an ethics course for graduation.

2. Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public Schools has achieved several of its academic performance goals for mathematics and English language arts.

Performance Objective A: *Students will make measurable yearly progress on standardized assessments.*

- Measure 1: *Our students in grades 4, 8 and 10 will score at or above the district average for English language arts and mathematics on MCAS exams.*

Abby Kelley Foster has met its goal of outperforming the district (Worcester Public Schools) on the mathematics and ELA sections of the 2006 MCAS in grades 4, 8 and 10 (see table below). Longitudinal data indicate that the school has consistently outperformed Worcester Public Schools over the years.

2006 MCAS Comparison

Grade/Subject		A/P	NI	W
4 th Math	AKFCPS	29	55	16
	Worcester	23	46	31
	State	40	45	15
8 th Math	AKFCPS	33	35	31
	Worcester	19	25	56
	State	40	31	29
10 th Math	AKFCPS	52	40	8
	Worcester	41	31	27
	State	67	21	12

4 th ELA	AKFCPS	41	47	12
	Worcester	27	48	24
	State	50	39	12
8 th ELA	AKFCPS	68	24	7
	Worcester	47	34	19
	State	74	19	7
10 th ELA	AKFCPS	64	32	4
	Worcester	47	39	14
	State	69	24	7

- Measure 2: *Our students will meet the Composite Proficiency Index (CPI) target for English language arts in the aggregate as defined by the School Performance Rating System each year.*
- Measure 3: *Our students will meet the Composite Proficiency Index (CPI) target for mathematics in the aggregate as defined by the School Performance Rating System each year.*

Abby Kelley Foster has achieved AYP in each of the last three years in both mathematics and ELA and has also met its CPI targets.

- Measure 4: *More than 50% of the students who begin their school career with Abby Kelley Foster will score in proficient levels on the mathematics and English language arts MCAS by the end of fourth grade.*

The school attained this measure for ELA. Fifty-one percent of the students who began at Abby Kelley Foster in kindergarten attained proficiency in grade 4. The school, however, fell short in mathematics, where only 40 percent of these fourth grade students scored proficient.

- Measure 5: *Abby Kelley Foster will continue to achieve Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) each year as defined by the School Performance Rating System.*

Although the school did make AYP for the past three years and appears poised to continue to do so, it is impossible to comment on future attainment.

Performance Objective B: *100% of students who graduate from Abby Kelley Foster Charter School will be qualified to attend a two- or four-year institution of higher education or post-secondary program.*

- Measure 1: *100% of the students enrolled in the high school will participate and complete a high school portfolio for English.*
- Measure 2: *100% of the students enrolled in the high school will participate and complete a high school portfolio for mathematics.*

High school portfolios in ELA and mathematics have not yet been implemented. The school anticipates that this measure will be in place for the class of 2010.

- Measure 3: *100% of the students in grade 10 will achieve a passing score on the English language arts MCAS exam or portfolio review.*
- Measure 4: *100% of the students in Grade 10 will achieve a passing score on the mathematics MCAS exam or portfolio review.*

Although all of the school's 2006 and 2007 graduates ultimately did pass the MCAS in mathematics and ELA, they did not necessarily do so in grade 10. For the tenth grade, in 2004, 2005 and 2006, zero percent, six percent, and four percent, respectively, failed the MCAS in ELA. For the same years, failing rates in mathematics were five percent, twelve percent and eight percent, respectively.

- Measure 5: *More than 80% of the students in grade 12 will apply and be accepted to a minimum of one post secondary school.*

The school exceeded this goal, in that 100 percent of the students in the classes of 2006 and 2007 were accepted into two- or four-year colleges.

7. Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public Schools has largely achieved the goals of its mission with respect to musical competence, character development and parental involvement.

In addition to the academic performance goals above, the Abby Kelley Foster had three performance objectives relative to its mission and faithfulness to the terms of its charter. These are:

- A. Performance Objective: *Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School students will have the opportunity to participate in a musical or dramatic performance each year.*
- Measure 1: *More than 50% of Abby Kelley Foster students will be expected to participate in a public production, either on stage or behind the scenes.*
 - Measure 2: *100% of Abby Kelley Foster students enrolled in the high school will be required to take a full year of music and a semester of art to meet graduation requirements.*
 - Measure 3: *100% of Abby Kelley Foster students will participate in an art curriculum that includes attention to appreciation of art history and culture.*

The school provides multiple performance opportunities for students – musical ensembles, class assemblies and musical productions. There is evidence that many students participate, including students and parents interviewed who described these events (Measure 1). The school's curricular documents show that Measures 2 and 3 are met.

