



Auburn Public Schools Review

Executive Order 393

Education Management Accountability Board Report
January 2000

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I. Introduction

The Massachusetts Education Reform Act (MERA) of 1993 has three major goals: to increase student achievement; to achieve adequate funding for all local and regional school districts over a seven-year period; and to bring equity to local taxation efforts based on a community's ability to pay. In February 1997, the Governor issued Executive Order 393 to evaluate the education reform program that was nearing the end of its fourth year. In FY99, Massachusetts General Laws (M.G.L.) Ch. 70 state aid for education reached \$2.6 billion. With an investment of this magnitude in the Commonwealth's schools, it is critical to "review, investigate and report on the expenditures of funds by school districts, including regional school districts, consistent with the goals of improving student achievement." To that end, Executive Order 393 established the Education Management Accountability Board (EMAB).

The Secretary of Administration and Finance, serving as chief of staff to the EMAB, selected a team of auditors from the Department of Revenue's (DOR) Division of Local Services (DLS) to conduct the school district reviews. DOR's Director of Accounts is the chief investigator with authority to examine municipal and school department accounts and transactions pursuant to M.G.L. Ch. 44, §§45 and 46A. The reviews are conducted in consultation with the State Auditor and the Commissioner of Education.

The Auburn Public Schools (APS) is the nineteenth school district reviewed under Executive Order 393. The audit team began the review of APS in August 1999, and completed it in October 1999. As part of this review, the audit team conducted a confidential survey of employees of the school district and included the results in this report. School officials cooperated fully with the audit team.

The Executive Summary includes some of the more significant observations and findings of the review of APS' operations. When possible, the audit team has identified and presented best practices, which may be adopted by other school districts. The report discusses all results, best practices and deficiencies, if any, in greater detail in the "General Conditions and Findings" section.

II. Executive Summary

SUMMARY

Auburn has made steady progress in achieving some of the key goals of education reform. An emphasis on implementing the school management related provisions of the education reform law has created a management system incorporating both solid planning and accountability. A strategic plan is in place, personnel evaluations systems are used and principals' pay increases are based on performance.

Student test scores are generally near or above the state average. MCAS scores were better than the state average scores in all subject areas for all tested in 1998. Fourth And eighth grade MEAP scores increased significantly between 1988 and 1996 in all subject areas. The 1998 Iowa Test of Basic Skills for third grade showed 80 percent of all students tested as proficient or advanced readers. APS is adjusting its curriculum to bring district performance standards and grading expectations in line with MCAS standards and expectations. The district's time and learning plan exceeds the 1997/98 DOE requirements in all three school levels.

APS has a student population of about 2,500, and a budget of \$12.2 million as of FY98. Required and actual net school spending as a percent of foundation budget has been greater than 100 percent since FY94. Contracted salary increases calculated by the district accounted for between 56 percent and 94 percent of the increases in total state and local aid provided under by education reform from FY95 to FY98. From FY93 to FY98, FTE teachers increased by 4.1. The all students/all FTE teachers ratio has increased from FY93 to FY98, but this has been mitigated by adding 27.6 instructional during the same period.

Currently, the high school is accredited with a warning status. In FY96, actual net school spending was less than the requirement by \$53,342 due to less than estimated spending for active and retired employee insurance. Although exceeding in total, spending was less than the foundation budget target in three key areas from FY94 to FY98. In a fourth key area, professional development, spending was less than foundation budget except for FY98 but has been greater than the minimum spending requirement since FY96. In FY97, the district average per FTE pupil textbook expenditure was about 24 percent less than the statewide average. APS is experiencing space problems in relation to class sizes, especially at the elementary level.

THE FOUNDATION BUDGET

- APS actual net school spending has exceeded the foundation budget target as determined by DOE for FY94 through FY98. FY96 actual spending was deficient of the required amount by \$53,342 which was added to the FY97 requirement. In FY98, the district's local and state percentages of actual net school spending were 77.3 percent and 22.7 percent respectively. FY98 salaries accounted for 85.5 percent of the school operating budget including transportation. [See Section 5 and Appendix A-1]
- FY98 budgeted SPED tuition accounted for \$243,000 or 13.5 percent of non-salary budget areas including transportation. SPED expenses increased \$579,482 or 53.8 percent from FY93 to FY98. [See Section 22 and Appendix A-1]
- The foundation budget does not mandate spending in any specific category. To encourage appropriate levels of spending, M.G.L. Ch.70 §9 requires that a school district report to the Commissioner of Education when it has failed to meet foundation budget levels for professional development, books and equipment, expanded

program and extraordinary maintenance. APS did not meet these levels for any of the categories in any of the fiscal years shown except for professional development in FY98. The district did not file a report as required by law stating its reasons for not meeting these levels nor did DOE direct it to do so. [See Section 7]

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

- APS test scores are generally above state averages. MCAS scores show that APS scored above the state average scaled scores for all students in grades 4, 8 and 10. SAT scores for 1994 through 1998 are below the state averages. MEAP, the state's educational testing program from 1988 to 1996, showed that APS scaled scores increased significantly in all four subject areas between 1988 and 1996. Results from the 1996 Iowa Tests of Educational Development (Iowa Tests) indicate that 80 percent of APS grade 3 students demonstrated a high degree of proficiency in fundamental skills of reading. [See Section 16, Appendices C and D]

GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT POWERS

- The Superintendent, in collaboration with the school committee, sets yearly goals for the district during July and August. Goals are generally based on the district's strategic plan and school improvement plans and is made within budgetary limits. [See Section 17]
- APS developed a new evaluation tool for principals and administrators in FY98 and since that time has used the new format to link salary enhancement to performance. The Superintendent evaluates principals on their progress toward meeting their yearly goals and on following the "Principles for Effective Leadership." [See Section 17]

STUDENT/FTE TEACHER STAFFING

- Between FY93 and FY98, the total number of teacher FTE's increased by 4.1, less than the increase between FY89 and FY93. Also between FY93 and FY98, the all students/all FTE teacher ratio increased from 14.4:1 to 15.4:1. The FY93 ratio was lower than the state average and the FY98 ratio was higher than the state average. Instructional assistants more than doubled between FY93 and FY98. APS has utilized these assistants to reduce the student per "instructor" ratio. The all students/all non-SPED FTE teacher ratios were all less than the state averages for the selected years. [See Section 8]

TEACHER COMPENSATION

- Between FY93 and FY98, expenditures for salaries rose \$2.0 million or 24.2 percent. Total teaching salaries rose \$1.3 million or 21.3 percent, reflecting additional spending for new staff as well as pay raises in teachers' contracts. Actual salary expenditures were less than expected assuming the cost of new

positions and a three percent inflation rate. Union contracted annual raises plus step increases for teachers have increased by 48 percent from 1993 to 1998. The average teacher's salary at APS is below the state average reported by DOE in FY98. [See Section 9]

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- During FY95 and FY96, DOE required school districts to spend at a rate equivalent to \$25 per pupil for professional development. This requirement increased to \$50 per pupil for FY97 and \$75 per pupil for FY98. APS did not meet the minimum spending requirement in FY95 but did so for FY96 to FY98. [See Section 10]

TIME AND LEARNING

- APS time and learning plan exceeded the 1997/98 DOE school year requirements by 39 hours in the high school, 129 hours in the middle school and an average of 70.6 hours in the elementary schools. [See Section 12]

TECHNOLOGY

- APS should not experience any catastrophic failures as a result of Y2K. Although the district will probably not have time to complete a comprehensive Y2K inventory and testing program with available staff (the director of technology works part-time), all critical information systems and equipment have been identified, tested and largely replaced. [See Section 14]

HIGH SCHOOL ACCREDITATION

- Auburn High School is currently accredited with a warning status. The accreditation visit by NEASC took place in October 1997. The report was particularly critical of the facility. [See Section 20]

MAINTENANCE AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT

- Auburn is committed to financing a \$40 million construction and renovation project for the schools. To afford the plan, the town has informally capped the school operating budget to a 4.0 percent to 4.5 percent annual increase and the town operating budget to a 3.0 percent to 3.5 percent increase. The plan also makes certain assumptions as to future debt, revenues and town growth. The plan was reportedly supported by the board of selectmen, the school committee and by the finance committee and the town meeting formally adopted it in February 1998. [See Section 24]

DISTRICT ISSUES

- In verifying the accuracy of enrollment numbers, the audit team noted several inaccuracies between the numbers maintained by APS enrollment system and those reported to DOE on the foundation enrollment report. Specifically, our review of foundation enrollment reports revealed both overstated and understated student populations. In dollar terms, these enrollment errors resulted in an estimated total of \$26,000 in excess state aid since FY95. [See Section 1]
- In verifying the accuracy of the expenditure numbers, the audit team noted that the regional school assessment amount did not appear on the district's end-of-year report submitted to DOE from FY96 to FY98, but does appear on DOE's final copy. It remains unclear how a correction appears on the DOE final copy. [See Section 4]
- In verifying the accuracy of the expenditure numbers, the audit team noted that appropriations from a separate capital article were not properly reported on any of the end-of-year reports reviewed. DOE uses this information to determine compliance with new school building maintenance spending requirements. Future school building assistance funding may be jeopardized by incomplete data. [See Section 4]
- The audit team noted that the school committee has not been approving payrolls before the town treasurer receives them. DLS has ruled that even after the passage of education reform, the school committee remains the head of the school department for approving bills and payrolls under M.G.L. Ch.41 §§41 and 56. [See Section 18]

COURSES AND CLASS SIZES

- APS is experiencing space problems in relation to class sizes, especially at the elementary level. The school committee's policy is no more than 25 students per class. However, 19 of APS' 49 elementary classes are at or over 25 students. One school has class sizes greater than 25 students in every fourth and fifth grade classroom. [See Section 13]

BEST PRACTICES

- In 1998 APS instituted a new program at the middle school for developmentally disabled students who had previously been tuitioned out-of-district. The SPED director established the program after the school the children were attending more than doubled the tuition per student. Six full day students and three partial day students are in the program for FY2000. The program which is staffed by one full time SPED teacher and two and one half instructional aides is estimated to save the district between \$50,000 and \$100,000 while providing services in Auburn. [See Section 22]

- APS has made increasing community support for education one of the four goals contained in their strategic plan. As a result, APS has put together two pamphlets, one explaining the district's strategic plan and goals and one detailing the technology plan. The pamphlets were sent to every residence of Auburn as a way of informing the community about the direction of the district. Both pamphlets contained the APS mission statement and the goals and action required to achieve these goals in the respective areas involved. [See Sections 14 and 17]

Auditee's Response

The audit team held an exit conference with the Superintendent, assistant superintendent and business administrator on January 5, 2000. The team invited APS to suggest specific technical corrections and make a formal written response. Comments were received, changes were made as a result of these comments, and a revised report was provided to the Superintendent.

