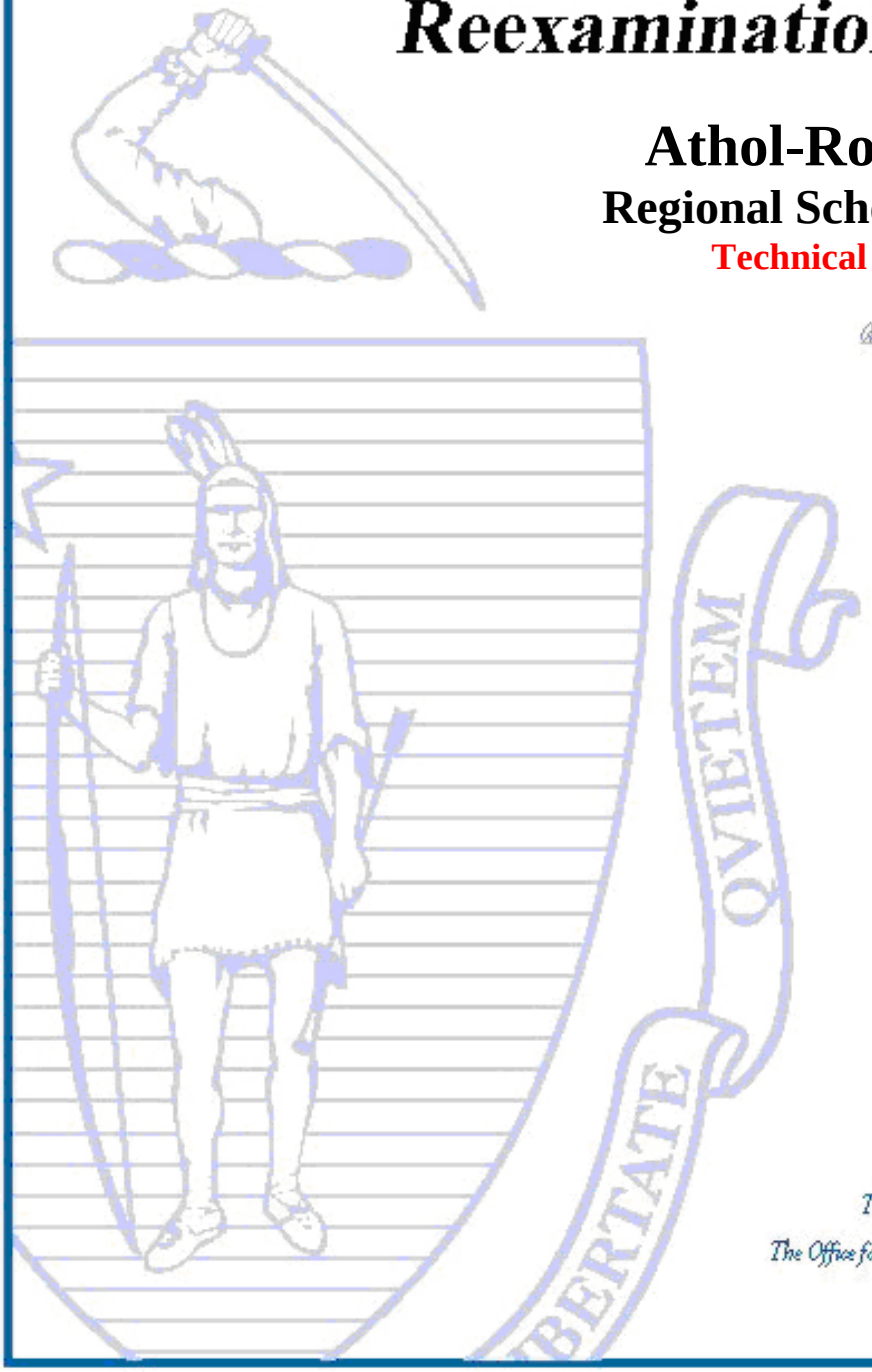
The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

School District *Reexamination Report:*

Athol-Royalston
Regional School District
Technical Report

data driven
standards based
learner centered



The Education Management Audit Council

The Office for Educational Quality and Accountability

2006 - 2007

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Office of Educational Quality and Accountability

Visiting Reexamination Team

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After reviewing this report, the Educational Management Audit Council voted to accept its findings at its meeting on October 24, 2007. The council also removed the district from the obligations of 'Watch' status, but retained monitoring services.

The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability would like to acknowledge the professional cooperation extended to the audit team by the Department of Education; the Superintendent of the Athol-Royalston Regional School District, Anthony Polito; the school department staff of the Athol-Royalston Regional School District; and the town officials in Athol and Royalston.

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Introduction

The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA) reexamined the Athol-Royalston Regional School District in October 2007. With an English language arts proficiency index of 79 proficiency index (PI) points and a math proficiency index of 69 PI points in 2007, the district is considered a 'Moderate' performing school system based on the Department of Education's rating system (found in Appendix B of this report), with achievement below the state average. Fifty-two percent of Athol-Royalston students scored at or above the proficiency standard on the 2007 administration of the MCAS tests in ELA, and 43 percent did so in math.

District Overview

The Athol-Royalston Regional School District, located in Athol in Worcester County in north central Massachusetts, is comprised of two member towns, Athol and Royalston. Athol was founded as a typical New England mill town and became known as "Tool Town" due to its extensive metalwork manufacturing. It is a blue-collar community with rural characteristics. Royalston is a small, rural community surrounded by forests, waterfalls, and conservation land. However, agriculture was not successful there and residents turned to the textile mills for employment. The largest source of employment within Athol is manufacturing, followed by educational, health, and social services; in Royalston, these two sectors are roughly equal in their share of the economy. Athol is governed by a Board of Selectmen/Representative Town Meeting and Royalston by an Open Town Meeting.

According to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR), Athol had a median family income of $41,061 in 1999 and Royalston had a median family income of $51,818 in 1999, compared to the statewide median family income of $63,706, ranking them 339 and 289, respectively, out of the 351 cities and towns in the commonwealth. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the member towns had a combined total population of 12,553, with a population of 2,680 school-age children, or 21 percent of the total. Athol had a total population of 11,299, with a population of 2,371 school-age children, or 21 percent of the total. Royalston had a total population of 1,254, with a population of 309 school-age children, or 25 percent of the total.

Of the total households in Athol, 34 percent were households with children under 18 years of age, while in Royalston, 39 percent were households with children under 18 years of age. In

Athol, 13 percent of the population age 25 years or older held a bachelor's degree or higher, and in Royalston 17 percent did so; these figures compare to 33 percent statewide.

According to the Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE), in 2006-2007 the Athol-Royalston Regional School District had a total enrollment of 1,954. The demographic composition in the district was: 87.7 percent White, 6.5 percent Hispanic, 1.9 percent African-American, 0.5 percent Asian, 0.3 percent Native American, 0.2 Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and 2.9 percent multi-race, non-Hispanic; 1.5 percent limited English proficient (LEP), 39.3 percent low income, and 21.7 percent special education. Ninety-six percent of school-age children in Athol and Royalston attended public schools. The district offers school choice, and 45 students from other school districts attended the Athol-Royalston schools in 2006-2007. A total of 335 Athol students attended public schools outside the district, including 103 students who attended Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical High School and four students who attended charter schools. A total of 48 Royalston students attended public schools outside the district, including 26 students who attended Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical High School and two students who attended a charter school.

The district has eight schools serving grades pre-kindergarten through 12, including five elementary schools serving grades pre-kindergarten through 6, one middle school serving grades 6 through 8, one high school serving grades 9 through 12, and one alternative school serving grades 2 through 12. The administrative team consists of a superintendent, a director of operations, and a business administrator. Each school has a principal except the Ellen Bigelow School, which has a director of pupil services as the main administrator. The district has a 10-member school committee.

In FY 2006 (most recent data available), Athol-Royalston's per pupil expenditure, based on appropriations from all funds, was $10,164, compared to $11,211 statewide, ranking it 191 out of the 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 $17,067,514 to $19,053,139; Chapter 70 aid increased from $16,238,378 to $17,084,514; the required local contribution increased from $417,088 to $623,845; and the foundation enrollment decreased from 2,263 to 2,184. Chapter 70 aid as a percentage of actual

net school spending decreased from 95 to 90 percent over this period. From FY 2005 to FY 2006, total curriculum and instruction expenditures as a percentage of total net school spending decreased from 58 to 54 percent.

The EQA Reexamination 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, and was 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).

School districts examined by the Massachusetts Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA) are placed in 'Watch' status if the EQA examination reveals several areas of poor or unsatisfactory performance. The EQA and its staff monitor all 'Watch' districts. In addition, districts may be placed in 'Watch' status if they were referred to the Board of Education for a "declaration of underperformance" but the board declined to make that determination. For the next one to two years, an experienced and trained senior EQA examiner monitors a district in 'Watch' status. After a reexamination by the EQA, either the district is removed from 'Watch' status or an EQA report is forwarded to the Board of Education with a recommendation to declare the district underperforming. Underperforming districts receive additional support and services from the state to improve student achievement.

The EQA first examined the Athol-Royalston Regional School District in January 2004, and the district was subsequently placed in 'Watch' status in July 2004. The district was monitored by the EQA and reexamined by a second team of EQA examiners in June 2006. At its January 2007 meeting, the EMAC expressed deep concerns about the district and kept it in 'Watch' status and granted the district another six months to implement its strategies for improvement, and the EQA continued to monitor the district. From October 9-12, 2007, the EQA conducted a second reexamination of the Athol-Royalston Regional School District by a third team of examiners. This reexamination report is the conclusion of the 'Watch' process, the purpose of which is to assess the progress the district has made since the prior examination. 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.

Context

The concept of school district regionalization had been widely discussed during the 1950s, and it fit the adjoining communities of Athol and Royalston so well that in 1956 the two communities agreed to regionalize their grade 7 through 12 programs. On July 1, 1977 the two communities completed the regionalization of kindergarten through grade 12, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts paid 95 percent of the costs of the newly regionalized district. The new school district had a very small impact on the local tax structure. In January 1980, Proposition 2 ½ took effect in Massachusetts, local aid payments began a period of unevenness and unpredictability, and thus began the history of economic hard times for the Athol-Royalston Regional School District.

Decades of tight budgets accompanied by slow economic growth in the communities made it more and more difficult for the towns to support their schools. The buildings continued to age, and the district experienced a continuing series of personnel changes that resulted in educational instability and inefficiency. During the most recent visit to the district, one school committee member told the EQA examiners that “the superintendents we hire never turn out to be the same people we interviewed.”

As the district leadership became increasingly transient, the teachers’ association became increasingly more powerful. The mere threat of action by the teachers’ association was sometimes enough to paralyze the district from making educational decisions. In 2007, for example, teachers at one elementary school tried to initiate a looping experiment, in which two teachers followed their classes to the next grade, with administrative permission. The teachers and students were scheduled and the school year began. The teachers’ association threatened a grievance against the practice, and the superintendent ended the experiment. He had the students transferred to other classes and the teachers returned to their previous year assignments.

The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) conducted an evaluation visit in 2006 that resulted in a threatened loss of the high school's accreditation. Another budget crisis resulted in a $1 million loan from the commonwealth and the passage of a $1.2 million budget override in 2007. Despite this, the district still had to cut 21 teaching positions and 15 paraprofessional positions. The towns transferred an additional $287,000 in town funds to the school district to allow renovations at the high school that delayed the loss of accreditation.

The loan from the Massachusetts Department of Revenue brought with it a Financial Advisory Board (FAB) with the authority to oversee district spending. This, combined with the threatened loss of the high school's accreditation and the district's continued monitor status by the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA), resulted in the creation of a Strategic Planning Committee with representation from all parts of the communities. The district hopes that the committee will help it plan for renovations of the buildings, restructure the financial status of the district, and rebuild the reputation for excellence that it once had.

In its June 2006 reexamination, although the EQA team arrived at a number of findings, the focus of its report involved four critical areas of concern: 1) fragmented leadership; 2) lack of a shared understanding of stakeholder responsibility for improving student achievement; 3.) insufficient alignment between goals and processes; and 4) inadequate budget. The district's problems in these areas were serious enough for the Educational Management Audit Council (EMAC) to accept the report at its meeting of January 12, 2007 and "take further action regarding this school district."

In October 2007, another team of EQA examiners visited the district to assess the level of accomplishment since the previous two visits. This report describes the conditions observed during the 2007 reexamination. The statements in bold represent findings from the 2006 EQA reexamination report.

Reexamination Findings

Fragmented Leadership

The 2006 reexamination report stated that the district experienced substantial turnover in the leadership team, consisting of the superintendent, director of operations, the fiscal officer, and five principals (with each of two pairs of elementary schools sharing a principal).

The 2007 reexamination found that all of the members of the administrative team who served the district in 2006 still held the same positions, and interviewees stated that this has aided the efforts of the district to stabilize. The closing of the Silver Lake Elementary School has enabled the district to have only one administrator serve as the elementary principal for two schools. Prior to this, each of two pairs of elementary schools shared a principal. Each of the two elementary schools currently served by a common principal has assigned a lead teacher to assist when the principal is out of the building attending to the needs of the other school.

Since the prior reexamination, the administrative team met on a weekly basis to review the needs of the district, discuss the District Improvement Plan (DIP) and School Improvement Plans (SIPs), review the recent school committee meeting, discuss student achievement data, and focus on the district's status and what needed to occur to move the district forward. The superintendent stated that he stressed the importance of unity among the schools and the need for common protocols to become reality. The EQA's review of the SIPs found alignment with the DIP, and when asked to identify the priorities of the district, all principals were in concert with the superintendent and with each other.

The 21st Century Leadership Academy has become involved with the district, and the superintendent and each principal has a mentor. All mentors had experience as school administrators. In addition, the school committee members voted 10-0 to accept a former school committee member from another community to serve as their mentor. In the past the school committee had not adopted the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) code of ethics and not all members had completed the mandatory eight-hour program.

The district had three superintendents from June 2005 to the time of the EQA's first reexamination in June 2006.

The current superintendent has served the district since November 2005. The original contract signed by the superintendent and the district was for a period of three years and was recently extended for one more year at the request of the superintendent. The contract in place calls for an annual evaluation by the school committee. The EQA's review of the superintendent's personnel file did not find any evaluations. The superintendent stated that an evaluation, written by some of the members of the school committee, has not been dated or signed by either party. The superintendent also stated that he has not received any raises during his tenure in the district. In the interview session with the school committee, members expressed mixed points of view regarding the ability of the superintendent. Some members stated that the superintendent has led the charge of bringing the school department and the towns together in their attempt to overhaul the school system and to address noted deficiencies in both the EQA and NEASC reports. Other members expressed unhappiness with the superintendent's approach to serving the community and more importantly with the fact that he does not live in the community.

Meetings with town officials corroborated the fact that the superintendent has worked with the towns, and as a result, a 34-member task force, facilitated by a retired superintendent of schools, was scheduled to meet at the end of October 2007 to form a strategic plan for the upcoming years. The issues of the budget, retention of administrators, school choice, and the need to address the physical plants were to highlight the weekend meeting.

The fiscal officer was hired in May 2005, and five of the elementary schools had new principals in the 2005-2006 school year.

The Finance Advisory Board (FAB) recommended the hiring of a fiscal officer, and the school committee took it upon itself to offer a contract with no input from the superintendent. The elementary principals have all been in the district for at least two years, and the middle school principal is in his second year. The high school principal has served for five years and has been in the district for his entire career as a teacher, athletic director, and assistant principal.