- B. Performance Objective: *Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School will actively involve parents and facilitate community involvement.*
- Measure 1: *Abby Kelley Foster will establish a parent/teacher organization that will communicate with the school community through newsletters, fundraisers and school-wide activities.*
 - Measure 2: *More than 90% of parents will report that they are satisfied with the overall education their child receives at Abby Kelley Foster. Parent surveys will be administered at the end of each school year.*

The school has a Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), although the level of parental involvement and participation was not established. The school reported that the PTO organizes teacher appreciation day, end-of-school-year spree day, a Scholastic Book Fair and other fundraising activities (Measure 1). On the most recent parent satisfaction survey, 98 percent of parents agreed or strongly agreed that they are satisfied with the overall education their child receives at the school (Measure 2).

C. Performance Objective: *Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School students will participate in a structured character education program.*

- Measure 1: *All Abby Kelley Foster middle and high school students will be expected to participate in minimum of two community service projects.*
- Measure 2: *All Abby Kelley Foster elementary school students will be required to participate in a monthly character education program that will include the ten character virtues.*
- Measure 3: *More than 90% of the student body will report that they feel safe at school as determined by the annual parent/student survey.*
- Measure 4: *The number of in-school and out-of-school suspensions will decrease by 5% each year for students in the middle and high school.*

The team did not review documentation of Measure 1. However, in interviews, middle and high school students reported various projects in which they were involved and the school's newsletters described volunteering in nursing homes, working in the community garden from which produce grown and donated to a neighborhood food bank, collecting food and clothing for Mustard Seed (a homeless shelter) of Worcester, and participating in a Community Cares Day with the Worcester Housing Authority. The Student Council organizes some of the school's service projects. The existence of the school's character education program (Measure 2) was confirmed by staff, parents and students and evidence was seen posted in classrooms and corridors. On the most recent parent satisfaction survey, 97 percent of parents agreed or strongly agreed that their children feel safe at school (Measure 3). According to the 2004-2005 Annual Report, there were 68 in-school and 132 out-of-school suspensions that year, primarily due to insubordinate or physically dangerous behavior. According to the 2005-2006 Annual Report, there were 60 in-school suspensions and 54 out-of-school suspensions – showing the desired decrease in the number of suspensions (Measure 4).

8. Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School has met most of its measures for viability as defined by the organizational goals in the Accountability Plan.

Viability Objective A: *The Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School will maintain full enrollment and an adequate wait list.*

- Measure 1: *Abby Kelley Foster will actively recruit and retain students from the charter region by sponsoring a minimum of six informational and community meetings each academic year.*
- Measure 2: *Abby Kelley Foster will enroll new students each year to maintain maximum enrollment as defined by the charter.*
- Measure 3: *Abby Kelley Foster will meet or exceed the state attendance average each year.*
- Measure 4: *Abby Kelley Foster will maintain a waitlist equivalent to at least 15% of the maximum student enrollment.*

The school held two meetings (day and evening) per month from November through February 2007 and received 521 applications for 262 open seats (Measure 1). The school has sufficient numbers of students, either accepted or on the waitlist, to attain maximum enrollment in September 2007 (Measure 2). The school exceeded the state attendance average in 2005-06

by 1% (Measure 3). The school's maximum enrollment for the 2007-08 school year will be 1,426 students. The waitlist as of March 2007 was 837 students – far in excess of 15 percent (Measure 4).

Viability Objective B: The Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School will operate and manage in a fiscally responsible manner that ensures stability and success.

- *Measure 1: Abby Kelley Foster will undergo an external audit of the school's revenues and expenditures in accordance with GAAP principles by a certified public accounting firm approved by the school's Board of Trustees, and forward the results of each annual audit to the Department of Education.*
- *Measure 2: Abby Kelley Foster Business Office will submit monthly Statements of Activities and Operating Budgets to the Board of Trustees Finance Committee for review.*
- *Measure 3: Abby Kelley Foster Business Office will continue to maintain sound business practices and adhere to the recommendations and guidelines of the Charter School Office.*

The school operates in a financially responsible manner, is fiscally sound and has received clean audits (Measures 1-3).

Viability Objective C: The Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School Board of Trustees will maintain sound governance policies and practices.