Review Scope

In preparation for the school district reviews, the audit team held meetings with officials from DOE, the State Auditor's Office and other statewide organizations such as the Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation, the Massachusetts Municipal Association and the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents. The audit team also read published reports on educational and financial issues to prepare for the school district reviews.

The audit team met with the private audit firm that conducts financial audits of APS. DOE provided data including the end-of-year reports, foundation budgets and statewide comparative data. The DOR's Division of Local Services (DLS) Municipal Data Bank provided demographic information, community profiles and overall state aid data. While on site, the audit team interviewed officials including, but not limited to the school committee chair, Superintendent, assistant superintendent, business administrator, director of special services, principals and town accountant. Documents reviewed included vendor and personnel contracts, invoices, payroll data, statistics on students and teachers as well as test results and reports submitted to DOE.

In keeping with the goals set out by the EMAB, the school district review was designed to determine whether or not basic financial goals related to education reform have been met. The audit team gathered data related to performance such as test scores, student to teacher ratios and class sizes to show results and operational trends. However, this report does not intend to present a definitive opinion regarding the quality of education in APS, or its successes or failures in meeting particular education reform goals.

Rather, it is intended to present a relevant summary of data to the EMAB for evaluation and comparison purposes.

The focus of this review was on operational issues. It did not encompass all of the tests that are normally part of a year-end financial audit such as: review of internal controls; cash reconciliation of accounts; testing compliance with purchasing and expenditure laws and regulations; and generally accepted accounting principles. The audit team tested financial transactions on a limited basis only. The audit team also excluded federal grants, state grants except for Equal Education Opportunity (EEO) and Per Pupil Education Aid, revolving accounts and student activity accounts. The audit team did not test statistical data relating to enrollment, test scores and other measures of achievement. This report is intended for the information and use of EMAB and APS. However, this report is a matter of public record and its distribution is not limited.

III. General Conditions and Findings

1. Auburn Overview

DOE classifies the town of Auburn as an economically developed suburb. Its 1996 population was 15,002, up 1.1 percent from 1980 but down 2.6 percent from 1970. It is located approximately 50 miles west of Boston and approximately five miles south of Worcester. The town is governed by a representative town meeting and is administered by a five-member board of selectmen with an executive secretary. Filene's Basement, Auburn's largest employer, employs 400 people. The taxable value of the town's largest taxpayer, Auburn Mall, was valued in FY98 at \$34.5 million or 3.9 percent of the town's total taxable value.

Like many Massachusetts school districts, Auburn faced budgetary pressures in the early 1990s as a result of an economic recession and the associated decline in municipal state aid for education and in financial contributions to schools. The Auburn town meeting approved school operating budgets for FY91 to FY93 less than the school operating budget for FY90. For FY92, a \$1 million proposition 2½ capital exclusion vote for school maintenance passed in apparent reaction to the high school being placed on probation by NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges) for facility deficiencies (see section 20). Both a proposition 2½ debt exclusion vote in 1990 and an override vote in 1994 for school related expenses failed by substantial margins.

Charts 1-1 and 1-2 show some key demographic and economic statistics for Auburn.

*Chart 1-1***Town of Auburn
Demographic Data**

1996 Population	15,002
FY99 Residential Tax Rate	\$13.32
FY99 Average Single Family Tax	\$1,543
FY99 Avg. Assessed Value Per Single Family	\$115,854
FY99 Tax Levy	\$15,305,055
FY99 Levy Limit	\$16,100,972
FY99 Levy Ceiling	\$23,133,513
FY99 State Aid	\$5,096,501
FY99 State Aid as % of Revenue	19.6%
1989 Per Capita Income	\$17,500
1996 Average Unemployment Rate	3.3%

Note: Data provided by DLS

As of our audit date, the district has one high school (grades 9-12), one middle school (grades 6-8) and four elementary schools (two grades 3-5, one grades pre-K-2, and one grades K-2).

The Superintendent has been in this position for 10 years, the assistant superintendent for three years (the position was recently upgraded from director by the school committee), and the business administrator for five years.

The organization chart divides the system into two sections: program and operations. Under program are the positions of assistant superintendent for curriculum and development, directors of special services, of technology and of athletics and supervisors of physical education and of fine arts. Under operations are the positions of business administrator and of supervisor of maintenance.

An Auburn School Committee policy which, according to the Superintendent, dates back to the 1970s allows non-resident APS teachers to enroll their child or children in the district. The current policy states that "all teachers employed prior to September 1998 will be allowed to enroll their children in the Auburn Public Schools."

Since 1995, over 200 Auburn high and middle school students and chaperones have participated in a field trip to the Amazon rainforest in La Selva, Ecuador. Led by an Auburn middle school science teacher who teaches rainforest biology and who has done research in the rainforest, the group studies animal and plant life during the spring school vacation. This same teacher has led private safaris to Africa and to the Galapagos Islands.

Transportation is provided to students who live over 1½ miles from the school they attend and to pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students door to door. Exceptions are made for students with a disability.

APS' high school graduating class of 1997 indicated that 82.6 percent intended to go on to a two or four year college, a rate higher than the 71.9 percent state average. The percent of graduates planning to go to work was 11.6 percent, a rate lower than the state average of 16.8 percent. In 1997, the high school dropout rate was 0.5 percent, less than the state average of 3.4 percent.

Chart 1-2

**Auburn Public Schools
Demographic Data 1997/98**

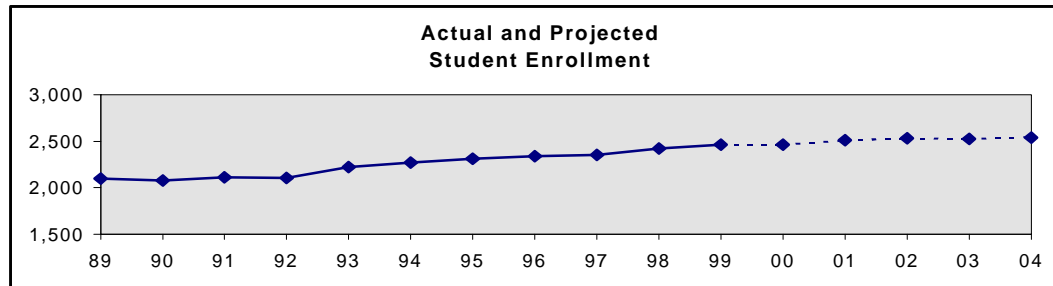
	APS	State Average
Enrollment: Race / Ethnicity		
White	97.1%	77.5%
Minority	2.9%	22.5%
Limited English Proficiency	0.0%	4.8%
Special Education	11.1%	16.6%
Percentage Attending Private School -1997	5.6%	10.6%
High School Drop-Out Rate - 1997	0.5%	3.4%
Plan of Graduates - Class of '97:		
4 Year College	56.5%	53.4%
2 Year College	<u>26.1%</u>	<u>18.5%</u>
2 or 4 Year College	82.6%	71.9%
Work	11.6%	16.8%

Note: Data provided by DOE. Special Education data as of June 1998.

Chart 1-3 illustrates APS' enrollment trend from October 1988, the 1988/89 school year, to October 2003, the 2003/04 school year. Enrollments are projected for the district by the New England School Development Council (NESDEC) and are shown from October 1999 through October 2003. Enrollments are as of October 1, except for tuitioned out students which are as of June 30. Enrollments include tuitioned in and tuitioned out students.

Chart 1-3

**Auburn Public Schools
Actual and Projected Student Enrollment
School Years 1988/89 to 2003/04**



Note: Enrollment as of October 1st. Data obtained from APS.

A solid line represents actual enrollment; a dotted line represents projected enrollment

As shown in *Chart 1-3a*, enrollment has increased from 2,099 in October of the 1988/89 school year to 2,422 in October of the 1997/98 school year. Total APS enrollment increased by 15.4 percent during this time period, a slightly higher rate of increase than the state average of 15.1 percent. The chart shows a total enrollment increase in 12 of the 15 years represented in the chart. Elementary enrollment increased by 25.3 percent from 1988/89 to 1997/98, a higher rate of increase than the state average of 22.1 percent. Enrollments at the middle and high schools show rates of change less than the state average. Enrollment projections show generally increasing enrollments at the middle and high school levels.

Chart 1-3a

**Auburn Public Schools
Actual and Projected Student Enrollment**

School Year	Elementary School		Middle School	High School	Ungraded/ Tuitioned	Total Enrollment
	Pre K & K	1 - 5	6 - 8	9 - 12	Out	
88-89	154	792	499	614	40	2,099
89-90	184	759	520	574	43	2,080
90-91	185	790	532	567	38	2,112
91-92	181	817	518	560	27	2,103
92-93	255	860	503	573	29	2,220
93-94	225	931	511	590	11	2,268
94-95	246	961	515	577	15	2,314
95-96	238	963	531	596	10	2,338
96-97	241	963	546	592	12	2,354
97-98	263	992	558	590	19	2,422
98-99	253	988	575	619	26	2,461
99-00	249	983	606	622	26	2,486
00-01	265	960	638	647	26	2,536
01-02	240	977	624	688	26	2,555
02-03	252	965	615	695	26	2,553
03-04	252	955	605	731	26	2,569
APS 89-98						
% Change	70.8%	25.3%	11.8%	-3.9%	-	15.4%
State 89-98						
% Change	20.7%	22.1%	21.8%	2.8%	-	15.1%
APS 99-04						
% Change	-0.4%	-3.3%	5.2%	18.1%	-	4.4%

Note: Data obtained from APS

Chart 1-4 illustrates the elementary, middle and high school enrollments as a percentage of the total enrollment.