The EQA's review of the personnel files of the entire administrative team did not find any signed and dated evaluations even though each contract calls for an annual evaluation. The superintendent stated that he has been remiss about the writing and delivering of annual performance evaluations of administrators. He also stated that he believes he has been supervising his principals on a regular basis. All administrators have multiple year contracts with language regarding annual salary increases, although this language does not mention student achievement.

The staff of approximately 150 teachers had minimal turnover, but the teaching faculty lacked consistent direction and responsiveness from central office, which was rife with transitions and unclear lines of authority.

The trend of minimal staff turnover continued in the district since EQA's first reexamination in June 2006. The closing of an elementary school brought forth change in many of the schools as 21 teaching positions were eliminated due to budget constraints. Issues did arise prior to the start of the 2007-2008 school year regarding the reassignment of staff members, the longevity clause in the union contract, and the posting of positions. Union officials brought forth a number of grievances about the hiring of staff members and the proper certification of these staff members. Also brought forth was the ability of principals to make educational decisions within each building to best meet the needs of the student population.

The district has a teacher mentor program for first year teachers, and mentors receive a stipend in accordance with the contractual agreement. During the past year a number of new mentors received training to assist in the mentoring of new staff members. An induction program was in place but it had no consistency nor was its contents reviewed, and thus each staff member did not receive the same information and guidelines. As noted in the 2006 reexamination report, teachers reassigned to a new building or program were not assigned a mentor unless they requested one.

Teachers interviewed by the EQA indicated that the constant change in administrators produced a great deal of frustration in the past. They further stated that having the same administrative team in place during the past year brought some stability to individual schools and the district in general. They cited the inability of the school committee members to work harmoniously and the financial woes of the district to be the major road blocks teachers face on a daily basis. The fact

that the towns passed an override has staff members hopeful that this is the beginning of a new era and that citizens of the community will begin to support the educational needs of their children.

Lack of a Shared Understanding of Stakeholder Responsibility for Improving Student Achievement

The district's relationship with the Athol Teachers Association led to time consuming distractions and impediments to improving instruction and teacher accountability.

Although leadership changes in the teachers association led the district to hope for improved conditions, the relationship between the district and the association remained contentious. The association has continued to meet district actions with grievances or threats of grievances. The superintendent said that the message he received from the school committee was that "the collective bargaining agreement pretty much supersedes state law," resulting in a climate in which even threatened grievances were often met by rescinded district plans and initiatives. At the time of the site visit, the district had been awarded a 21st Century grant of $500,000. The district had been unable to obtain sufficient cooperation from the teachers association to approve the job posting for the director of the grant. Association representatives explained that they needed to be assured that new positions would not "impact any other union in the building."

During the spring of 2007, teachers at the Riverbend School approached the administration with the idea of reassigning teachers along with matriculating students, in a process known as "looping." Two teachers volunteered to participate in the initiative. The principal cooperated and scheduled children accordingly. Soon after the opening of the school year, the teachers association filed a grievance against the practice that resulted in the superintendent deciding that the looping initiative would not be instituted at that time. Association representatives reported that the teachers involved had "not really wanted to do that." In another example of the contentious climate, middle school teachers reported that they had wanted to add two skills periods to the school day. According to the teachers, teachers association representatives told them that this constituted a "change in working conditions" and that they should stop any further efforts to modify the schedule to support student learning.

Both the superintendent and the association representatives reported on situations in which the teachers association was helpful, particularly when budget cuts required contract modifications prior to the reexamination period. Both pointed out the association's role in securing the Priority Schools grant from the Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA) that funded the majority of the district's professional development for the prior three years. Both association members and the district administration voiced concerns about the goals of the district, the state of the facilities and their impact upon school choice, and the improvement of student achievement. Despite this apparent climate of cooperation and willingness to compromise, the school committee and the teachers association remain unable to settle a collective bargaining agreement as they enter a second consecutive year without a contract.

The teacher evaluation process did not comply with state law, and the supervision process did not ensure that teachers were implementing the curriculum and instructional improvements.

After the EQA's first reexamination visit, there was little improvement in the status of the evaluation and staff supervision systems within the district. During an interview that was part of the 2007 reexamination, the superintendent and the president of the teachers association agreed to submit the teacher evaluation procedure to collective bargaining. Representatives of the teachers association reported that a sidebar agreement would be possible in the absence of a signed collective bargaining agreement.

The interview sessions revealed numerous instances in which confusion or misinterpretation of evaluation provisions hampered effective personnel evaluation. Contractual provisions required that once a teacher achieved professional teacher status, no further classroom observations and evaluations were ever to be conducted, but merely goal-setting activities during alternate years were permitted. This led to situations where principals were not allowed to provide written feedback to teachers regarding activities observed within their classrooms. Principals at the elementary schools were not even allowed to collect lesson plans lest they be tempted to use the information in some sort of an evaluative way. Although the assertion against checking lesson plans was less obstructive at the secondary level, principals told EQA examiners that they were "not allowed to manage the building." However, opposition by the teachers association was not

the only impediment to effective teacher evaluation. One principal was quoted as saying, "Evaluation is not an issue with us. We have too many things to do." Another said, "I do not get into the classroom enough. The evaluation system is poor." One principal reported that he had been trained in supervisory techniques in a Skillful Teacher workshop years earlier, but had never used the techniques he learned there.

Supervision practices within the district exclusive of teacher evaluation were similarly constrained by the climate of "governance by grievance." Principals reported that they were unsure about how much freedom they had to supervise teachers in their buildings. One principal reported that there had been a threatened grievance over supervision of instruction because "it was impossible to separate the evaluation of teaching from the evaluation of the teacher." Administrators reported changing practices to avoid grievances rather than confront them. Despite this, all principals reported that they maintained a classroom presence and walked through each classroom in their respective buildings at least three times per week.

The EQA team found that administrative evaluations fared no better. A review of administrator personnel files did not find any personnel evaluations conducted since the first reexamination in 2006, despite Board of Education regulations requiring annual evaluations of administrators. The superintendent told EQA examiners that although he did not complete formal evaluations of the principals, he conducted "many informal ones."

Since the first EQA reexamination, the district has entered into a coaching relationship with the 21st Century Leadership Academy, which assigned a coach to every administrator with the exception of assistant principals and the director of operations as well as to the school committee.

The school committee was not clearly focused on priority governance areas under its purview, often unable to arrive at a consensus to make decisions supporting student achievement, and ineffective in ensuring adequate funding for the schools.

The 10-0 vote of the school committee to accept the services of a coach from the 21st Century Leadership Academy was a recent development subsequent to the first reexamination visit. School committee representatives reported that at least two attempts had been made to enlist the

Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) to conduct training for the members, and that each attempt was met by inauspicious circumstances and was cancelled. Committee members who attended the EQA interview said that they had not attended mandatory training at any of the settings where it was held annually.

In addition, school committee members reported that few of its meetings were locally televised in the past. Difficulties encountered by the local community access cable company were cited as the reason for the lack of television coverage. According to school committee members, the length of the meetings meant that community volunteers from the cable company were often forced to disassemble and transport equipment after 1 a.m. Also, the town of Royalston did not have any cable service through which to view potential coverage of meetings. School committee representatives expressed confidence that those drawbacks could be overcome by judicious scheduling and by moving meetings to the cable studio, and they expressed a willingness to explore options to do so. The local newspaper provided coverage of the school committee meetings, although both the school committee and the administration expressed disappointment at occasional inconsistencies between news stories and the headlines that accompanied them.

Following the first reexamination, the superintendent increased presentations to the school committee about academic topics. Suspension of the accreditation of the high school by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) also united the community and the school committee in finding the money for needed renovations to the high school building. For FY 2007 the citizens of Athol and Royalston passed a tax-override that, combined with a $1 million loan from the state and the closing of one elementary school, allowed the district to continue operating for the year. The superintendent reported that he was not sure what would happen in future years, but the Department of Revenue, in return for providing the loan to the district, installed a Financial Advisory Board (FAB) with wide ranging power to manage the finances of the district.

The budget process was a highly political process. The towns comprising the district did not provide adequate financial support to meet the needs of students. This resulted in a large loss of revenue for the district due to school choice.

Although the budget process remained political since the first reexamination, according to administrators the intervention of the FAB proved to be a positive step for the district. Administrators reported that they had daily contact with the chairperson of the board on matters of line item transfers and appropriations. The chair of the FAB reported that he recommended to the Department of Revenue the continuation of its involvement with the district "for at least another year or two" beyond the projected termination date of 2008.

During the spring of 2007 an "all-boards meeting" of town representatives in Athol prompted the school committee to empower an *ad hoc* committee to develop a strategic plan for the school district. The strategic planning committee has actively pursued participation from a wide representation of community members and stakeholders with the intent of providing long-term guidance for the direction of the school district and its relationship with its member communities. Town officials, including those serving on the committee, expressed a willingness to work with district and other representatives to chart a course for the district that would be both educationally and fiscally responsible and would avoid the inclusion of political interference.

The teachers' union was actively involved in the budget process and used the grievance procedure to prioritize teacher union interests over initiatives to improve student achievement.

According to the superintendent, prior to his arrival in 2005 three people prepared the first draft of the budget: a member of the budget subcommittee, the teachers association president, and the superintendent. The superintendent reported that the involvement of the FAB ended that practice. Both teachers and principals told EQA examiners that they now had a larger voice in budget development. Reports from administrators, teachers, and teachers association representatives indicated that the administration's avoidance of threatened grievances played a role that was equally disruptive to the functioning of the district as was the actual filing of grievances.

The new superintendent has involved the member communities by having the finance committee participate in the development of the 2007 budget.

The development of the budget for FY 2008 included the involvement of school committee members as well as other stakeholders. The school committee supported a budget subcommittee.

Principals reportedly developed building budgets based upon information provided by the district business manager, and provided information to school councils. The level of input sought from school councils was less clear.

Insufficient Alignment Between Goals and Processes

The district took several steps to address areas of concern noted in the 2006 EQA report.

The district had not put adequate systems in place by the time of the site visit to improve student achievement.

Since the previous EQA reexamination in June 2006, the district developed School Improvement Plans (SIPs) that aligned with the District Improvement Plan (DIP). The district brought in a consultant from a college to assist with the writing of the DIP and SIPs. This District Alignment and Strategic Planning Project (DASPP) also trained administrators in the use of data. Interviews with administrators and teachers revealed that TestWiz was used to analyze MCAS data at the building level. Elementary principals were all trained in the use of TestWiz, and they provided the data and analyses to staff members who used them to examine strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum, especially in identifying gaps and reviewing curriculum maps for placement of topics.

In addition, the district began implementing X2, a software system that can encompass several functions when fully implemented. Elementary principals indicated they hoped for the ability to incorporate data from the MCAS tests, the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), the Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE), and district benchmark assessments into student profiles to be able to review student progress.

At the middle school, team leaders were trained in TestWiz and were facilitators of data analysis for their teams. The high school department heads worked with their staffs to analyze data and review and modify courses to continuously align them with state framework standards. In particular, the math and English departments used district benchmark assessments to “tweak” their courses and refine the assessments. Since the district now has the web version of TestWiz with 36 passwords for the district, knowledge and use of data has become more widespread. In

some buildings the principal provided the data to teachers, while in others teachers would retrieve the data themselves online.

In order to improve student achievement, the district increased time for literacy instruction to a continuous 90-minute literacy block at the elementary level, along with 75 to 90 minutes of math instruction. Additional supports included Lexia, Accelerated Math, DIBELS, Early Reading Intervention (ERI), the Three Tier Model, a Reading First grant at one elementary school, and a Secondary School Reading Grant at the middle school. At the high school, students must now pass English and Algebra I in grade 9 to be promoted to grade 10 in which all students take a full year of English and Geometry. Students who failed the MCAS tests were placed in a remedial MCAS math or ELA class.

The district had not fully evaluated its actual budgetary requirements to meet the educational needs of its students. The community's current financial commitment to education does not ensure adequate levels of funding for programs since the override only meets the current shortfall.

The district previously had a dropout prevention counselor at the high school who worked with at-risk students; the position was eliminated in cuts to the 2007-2008 budget. A summer program for at-risk students was also eliminated. Elementary schools offered an after-school program with funds provided by school parent groups or other alternative sources of funding. The MTA grant at the middle school for Project Priorities also provided some funding for after-school support.

The concern from the 2006 report addressing community support for education saw some progress during the latter part of the 2006-2007 school year into 2007-2008. At the superintendent's urging, an All-Boards Committee was formed to include town selectmen, school committee members, and finance committee members. The committee now meets and focuses more on whole community needs, including education.

The district's organizational structure did not ensure implementation of district plans.

Through a review of documents and interviews, EQA examiners found the district now has an organizational structure to ensure implementation of district plans. The superintendent developed

a more cohesive administrative team that has weekly meetings at which data, including MCAS test results, and School Improvement Plans are the main topics. The SIPs follow a consistent template developed with a consultant and address root causes, change objectives, resources, and evidence. The District Improvement Plan contains nine goals, and each School Improvement Plan has the same first three major goals as the DIP. The first addresses ELA and sets a goal for a percentage increase in meeting the school's target for the percentage of students attaining proficiency. The second goal addresses mathematics, and the third goal addresses open-response questions.

The district had not provisioned for a staff member with sufficient time and authority to be responsible for oversight and coordination of data generation, student assessments and use of data, program evaluation, and prioritizing the raising of student achievement by focusing on curriculum, instruction, professional development, academic support services, and budget allocation.

The school committee had developed a position, director of operations, to replace the assistant superintendent position it had eliminated. The director of operation's responsibilities included all of the above areas as well as grants management. While the director had responsibility for these areas, the person had no authority to supervise these areas, including principals. It was a position with high expectations for performance and little authority to effect change. The current director, in the position for two years, brought about several initiatives, including the implementation of the curriculum benchmarks and the districtwide adoption of SRA Real Math. A district curriculum committee that would meet throughout the year has not yet been organized as it requires the funding of after-school committees for which the district does not have funds. Curriculum work is done at grade level meetings (one hour per month), at building level faculty meetings, or during the summer paid with grant funds. The director of operations position was funded with a combination of school budget funds and grant monies.

The district has greater fidelity of implementation of curriculum and programs; however, the reading program Open Court is still not used consistently across the district. In one elementary school, the principal removed other materials, leaving only the Open Court Reading and the new SRA Real Math. Teachers were reluctant to give up other materials but were implementing both

programs with greater fidelity. The director of operations along with some building principals brought curriculum mapping to their schools with great initial success. During the current year, maps are being examined and revised using available data.

The superintendent had been working on creating a shared understanding about stakeholder responsibility for improving student achievement through the collaborative creation of the District Improvement Plan for 2007-2009. The superintendent has improved communication and established a collaborative relationship with the school committee and united staff and stakeholders. The override was an unprecedented victory.

During the time period before the successful override vote, the superintendent had reached out to the community in a variety of ways to elicit support for the schools and education. He used his monthly television program for community members to call in questions, attended community events and meetings, and began working with town officials on relevant issues. Parent groups and others joined in supporting this effort. The Town of Athol also transferred money for renovations at the high school. This community involvement led to renovations at Athol High School, allowing the high school to retain NEASC accreditation with probation status.

Another initiative to involve more constituencies in the community in planning for the future was the creation of a Strategic Planning Committee. The committee will develop a vision for the schools and outline goals for the future. A pre-planning committee met for several months in the spring and summer of 2007 and recruited key members of the community to the initiative. This small group has led to a committee of 34 members representing a wide range of community groups including senior citizens, town officials, business members, and parents, and in the education realm the superintendent, school committee representatives, and representation from the Athol Teachers Association.