- *Measure 1: The Board of Trustees will conduct monthly meetings in accordance with the Massachusetts General Laws.*
- *Measure 2: The Board of Trustees will participate in an annual self-evaluation to determine the effectiveness of their roles and responsibilities in monitoring the school's progress.*
- *Measure 3: The Nominating, Education, Facilities and Finance Standing Committees of the Board of Trustees will host a minimum of three meetings each academic year.*

Through interviews and review of documents, the team determined that the Board maintains sound governance policies and practices. The Board meets nine times throughout the year and holds a Board retreat at the end of the summer. A self-evaluation has been conducted and the standing committees of the Board meet frequently throughout the year (Measures 1-3).

Viability Objective D: The Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School will actively recruit, retain and employ highly qualified personnel.

- *Measure 1: More than 85% of the core academic classes at Abby Kelley Foster will be taught by teachers who are highly qualified as defined by the No Child Left Behind Act.*
- *Measure 2: 100% of first- and second-year teachers and up to 50% of the experienced faculty will receive an annual evaluation to determine effectiveness and performance progression.*
- *Measure 3: Abby Kelley Foster will maintain a retention rate of more than 70% of the full-time core subject teachers.*

Personnel documents reviewed by the team showed that 96 percent of teachers at Abby Kelley Foster meet the federal NCLB guidelines for highly qualified staff (Measure 1). With respect to evaluation, the team determined that, despite the fact that all teachers are observed by supervisors, they are not provided with an annual formal summative evaluation (Measure 2). Although the school indicated that it maintains an 80 percent teacher retention rate, examination

of the staff list showed that nearly half the school's teachers have been at the school for two years or less (Measure 3).

9. Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School has begun the dissemination of its best practices.

Four members of the staff made a presentation on the All School Review at the Massachusetts Charter Public School Association Best Practices Showcase in March 2007. The All School Review is a comprehensive student evaluation system that enables each homeroom teacher to present a brief description of the strengths and needs of each one of his/her students to a committee of teachers, support staff and administrators. Children's issues may be educational, emotional or social. Students in need of service are then assigned to a specific school program or staff member for follow-up.

Abby Kelley Foster has also developed a number of partnerships and collaborations with other groups. For example, the school is a member of the Municipal Safety Cabinet, which works with the Worcester Public Schools to establish crisis response plans and procedures for area schools. The school has a partnership with the Performing Arts School of Worcester to hold joint music programs. There are also arrangements for students to take online courses through either Quinsigamond Community College or Mt. Wachusett Community College. Finally, the school collaborated with three local colleges to develop a Teaching American History grant proposal that focuses on relationships of native and non-native people of Southern New England.

RENEWAL QUESTION 4: IF THE SCHOOL'S CHARTER IS RENEWED, WHAT ARE ITS PLANS FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS?

- 1. The School Accountability Plan contained in Appendix G of the renewal application was approved in March 2007 and contains goals and performance measures that are credible, clearly attainable and somewhat rigorous.**

IS THE SCHOOL AN ACADEMIC SUCCESS?

Performance Objective 1: Abby Kelly Foster Charter Public School (Abby Kelley Foster) students will make measurable yearly progress on standardized assessments.

This objective and the five performance measures attached to it were identical to those contained in the 2006 plan. Although the school has access to several standardized assessments (e.g., MCAS, DIBELS and SAT-10), they have chosen again to use only the MCAS as the instrument to track student progress on all five performance measures. And again, in four of the five performance measures, they have chosen to use aggregate scores only (e.g., achieving AYP, meeting the CPI and exceeding the scores of students attending the Worcester Public Schools). The only measure that made use of disaggregated data was *Measure 4: More than 50% of the students who enroll at AKFPCS in kindergarten will score at or above the proficient levels on the ELA MCAS exam by the end of fourth grade.* (NOTE: Of interest to the team was the fact that, in the 2006 plan, both mathematics and ELA were included in this performance measure and that, in 2006, the school had met its 50 percent proficient or above goal in ELA but not in mathematics.) Also, the plan included no measures to address gaps in the performance of subgroups (gender, race, etc.).

Because the school has met AYP and CPI in each of the last three years and has consistently outperformed the Worcester Public Schools on the MCAS, the team felt that the written goals for student achievement – although credible and attainable – might not be as rigorous or as specific as they might, given the school's interest in taking student achievement to even higher levels.

Performance Objective 2: Abby Kelley Foster will evaluate the K-12 curriculum standards for student performance and alignment with state standards.