Chart 1-4

Auburn Public Schools
Distribution of Enrollment by Type of School

School Year	Elementary School		Middle School	High School	Ungraded/ Tuitioned	Total
	Pre K & K	1 - 5	6 - 8	9 - 12	Out	Enrollment
88-89	7.3%	37.7%	23.8%	29.3%	1.9%	100.0%
89-90	8.8%	36.5%	25.0%	27.6%	2.1%	100.0%
90-91	8.8%	37.4%	25.2%	26.8%	1.8%	100.0%
91-92	8.6%	38.8%	24.6%	26.6%	1.3%	100.0%
92-93	11.5%	38.7%	22.7%	25.8%	1.3%	100.0%
93-94	9.9%	41.0%	22.5%	26.0%	0.5%	100.0%
94-95	10.6%	41.5%	22.3%	24.9%	0.6%	100.0%
95-96	10.2%	41.2%	22.7%	25.5%	0.4%	100.0%
96-97	10.2%	40.9%	23.2%	25.1%	0.5%	100.0%
97-98	10.9%	41.0%	23.0%	24.4%	0.8%	100.0%
98-99	10.3%	40.1%	23.4%	25.2%	1.1%	100.0%
99-00	10.0%	39.5%	24.4%	25.0%	1.0%	100.0%
00-01	10.4%	37.9%	25.2%	25.5%	1.0%	100.0%
01-02	9.4%	38.2%	24.4%	26.9%	1.0%	100.0%
02-03	9.9%	37.8%	24.1%	27.2%	1.0%	100.0%
03-04	9.8%	37.2%	23.6%	28.5%	1.0%	100.0%
Percentage Point						
Chg. '89-98	3.5	3.2	-0.7	-4.9	-1.1	0.0
Percentage Point						
Chg. '99-'04	-0.5	-3.0	0.2	3.3	0.0	0.0

Note: Data obtained from APS. Percentages may not calculate due to rounding.

In verifying the accuracy of enrollment numbers, the audit team noted several inaccuracies between the numbers maintained by APS enrollment system and those reported to DOE on the foundation enrollment report. Specifically, our review of foundation enrollment reports revealed both overstated and understated student populations. Errors that were found since FY94 include reporting resident tuitioned pre-K and certain non-resident non-tuitioned in students, inconsistently reporting pre-K SPED and ungraded students and not reporting tuitioned out students.

In dollar terms, these enrollment errors resulted in an estimated total of \$26,000 in excess state aid since FY95. In this instance, errors carry forward per the education aid formula as minimum aid (based on foundation enrollment) becomes a factor in the following fiscal year's base aid for an above-foundation community. The audit team suggests that in the future the district use and save supporting documentation on the completion of the foundation enrollment report and also that the district review annual DOE instructions for the report.

2. School Finances

Overall, APS has benefited from additional funds available due to education reform. State aid increased by \$600,000 and required local contribution by \$1.6 million from FY94 to FY98. This combination of aid allowed the district to hire more teacher aides, fund additional SPED costs, increase salaries and spend for new academic initiatives.

School district funding and financial reporting requirements are generally complex and become especially complicated in the context of education reform. A district annually determines how much money it will spend on education. DOE considers only certain expenditures and funding when determining whether or not a district meets education reform requirements.

This audit examines school funding primarily from three perspectives: the school committee budget, net school spending, and the foundation budget.

The audit team examined the school committee budget in some detail as a matter of practice because it reflects basic financial and educational decisions, provides an overview of financial operations and indicates how the community expects to meet the goals and objectives of education reform.

Net school spending, the sum of the required minimum contribution from local revenues plus state chapter 70 education aid, is a figure issued annually by DOE that must be met by school districts under education reform.

The foundation budget is a school spending target under education reform which the school district should meet. Calculated on the basis of pupil characteristics and community demographics, it is designed to ensure that a minimum level of educational resources is available per student in each school district. Under education reform, all school districts are expected to meet their foundation budget targets by the year 2000.

3. School Committee Budget Trend

Chart 3-1 illustrates the school committee budget trend from FY89 to FY98. For this purpose, the budget includes the initial and major supplemental town meeting action on the school committee's operating budget. Separate town meeting action for capital improvement and state grants for EEO and Per Pupil Aid are not included.

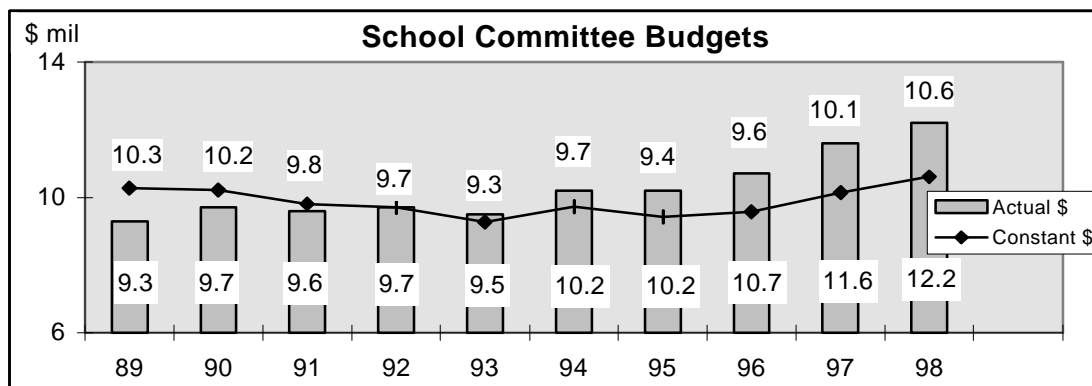
The total school committee budget as defined above increased by \$216,000, or 2.3 percent, between FY89 and FY93. With education reform aid, the budget increased between FY93 and FY98 by \$2.7 million, or 28.1 percent. Actual salary expenditures accounted for between 56 percent to just over 100 percent of the increases in total state and local aid provided by education reform from FY95 to FY98.

In constant dollars, where FY92 is set at 100, the chart illustrates how the school committee budget fared with respect to inflation over time. From FY89 to FY98, the school committee budget as defined above increased from \$10.3 million to \$10.6 million,

a 2.9 percent increase in constant dollars. From FY93 to FY98, it increased by \$1.3 million or 14 percent in constant dollars, from \$9.3 million to \$10.6 million. In constant dollars, APS experienced budget increases in four of the last nine years.

Chart 3-1

**Auburn Public Schools
School Committee Budgets in Actual and Constant Dollars
FY89 - FY98**



Note: Data obtained from APS. Years are in fiscal years. Numbers in the bars represent actual \$ and above the bars constant \$.

APS end-of-year reports indicate that \$0 was expended in Equal Education Opportunity (EEO) grants and that \$209,604 was expended in FY93 Per Pupil Aid. The purpose of EEO grants was to raise per pupil direct service expenditures in Massachusetts cities and towns in which these expenditures were below 85 percent of the state average. FY93 Per Pupil Aid funds were exclusively for educational purposes and must have been used to implement new initiatives, reduce class size and make management changes or other improvements in the educational program. These funds were budgeted in large part for staff development/new books and materials, special education needs and for the reinstatement of elementary guidance and certain other instructional assistants.

4. Total School District Expenditures

Total school district expenditures includes expenditures by the school committee and by the town for school purposes as reported in the DOE end-of-year report. Total school district expenditures increased between FY89 and FY93 by \$430,000 or 3.9 percent. Expenditures increased between FY93 and FY98 by \$3.1 million or 27.8 percent.

Expenditures paid by the town for school purposes were at \$1.6 million in FY89 and increased to \$2.3 million in FY98 primarily due to employee benefits, extraordinary maintenance and capital technology expenses. In FY98, the major components of town spending were \$1.2 million for insurance, \$270,000 for retirement and \$148,000 for extraordinary maintenance. *Chart 4-1* illustrates APS' total school district expenditures for FY89 and for FY93 through FY98.

Chart 4-1

**Auburn Public Schools
Total School District Expenditures
(in millions of dollars)**

	FY89	FY93	FY94	FY95	FY96	FY97	FY98
School Committee	\$9.3	\$9.5	\$10.2	\$10.3	\$10.7	\$11.6	\$12.2
Town	\$1.6	\$1.8	\$2.2	\$2.0	\$1.9	\$1.9	\$2.3
Total	\$10.9	\$11.3	\$12.3	\$12.3	\$12.6	\$13.5	\$14.5

Note: Data obtained from APS. Numbers may not add due to rounding.

In verifying the accuracy of the expenditure numbers, the audit team noted that the regional school assessment amount did not appear on the district's end-of-year report submitted to DOE from FY96 to FY98, but did appear on DOE's final copy. It is unclear how this correction appeared on the DOE final copy. The audit team recommends that the district include this assessment amount before submitting the next end-of-year report to DOE.

In verifying the accuracy of the expenditure numbers, the audit team noted that appropriations from a separate capital article were not properly reported on any of the end-of-year reports reviewed. The audit team recommends that the district completely report all appropriations, both operating and capital, on future end-of-year reports. DOE uses this information to determine compliance with new school building maintenance spending requirements (see section 24). Future school building assistance funding may be jeopardized by incomplete data.

Chart 4-2 shows the FY94 to FY98 trend in net school spending per student. It indicates that actual net school spending per student has increased from \$5,096 in FY94 to \$5,645 in FY98, or 10.8 percent. The inflation adjusted figures increased from \$4,858 in FY94 to \$4,951 in FY98, or 1.9 percent in 1992 dollars.

Chart 4-2

**Auburn Public Schools
Net School Spending Per Student
Actual and Constant (1992=100) Dollars**

	FY94	FY95	FY96	FY97	FY98	FY94-FY98 Change
Expenditures / Student in Actual \$	\$5,096	\$5,094	\$5,176	\$5,527	\$5,645	10.8%
Expenditures / Student in 1992 \$	\$4,858	\$4,712	\$4,684	\$4,891	\$4,951	1.9%

Note: Data obtained from APS

5. Net School Spending Requirements

Pursuant to the education reform law, DOE develops annual spending requirements and budget targets for each school district. The requirements are based on a formula which is used to set specific minimum spending requirements and in combination with other factors is also used to set foundation budget targets as well as determining the amount of state aid for each district.

Each school district must meet a net school spending requirement. Expenditures which count towards a district's net school spending, generally include all education related expenditures paid for with state aid under Chapter 70 and municipal appropriations used for that purpose. Excluded from the net school spending definition are expenditures for school transportation, school lunch, school construction and certain capital expenditures. Expenditures from federal funds and from school revolving accounts are also excluded.

As indicated in *Chart 5-1*, the recommended foundation budget target, that is the ultimate spending goal for the district, increased from \$10.9 million in FY94 to \$12.1 million in FY98, an 11 percent increase. During this same time period, required net school spending increased by 19 percent, from 11.1 million in FY94 to 13.2 million in FY98. Both the required and actual net school spending amounts have been consistently above the recommended foundation budget target.