The work of the committee was to result in a town meeting forum on October 25, 2007 at which the community will be asked “Where are our schools now?” and “What do we need to improve?” With the input of the community, the committee was to work for two days following the forum to shape a vision and goals as the basis of a strategic plan.

The 2006-2007 DIP called for the creation of a district curriculum committee.

Through a review of documents and interviews, EQA examiners found alignment of the curriculum in ELA and math, as well as benchmark assessments for those subjects for which certain standards and indicators were chosen for districtwide assessment. These were implemented for the 2006-2007 school year and were continuing to be refined. A consistent process or protocol for analyzing and using the data to inform instruction was not in place.

The district budget remained inadequate and the district had not yet been able to implement its plan to improve student achievement.

While budget support remains inadequate, the implementation of the DIP and SIPs, the district benchmark assessments, curriculum alignment to the framework standards, and greater fidelity of implementation of curriculum has led to improvements in some areas of MCAS test performance from 2005 to 2007, especially in mathematics.

Inadequate Budget

The first reexamination by the EQA in 2006 determined that the district had an inadequate budget, and the towns comprising the district did not provide adequate financial support to meet the needs of its students. The district's financial system was fragmented due to turnover, and the district lacked leadership in the business operation. For FY 2006, the district attempted to secure a $480,000 override for budget operations that failed and resulted in severe cuts. The district had to secure a $1 million bailout loan from the state and now has fiscal board oversight. In addition, students were electing to "school choice" out of the district at a rate that created an additional adverse financial impact on the district. The facilities, with the exception of the middle school and the Royalston Elementary School, were in desperate need of renovation or replacement. The district did not have a long-term facilities capital improvement plan or a routine preventative maintenance program.

Towns comprising the district did not provide adequate financial support to meet the needs of its students.

For FY 2006, the member towns defeated an operational override for $480,000. For FY 2007, the district's towns passed an override of $1,220,500 to meet the current budget operation shortfall. The Town of Athol also transferred approximately $287,000 from town funds to the schools for providing necessary repairs to the high school and to address NEASC's concerns for accreditation. The district also borrowed $1 million from the state, which it is required to pay back with interest over a 10-year period, and which obligates it to be placed under the authority of a Finance Advisory Board (FAB), established in Chapter 50 of the Acts of 2006 and titled An Act Relating To Financial Conditions In The Athol-Royalston Regional School District. The chairperson of the FAB, who is a representative from the Department of Revenue, has the responsibility to approve the district's financial transactions and budget. The total school district budget expenditures for FY 2006 were $22 million. The budget for FY 2007 was $23.3 million, and for FY 2008 it was $24.5 million.

Town finance officials stated to examiners that the net Cherry Sheet receipts to the district decreased from $17,356,102 in 2005 to $16,561,738 in 2006. Receipts further decreased to $16,638,250 in 2007, and increased to $17,273,199 in 2008. These officials also stated that the annual additional tax revenue in accordance with Proposition 2 ½ plus new growth made it difficult to fund the requested school district budget.

Chapter 70 receipts for the district in 2006 were $16,820,492, and the district exceeded its net school spending (NSS) requirement by $973,957. Chapter 70 receipts for the district in 2007 were $17,084,514, and the district exceeded its net school spending requirement by $2,427,670. Chapter 70 receipts for the district in 2008 are reported by the Department of Revenue to be $17,837,209. According to current Department of Revenue documents, the town of Athol had a 2006 unemployment rate of 6.7 percent. The average single family tax bill in 2007 was $1,914, compared to the state average of $3,962. The Moody's bond rating is A3. The town had $674,101 in free cash as of July 1, 2006 and a stabilization fund of $173,483. Royalston had an unemployment rate of 6.6 percent. The average single family tax bill in 2007 was $1,815. The town has $10,179 in free cash and a stabilization fund of $649,000.

Interviews with district administrators indicated the financial condition of the district resulted in a large number of students opting to go to school choice districts at a large loss of revenue for the district. A review of district financial documents indicated that in 2005 the total number of students choosing to attend schools outside Athol-Royalston was 130. In 2006, the total number of students choosing a school outside the district was 172 students at a cost to the district of $1.1 million. In 2007, the total number of students choosing a school outside the district was 247 at a cost of $1.34 million. For 2008, the estimated number is 279 at an estimated cost of $1.84 million. The number of out-of-district students choosing to attend Athol-Royalston schools increased from 18 in 2005 to 49 in 2008. In interviews, district personnel and others reported the reasons for students selecting schools outside the district were an inadequate budget, which resulted in fewer course offerings and high student-teacher ratios, the condition of buildings, high turnover of administrative staff, and lack of community support.

The district failed to provide the financial resources required to improve student achievement.

The major expenditures in the school budget consisted of special education tuition costs and costs for retirement, health, and other insurance. According to the Department of Education expenditure report for the school district in 2006, the per pupil expenditure in the district from all funds was less than the state average per pupil expenditure in all major categories except insurance, in-district transportation, and social security. In the category of instructional materials, equipment, and technology, the district's per pupil expenditure was $150.23 compared to the state average of $359.75. Professional development funding from the operating budget has "shrunk to practically nothing," according to interviewees. Most funding for professional development comes from grants. Another funding situation facing the district is that the bargaining unit personnel are in their second year without a negotiated agreement.

An elementary school was closed at the conclusion of the 2006-2007 school year to balance the budget, and students were reassigned. The superintendent reported that due to the school closing there was a reduction in staff of 21 teachers and 15 instructional aides plus other support personnel.

The district's budget did not integrate the District Improvement Plan nor did the budget include long-term goals and action plans.

Interviewees stated that the budget process had previously been "top down" with little input sought from the staff. School administrators stated that they are now involved in the budget development process and that student assessment data and school and district improvement plans are now a part of the process, and they referred to the purchase of a new mathematics series as an example. Examiners did not find any documents to confirm that student assessment data were used in budget development. Examiners were told by town officials that the superintendent now meets with the board of selectmen, the finance committee, and other stakeholders to explain the budget. The superintendent has appeared on live, local access cable television to answer call-in questions about the budget and other matters. When asked why the override for $1.2 million was successful, the officials responded that "The town saw where the money was going" and "The superintendent has involved the communities by having the finance committee as well as the budget subcommittee of the school committee participate in the development of the budget." Examiners reviewed a PowerPoint presentation the superintendent prepared for the 2008 budget that clearly explained the district's needs.

However, the budget document still does not contain all the elements anticipated by examiners. It is strictly a financial document and does not provide accurate information on all fund sources, budgetary trends, or a written explanation of budget requests.

The financial management was overlapping, fragmented due to turnover, and lacked leadership in the business operation. The superintendent performed the functions of a business manager and chief procurement officer.

The independent audit report for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2006 contained findings regarding the district not monitoring receipts against expenditures, the district not monitoring fund balances, improvements needed in the management of student activity funds, timely submission of grants, improvements needed in cash management of grants, and compliance with Massachusetts procurement laws. These findings were discussed with district administrators, and examiners were informed that the position of business manager, which had not been funded since 1996, was staffed beginning in August 2006 and is still in place. Furthermore, that the district

now uses the financial management software program FundSense, which is used by a number of school districts, and uses Excel spreadsheets to forecast payroll and other expenditures. The district still does not have someone trained in the Massachusetts Public Procurement program.

The district pursued federal and state entitlement grants but did not expend all of its grant monies and did not actively pursue competitive grants during the review period.

The district recently received a competitive 21st Century Leadership Academy grant, and interviewees stated that they were more active in pursuing grants and more accountable in ensuring that grant monies were being spent in the proper manner.

The facilities (except the middle school and the Royalston Community School) were in desperate need of renovation and replacement. Lacking a preventative maintenance program and adequate custodial staff, the facilities were not maintained adequately. In addition, the school committee did not put into place a long-term capital plan.

Examiners found that the district still does not have a long-term capital improvement maintenance plan or a routine preventative maintenance plan. The schools were clean but, with the exception of the middle school and Royalston Community School, have or are close to reaching the end of their useful life. The NEASC had placed the high school on probation partially due to the condition of the facility. In the fall of 2006, a Building Committee met with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) regarding the process to apply for reimbursement for the construction of a new high school. In November 2006, debt exclusion articles requesting approval for submitting an application to the MSBA were defeated at town meetings. The Town of Athol transferred approximately $287,000 to the school district in 2007 for improvements to the high school to enable it to receive accreditation from the NEASC. In August 2007, the district submitted a request to the MSBA for funding assistance for boiler and HVAC replacement at the Riverbend Elementary School. The Silver Lake Community School was closed after the 2006-2007 school year, and students were reassigned to other elementary schools. Examiners found that the schools had front doors secured with buzzer entrances, and some had cameras. Exit doors were distinctly numbered or lettered.

Conclusion

The communities of Athol and Royalston were lured by the prospect of major state support beginning in the mid 1950s, and then ensnared by the unevenness and unpredictability of that same support since 1980. Circumstances and some questionable decision-making complicated the situation over the years, and the district reached the point where the New England Association of School and Colleges, the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, as well as local school and community officials became concerned over the capacity of the district to adequately provide for the education of its children.

The EQA conducted an examination in 2004 and the district was placed on 'Watch' status by the Educational Management Audit Council. A reexamination visit was conducted during the spring of 2006, and the EMAC asked for one further review in 2007. At this time, examiners found that both the state and the communities had moved to temporarily support the finances of the district, issues between the teachers' association and the district appeared to have eased somewhat, and improvements in the educational climate began to take effect. The NEASAC approved of renovations to the high school and continued the accreditation of the high school on a probationary basis. MCAS scores from the previous year showed improvement, the Department of Revenue installed a financial advisory committee to assist the district in making sound fiscal decisions, and the school committee empowered a strategic planning committee including diverse representatives of the community to make recommendations that might influence long-term financing of the district, replacement of aging facilities, and strategies to address other nagging local issues. While the problems of the Athol-Royalston Regional School District were not yet permanently solved, there was reason to look for better things to come.

Appendix A: 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 Athol-Royalston 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 Athol-Royalston; and comparative analyses of districtwide, 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 B 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:

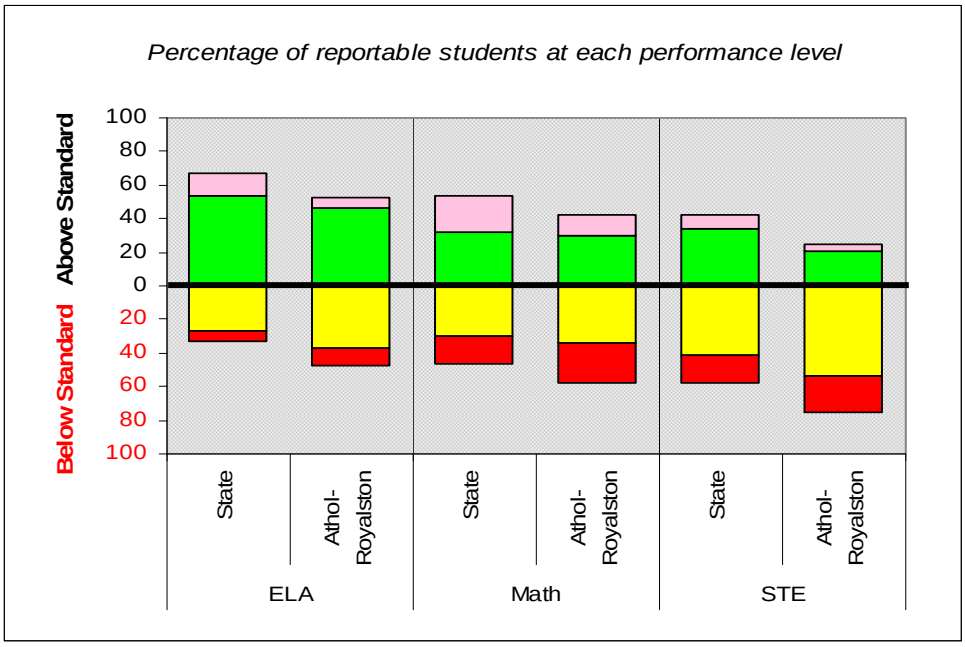
- On average, approximately half the students in Athol-Royalston Public Schools attained proficiency in English language arts (ELA) on the 2007 MCAS tests, more than two-fifths of Athol-Royalston students attained proficiency in math, and close to one-quarter attained proficiency in science and technology/engineering (STE). Eighty-six percent of the Class of 2007 attained a Competency Determination.

- Athol-Royalton's ELA proficiency index on the 2007 MCAS tests was 79 proficiency index (PI) points. This resulted in a proficiency gap, the difference between its proficiency index and the target of 100, of 21 PI points, six points wider than the state's average proficiency gap in ELA. This gap would require an average improvement in performance of three PI points annually to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP).

- In 2007, Athol-Royalton's math proficiency index on the MCAS tests was 69 PI points, resulting in a proficiency gap of 31 PI points, seven points wider than the state's average proficiency gap in math. This gap would require an average improvement of four and one-half PI points per year to achieve AYP.

- Athol-Royalston's STE proficiency index in 2007 was 64 PI points, resulting in a proficiency gap of 36 PI points, eight and one-half points wider than that statewide.

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



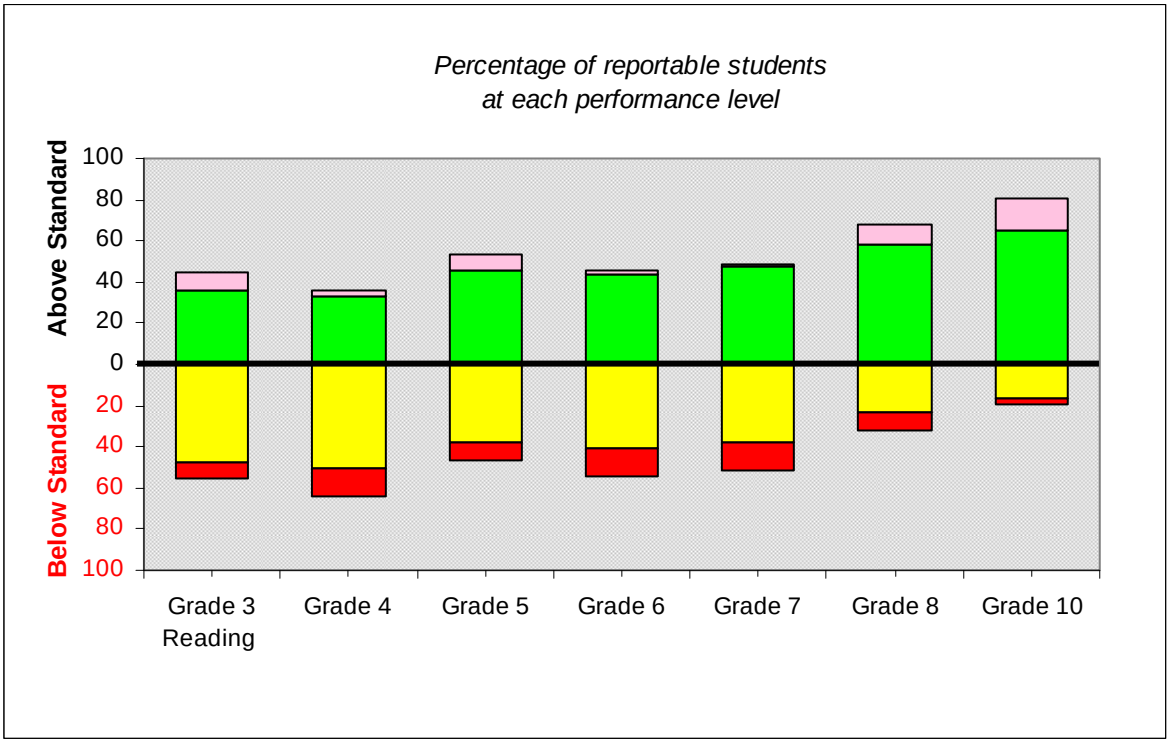
	ELA		Math		STE	
	State	Athol-Royalston	State	Athol-Royalston	State	Athol-Royalston
Advanced	13	6	22	13	9	4
Proficient	53	46	32	30	34	20
Needs Improvement	27	37	30	34	41	54
Warning/Failing	7	10	17	24	17	22
Percent Attaining Proficiency	66	52	54	43	43	24
Proficiency Index (PI)	85.7	79.4	76.1	69.1	72.1	63.6

In 2007, achievement in English language arts (ELA), math, and science and technology/engineering (STE) was lower in Athol-Royalston than statewide. In Athol-Royalston, 52 percent of students attained proficiency in ELA, compared to 66 percent statewide; 43 percent attained proficiency in math, compared to 54 percent statewide; and 24 percent attained proficiency in STE, compared to 43 percent statewide.