This objective is the only totally new performance objective in the plan. It is highly credible and appropriately rigorous. Within the last year, the school successfully accomplished the huge task of creating curriculum guides for K-12 in all subject areas that are aligned with the state standards. In the past, their curriculum had been “in pieces;” hence, for the first time in the school's history, it has the makings of a sound and unified curriculum. The school's leadership realizes that the recent curriculum work, though intensive, serves only as a pilot or a draft upon which to build. They have identified two measures in the 2007 plan that will serve to move them forward – one specifying their intent to review and revise the curriculum in “one core subject annually on a five-year rotating schedule,” and another stating that a curriculum committee “will hold a minimum of five meetings during the academic year to review curriculum materials, professional development opportunities and student assessments.”

Performance Objective 3: 100% of the students who graduate from Abby Kelley Foster will be qualified to attend a two- or four-year institution of higher learning.

The renewal visit confirmed that the academic and extracurricular standards and experiences provided by Abby Kelley Foster currently qualify all students to take advantage of post-secondary learning experiences. The first two graduating classes in the school's history (2006 and 2007) had 100 percent of their members accepted to two- or four-year colleges.

IS THE SCHOOL A VIABLE ORGANIZATION?

Performance Objective 4: The AKFPCPS will maintain full enrollment and an adequate wait list.

Performance Objective 5: The AKFPCPS will operate and manage in a fiscally responsible manner that insures stability and success.

Performance Objective 6: The AKFPCPS will maintain sound governance policies and practices.

The language in each of these objectives (4, 5, and 6) remains exactly the same as in 2006. By and large, the eleven performance measures under these organizational viability objectives contain sufficient rigor and specificity to ensure that accomplishment of these measures will allow Abby Kelley Foster to maintain the stability and success witnessed by the site visit team.

Performance Objective 7: The Abby Kelley Foster will actively recruit, retain and employ highly qualified teachers.

The team discovered that the Abby Kelley Foster leadership had already made a strong commitment to achieve parts of this performance objective. At the time of the site visit, the school had already exceeded the goal of having 85 percent of its teachers in the "highly qualified" category, as outlined in the NCLB Act and had just adopted a new, more competitive salary schedule in an attempt to increase the annual teacher retention rate. The new plan includes two very important performance measures: one related to the successful execution of annual teacher evaluations and another related to the maintenance and evaluation of teachers' annual professional development plans. Both of these performance measures address areas that the team found to be noticeably weak.

Performance Objective 8: Abby Kelly Foster Charter Public School students will have the opportunity to participate in a musical or dramatic performance each year.

Performance Objective 10: Abby Kelly Foster Charter Public School students will participate in a structured character education program.

Music and character education are two programs that continue to be communicated as core elements of the school's mission. Performance objectives 8 and 10 and the seven measures that accompany them are nearly identical to the ones specified in the previous accountability plan. Students at the school continue to have opportunities to participate in musical and dramatic performances each year and are already required to complete courses in music and art to graduate. The school also continues to expect students to participate in a structured character education program and, at the time of the site visit, a committee had been formed to revamp and revitalize the structure of the character education program. Reiteration of these previously accomplished objectives and measures (or requirements) in the new accountability plan – if

nothing else – serves as a reminder that music, art and character education are still central to the school’s unique mission.

Performance Objective 9: Abby Kelley Foster Charter Public School will actively seek opportunities to involve parents and community as a whole in the school.

Relying on the plan to actively include parents, Abby Kelley Foster has targeted Title 1 parents as a priority. More than 100 parents have attended each of six PTO events held during the 2006-07 academic year. In addition, by assigning tasks to the most appropriate person or department, Abby Kelley Foster has achieved excellent success in promoting parental attendance at 17 musical performances or events, and have had more than 600 parents attend K – 12 art exhibits and other special events.