Chart 5-1

Auburn Public Schools
Foundation Budget and Net School Spending (NSS)
(in millions of dollars)

	FY94	FY95	FY96	FY97	FY98
Foundation Budget Target	\$10.9	\$11.1	\$11.4	\$11.9	\$12.1
Required NSS as % of Foundation	101.7%	103.3%	105.5%	106.0%	109.5%
Required Net School Spending	\$11.1	\$11.5	\$12.1	\$12.6	\$13.2
Actual Net School Spending	\$11.5	\$11.7	\$12.0	\$12.9	\$13.5
Variance \$	\$0.4	\$0.2	(\$0.1)	\$0.3	\$0.3
Variance %	3.7%	1.9%	-0.4%	2.6%	2.3%
Actual NSS as % of Foundation	105.5%	105.3%	105.0%	108.7%	112.0%

Note: Data obtained from DOE and APS. Percentages may not calculate due to rounding.

Chart 5-2 indicates that state aid, as a percent of actual net school spending, increased from 22.0 percent in FY94 to 22.7 percent in FY98, while the local share decreased from 78.0 percent in FY94 to 77.3 percent in FY98. The chart also indicates that from FY94 to FY98, the actual local contribution generally exceeded the required local contribution by as low as 2.5 percent and by as high as 4.8 percent. In FY96, the percent was negative because actual net school spending was less than required net school spending by \$53,342. This deficiency appeared to be caused by spending less than estimated for active and retired employee insurance. This amount was carried forward into FY97's required net school spending total which was met by APS.

Chart 5-2

**Auburn Public Schools
Net School Spending
(in millions of dollars)**

	FY94	FY95	FY96	FY97	FY98
Required Local Contribution	\$8.6	\$8.9	\$9.3	\$9.7	\$10.2
Actual Local Contribution	\$9.0	\$9.1	\$9.3	\$10.0	\$10.5
Variance \$	\$0.4	\$0.2	(\$0.1)	\$0.3	\$0.3
Variance %	4.8%	2.5%	-0.6%	3.4%	3.0%
Required Net School Spending	\$11.1	\$11.5	\$12.1	\$12.6	\$13.2
Actual Net School Spending	\$11.5	\$11.7	\$12.0	\$12.9	\$13.5
Local Share \$	\$9.0	\$9.1	\$9.3	\$10.0	\$10.5
State Aid \$	\$2.5	\$2.6	\$2.7	\$2.9	\$3.1
Local Share %	78.0%	78.0%	77.2%	77.5%	77.3%
State Aid %	22.0%	22.0%	22.8%	22.5%	22.7%

Note: Data obtained from DOE and APS. Percentages may not calculate due to rounding.

6. School Committee Program Budget

Within the context of education reform and improving student achievement, the audit team tries to establish what a school district budgets and spends on academic courses such as English and science versus other subjects or programs. Program budgets are generally intended to show the total financial resources for a particular program or activity. Well developed program budgets include goal statements, planned actions and expected outcomes along with the total amount of resources required to achieve the objectives. In the school environment, a program budget for mathematics, for example, would show salaries for mathematics teachers and related costs such as supplies, textbooks, etc. It would also indicate the expected outcomes for the budget year.

The district's budget is detailed by major classification as found in DOE's end-of-year report (1000 - administration, 2000 – instruction, etc.). Salaries and expenses are further detailed within these major classifications. Teacher salaries are budgeted based on the current fiscal year's estimated expenditure plus or minus adjustments. The budget is also presented by school, by special services and by systemwide costs.

Principals are responsible to defend their own budgets before the school committee. APS officials indicated to the audit team that the school committee looks for expenditure equities between the two elementary schools on each side of town.

Chart 6-1 summarizes the school committee budget for FY89, FY93, FY97 and FY98. The school transportation budget has been excluded from this data to approximate net school spending.

According to *Chart 6-1*, the budgeted amount for instruction increased most in dollar terms between FY93 and FY98, from \$7.5 million in FY93 to \$9.9 million in FY98. According to DOE guidelines, this amount includes expenses for instructional activities involving the teaching of students, supervising of staff, and developing and utilizing curriculum materials and related services. The budgeted amount for other school services increased most in percentage terms during the same time period from \$186,000 in FY93 to \$356,000 in FY98. This increase was due mostly to budgeted nursing salaries and coaches' stipends. DOE guidelines define these expenses as services other than instructional provided for students.

Chart 6-1

**Auburn Public Schools
School Committee Program Budget
(in thousands of dollars)**

	FY89	FY93	FY97	FY98	FY93 - FY98		FY98
					\$ Diff	% Diff	% of Tot
Administration	\$270	\$352	\$374	\$370	\$19	5.3%	3.1%
Instruction	\$6,896	\$7,541	\$9,427	\$9,915	\$2,374	31.5%	82.4%
Other School Services	\$220	\$186	\$338	\$356	\$170	91.4%	3.0%
Operations/Maintenance	\$1,275	\$935	\$1,067	\$1,145	\$210	22.5%	9.5%
Community Services	\$4	\$0	\$0	\$0	(\$0)	N/A	0.0%
Fixed Assets	\$143	\$5	\$0	\$0	(\$5)	-100.0%	0.0%
Prog. w/ Other Systems	\$168	\$146	\$62	\$254	\$107	73.6%	2.1%
Total	\$8,975	\$9,165	\$11,267	\$12,039	\$3,064	34.1%	100.0%

Note: Data obtained from APS. School transportation and employee benefits are not included.

Appendix A-1 further details the data shown in *Chart 6-1*. This appendix, unlike the chart, includes budgeted transportation.

Chart 6-1a shows the same program budget data on a percentage distribution basis to illustrate how particular budget items have changed since FY89 in certain areas.

Chart 6-1a

**Auburn Public Schools
School Committee Program Budget
Percentage Distribution**

	FY89	FY93	FY97	FY98	% Point Diff. FY89 - FY98
Administration	3.0%	3.8%	3.3%	3.1%	0.1
Instruction	76.8%	82.3%	83.7%	82.4%	5.5
Other School Services	2.5%	2.0%	3.0%	3.0%	0.5
Operations/Maintenance	14.2%	10.2%	9.5%	9.5%	-4.7
Community Services	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0
Fixed Assets	1.6%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	-1.6
Prog. w/ Other Systems	1.9%	1.6%	0.5%	2.1%	0.2
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	0.0

Note: Data obtained from APS. School transportation and employee benefits are not included.
Percentages may not add due to rounding.

Chart 6-2 provides a more detailed look at teacher full time equivalents (FTEs) by selected disciplines. This chart indicates minor differences between FY93 and FY98. For purposes of this chart, teacher FTEs replace a dollar amount for salary.

Chart 6-2

**Auburn Public Schools
FTE Teachers By Selected Disciplines**

Discipline	FY89	FY93	FY97	FY98	FY93 - FY98		
					Diff.	% Diff	% of Total
Certain Core Subjects	43.5	45.2	46.6	45.9	0.7	1.5%	10.8%
Art and Music	4.0	5.0	4.6	5.0	0.0	0.0%	0.0%
Early Childhood	0.5	2.0	3.7	3.3	1.3	65.0%	20.0%
Health / Phys. Ed.	5.5	5.0	7.0	7.0	2.0	40.0%	30.8%
SPED	14.7	16.4	14.0	13.0	(3.4)	-20.7%	-52.3%
Elementary	56.0	52.0	59.8	57.8	5.8	11.2%	89.2%
Reading	6.8	4.9	4.5	5.0	0.1	2.0%	1.5%
Foreign Language	6.3	6.5	6.5	6.5	0.0	0.0%	0.0%
Total Selected	137.3	137.0	146.7	143.5	\$6.5	4.7%	100.0%

Note: Data obtained from APS. Core subjects included here are English, math, science and social studies.

Chart 6-2a shows the same budget data on a percentage distribution basis to illustrate how teacher FTEs in selected disciplines have changed since FY89.

Chart 6-2a

**Auburn Public Schools
Distribution of FTE Teachers By Selected Disciplines**

Discipline	FY89	FY93	FY97	FY98	% Point Change FY93 - FY98
Certain Core Subjects	31.7%	33.0%	31.8%	32.0%	-1.0
Art and Music	2.9%	3.6%	3.1%	3.5%	-0.2
Early Childhood	0.4%	1.5%	2.5%	2.3%	0.8
Health / Phys. Ed.	4.0%	3.6%	4.8%	4.9%	1.2
SPED	10.7%	12.0%	9.5%	9.1%	-2.9
Elementary	40.8%	38.0%	40.8%	40.3%	2.3
Reading	5.0%	3.6%	3.1%	3.5%	-0.1
Foreign Language	4.6%	4.7%	4.4%	4.5%	-0.2
Total Selected	100%	100%	100%	100%	

Note: Data obtained from APS. Core subjects included here are English, math, science and social studies. Percentages and percentage point changes may not add due to rounding.

Teacher FTEs detailed by selected disciplines are shown in *Appendix A-2*.

7. Foundation Budget

The foundation budget is a target level of spending developed to ensure that a minimum level of education resources is available per student in each school district. The foundation budget shown in *Appendix B* is determined by a number of factors including enrollment, staffing and salary levels. The key items in the foundation budget include: payroll, non-salary expenses, professional development, expanded programs, extraordinary maintenance, and books and instructional equipment. DOE calculates each of these budget items using foundation enrollment with adjustments for special education, bilingual and low-income students. Certain salary levels and FTE standards are used to calculate salary budgets which also include annual adjustments for inflation.

The foundation budget establishes spending targets by grade (pre-school, kindergarten, elementary, junior/middle and high school) and program (regular day, special education, bilingual, vocational and expanded or after-school activities). Grade and program spending targets are intended to serve as guidelines only and are not binding on local school districts. To encourage appropriate levels of spending, M.G.L. Ch.70, §9 requires that a school district report to the Commissioner of Education when it has failed to meet foundation budget spending levels for professional development, books and instructional equipment, extended/expanded programs and extraordinary maintenance.

According to *Chart 7-1*, expenditures did not reach foundation budget for any of the categories in any of the fiscal years shown except for professional development in FY98. APS did not file a report with the Commissioner's office as required by Ch. 70, §9 for these fiscal years stating its reasons for not meeting these levels nor did DOE direct APS to submit such report. The audit team determined that professional development expenditures for FY94 and FY96 were calculated according to district interpretation of DOE guidelines which provided for less reported expenditures than may have been allowed.