The 2007 proficiency index for Athol-Royalston students in ELA was 79 PI points, compared to 86 PI points statewide; in math, it was 69 PI points, compared to 76 points statewide; and in STE, it was 64 PI points, compared to 72 points statewide.

The ELA proficiency gap for Athol-Royalston students in 2007 was 21 PI points, compared to 14 PI points statewide, and would require an average improvement of three PI points annually to make AYP. Athol-Royalston's math proficiency gap in 2007 was 31 PI points, compared to 24 PI points statewide, and would require an average improvement of four and one-half PI points per year to make AYP. Athol-Royalston's STE proficiency gap was 36 PI points, compared to 28 PI points statewide.

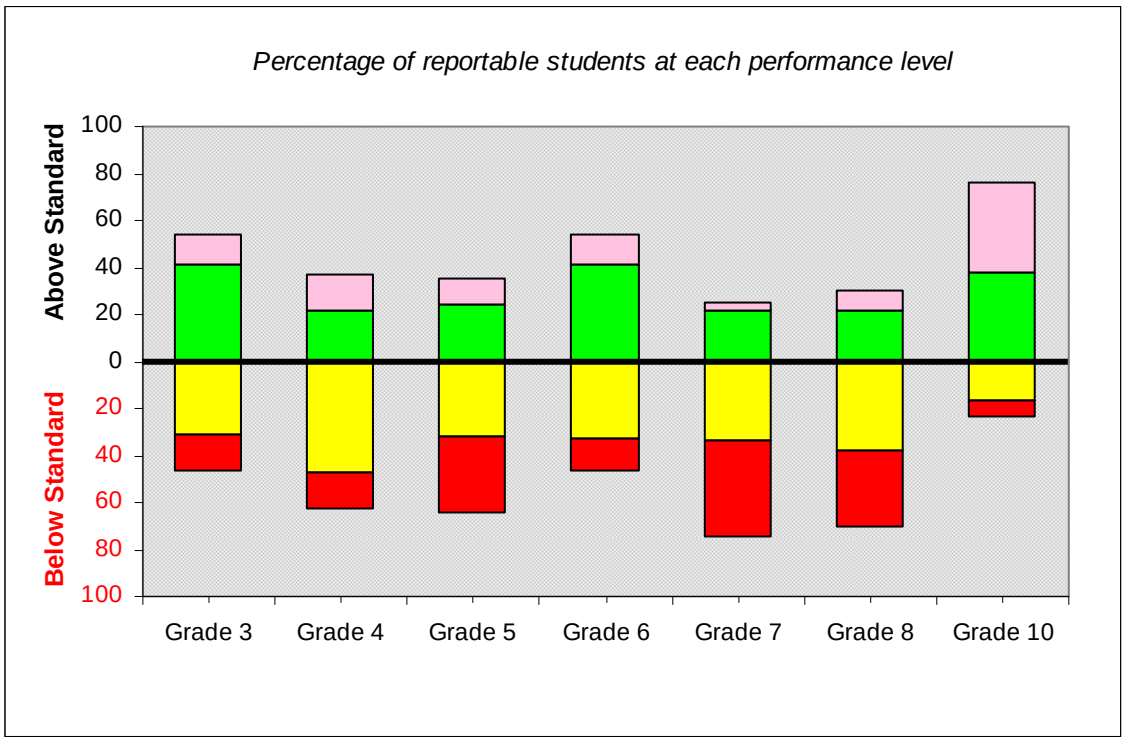
Figure/Table 2: MCAS English Language Arts (ELA) Test Performance by Grade, 2007



	Grade 3 Reading	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 10
Advanced	8	3	7	2	1	10	15
Proficient	36	33	46	44	47	58	66
Needs Improvement	48	50	38	41	38	23	16
Warning/Failing	8	14	9	13	13	9	3
Percent Attaining Proficiency	44	36	53	46	48	68	81

The percentage of Athol-Royalston students attaining proficiency in ELA in 2007 varied by grade level, ranging from a low of 36 percent at grade 4 to a high of 81 percent at grade 10.

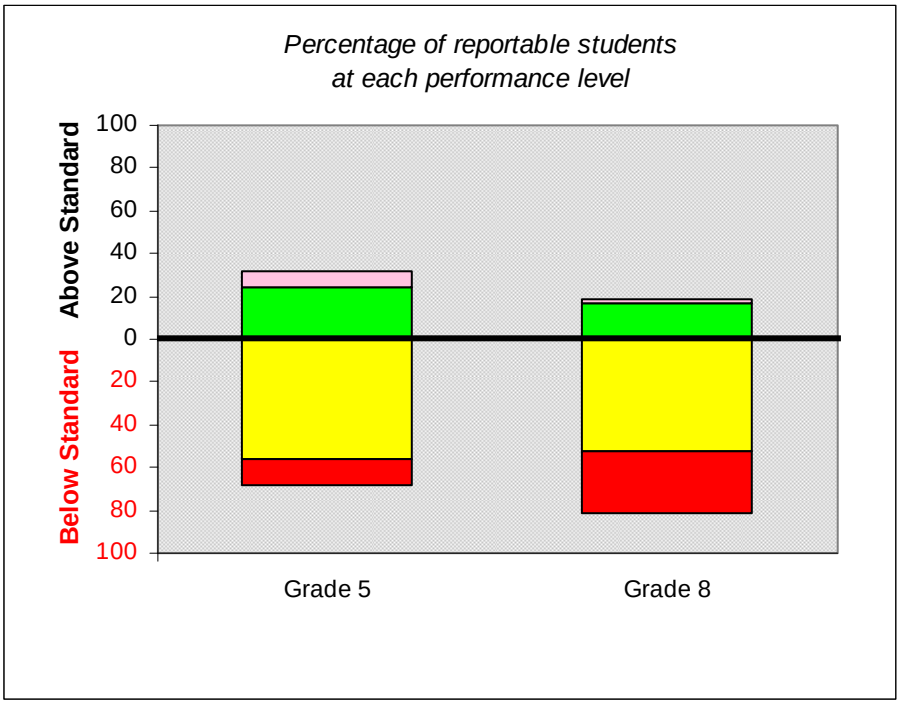
Figure/Table 3: MCAS Math Test Performance by Grade, 2007



	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 10
Advanced	12	16	11	12	3	8	39
Proficient	42	22	25	42	22	22	38
Needs Improvement	31	47	32	32	34	38	16
Warning/Failing	15	16	33	14	41	32	7
Percent Attaining Proficiency	54	38	36	54	25	30	77

The percentage of Athol-Royalston students attaining proficiency in math in 2007 varied widely by grade level, ranging from a low of 25 percent at grade 7 to a high of 77 percent at grade 10.

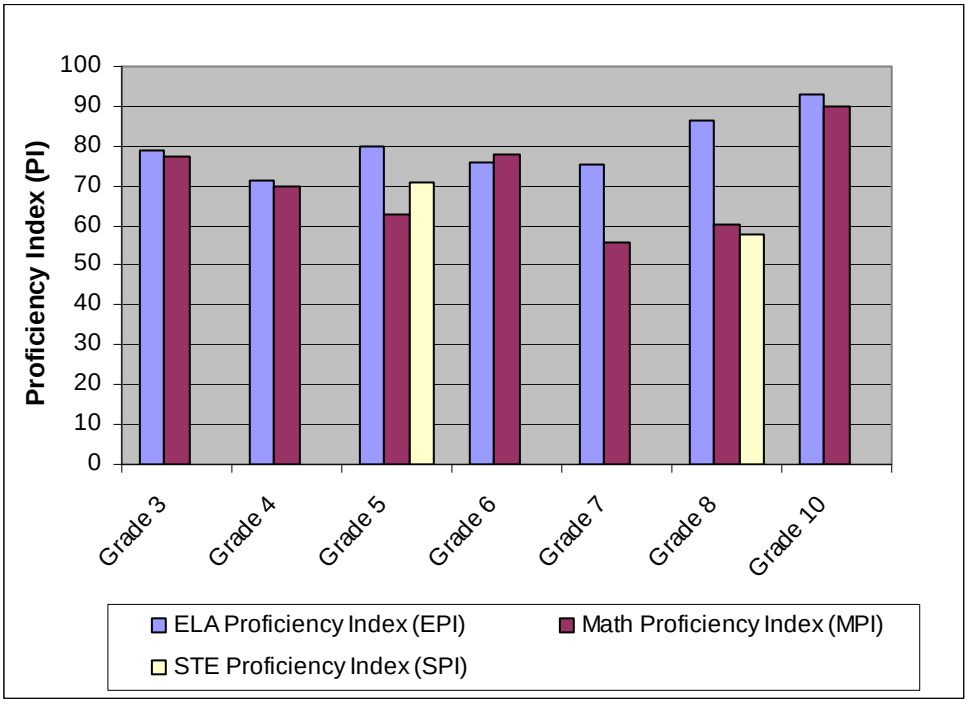
Figure/Table 4: MCAS Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) Test Performance by Grade, 2007



	Grade 5	Grade 8
Advanced	7	2
Proficient	25	17
Needs Improvement	56	52
Warning/Failing	12	29
Percent Attaining Proficiency	32	19

In Athol-Royalston in 2007, 32 percent of grade 5 students attained proficiency in STE, and 19 percent of grade 8 students did so.

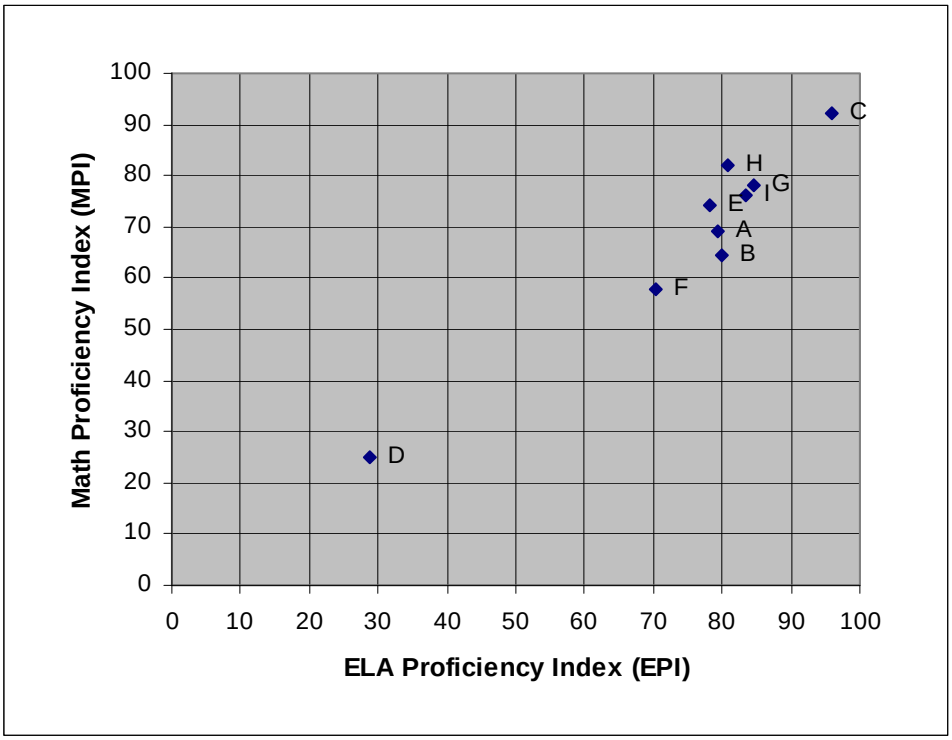
Figure/Table 5: MCAS Proficiency Indices by Grade and Subject, 2007



	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 10
ELA Proficiency Index (EPI)	78.7	71.3	79.8	75.8	75.5	86.5	92.8
Math Proficiency Index (MPI)	77.4	69.6	62.9	77.9	55.8	60.4	89.7
STE Proficiency Index (SPI)			71.0			58.0	

At every grade level except grade 6, the performance of Athol-Royalston students on the 2007 MCAS tests was strongest in ELA. Athol-Royalston's ELA proficiency gap in 2007 ranged from a low of seven PI points at grade 10 to a high of 29 PI points at grade 4. Athol-Royalton's math proficiency gap ranged from a low of 10 PI points at grade 10 to a high of 44 PI points at grade 7. Athol-Royalton's STE proficiency gap was 29 PI points at grade 5 and 42 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	Athol-Royalston district avg.	79.4	69.1	2,044
B	Athol-Royalston Middle School	79.9	64.5	934
C	Athol High School	95.8	92.1	165
D	Ellen Bigelow School	28.8	25.0	37
E	Pleasant Street School	78.2	74.1	282
F	Riverbend School	70.4	57.8	250
G	Royalston Community School	84.5	78.0	148
H	Sanders Street School	80.8	82.1	78
I	Silver Lake School	83.3	76.0	150

Among Athol-Royalston's schools, the ELA proficiency gap in 2007 ranged from a low of four PI points at Athol High to a high of 71 PI points at Bigelow, although the number of students tested at Bigelow was small. Athol-Royalston's math proficiency gap ranged from a low of eight PI points at Athol High to a high of 75 PI points at Bigelow.

Equity of Achievement

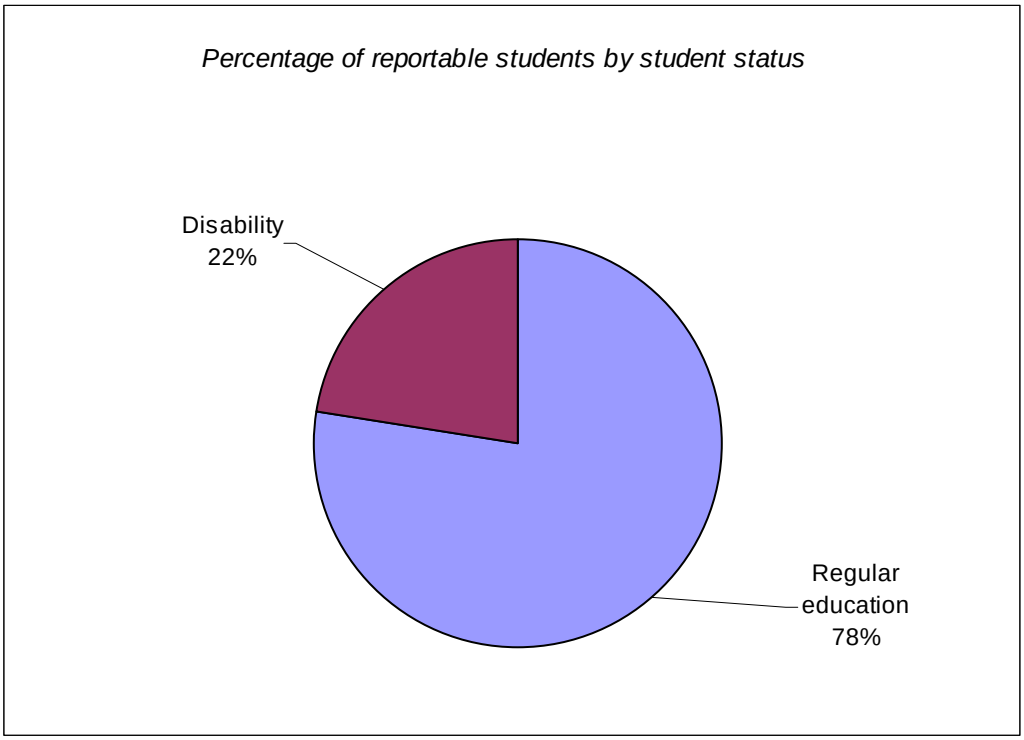
Do MCAS test results vary among subgroups of students?