APPENDIX A: SCHEDULE OF THE RENEWAL INSPECTION VISIT**Monday, May 7, 2007**

Time	Team Member A	Team Member B	Team Member C	Team Member D	Team Member E	Team Member F	Team Member G	Team Member H
10:45-12:50	Initial Team Meeting							
1:00-1:40	Team Arrival & Tour of School							
1:45-3:00	Initial Meeting with School Leaders							
3:00-5:00	Team Meeting & Debrief							
5:10	Team Departure							

Tuesday, May 8, 2007

Time	Team Member A	Team Member B	Team Member C	Team Member D	Team Member E	Team Member F	Team Member G	Team Member H
7:15-7:30	Team Arrival & Preparation							
7:30-8:00	Board Interview (7:45-8:45)	Doc Review/ Organize	Doc Review/ Organize	Board Interview (7:45-8:45)		Doc Review/ Organize	Board Interview (7:45-8:45)	Doc Review/ Organize
8:00-8:30		Morning Mting Gr. K-	Math Meeting Gr. 1			Earth S.- gr. 7 Rm. 132		Physics Rm. 103
8:30-9:00		ELA— Gr. 1	Reading & Lang—Gr. K			Study Skills-9 Rm. 200		
9:00-9:30	Ancient Civ Rm. 131	Teacher Inter*	Teacher Inter*		Math-Gr. 2 Hughes	FLOAT	World Lit Rm. 115	
9:30-10:00	Alg. I Rm. 127	FLOAT	Document Review	Math-gr. 5/6 Rm. 205	Reading Workshop-gr. 2-Baril (9:45-10:15)	ELA-gr. 7 Rm. 133	US Hist Rm. 105	MS ELA Rm. 123
10:00-10:30	FLOAT	Special-Gr. 3	Teacher Interview**	Teacher Interview**				
10:30-11:00	Drama St Rm. 102	Interview w/ Title I coord (10:30-11:10)	Reading— Gr. 4	Interview w/ Title I coord (10:30-11:10)	Math—Gr. K	ELA-gr. 5 Rm. 202	Document Review	Am/Br Lit II Rm. 115
11:00-11:30			Math-Gr. 1		Inter w/ all principals (11:00-11:45)			
11:30-12:00			Math— Gr. 3			Math-Gr. 4		Rbt- Rm. 132
12:00-1:00	Team Lunch & Debrief							
1:00-1:30		Writing- Gr. 3			ELA Enrich- K			

Wednesday, May 9, 2007

Time	Team Member A	Team Member B	Team Member C	Team Member D	Team Member E	Team Member F	Team Member G	Team Member H
7:15-7:30	Team Arrival & Preparation							
7:30-8:00	FLOAT	Document Review		FLOAT	Document Review		FLOAT	FLOAT
8:00-8:30		Parent Interview (8:00-8:45)			Writing-Gr. 4	Parent Interview (8:00-8:45)	AP WHis II	Art History
8:30-9:00	Supt. Interview (8:30-9:15)			Dance (8:50-9:20)	Supt. Interview (8:30-9:15)			
9:00-9:30						Art 6 Rm. 214	Specials-Gr. 4	
9:30-10:00	Interview w/ Guidance Counselors (9:30-10:00)		Intr w/ SPED		Intr with Kerr &	Intr w/ SPED	Interview w/ Guidance Counselors (9:30-10:15)	
10:00-10:30		Interview w/ Home Comm Liaisons		Student Interview—gr. 5-8		Geometry Rm. 100		Interview w/ Home Comm Liaisons
10:30-11:00			Ethics I Rm. 109	Math 5 Rm. 203	MS ELA Rm. 123	ELA 6 Rm. 129		
11:00:-11:30	Document Review			Tcher Interview			Tcher Interview	
11:30-1:45	Organize Notes, Team Lunch & Debrief							
2:00-2:30	Feedback to Sch. Leaders (2:00-2:45)	P.E./Health Rm. CAF (2:12-2:42)	Study Skills 8 Rm. 216 (2:12-2:42)	Feedback to Sch. Leaders (2:00-2:45)	Writing Gr. 3	Feedback to Sch. Leaders (2:00-2:45)	Latin I Rm. 110 (2:12-2:42)	Pre-Calc Rm. 100 (2:12-2:42)
2:30-3:00								
3:00-5:00	Team Debrief							
5:10	Team Departure							

Thursday, May 10, 2007

Time	Team Member A	Team Member B	Team Member C	Team Member D	Team Member E	Team Member F	Team Member G	Team Member H
7:15- 7:30	Team Arrival & Preparation							
7:30- 8:00								
8:00- 8:30			Student Int Gr.			Student Int Gr.		
8:30- 9:00	Feedback to School Leaders (8:30- 9:15)			Feedback to School Leaders (8:30- 9:15)				Feedback to School Leaders (8:30- 9:15)
9:00- 9:30								
9:30- 10:00								
10:00- 3:00	Tentative Team Debrief & Deliberations							
3:10- 3:30	Report Out to School Leaders							
3:40	Team Departure							