Chart 7-1

**Auburn Public Schools
Net School Spending According to Foundation Budget
(in thousands of dollars)**

	FY94		FY96		FY98	
	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget
Professional Development	\$0	\$170	\$117	\$179	\$193	\$189
Books and Equipment	\$186	\$651	\$320	\$678	\$413	\$717
Expanded Program	\$0	\$37	\$0	\$60	\$0	\$66
Extraordinary Maintenance	\$0	\$341	\$0	\$359	\$148	\$380

Expenditures As Percentage of Foundation Budget

	FY94	FY96	FY98
	NSS/FND	NSS/FND	NSS/FND
Professional Development	0.0%	65.7%	102.4%
Books and Equipment	28.6%	47.3%	57.6%
Expanded Program	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Extraordinary Maintenance	0.0%	0.0%	38.9%

Note: Data obtained from DOE and APS. Percentages calculated using whole dollars.

Appendix B shows the APS foundation budget for FY94, FY96 and FY98. For each year, the chart shows expenditures and variances from the foundation budgets as well as how expenditures compare with the foundation budgets. Although specific spending levels were not met, total spending exceeded the total foundation budget for each of the fiscal years shown. For FY98, spending was greater than the foundation budget for teaching salaries by \$2.5 million, in assistants' salaries by \$278,000, but was less than the foundation budget target for support salaries by \$983,000 and in books and equipment by \$304,000.

8. Staffing – Full Time Equivalent (FTE) Trends

Since salaries comprise approximately 72.4 percent of the FY98 total school district expenditures, budget changes closely reflect changes in staffing or FTEs. According to *Chart 8-1*, APS had a total of 260.7 FTEs including 147.4 teacher FTEs in FY89. By

FY93, total FTEs increased to 265.0 and teacher FTEs increased to 152.9. In this context, teachers exclude instructional assistants, para-professionals, guidance counselors, psychologist, cafeteria, custodial and maintenance personnel.

As *Chart 8-1* indicates, APS increased staff between FY89 and FY93 by 4.3 FTEs including 5.5 teaching FTEs, and between FY93 and FY98, increased staff by 36.7 FTEs including 4.1 teaching FTEs. Instructional assistants increased by 27.6 during this same time period and all others by 4.5. This compares to a total student enrollment increase of 202 students or 9.1 percent from FY93 to FY98.

Over the FY89 to FY98 period, schools in the district experienced an increase in total FTEs of 15.7 percent while teacher FTEs increased by 6.5 percent. The enrollment increase over this time period was 15.4 percent.

Chart 8-1

**Auburn Public Schools
Staffing Trends
Full Time Equivalent (FTE)**

	Total FTEs	Teachers	Teachers as % of FTEs	Instruct. Assists.	Administration and Support	All Others
FY89	260.7	147.4	56.5%	23.5	37.0	52.8
FY93	265.0	152.9	57.7%	25.0	33.5	53.6
FY98	301.7	157.0	52.0%	52.6	34.0	58.1
FY89-93	4.3	5.5		1.5	-3.5	0.8
Incr./ Decr.	1.6%	3.7%		6.4%	-9.5%	1.5%
FY93-98	36.7	4.1		27.6	0.5	4.5
Incr. / Decr.	13.8%	2.7%		110.4%	1.5%	8.4%
FY89-98	41.0	9.6		29.1	-3.0	5.3
Incr. / Decr.	15.7%	6.5%		123.8%	-8.1%	10.0%

Note: Data obtained from APS School System Summary Report as of October 1 as adjusted by audit team for comparison purposes.

Chart 8-2 shows changes in teaching FTEs by type of school or program. The largest increase in teachers occurred in the elementary level between FY93 and FY98, when 5.8 FTEs were added. This was an 11.2 percent increase. Secondary teacher FTEs increased by less than one FTE and special education teacher FTEs decreased by 3.4.

Chart 8-2

**Auburn Public Schools
FTE Teachers By Program
(excluding teaching aides)**

				FY93 - FY98	
	FY89	FY93	FY98	Increase	% Incr / Decr
Early Childhood	0.5	2.0	3.3	1.3	65.0%
Elementary	56.0	52.0	57.8	5.8	11.2%
Secondary	76.2	82.5	82.9	0.4	0.5%
Subtotal	132.7	136.5	144.0	7.5	5.5%
Special Education	14.7	16.4	13.0	-3.4	-20.7%
Total	147.4	152.9	157.0	4.1	2.7%

Note: Data obtained from APS 10/1 School System Summary Reports as adjusted by audit team for comparison purposes. Kindergarten included in elementary.

Student/teacher ratios increased between FY89 and FY93 and increased again between FY93 and FY98 as shown in *Chart 8-3*. The overall ratio for students to teachers was 14.1:1 in FY89, 14.4:1 in FY93 and 15.4:1 in FY98. The FY98 ratio is above the statewide ratio of 14.2:1. The audit team notes that the student per teacher ratio does not take into account the increase in instructional assistants which more than doubled between FY93 and FY98. APS has utilized teacher aides to reduce the student per “instructor” ratio. When adjusted for the number of SPED teachers, using the same total student population for illustration purposes, the resulting all student ratios are somewhat higher. The non-SPED teacher ratios were all less than the state averages.

Chart 8-3

**Auburn Public Schools
Students Per FTE Teacher**

	FY89	FY93	FY98
All Students / All FTE Teachers	14.1	14.4	15.4
All Students / All FTE Teachers - State Average	14.1	15.1	14.2
All Students / All Non-SPED FTE Teachers	15.7	16.2	16.7
All Students / All Non-SPED FTE Teachers - State Avg.	17.7	19.2	18.1
All Students / All Non-SPED FTE Teachers			
Kindergarten	17.3	15.9	16.9
Elementary	15.3	18.7	18.6
Secondary	14.8	13.0	13.8

Note: Data obtained from APS and DOE.

Teaching FTEs in mathematics and social studies increased and decreased in the other core subject areas of English and science as shown in *Chart 8-4*.

Chart 8-4

**Auburn Public Schools
Teachers - Core Subjects
High and Middle School FTEs**

				FY93 - FY98	
	FY89	FY93	FY98	Increase	% Incr / Decr
English	11.2	12.2	12.0	-0.2	-1.6%
Mathematics	12.5	11.4	14.0	2.6	22.8%
Science	10.8	12.2	10.9	-1.3	-10.7%
Social Studies	9.0	9.4	10.0	0.6	6.4%
Total	43.5	45.2	46.9	1.7	3.8%

Note: Data obtained from APS School System Summary Report as of October 1.
Science includes physics.

In verifying the accuracy of October 1st School System Summary Report data, the audit team found a lack of supporting documentation, a change in reporting methodology which made FTEs by selected discipline difficult to compare over time and an overstatement of elementary school teaching FTEs in one year. Two factor contributed to these errors: (1) a retirement which led to a change in who completed the form locally and (2) DOE form instructions which do not clearly state the correct reporting methodology. The audit team recommends that in the future APS save supporting documentation used to complete this form and also use a reporting methodology consistent with prior years unless otherwise directed by DOE instructions.

9. Payroll – Salary Levels, Union Contracts

Expenditures for salaries are reviewed to determine how the school district has increased expenditures for teachers and how teaching salaries have increased as a result of union contract agreements.

Chart 9-1 indicates how school salaries have increased in comparison to total school district expenditures. APS increased its expenditures for salaries by \$2.0 million between FY93 and FY98, an increase of 24.2 percent. This is 3.7 percentage points less than the increase in total school district expenditures during the same time period. Total salaries made up 74.5 percent of these expenditures in FY93 and decreased to 72.4 percent in FY98. Total school district expenditures include fringe benefits.

Of the \$3.1 million total school district expenditure increase from FY93 to FY98, \$2.0 million is attributable to salaries. Of this \$2.0 million increase, \$1.3 million or 61.5

percent applied to teaching salaries and \$800,000 or 38.5 percent applied to non-teaching salaries such as those for administrators, para-professionals, clerical and custodial staff.

Chart 9-1

Auburn Public Schools
Salary Expenditures Compared to Total School District Expenditures
(in millions of dollars)

	FY89	FY93	FY96	FY98	FY93 - FY98	
					\$ Incr. / Decr.	% Incr. / Decr.
Total School District Expenditures	\$10.9	\$11.3	\$12.6	\$14.5	\$3.1	27.8%
Total Salaries	\$7.3	\$8.4	\$9.4	\$10.5	\$2.0	24.2%
as % of Total Expenditures	66.8%	74.5%	74.8%	72.4%	64.9%	
Teaching Salaries	\$4.9	\$5.9	\$6.6	\$7.2	\$1.3	21.3%
as % of Total Salaries	67.9%	70.0%	69.8%	68.3%	61.5%	
Non-Teaching Salaries	\$2.3	\$2.5	\$2.8	\$3.3	\$0.8	31.1%
as % of Total Salaries	32.1%	30.0%	30.2%	31.7%	38.5%	

Note: Data obtained from APS. Numbers may not add due to rounding.

Chart 9-2 shows that the average teacher's salary increased from \$38,598 to \$42,914 between FY93 and FY98. The FY98 average teacher's salary of \$42,914 is below the state average of \$44,051 reported by DOE. The average teacher salary decreased from FY97 to FY98 by \$1,075. This can be attributed to the hiring of 19.3 new or replacement teachers for FY97 and FY98 at 72.3 percent of the average teacher salary. For FY98, according to APS officials, approximately 82 percent of teachers are on the top salary step.

During the course of the audit, the audit team discovered that in the FY97 end-of-year report, APS instructional aide salaries were included in total teaching salaries. This overstated teacher salaries by approximately \$310,000 and inflated the average teacher salary as calculated by DOE. The FY97 average shown in the chart has been adjusted by the audit team. The business administrator immediately notified DOE of the error in writing after it was brought to his attention.

Chart 9-2

Auburn Public Schools
Teaching Salaries and Teachers (FTE)
Average Salary Comparison

	FY89	FY93	FY94	FY95	FY96	FY97	FY98
Teaching Salaries (\$ in mil)	\$4.9	\$5.9	\$6.2	\$6.4	\$6.6	\$7.0	\$7.2
FTE - Teachers	156.1	153.1	157.1	151.4	151.1	158.9	167.0
FTE Incr. / Decr. from Previous Year	N/A	-0.3	4.0	-5.7	-0.3	7.8	8.1
Average Salary per FTE	\$31,694	\$38,598	\$39,499	\$42,293	\$43,497	\$43,989	\$42,914
DOE Reported State Average	N/A	\$38,681	\$39,012	\$40,718	\$41,760	\$42,874	\$44,051

Note: FTE excludes adult education teachers. Average salary per FTE consists of all salaries (i.e. asst principals, advisors, coaches etc.), step increases, longevity and differentials. Data obtained from APS and DOE end-of-year reports. FY97 adjusted by audit team.