Findings:

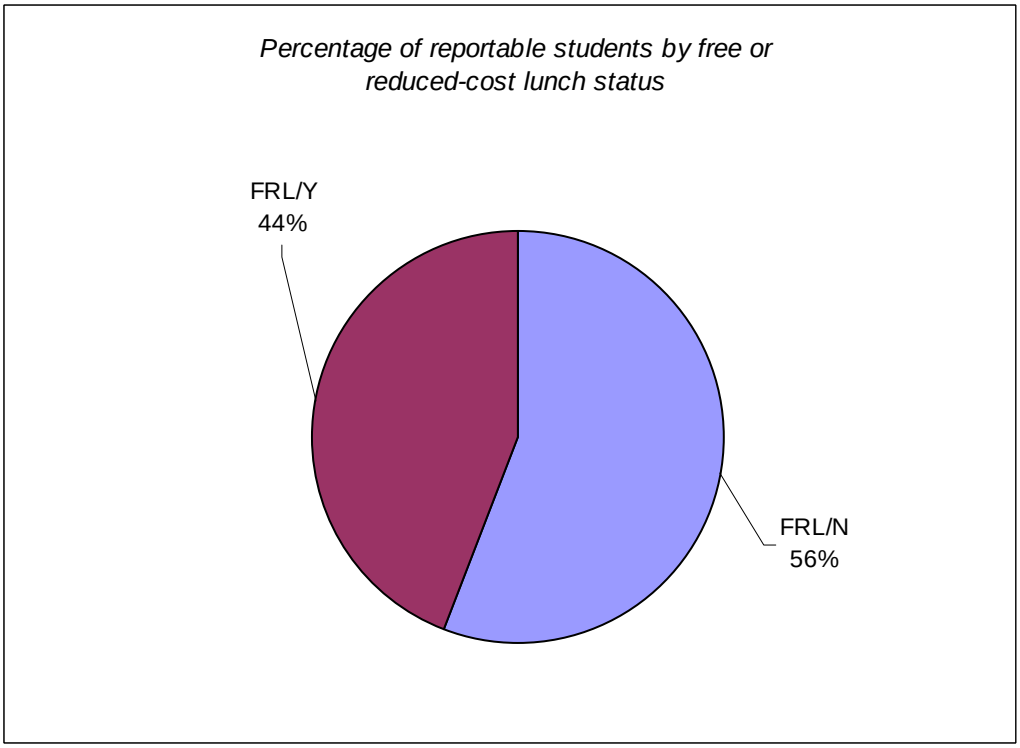
- MCAS performance in 2007 varied considerably among subgroups of Athol-Royalston students. Of the four measurable subgroups in Athol-Royalston, the gap in performance between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups was 34 PI points in ELA and 32 PI points in math (regular education students, students with disabilities, respectively).
- The proficiency gaps in Athol-Royalston in 2007 in both ELA and math were wider than the district average for students with disabilities 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 and non low-income students.

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

A.



B.

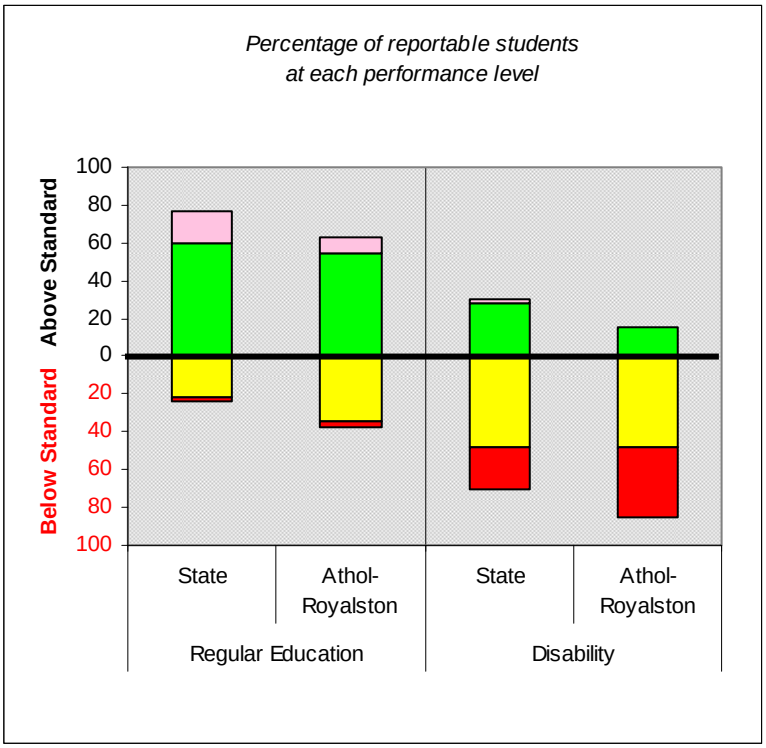


	Subgroup	Number of Students
Student status	Regular education	804
	Disability	233
Free or reduced-cost lunch status	FRL/N	586
	FRL/Y	464

Note: Data include students in tested grades levels only.

In Athol-Royalston in 2007, 22 percent of the students tested were students with disabilities. Forty-four 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

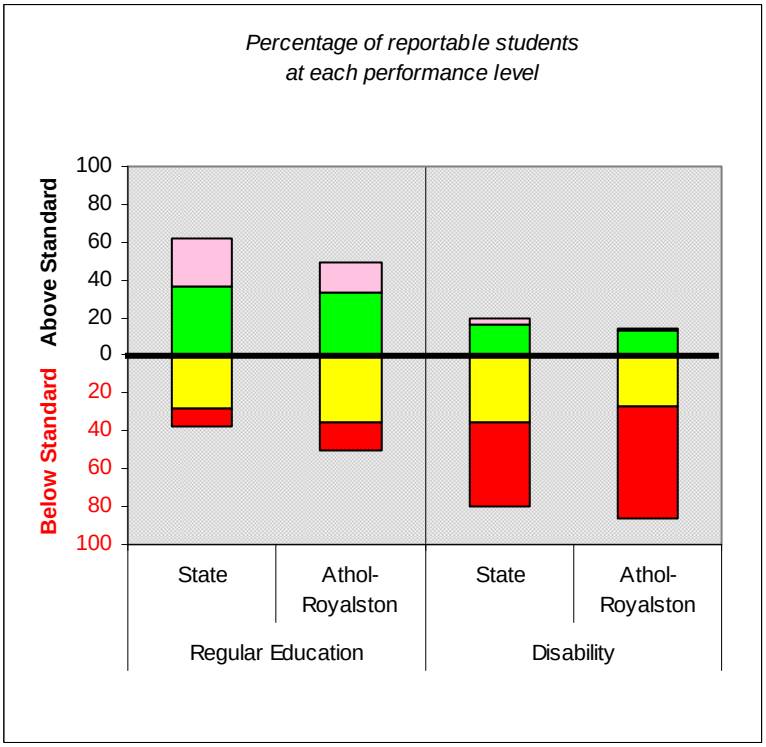


	Regular Education		Disability	
	State	Athol-Royalston	State	Athol-Royalston
Advanced	16	8	2	0
Proficient	60	55	28	15
Needs Improvement	21	34	48	48
Warning/Failing	2	3	22	37
Percent Attaining Proficiency	76	63	30	15
Proficiency Index (EPI)	91.3	86.8	64.8	52.6

In Athol-Royalston in 2007, the proficiency rate in ELA of regular education students was more than four times greater than that of students with disabilities. Sixty-three percent of regular education students and 15 percent of students with disabilities attained proficiency in ELA on the 2007 MCAS tests.

Athol-Royalton's ELA proficiency gap in 2007 was 13 PI points for regular education students, compared to nine PI points statewide; and 47 PI points for students with disabilities, compared to 35 PI points statewide. The performance gap in ELA between Athol-Royalton's regular education students and students with disabilities was 34 PI points.

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

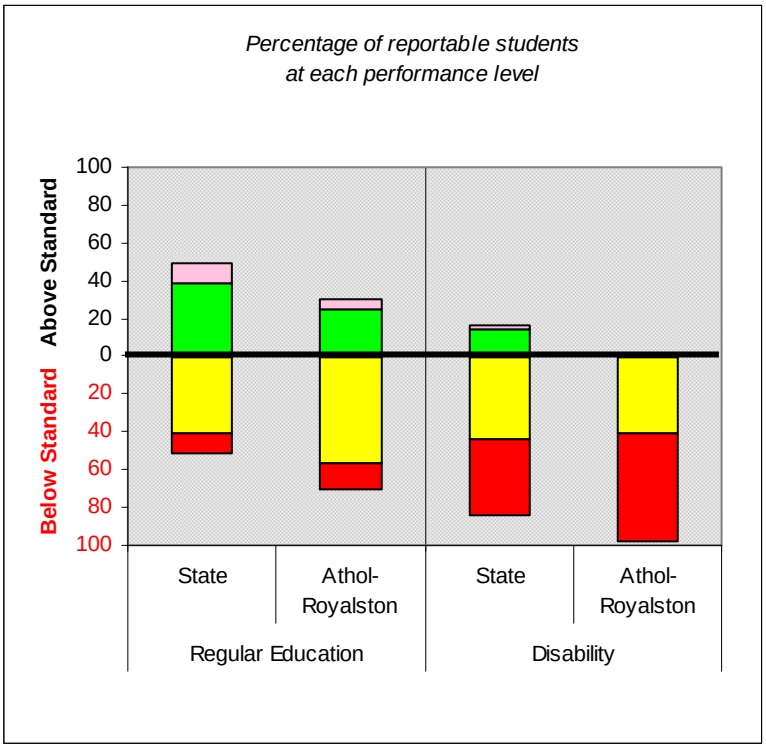


	Regular Education		Disability	
	State	Athol-Royalston	State	Athol-Royalston
Advanced	26	16	4	1
Proficient	36	34	16	13
Needs Improvement	28	36	36	26
Warning/Failing	10	15	44	59
Percent Attaining Proficiency	62	50	20	14
Proficiency Index (MPI)	82.2	75.4	51.0	43.8

In Athol-Royalston in 2007, the proficiency rate in math of regular education students was three and one-half times greater than that of students with disabilities. Fifty percent of regular education students and 14 percent of students with disabilities attained proficiency in math on the MCAS tests in 2007.

Athol-Royalton's math proficiency gap in 2007 was 25 PI points for regular education students, compared to 18 PI points statewide; and 56 PI points for students with disabilities, compared to 49 PI points statewide. The performance gap in math between Athol-Royalton's 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

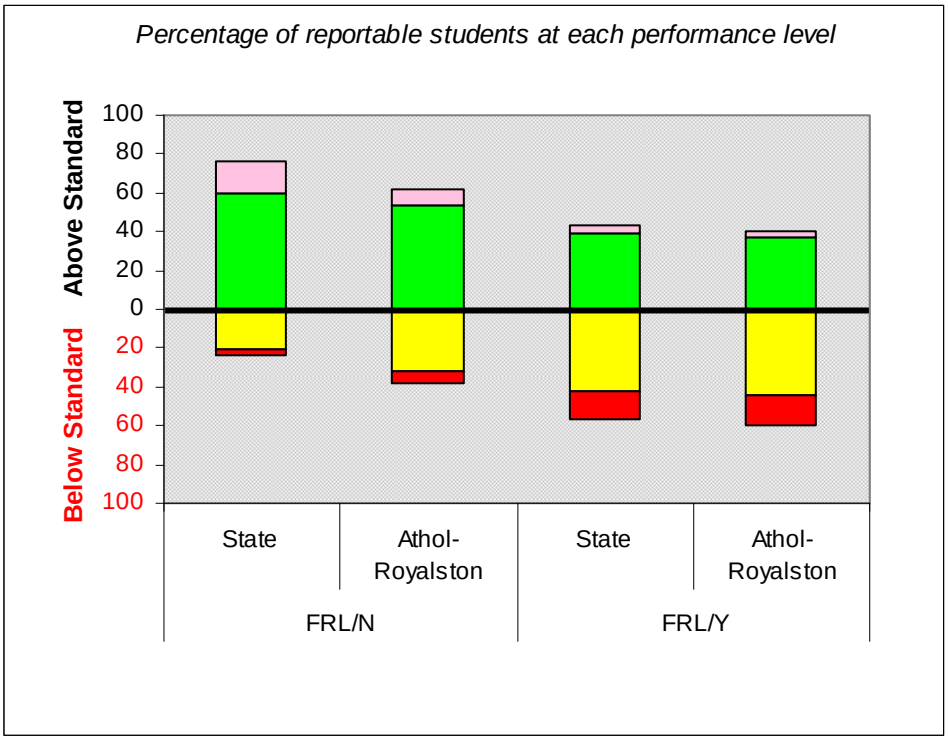


	Regular Education		Disability	
	State	Athol-Royalston	State	Athol-Royalston
Advanced	10	5	2	0
Proficient	39	25	14	2
Needs Improvement	41	56	44	41
Warning/Failing	10	14	40	58
Percent Attaining Proficiency	49	30	16	2
Proficiency Index (SPI)	77.5	69.1	51.8	39.8

In Athol-Royalston in 2007, the proficiency rate in science and technology/engineering of regular education students was 15 times greater than that of students with disabilities. Thirty percent of regular education students and only two percent of students with disabilities attained proficiency in STE on the 2007 MCAS tests.

Athol-Royalston's STE proficiency gap in 2007 was 31 PI points for regular education students, compared to 23 PI points statewide; and 60 PI points for students with disabilities, compared to 48 PI points statewide. The performance gap in STE between Athol-Royalston's regular education students and students with disabilities was 29 PI points.

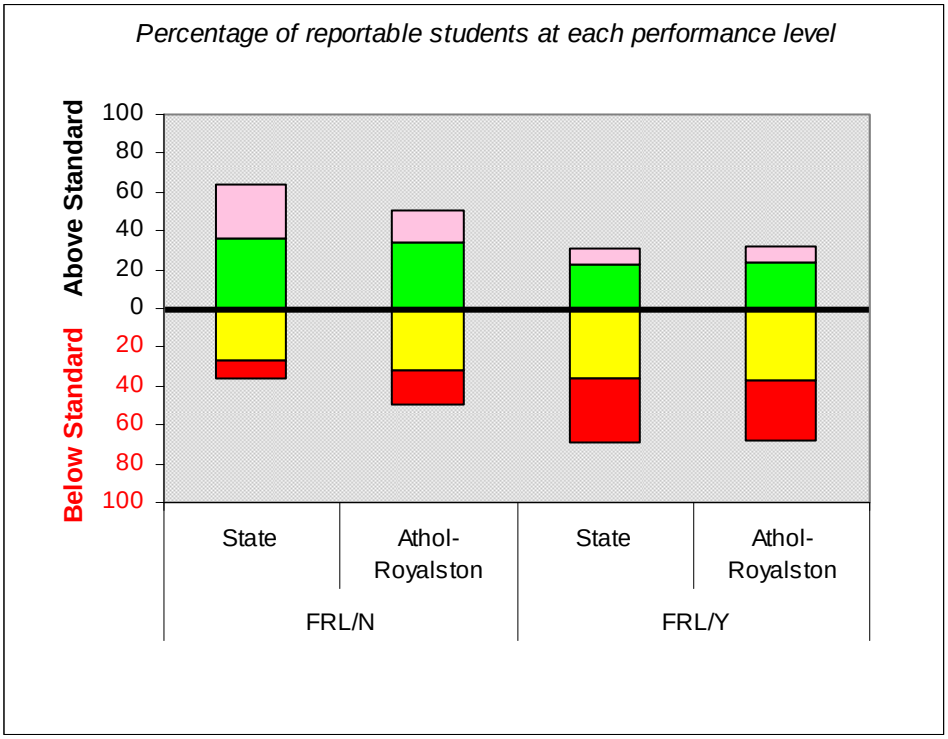
Figure/Table 11: MCAS English Language Arts (ELA) Test Performance by Socioeconomic Status Subgroup, 2007



	FRL/N		FRL/Y	
	State	Athol-Royalston	State	Athol-Royalston
Advanced	17	8	4	3
Proficient	59	53	39	37
Needs Improvement	20	32	42	44
Warning/Failing	3	6	15	15
Percent Attaining Proficiency	76	61	43	40
Proficiency Index (EPI)	91.0	84.6	73.4	72.8

In Athol-Royalston in 2007, 40 percent of low-income (FRL/Y) students attained proficiency in ELA on the MCAS tests, compared to 61 percent of non low-income (FRL/N) students. The ELA proficiency gap was 27 PI points for low-income students, approximately the same as that statewide; and 15 PI points for non low-income students, compared to nine PI points statewide. Athol-Royalston's performance gap in ELA between the two subgroups was 12 PI points.

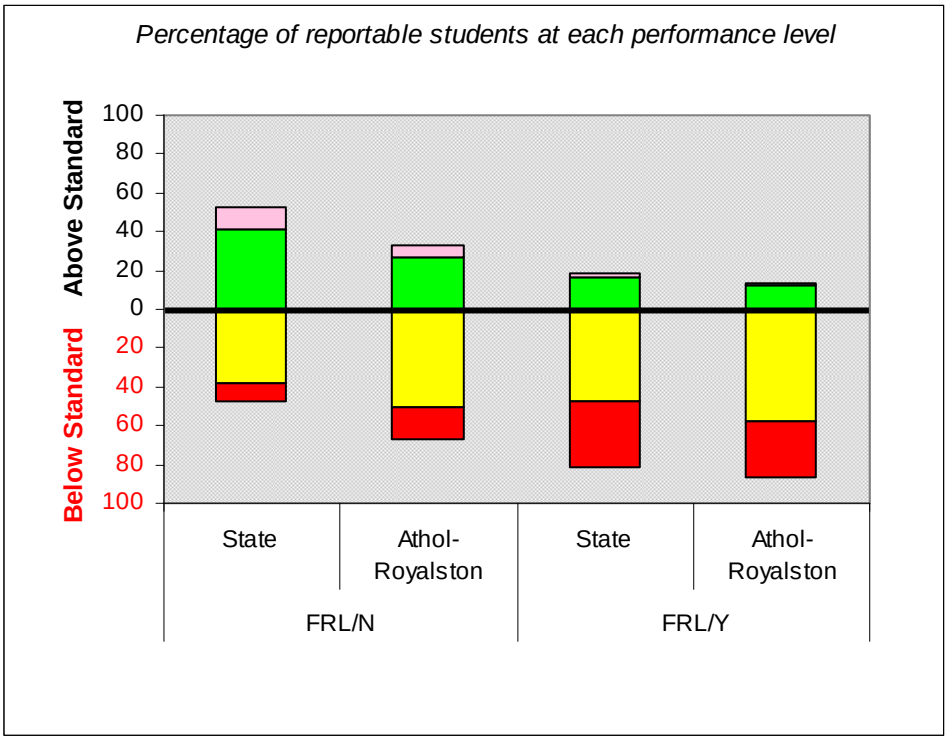
Figure/Table 12: MCAS Math Test Performance by Socioeconomic Status Subgroup, 2007



	FRL/N		FRL/Y	
	State	Athol-Royalston	State	Athol-Royalston
Advanced	27	16	8	8
Proficient	36	34	23	24
Needs Improvement	27	32	37	38
Warning/Failing	10	18	33	31
Percent Attaining Proficiency	63	50	31	32
Proficiency Index (MPI)	82.7	74.6	60.3	62.0

In Athol-Royalston in 2007, 32 percent of low-income (FRL/Y) students attained proficiency in math on the MCAS tests, compared to 50 percent of non low-income (FRL/N) students. The proficiency gap in math was 38 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 Athol-Royalston was 13 PI points.

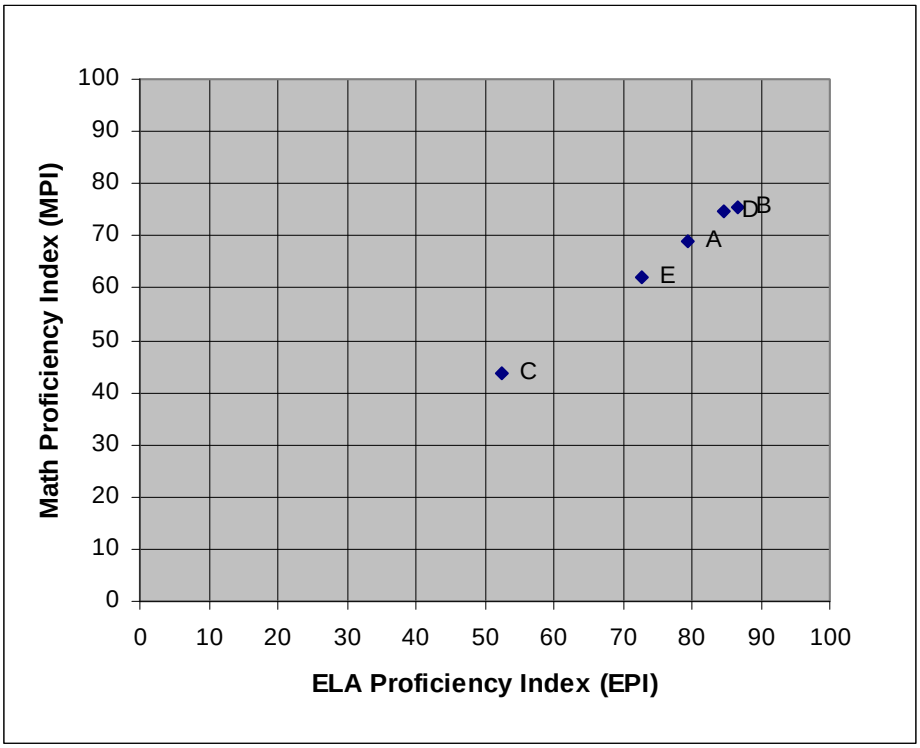
Figure/Table 13: MCAS Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) Test Performance by Socioeconomic Status Subgroup, 2007



	FRL/N		FRL/Y	
	State	Athol-Royalston	State	Athol-Royalston
Advanced	11	7	2	1
Proficient	41	26	17	12
Needs Improvement	39	51	47	58
Warning/Failing	9	16	34	29
Percent Attaining Proficiency	52	33	19	13
Proficiency Index (SPI)	79.4	69.0	55.2	56.6

In Athol-Royalston in 2007, 13 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 43 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. Athol-Royalston's performance gap in STE between the two subgroups was 12 PI points.

Figure/Table 14: MCAS ELA Proficiency Index vs. Math Proficiency Index by Subgroup, 2007



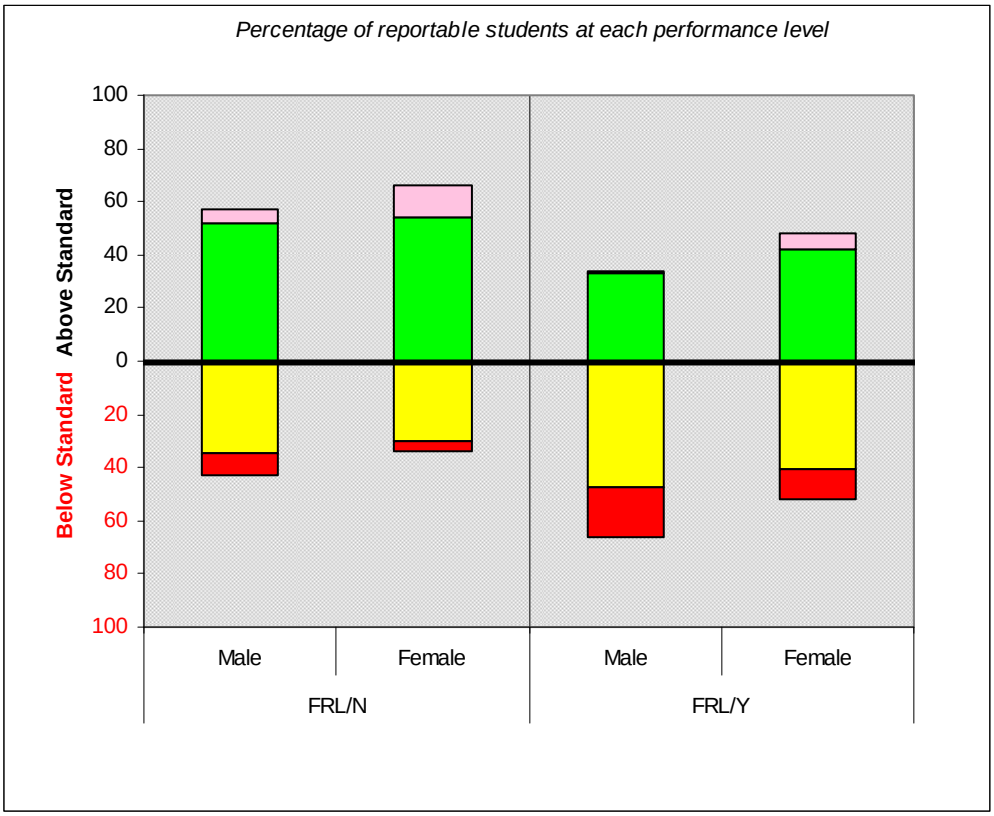
		ELA PI	Math PI	Number of Tests
A	Athol-Royalston	79.4	69.1	2,044
B	Regular Education	86.8	75.4	1,602
C	Disability	52.6	43.8	416
D	FRL/N	84.6	74.6	1,155
E	FRL/Y	72.8	62.0	888

The gap in performance between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in Athol-Royalston in 2007 was 34 PI points in ELA (regular education students, students with disabilities, respectively) and 31 PI points in math (regular education students, students with disabilities, respectively).

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

Each subgroup in Athol-Royalston had stronger performance in ELA than in math on the 2007 MCAS tests. The gap between performance in ELA and math for each subgroup in Athol-Royalston was approximately 10 PI points.

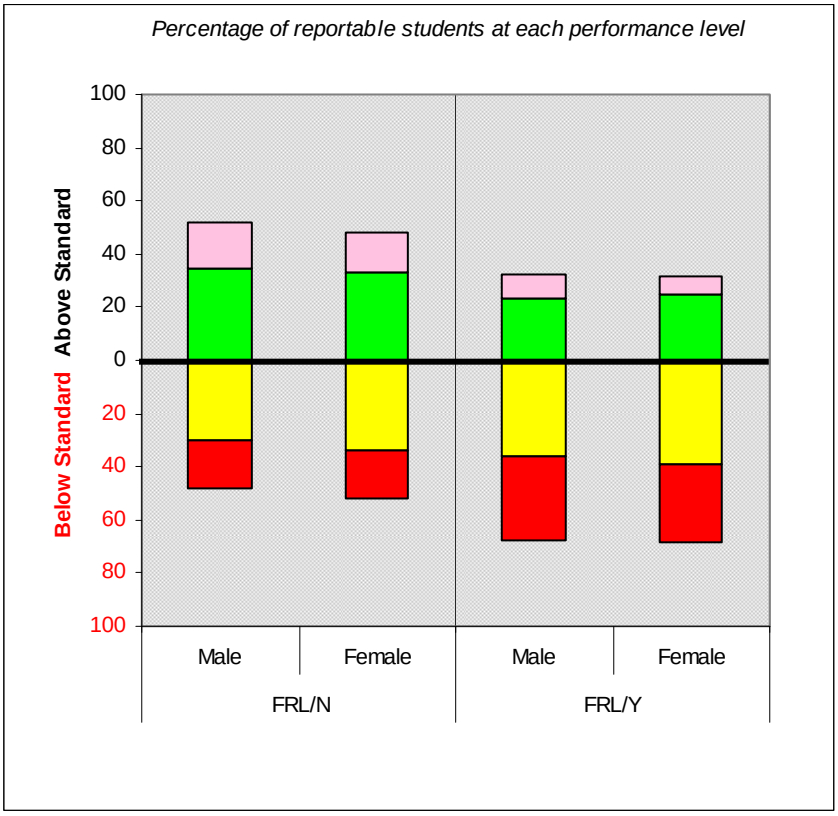
Figure/Table 15: MCAS English Language Arts (ELA) Test Performance by Socioeconomic Status by Gender, 2007



	FRL/N		FRL/Y	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Advanced	5	12	1	6
Proficient	52	54	33	42
Needs Improvement	34	30	47	40
Warning/ Failing	9	4	19	12
Percent Attaining Proficiency	57	66	34	48
Proficiency Index (EPI)	81.9	87.3	68.5	77.6
Number of Tests	291	289	240	208

On the 2007 MCAS tests in ELA, Athol-Royalton's female students outperformed male students in both socioeconomic subgroups. The performance gap in ELA between female and male students was five and one-half PI points for non low-income students and nine PI points for low-income students.

Figure/Table 16: MCAS Math Test Performance by Socioeconomic Status by Gender, 2007



	FRL/N		FRL/Y	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Advanced	17	15	9	7
Proficient	35	33	23	25
Needs Improvement	30	34	36	39
Warning/ Failing	18	18	31	30
Percent Attaining Proficiency	52	48	32	32
Proficiency Index (MPI)	75.3	73.9	61.9	62.3
Number of Tests	289	286	236	204

On the 2007 MCAS tests in math, performance was comparable for Athol-Royalston's low-income female and male students, while non low-income male students outperformed non low-income female students. The performance gap in math between female and male students was less than one-half PI point for low-income students in favor of female students and about one and one-half PI points for non low-income students in favor of male students.