Of the additional \$1.26 million spent for teaching salaries between FY93 and FY98 as shown in *Chart 9-2a*, \$430,000 or 34 percent represents the cost of new positions and \$940,000 or 75 percent represents the salary increase associated with an assumed three percent inflationary rate for existing staff as of FY93. The chart further indicates that actual salary expenses were less than expected assuming a three percent inflation rate. Cost savings in staffing may have been realized by hiring replacement teachers at less than the average salary of those retiring and/or resigning.

Chart 9-2a

Auburn Public Schools
Salary Expenditures
Estimated Cost of New Positions and Salary Increases
(in millions of dollars)

	FY93	FY98	% of Cumulative Increase
Total Teaching Salary Exp.	\$5.91	\$7.17	
Cumulative Increase from FY93		\$1.26	100%
Est. Cost of 3% Inflationary Increase		\$0.94	75%
Est. FY93-FY98 Cost of New Positions		\$0.43	34%
Subtotal		\$1.37	109%
Est. Amount above 3% Annual Increase		-\$0.11	-9%

Note: Analysis based on data obtained from APS

Chart 9-2b indicates that increases due to annual contracts and step increases ranged between 6.9 percent and 8.9 percent from the 1993 to 1998 time period.

Chart 9-2b

**Auburn Public Schools
Teachers Salaries - Step and Contract Percent Increases**

Period	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	Total
Annual Contract Increase	2.0%	2.0%	4.0%	4.0%	3.0%	3.5%	18.5%
Step Increase	5.0%	4.9%	4.9%	4.9%	4.9%	4.9%	29.5%
Total	7.0%	6.9%	8.9%	8.9%	7.9%	8.4%	48.0%

Note: Data obtained from APS

APS has five salary lanes. Lanes one and two, bachelor's degree and bachelor's degree plus 15 credits, have seven steps. Lanes three and four, master's degree and master's degree plus 15 credits, have eight steps. Lane five, master's degree plus 30 credits, has nine steps.

As shown in *Chart 9-3*, a review of salary changes over the FY93 to FY98 period indicates that the top step salary level increased by 17.6 percent without including step increases or lane changes. This represents the minimum increase a full time teacher would receive exclusive of raises due to step changes or obtaining additional academic credits. In contrast, the state and local government implicit price deflator indicates about an 12.2 percent inflationary trend for the FY93 to FY98 period.

Chart 9-3 shows how APS salary schedules might apply to a particular teacher for the period of FY93 to FY98 depending on the step and academic degree. Various examples outline different situations. The chart illustrates so-called lane changes due to degree earned such as BA to BA+15 and an MA to MA+15.

For example, as of FY93, teacher A was on the maximum step of 7 and had a BA. By FY98, this teacher still on step 7 received salary increases totaling to 17.6 percent. If this teacher earned 15 credits and changed salary lane to BA+15 during this period, the increase would have amounted to 21.0 percent.

Teacher B had a BA, step 2, in FY93. In FY98, this teacher was on step 7 and received a salary increase of 55.5 percent. Had this teacher earned 15 additional credits and changed salary lane during this period, the increase would have amounted to 59.9 percent.

Teacher C entered APS with a BA at step 1 in FY93. By FY98, this teacher reached step 6 and received a 50.7 percent increase in pay. By earning the next contract salary lane of a BA+15, the percent increase in salary would have reached 55.3 percent.

Chart 9-3

Auburn Public Schools
Teaching Staff
Step/Degree Summary - Selected Years

	FY93 Base Pay		FY98 Base Pay			FY93-98 % Change	
	Step	Base Pay BA	Step	Base Pay BA	BA + 15	BA	BA + 15
Teacher A	7	\$32,876	7	\$38,666	\$39,769	17.6%	21.0%
Teacher B	2	\$24,869	7	\$38,666	\$39,769	55.5%	59.9%
Teacher C	1	\$24,056	6	\$36,256	\$37,361	50.7%	55.3%
	MA		MA			MA	
	Step	Base Pay MA	Step	Base Pay MA	MA + 15	MA	MA + 15
Teacher A	8	\$36,980	8	\$43,493	\$44,601	17.6%	20.6%
Teacher B	3	\$29,387	8	\$43,493	\$44,601	48.0%	51.8%
Teacher C	1	\$26,227	6	\$38,798	\$39,902	47.9%	52.1%

Note: APS has 5 salary lanes: BA - Bachelor's degree, BA+15, MA - Master's degree, MA+15, MA+30.
 BA and BA+15 have seven steps; MA and MA+15 have eight steps and MA+30 has nine steps.
 Data obtained from APS.

Chart 9-4

Auburn Public Schools
Teaching Salary Schedules
Comparison of FY93 through FY98 Salary Schedules

Salary Lane	FY93		FY94		FY95		FY96		FY97		FY98	
BA	\$24,056		\$24,537		\$25,518		\$26,539		\$27,335		\$28,292	
BA + 15	\$25,005		\$25,505		\$26,525		\$27,586		\$28,414		\$29,408	
MA	\$26,227		\$26,752		\$27,822		\$28,935		\$29,803		\$30,846	
MA + 15	\$27,165		\$27,708		\$28,816		\$29,969		\$30,868		\$31,948	
MA + 30	\$29,741		\$30,336		\$31,549		\$32,811		\$33,795		\$34,978	
Salary Lane	FY93		FY94		FY95		FY96		FY97		FY98	
BA	\$32,876		\$33,534		\$34,875		\$36,270		\$37,358		\$38,666	
BA + 15	\$33,814		\$34,490		\$35,870		\$37,305		\$38,424		\$39,769	
MA	\$36,980		\$37,720		\$39,229		\$40,798		\$42,022		\$43,493	
MA + 15	\$37,924		\$38,682		\$40,229		\$41,838		\$43,093		\$44,601	
MA + 30	\$41,369		\$42,196		\$43,884		\$45,639		\$47,008		\$48,653	

Note: APS has 5 salary lanes: BA - Bachelor's degree, BA+15, MA - Master's degree, MA+15, MA+30. BA and BA+15 have seven steps; MA and MA+15 have eight steps and MA+30 has nine steps. Data obtained from APS.

10. Professional Development Program

DOE requires school systems to prepare a professional development plan and to meet minimum spending requirements for professional development. The district's philosophy states that "all staff members will be encouraged in and provided with suitable opportunities for the development of increased competencies beyond those they may attain through the performance of their assigned duties and assistance from supervisors." In 1996 APS created the position of director of curriculum and professional development and elevated the position to assistant superintendent of curriculum and professional development in 1999.

The APS professional development plan is based on the comprehensive district improvement plan which states that "all district and school-based initiatives, including school improvement plans, budgets, programs, professional and staff development, are focused on improving student achievement." APS has a comprehensive program for staff development. Thirty teachers participated in "The Skillful Teacher" program offered in FY99. According to our survey 91% of staff participated in professional development last year.

The first district wide professional development plan was prepared in FY98 by the Superintendent, director of curriculum and professional development and the administrative staff. A new plan is prepared each year by the standards committee, which prepares policy on curriculum as well as on professional development. Teachers are informed of offerings on the first day of school in the opening day booklet. In addition, the assistant superintendent confers with each principal on suggested offerings.

During FY95 and FY96, DOE required school districts to spend at a rate equivalent to \$25 per pupil for professional development. This requirement increased to \$50 per pupil for FY97 and \$75 per pupil for FY98. According to *Chart 10-1*, APS did not meet the minimum spending requirement in FY95 but did so for FY96 to FY98.

Chart 10-1

**Auburn Public Schools
Expenditures for Professional Development
(in whole dollars)**

	Professional Development	Minimum Spending Requirement	Total Spent as % of Requirement
FY94	\$0	N/A	N/A
FY95	\$42,770	53,925	79.3 %
FY96	\$117,377	54,500	215.4 %
FY97	\$118,400	110,550	107.1 %
FY98	\$193,179	164,475	117.5 %

Note: Data obtained from APS

One program offered is for mentor training of new teachers and new administrators. This program is funded through a grant and is administered by a steering committee. The program pairs a new teacher with a veteran teacher and involves input from principals, department heads and elementary specialists. Mentors observe the new teachers at least three times per year. In addition, the new teachers observe their mentors at least four times per year. Mentors are given training in observations, coaching, feedback, conferencing and reflective practice.

Chart 10-2 shows a sample of courses offered, the number of professional development points (PDP's) earned for each course and the number of attendees.

Chart 10-2

**Auburn Public Schools
Selected Professional Development Offerings 1998/99**

<u>Title</u>	<u>PDPs</u>	<u>Attendance</u>
Leadership Institute	6	14
Introduction to Mentoring	6	44
1999: School Climate	12	14
RBT: Introduction to Teaching I	6	28
1998 and 1999: Assessment Institute	18	67
1998 and 1999: New and Beginning Teacher	36	41
1998 and 1999: Observation of Teaching I (RBT)	36	9
1998 and 1999: Monday Meetings	30	120
1999 Content Institute English: Writing to Standards	60	20
Content Institute: 18th Century American History	90	20
Content Institute: World Languages	35	2
1998: Professional Development Days	27	All Faculty
1999: Literacy Institute	3	All Primary Faculty
1999 High School Writing to Standards	3	25

Note: Information obtained from APS

11. School Improvement Plans

M.G.L. Chapter 71, §59C mandates a school council at each school that must develop a school improvement plan (SIP) and update it annually. For the purpose of this audit, the audit team reviewed FY2000 APS SIPs for all schools.

APS policy guidelines establish school councils in accordance with M.G.L. Ch. 71 §53. The role of the councils as identified in the guidelines is:

- “to identify the educational needs of the students attending the school
- to adopt educational goals for the school
- to review the school building budget
- to formulate a school improvement plan
- to submit the school improvement plan to the school committee

for review and approval every year.”

The policy states that a written SIP “shall be submitted by the principal to the Superintendent and the School Committee for review and approval by May 1st of each year. Budget requirements for the School Improvement Plan shall be included in the normal building budget cycle and be part of the discussion by the principals at the budget hearings. The school council shall be required to present their plan at a school committee meeting within 30 days after the plan is submitted.”

The policy contains a list of areas which must be addressed in the plans including a mission statement, operational guidelines, clearly stated goals and objectives and an anticipated budget.

All plans are approved by the school committee and include a discussion of the prior year's accomplishments.

12. Time and Learning

Time and learning standards refer to the amount of time students are expected to spend in school. It is measured by the number of minutes or hours in a school day and the number of days in the school year. As of September 1997, DOE requires 990 instruction hours per year for both secondary (junior high and high schools) and 900 hours of instruction for the elementary and middle schools. The requirement for full day kindergarten is 450 hours. There is no requirement for half-day kindergarten. APS has met the DOE requirement of 180 teaching days.

As shown in *Chart 12-1*, APS time and learning plan exceeded the 1997/98 DOE school year requirements by 39 hours in the high school, 129 hours in the middle school, and an average of 70.6 hours in the elementary schools. APS operates a morning and afternoon half-day kindergarten program.

Chart 12-1

Auburn Public Schools Time and Learning Standards

	1995/96	1997/98	
	APS Standard Hours Per Year	DOE Req. Hours Per Year	APS Standard Hours Per Year
High School	1003	990	1029
Middle School	1006	900	1029
Elementary School	915	900	970.6
Kindergarten (half-day)	432.5	N/A	437.5

Note: Data obtained from APS

13. Courses and Class Sizes

Chart 13-1 shows core class sections and enrollment as well as average class sizes as of September 1999 for the 1999/00 school year. The average enrollment in these sections was 20.7 or less students per class. Math had the smallest average class size with 17.9 students, while social studies had the largest with 20.7 students. All core subjects had some sections with at least 25 students. English was the only subject that had sections with 30 or more students.

Chart 13-1

**Auburn Public Schools
High School Classes
1999/00 School Year**

Subject	Number of Sections	Total Enrollment	Avg. Enroll. Per Section	Sect. w/ 25-29	Sect. w/ 30 or more	30+ %
English	41	825	20.1	9	2	4.9%
Math	35	625	17.9	3	0	0.0%
Science	28	548	19.6	4	0	0.0%
Social Studies	28	580	20.7	6	0	0.0%

Note: Data obtained from APS

APS is experiencing space problems in relation to class sizes, especially at the elementary level. DOE recommends a maximum class size of 22 students per classroom on the elementary level (k-5). The Auburn School Committee's policy is no more than 25 students per class. However, 19 of APS' 49 elementary classes are at or over 25 students. One school has class sizes greater than 25 students in every fourth and fifth grade classroom. Consideration was given by the Superintendent's administrative council to hire two additional elementary teachers but was rejected by the council for lack of classroom availability.

The Auburn school committee held a special meeting in late September 1999 to address this problem. As a result, the school committee approved hiring four additional instructional aides (one per elementary school) to serve as roving literacy assistants.

14. Technology

APS submitted a technology plan to DOE on May 1, 1997 covering the years 1997 to 2001. DOE approved the plan on July 28, 1997.

In 1994, the Superintendent included in her five-year plan the need to improve technology. A school facilities research committee was formed in September 1994 to study school facilities and to make recommendations.

In 1996, the town voted \$235,000 to wire the administrative offices, high school and middle school, connect them to a wide area network (WAN) and provide them access to the Internet.

APS submitted an updated plan to DOE in July 1999. The director of technology administers the system. All district schools are now connected to a WAN through a cable modem and have access to the Internet. The system has an acceptable use policy for all students and filters to limit Internet use. The 1997/98 DOE school district profile identifies 12.5 students per computer, above the state average of 7.2. However, the updated district technology plan shows that the number of computers per student has dropped to 10.3. At the high and middle schools, the ratios were 6.1 and 9.4 respectively. Since the update, 93 additional computers rated category A (highest rating) by DOE have been added (45 at the high school, 35 at the middle school, 13 for two elementary schools).

The plan projected that full implementation would cost close to \$2 million over five years. The plan is currently through its third year and \$745,279 or 38 percent has been expended.

Year 2000 Compliance (Y2K)

APS should not experience any catastrophic failures as a result of Y2K. Although the district will probably not have time to complete a comprehensive Y2K inventory and testing program with available staff (the director of technology works part-time), all critical information systems and equipment have been identified, tested and largely replaced. Minor issues discovered in January 2000 may be resolved by replacing or by patching and upgrading older equipment. The director of technology appears to be following a reasonable course of action by coordinating with appropriate town personnel and by taking steps to ensure continued function of mission critical systems.

15. Supplies and Textbooks

Chart 15-1 details total instructional service expenditures by grade level for selected years, details the portion of expenditures for textbooks only and shows annual per student expenditures. Instructional service expenditures include textbooks, supplies and other activities involving the teaching of students and excludes salaries.

In verifying the accuracy of these expenditures, the audit team noted that the amount reported to DOE in FY94 for textbook expenditures was incorrect. The audit team adjusted the figure in the chart to include textbook expenditures misclassified as fixed assets. The audit team also noted that FY93 reported textbook expenditures were extraordinarily low. Although \$70,000 of FY93 Per Pupil Aid was designated for “staff development/new books, materials”, the district was unable to provide the audit team with an amount of purely textbooks expenditures. The amount shown in the chart is from the FY93 end-of-year report as submitted to DOE.

According to *Chart 15-1*, total actual expenditures between FY93 and FY98 increased by \$180,000 or 161.7 percent from \$111,000 to \$291,000. Textbook expenditures increased from \$4,000 in FY93 to \$66,000 in FY98 while other instructional expenditures increased from \$107,000 to \$225,000 during the same time period. According to the Superintendent, FY94 textbook expenditures were high due to the availability of funds in the first year of education reform. Per student, expenditures for textbooks increased significantly from \$2 in FY93 to \$37 in FY97 and then decreased to \$27 in FY98. According to DOE, the FY97 statewide average per FTE pupil textbook expenditure was \$46.45. The comparable district FY97 textbook expenditure was \$35.45. APS officials indicated to the audit team that lower than average textbook expenditures is reflective of a deliberate district attempt to emphasize teacher creativity over traditional textbook reliance.

Chart 15-1

**Auburn Public Schools
Textbooks and Other Instructional Expenditures
(in thousands of dollars)**

	FY93	FY94	FY95	FY96	FY97	FY98	FY93 - FY98	
							\$ Incr.	% Incr.
High School	\$26	\$78	\$42	\$64	\$68	\$74	\$48	184.3%
Middle School	\$22	\$74	\$30	\$33	\$60	\$44	\$21	95.6%
Elementary	\$45	\$89	\$75	\$64	\$102	\$89	\$45	99.8%
SPED	\$18	\$11	\$38	\$60	\$102	\$83	\$65	368.3%
Total	\$111	\$251	\$184	\$222	\$333	\$291	\$180	161.7%
Textbooks Only	\$4	\$126	\$63	\$53	\$87	\$66	\$62	1657.5%
Other Expenditures	\$107	\$125	\$121	\$169	\$246	\$225	\$118	109.5%
Textbooks / Student	\$2	\$56	\$27	\$23	\$37	\$27	\$26	1508.7%
Exp. / Student	\$49	\$55	\$53	\$72	\$105	\$93	\$45	91.8%

Note: Data obtained from APS and DOE. Elementary includes kindergarten and preschool.
FY94 expenditures adjusted by audit team.

Textbook selection involves individual teachers at the elementary level and curriculum coordinators at the secondary level. Principals are encouraged to participate in the process, but are not required to do so. The assistant superintendent works with the teachers during the selection process. Final selections are forwarded to the Superintendent for her review and are then sent to the school committee for their approval. APS has a 5-year textbook purchase plan. For the last two fiscal years, the

town has supplemented the operating budget by appropriating for textbooks and certain other supplies and equipment by separate articles. In FY99, the request for textbooks

and supplies was for \$50,000, and \$50,000 was appropriated. In FY2000, the request for textbooks alone was for \$70,000, but the appropriation was only for \$40,000.

16. Test Scores

Test scores are generally above state averages. The assistant superintendent for curriculum and professional development oversees all testing. APS utilizes testing feedback, especially MCAS results, for the purpose of assessing students, teachers and their curriculum. The assistant superintendent and director of technology are working on further expanding the software that is currently in use as a testing matrix. The goal of the new matrix will be to allow administrators to view test results and trends as they relate to individual students, classes of students and teachers.

The high school principal has formed an assessment committee to evaluate the school based on similar material that an educational magazine uses to issue their school district report cards. Test scores and guidance reports on graduates are among the areas the committee will be assessing. A high school statistics teacher chairs the committee and its members include the assistant superintendent, the director of technology, the high school principal and various faculty members.

SAT scores in 1998 were 964, below the state average of 1004. The Massachusetts Educational Assessment Program (MEAP), the state's educational testing program from 1988 to 1996, showed that students in grades four and eight had significant increases in scaled scores in all four subject areas. Grade four and eight students also scored significantly above the state averages in all subjects on the 1996 MEAP test. Results from the 1998 statewide Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) indicate that 80 percent of APS third graders scored at the higher reading skills levels of "proficient" and "advanced," which is above the statewide average of 74 percent for these skill levels.

Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT)

SAT scores were below the state average for all years from 1994 through 1998 as shown in *Chart 16-1*. Scores from 1994 and 1995 cannot be compared to 1996 to 1998 scores since SAT scores were "recentered" in 1996 resulting in a higher scores for that year for all schools and consequently, a higher state average.

Chart 16-1

**Auburn Public Schools
Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) Results**

SAT Content Areas	1994		1995		1996		1997		1998	
	APS	State Avg.	APS	State Avg.	APS	State Avg.	APS	State Avg.	APS	State Avg.
Verbal	419	426	403	430	488	507	508	508	478	502
Math	461	475	455	477	490	504	485	508	486	502
Total	880	901	858	907	978	1011	993	1016	964	1004
APS - % of State Avg.	97.7%		94.6%		96.7%		97.7%		96.0%	

Note: Data obtained from APS and DOE

Massachusetts Educational Assessment Program (MEAP)

MEAP reports are scored in two ways: scaled scores, which range from 1000 to 1600, and proficiency levels that are reported as percentage of students in each proficiency. Level 1 is the lowest, level 2 is considered the “passing grade” level, while levels 3 and 4 constitute the more advanced levels of skills.

Proficiency scores for 1992 and 1996 shown in *Chart 16-2* indicate that scores for APS grade 4 and 8 students increased in level 2 for all four subject areas. However, scores in levels 3 and 4 decreased in all four subject areas for grade 4 students and in science and social studies for grade 8. Most notably, grade 4 level 3 and 4 social studies decreased more than 50 percent from 1992 to 1996. Level 1 or below scores decreased in all grade 8 subjects. Grade 4 students’ level 1 scores decreased in mathematics and science, stayed the same in reading, and increased in social studies.