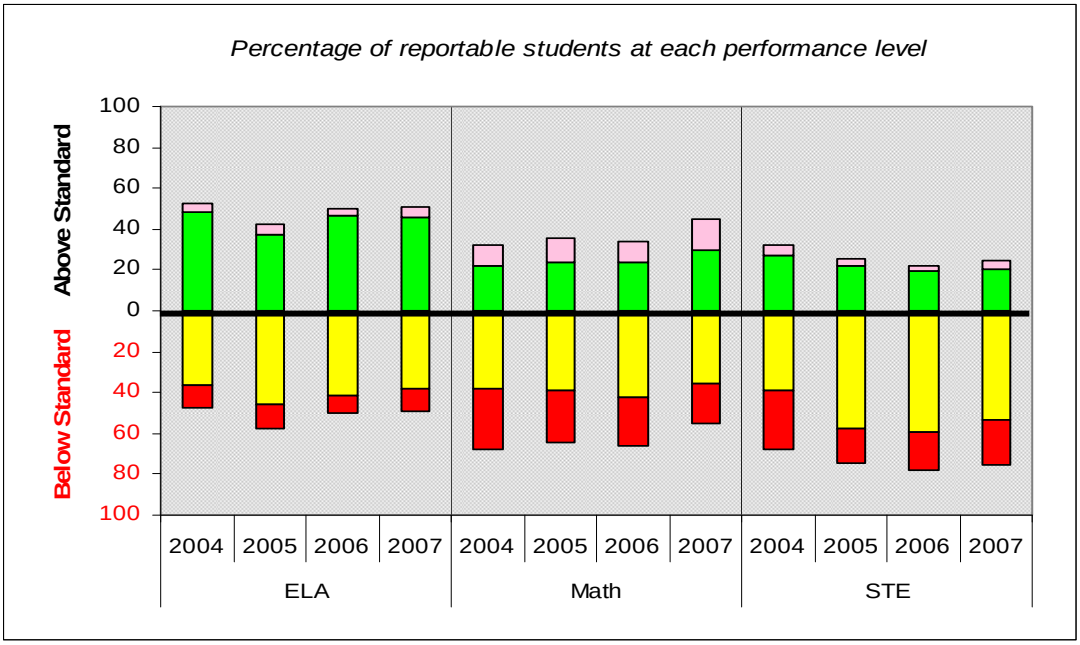
Improvement

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

Findings:

- Between 2004 and 2007, Athol-Royalton's MCAS performance showed a slight decline in English language arts, substantial improvement in math, and little improvement in science and technology/engineering.
- Over the three-year period 2004-2007, ELA performance in Athol-Royalston declined slightly, by less than one PI point. This resulted in a widening of the proficiency gap by three percent. The percentage of students attaining proficiency in ELA declined from 53 percent in 2004 to 51 percent in 2007.
- Math performance in Athol-Royalston showed improvement over this period, at an average of more than three PI points annually. This resulted in an improvement rate, or a closing of the proficiency gap, of 25 percent, a rate lower than that required to achieve AYP. The percentage of students attaining proficiency in math rose from 32 percent in 2004 to 45 percent in 2007.
- Between 2004 and 2007, Athol-Royalston had a slight increase in STE performance of less than one-half PI point over the three-year period, resulting in an improvement rate of less than one percent. However, the percentage of students attaining proficiency in STE decreased from 33 percent in 2004 to 24 percent in 2007.

Figure/Table 17: MCAS Test Performance by Subject, 2004-2007



	ELA				Math				STE			
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2004	2005	2006	2007	2004	2005	2006	2007
Advanced	5	5	3	5	10	12	11	16	6	4	2	4
Proficient	48	38	46	46	22	23	24	29	27	22	19	20
Needs Improvement	36	45	42	38	38	39	43	36	39	57	59	54
Warning/ Failing	11	12	9	11	29	25	23	19	28	17	19	22
Percent Attaining Proficiency	53	43	49	51	32	35	35	45	33	26	21	24
Proficiency Index (PI)	78.4	74.6	77.9	77.7	62.5	65.4	65.8	71.9	63.3	66.1	62.8	63.6

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 Athol-Royalston students attaining proficiency in ELA decreased from 53 percent in 2004 to 51 percent in 2007. The proficiency gap in ELA widened by less than one PI point over this period.

The percentage of Athol-Royalston students attaining proficiency in math increased from 32 percent in 2004 to 45 percent in 2007. The proficiency gap in math narrowed from 38 to 28 PI points over this period, resulting in an improvement rate of 25 percent, a rate lower than that required to make AYP.

The percentage of Athol-Royalston students attaining proficiency in STE decreased from 33 percent in 2004 to 24 percent in 2007. However, the proficiency gap in STE narrowed from 37 to 36 PI points over this period due to a decline in the percentage of students in the 'Warning/Failing' category.

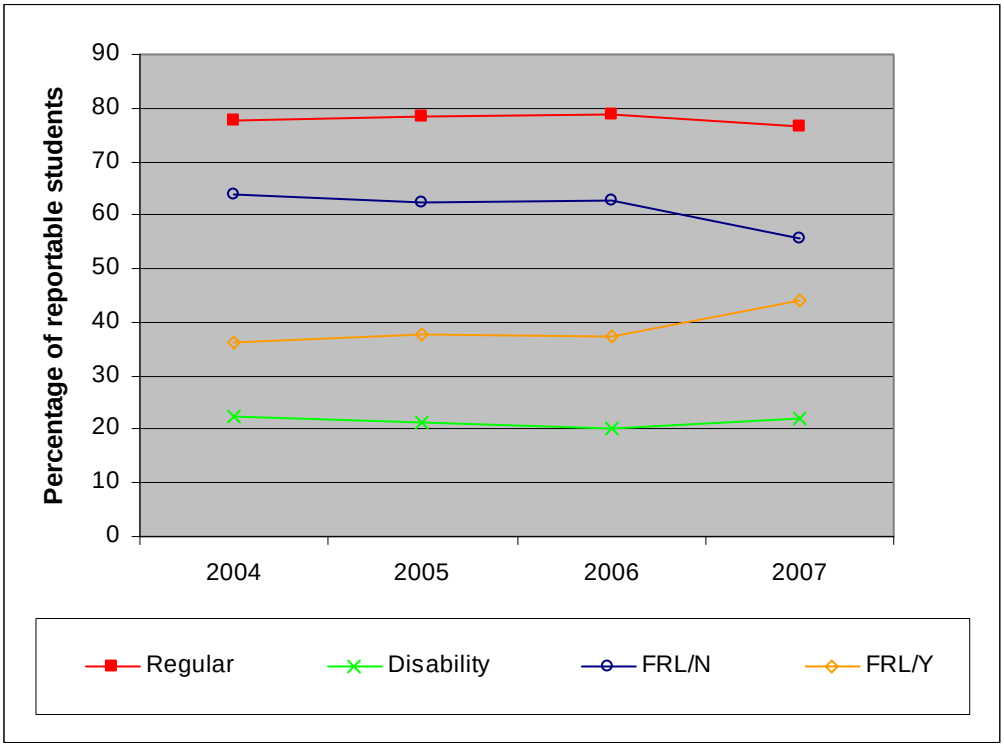
Equity of Improvement

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

Findings:

- In Athol-Royalston, the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in ELA widened from 30 PI points in 2004 to 37 PI points in 2007, and the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in math widened from 28 to 30 PI points over this period.
- Regular education students and low-income students had improved performance in ELA between 2004 and 2007. The more improved subgroup in ELA was low-income students.
- In math, the performance of all student subgroups in Athol-Royalston improved between 2004 and 2007. The most improved subgroup in math was also low-income students.

Figure/Table 18: Student Population by Reportable Subgroups, 2004-2007



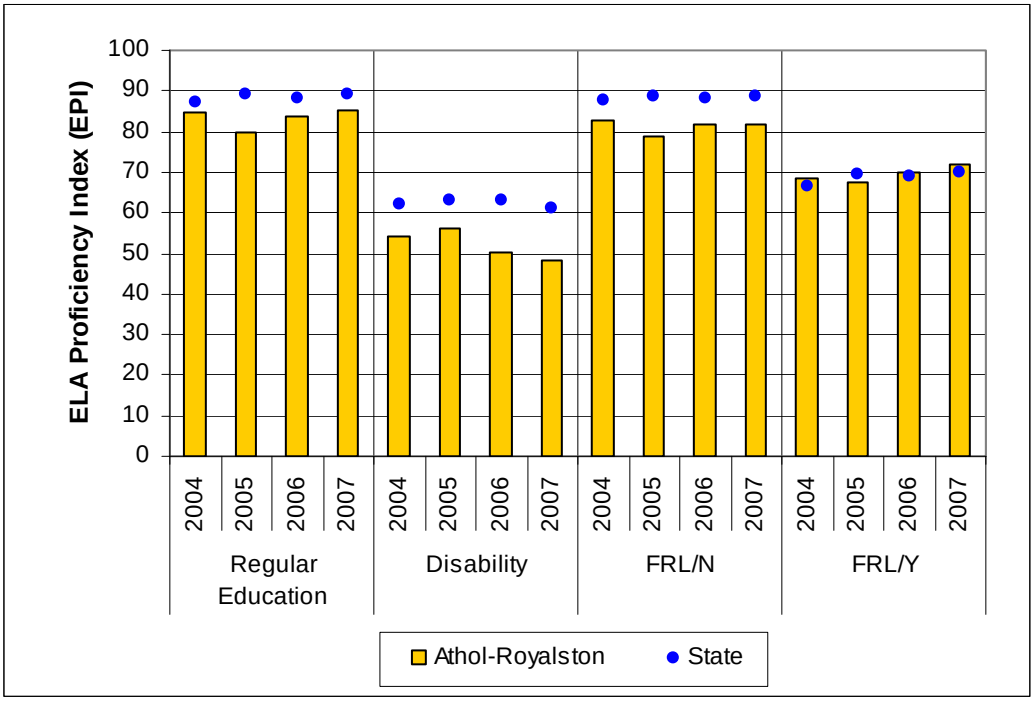
	Number of Students				Percentage of students			
	2004	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**
Athol-Royalston	1,000	1,009	1,155	1,050	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Regular	775	791	909	804	77.5	78.4	78.7	76.6
Disability	224	213	232	233	22.4	21.1	20.1	22.2
FRL/N	639	630	724	586	63.9	62.4	62.7	55.8
FRL/Y	361	379	431	464	36.1	37.6	37.3	44.2

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.

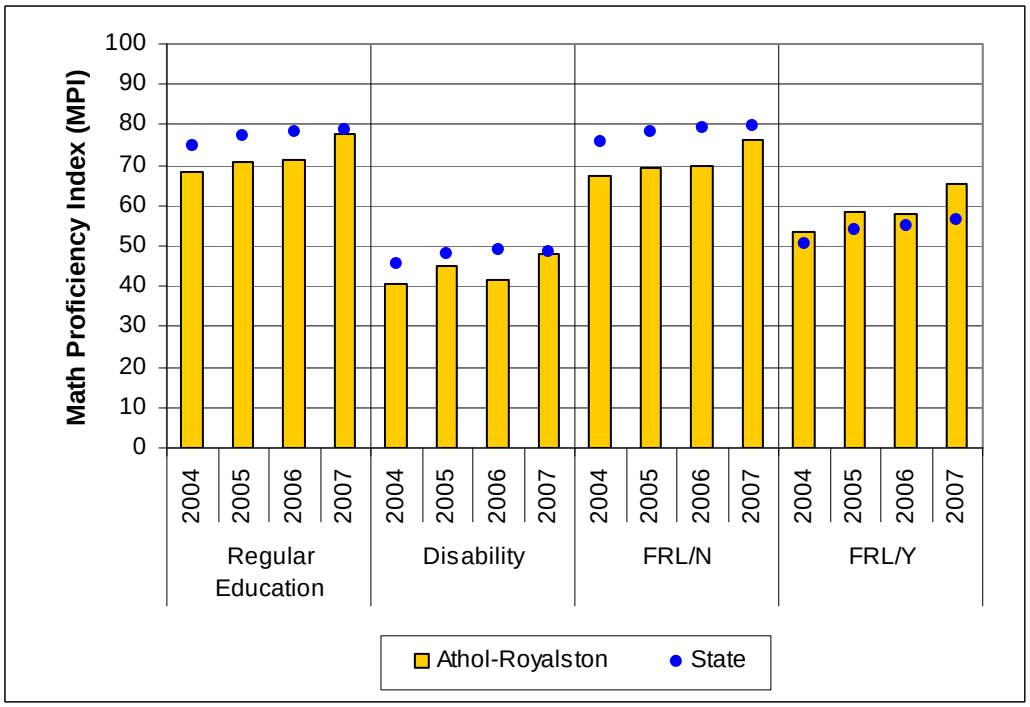
Between 2004 and 2007 in Athol-Royalston, the proportion of regular education students and of students with disabilities was relatively stable. The proportion of low-income students increased by eight percentage points.

Figures 19 A-B/Table 19: 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

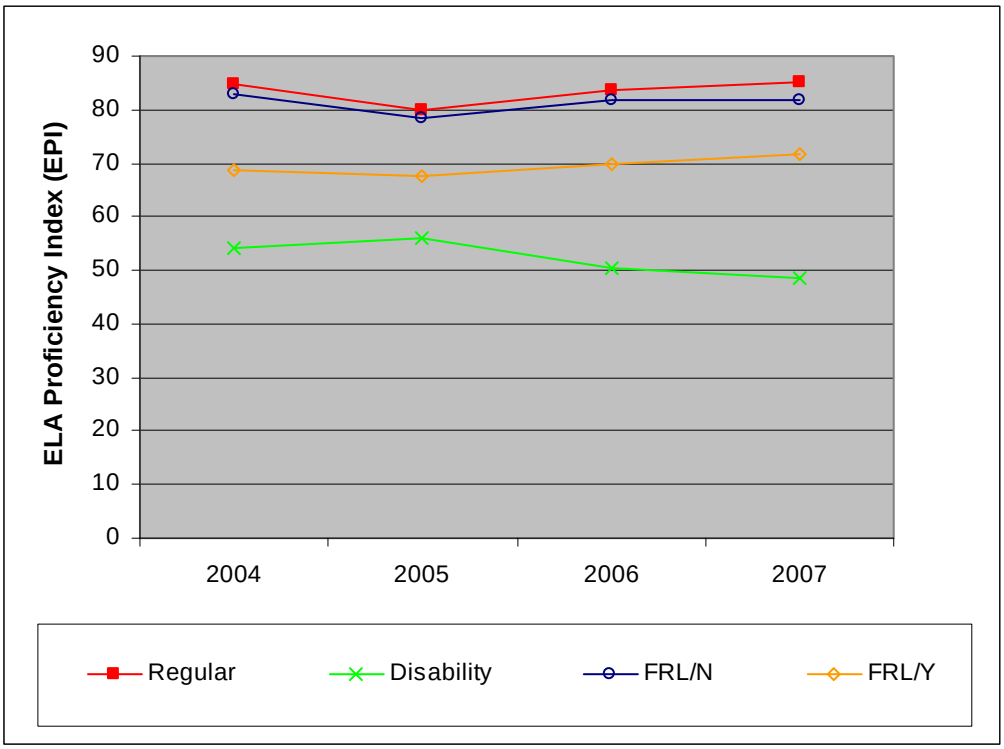


State				Athol-Royalston			
Subgroup	**Year**	**EPI**	**MPI**	**Subgroup**	**Year**	**EPI**	**MPI**
Regular Education	2004	87.3	74.7	Regular Education	2004	84.7	68.3
	2005	89.2	77.4		2005	79.8	70.7
	2006	88.3	78.2		2006	83.8	71.2
	2007	89.0	78.9		2007	85.2	77.6
Disability	2004	62.1	45.3	Disability	2004	54.3	40.7
	2005	63.3	47.9		2005	56.0	45.1
	2006	62.9	49.0		2006	50.3	41.4
	2007	61.2	48.4		2007	48.4	47.9
FRL/N	2004	87.9	75.9	FRL/N	2004	82.8	67.5
	2005	88.9	78.1		2005	78.6	69.3
	2006	88.3	79.0		2006	81.8	69.9
	2007	88.6	79.7		2007	81.9	76.4
FRL/Y	2004	66.6	50.7	FRL/Y	2004	68.6	53.3
	2005	69.7	53.9		2005	67.6	58.2
	2006	68.8	55.0		2006	69.8	57.9
	2007	70.0	56.3		2007	71.7	65.3

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, and 12.

In Athol-Royalston, all student subgroups had greater improvement in math than in ELA between 2004 and 2007. Over this period, the performance of regular education students improved by less than one PI point in ELA and by nine PI points in math. The performance of students with disabilities declined by six PI points in ELA and improved by seven points in math. The performance of non low-income students declined by one PI point in ELA and improved by nine PI points in math, and the performance of low-income students improved by three PI points in ELA and by 12 points in math.

Figure/Table 20: MCAS English Language Arts Proficiency Index (EPI) by Subgroup, 2004-2007



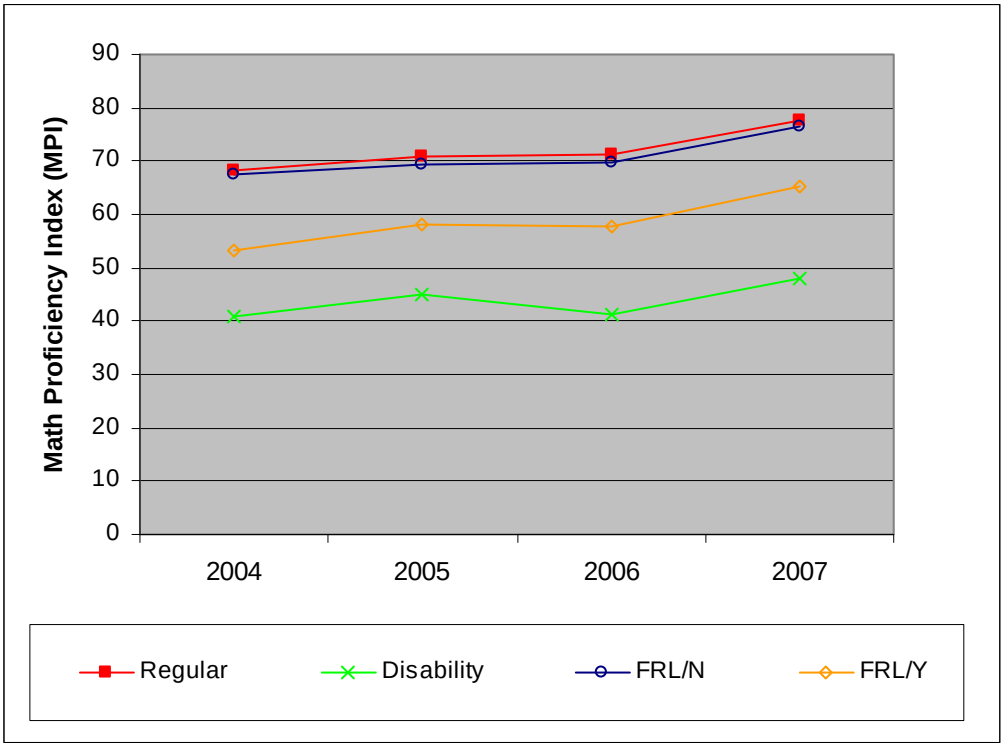
	ELA Proficiency Index (EPI)				Percent Attaining Proficiency			
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2004	2005	2006	2007
Athol-Royalston	78.4	74.6	77.9	77.7	52	43	50	51
Regular	84.7	79.8	83.8	85.2	61	50	58	61
Disability	54.3	56.0	50.3	48.4	18	15	9	12
FRL/N	82.8	78.6	81.8	81.9	60	49	56	58
FRL/Y	68.6	67.6	69.8	71.7	36	31	38	41

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 and 11.

Regular education students and low-income students had improved performance in ELA between 2004 and 2007. The ELA proficiency gap for Athol-Royalton's regular education students was 15 PI points in both 2004 and 2007, and for students with disabilities it widened by 13 percent from 46 to 52 PI points. The ELA proficiency gap for non low-income students widened by five percent from 17 to 18 PI points, and for low-income students it narrowed from 31 to 28 PI points, resulting in an improvement rate of 10 percent.

Between 2004 and 2007, the performance gap in ELA between regular education students and students with disabilities widened by six PI points. The performance gap in ELA between non low-income and low-income students narrowed by four PI points over this period.

Figure/Table 21: MCAS Math Proficiency Index (MPI) by Subgroup, 2004-2007



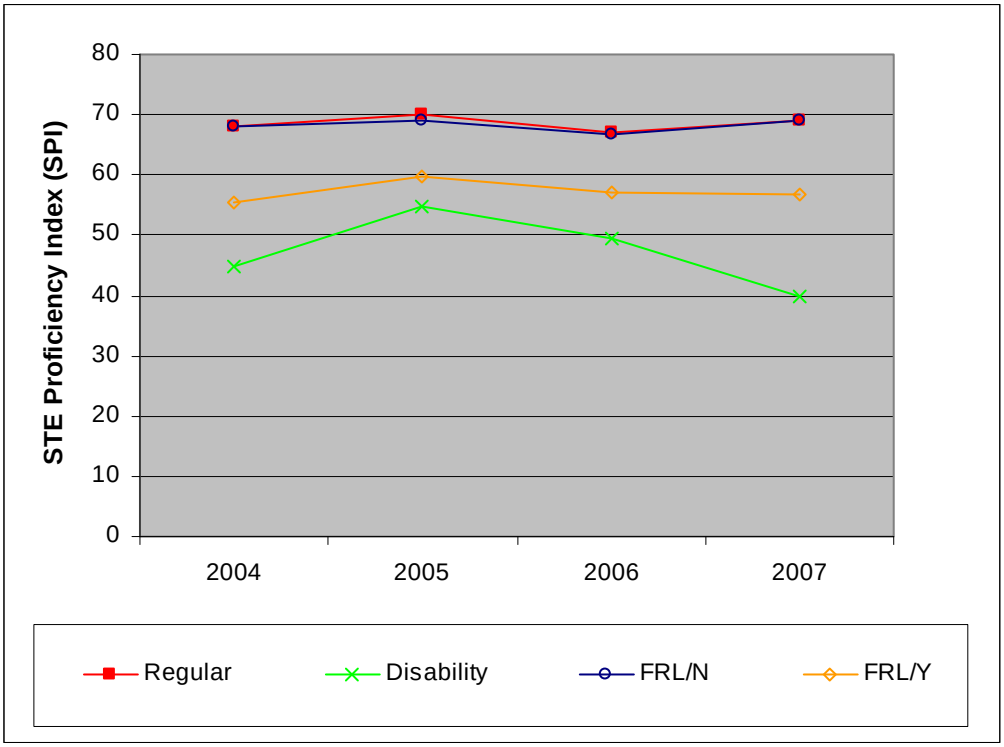
	Math Proficiency Index (MPI)				Percent Attaining Proficiency			
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2004	2005	2006	2007
Athol-Royalston	62.5	65.4	65.8	71.9	33	36	34	45
Regular	68.3	70.7	71.2	77.6	40	42	40	52
Disability	40.7	45.1	41.4	47.9	6	12	8	19
FRL/N	67.5	69.3	69.9	76.4	38	41	40	53
FRL/Y	53.3	58.2	57.9	65.3	23	26	22	34

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 and 12.

In math, the performance of all student subgroups in Athol-Royalston improved between 2004 and 2007. The math proficiency gap for Athol-Royalton's regular education students narrowed from 32 to 22 PI points over this period, resulting in an improvement rate of 29 percent; and for students with disabilities it narrowed from 59 to 52 PI points, an improvement rate of 12 percent. The math proficiency gap for non low-income students narrowed from 33 to 24 PI points, an improvement rate of 27 percent; and for low-income students it narrowed from 47 to 35 PI points, resulting in an improvement rate of 26 percent.

Between 2004 and 2007, the performance gap in math between regular education students and students with disabilities widened by two PI points. The performance gap in math between non low-income and low-income students narrowed by three PI points over this period.

Figure/Table 22: MCAS STE Proficiency Index (SPI) by Subgroup, 2004-2007



	STE Proficiency Index (SPI)				Percent Attaining Proficiency			
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2004	2005	2006	2007
Athol-Royalston	63.3	66.1	62.8	63.6	32	26	22	24
Regular	68.1	69.9	67.0	69.1	38	29	25	30
Disability	44.7	54.9	49.3	39.8	11	15	13	2
FRL/N	68.2	69.2	66.7	69.0	40	31	28	33
FRL/Y	55.6	59.8	57.1	56.6	21	15	13	13

In science and technology/engineering, all student subgroups in Athol-Royalston with the exception of students with disabilities had slightly improved performance between 2004 and 2007. The STE proficiency gap for Athol-Royalton's regular education students narrowed by three percent from 32 to 31 PI points over this period, and for students with disabilities it widened by nine percent from 55 to 60 PI points. The STE proficiency gap for non low-income students narrowed by three percent from 32 to 31 PI points, and for low-income students it narrowed by two percent from 44 to 43 PI points.

Between 2004 and 2007, the performance gap in STE between regular education students and students with disabilities widened by six PI points. The performance gap in STE between non low-income and low-income students was approximately the same in both 2004 and 2007.

Participation

Are all eligible students participating in required state assessments?

Finding:

- On the 2007 MCAS tests in ELA, math, and STE, eligible students in Athol-Royalston 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
Athol-Royalston	ALL LEVELS	**1,028**	**1,016**	**319**
	Advanced	64	129	13
	Proficient	475	300	65
	Needs Improvement	383	348	171
	Warning/Failing	106	239	70
Regular Education	Advanced	64	125	13
	Proficient	440	270	64
	Needs Improvement	275	287	146
	Warning/Failing	24	117	36
Disability	Advanced	0	3	0
	Proficient	32	26	1
	Needs Improvement	101	54	24
	Warning/Failing	79	121	34
Limited English Proficient	Advanced	0	1	0
	Proficient	3	4	0
	Needs Improvement	7	7	1
	Warning/Failing	3	1	0
White	Advanced	57	117	13
	Proficient	423	267	63
	Needs Improvement	334	298	150
	Warning/Failing	88	209	60
Hispanic	Advanced	1	2	0
	Proficient	23	14	0
	Needs Improvement	29	33	11
	Warning/Failing	12	14	4
African-American	Advanced	3	3	0
	Proficient	5	6	0
	Needs Improvement	11	5	1
	Warning/Failing	1	6	4
Asian	Advanced	0	1	0
	Proficient	2	0	0
	Needs Improvement	1	1	0
	Warning/Failing	3	4	2
Free or Reduced-Cost Lunch/No	Advanced	49	94	12
	Proficient	308	195	48
	Needs Improvement	186	183	92
	Warning/Failing	37	103	30
Free or Reduced-Cost Lunch/Yes	Advanced	15	35	1
	Proficient	167	105	17
	Needs Improvement	197	165	79
	Warning/Failing	69	135	40
Male	Advanced	18	71	8
	Proficient	230	156	41
	Needs Improvement	213	172	89
	Warning/Failing	70	126	32
Female	Advanced	46	58	5
	Proficient	245	144	24
	Needs Improvement	170	176	82
	Warning/Failing	36	112	38

n-Values by Grade and Year, 2004-2007

Grade	Year	ELA	Math	STE
Grade 3	2004	171	0	0
	2005	147	0	0
	2006	166	165	0
	2007	155	156	0
Grade 4	2004	172	174	0
	2005	169	169	0
	2006	144	144	0
	2007	147	148	0
Grade 5	2004	0	0	179
	2005	0	0	169
	2006	162	164	164
	2007	141	138	138
Grade 6	2004	0	166	0
	2005	0	186	0
	2006	162	159	0
	2007	158	154	0
Grade 7	2004	157	0	0
	2005	167	0	0
	2006	176	176	0
	2007	157	154	0
Grade 8	2004	0	215	215
	2005	0	155	154
	2006	166	165	165
	2007	183	181	181
Grade 10	2004	153	153	0
	2005	155	155	0
	2006	161	159	0
	2007	87	85	0
All Grades	2004	653	708	394
	2005	638	665	323
	2006	1,137	1,132	329
	2007	1,028	1,016	319

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 17-22 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.

Appendix B: 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. The EQA computes 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 (API) for the Anywhere High School would be 57.75.

The EPI is calculated using the ELA results for all 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.

The 100 point proficiency index is divided into six proficiency categories as follows: 90-100 is 'Very High' (VH), 80-89.9 is 'High' (H), 70-79.9 is 'Moderate' (M), 60-69.9 is 'Low' (L), 40-59.9 is 'Very Low' (VL), and 0-39.9 is 'Critically Low' (CL).

Appendix C: 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	2,186	-3.6	13,284,783	-1.0	75,215	12,032,447	5.4	12,107,662	5.4	13,269,856	8.8	1,162,194	9.6
FY99	2,221	1.6	14,196,354	6.9	78,780	13,515,826	12.3	13,594,606	12.3	14,556,795	9.7	962,189	7.1
FY00	2,287	3.0	14,590,977	2.8	69,357	14,719,927	8.9	14,789,284	8.8	16,146,718	10.9	1,357,434	9.2
FY01	2,269	-0.8	14,906,382	2.2	132,617	15,117,002	2.7	15,249,619	3.1	17,079,773	5.8	1,830,154	12.0
FY02	2,277	0.4	15,766,726	5.8	92,775	15,673,951	3.7	15,766,726	3.4	16,355,191	-4.2	588,465	3.7
FY03	2,300	1.0	16,335,123	3.6	375,137	15,959,986	1.8	16,335,123	3.6	17,561,313	7.4	1,226,190	7.5
FY04	2,267	-1.4	16,334,999	0.0	347,437	15,987,562	0.2	16,334,999	0.0	16,896,237	-3.8	561,238	3.4
FY05	2,263	-0.2	16,655,466	2.0	417,088	16,238,378	1.6	16,655,466	2.0	17,067,514	1.0	412,048	2.5
FY06	2,247	-0.7	17,339,154	4.1	518,662	16,820,492	3.6	17,339,154	4.1	18,313,111	7.3	973,957	5.6
FY07	2,184	-2.8	17,708,359	2.1	623,845	17,084,514	1.6	17,708,359	2.1	19,053,139	4.0	1,344,780	7.6

	Dollars Per Foundation Enrollment			Percentage of Foundation			Chapter 70 Aid as Percent of Actual NSS
	Foundation Budget	Ch 70 Aid	Actual NSS	Ch 70	Required NSS	Actual NSS	
FY98	6,077	5,504	6,070	90.6	91.1	99.9	90.7
FY99	6,392	6,085	6,554	95.2	95.8	102.5	92.8
FY00	6,380	6,436	7,060	100.9	101.4	110.7	91.2
FY01	6,570	6,662	7,527	101.4	102.3	114.6	88.5
FY02	6,924	6,884	7,183	99.4	100.0	103.7	95.8
FY03	7,102	6,939	7,635	97.7	100.0	107.5	90.9
FY04	7,206	7,052	7,453	97.9	100.0	103.4	94.6
FY05	7,360	7,176	7,542	97.5	100.0	102.5	95.1
FY06	7,717	7,486	8,150	97.0	100.0	105.6	91.8
FY07	8,108	7,823	8,724	96.5	100.0	107.6	89.7

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.