Chart 16-2

**Auburn Public Schools
MEAP Proficiency Scores
1992 and 1996 Fourth and Eighth Grades**

Fourth Grade	1992			1996		
	Level 1 or Below	Level 2	Levels 3 & 4	Level 1 or Below	Level 2	Levels 3 & 4
Reading	27%	38%	34%	27%	46%	28%
Mathematics	27%	42%	31%	16%	63%	22%
Science	23%	40%	37%	15%	59%	27%
Social Studies	23%	40%	37%	29%	53%	18%
Eighth Grade	1992			1996		
	Level 1 or Below	Level 2	Levels 3 & 4	Level 1 or Below	Level 2	Levels 3 & 4
Reading	36%	27%	37%	16%	43%	42%
Mathematics	41%	40%	19%	29%	43%	28%
Science	33%	24%	42%	32%	37%	30%
Social Studies	37%	31%	32%	25%	46%	28%

Note: Data provided by DOE and APS. Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

The MEAP scores for all grades tested are shown in *Appendix C*. The appendix shows that between 1988 and 1996, MEAP scores for students in grades 4 and 8 increased significantly in all four subject areas. However, only grade 8 reading scores increased significantly from 1992 to 1996. Other scores showed little improvement or decreased over the same period, specifically grade 4 social studies which decreased significantly. Variations of 50 points or more are considered statistically significant.

Chart 16-3 shows reading scores for the fourth grade for selected school districts whose scores in 1988 fell between 1290 and 1350 as compared with APS' 1320 score. From 1992 to 1996, APS showed no change in grade 4 reading. The scores for grade 4 students are particularly significant because, by 1996, these students had experienced education reform initiatives in the early stages of formal education. The greatest impact of education reform should initially be seen in the performance of these students.

Chart 16-3

MEAP Reading Scores - 4th Grade- 1988 Scores from 1290-1350

	1988	1990	1992	1994	1996	1992 - 1996 Change
Carver	1290	1310	1300	1250	1320	20
Clinton	1290	1280	1260	1290	1320	60
Hull	1290	1320	1320	1360	1360	40
Douglas	1300	1310	1410	1400	1390	-20
Millbury	1300	1300	1350	1310	1340	-10
Palmer	1300	1260	1330	1340	1330	0
Sandwich	1300	1380	1350	1410	1410	60
Uxbridge	1300	1390	1390	1430	1430	40
Amesbury	1310	1350	1360	1350	1290	-70
Blackstone/Millville	1310	1330	1340	1450	1450	110
Bourne	1310	1320	1390	1370	1370	-20
Dudley/Charlton	1310	1340	1340	1370	1360	20
Easthampton	1310	1240	1300	1290	1260	-40
Fairhaven	1310	1270	1260	1320	1330	70
Auburn	1320	1370	1420	1410	1420	0
Bellingham	1320	1360	1350	1400	1390	40
Ipswich	1320	1420	1370	1450	1380	10
Maynard	1320	1300	1290	1330	1290	0
Middleborough	1320	1300	1320	1310	1350	30
South Hadley	1320	1350	1350	1360	1350	0
Stoneham	1320	1330	1390	1390	1370	-20
Harwich	1330	1310	1350	1410	1370	20
Newburyport	1330	1400	1410	1410	1420	10
Somerset	1330	1310	1320	1400	1410	90
Winthrop	1330	1300	1350	1350	1390	40
Foxborough	1340	1420	1400	1380	1380	-20
Hopedale	1340	1430	1400	1380	1340	-60
Mansfield	1340	1340	1350	1360	1320	-30
Norton	1340	1350	1350	1370	1380	30
Seekonk	1340	1360	1330	1360	1380	50
Shrewsbury	1340	1370	1420	1400	1480	60
Spencer/East Brookfield	1340	1350	1340	1270	1340	0
Wilmington	1340	1400	1380	1430	1420	40
East Longmeadow	1350	1310	1440	1490	1530	90
Hopkinton	1350	1380	1380	1450	1430	50
Sutton	1350	1360	1260	1280	1420	160
State Average	1300	1310	1330	1300	1350	20

Note: A significant change in a score is considered to be 50 points in either direction. Selected communities were chosen based on geography and/or population.

Iowa Tests

The Iowa Test of Basic Skills (Iowa tests) for third grade was administered throughout Massachusetts in the spring of 1998. Results were categorized by students tested under routine conditions, students with disabilities tested under non-routine conditions and students with limited English proficiency. APS' overall total percentile rank in reading was 69 – above the statewide score of 64. The test defines four different levels of reading comprehension; pre-reader, basic reader, proficient reader and advanced reader. Pre-reader and basic reader made up 20 percent of tested students while proficient and advanced readers were 80 percent of all students who were tested in APS. The state averages for pre- and basic readers and for proficient and advanced readers were 24 percent and 74 percent respectively. About 87 percent of tested students have attended APS since first grade.

The Iowa Test of Educational Development, also referred to as the Massachusetts Grade 10 Achievement Test, was also administered in the spring of 1997. It tested seven different areas of skills including reading, quantitative thinking and social studies. Scores were based on a national sample of students who took the test. APS grade 10 students scored at the 68th percentile compared to the national sample. APS' performance compares to scores as high as the 89th percentile and as low as the 28th percentile for other Massachusetts school districts.

Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS)

MCAS scores show that APS scored above the state average scaled scores for all students in grades 4, 8 and 10. Also, all scores for students attending the district for three years or more were above the state average scaled scores.

MCAS is the new statewide assessment program administered annually to grades 4, 8 and 10. It measures performance of students, schools and districts on learning standards contained in the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks and fulfills the requirements of education reform. This assessment program serves two purposes:

- measures performance of students and schools against established state standards; and
- improves effective classroom instruction by providing feedback about instruction and modeling assessment approaches for classroom use.

MCAS tests are reported according to performance levels that describe student performance in relation to established state standards. Students earn a separate performance level of advanced, proficient, needs improvement or failing based on their total scaled score for each test completed. There is no overall classification of student performance across content areas. School, district and state levels are reported by performance levels.

Chart 16-4 reflects performance level percentages for all APS students in tested grades. *Appendix D* provides additional detail for students who have attended schools in the district for at least three years.

Chart 16-4

**Auburn Public Schools
1998 MCAS Test Scores
Percentage of Students at Each Performance Level**

All Students	Advanced	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Failing (Tested)	Failing (Absent)	Average Scaled Score	State Avg. Scaled Score
Grade 4:							
English Language Arts	1	28	62	8	0	233	230
Mathematics	14	29	43	15	0	238	234
Science & Technology	8	54	36	1	0	242	238
Grade 8:							
English Language Arts	2	66	30	3	0	241	237
Mathematics	7	29	37	28	0	231	227
Science & Technology	3	36	33	28	0	231	225
Grade 10:							
English Language Arts	5	53	32	9	0	240	230
Mathematics	11	29	22	38	0	230	222
Science & Technology	1	35	49	15	0	233	225

Note: Data provided by DOE

17. Management and Personnel Practices

Management Practices

In 1994, a team of APS administrators developed a five-year educational plan that outlined eight goals and objectives with corresponding strategies. The goals were generally curriculum and frameworks based and were inspired by education reform.

In the fall of 1998, a new strategic plan was developed by a cross section of community participants and district administrators. The new plan built upon the original plan and updated and addressed new district concerns and issues. APS' mission statement was reworded to provide a clearer description of the district's purpose and function.

The 1998 strategic plan contained four clearly defined goals: curriculum, technology, facilities, and community relations. Each goal was accompanied by specific objectives the district hoped to achieve, as well as an action plan that was developed by community based sub-committees. Action plans contained strategic objectives, person(s) responsible, timelines, indicators of accomplishment and projected expenses. Every household in Auburn was mailed a 1998-2004 APS strategic plan pamphlet that detailed the individual goals and objectives of the district.

The Superintendent, in collaboration with the school committee, sets yearly goals for the district during July and August. Goals are generally based on the district's strategic plan and school improvement plans and are made within budgetary limits. This triangular combination guides most district initiatives.

The Superintendent meets weekly with all administrators to discuss districtwide initiatives and concerns. In addition, the Superintendent formally meets with all principals quarterly by level to discuss building and system concerns.

According to the Superintendent and to the school committee chairman, a primary concern of the district is to maintain an equitable balance of staff and resources at the elementary level between the two elementary schools on each side of town. They indicated that careful consideration is given when enacting districtwide initiatives to ensure that all students in the district are affected equally.

The Auburn school committee meets twice per month. The Superintendent, assistant superintendent and business administrator are required to attend these meetings. Other administrators are required to attend only when an individual's school or program is on the committee's agenda for that particular meeting.

Hiring Process

APS teaching vacancies are posted in statewide and local newspapers. The principal, assistant principal and department head (when applicable) screen and interview candidates. The principal confirms references by telephone. The principal then informs the Superintendent of his/her choice and upon completion of a background check, offers the position. Internal candidates and qualified resident applicants are guaranteed an interview. Generally, APS hires the principal's top choice regardless of the teacher's salary level.

APS principal vacancies are posted in statewide and local newspapers. The Superintendent forms a search committee that includes the Superintendent, district administrator(s), parent(s), community member(s), a school council member and a student (high school only). The committee paper-screens resumes to match the applicant with the job description. Interviews are conducted and a site visit is made by selected members of the search committee. The two final candidates are given a third interview with only the Superintendent and another principal. The Superintendent makes the final decision and offers the position after bringing the applicant before the school committee for a courtesy meeting.

The audit team examined contracts of the district's five individually contracted principals (one elementary school has an interim principal who was the assistant principal of the middle school and has no individual contract), the Superintendent, the assistant superintendent for curriculum and professional development, and the business administrator. All principal contracts are for three years in duration, but expire at staggered intervals. The Superintendent's contract was originally negotiated

for two years and a one year extension was added during the first year of the contract. The business administrator and the assistant superintendent also have three year contracts that expire at different times.

Evaluation Process

Principals and Administrators

APS developed a new evaluation tool for principals and administrators in 1997/98 and since that time has used the new format to link salary enhancement to performance. The Superintendent evaluates principals on their progress toward meeting their yearly goals and on following the Principles for Effective Leadership.

Each principal develops goals with the Superintendent during the summer. Principals usually have three goals per year: one building goal from the school improvement plan, one districtwide goal from school committee initiatives and one personal goal for professional development. The Superintendent has a mid-school year review with each principal to discuss progress toward goals and performance. The principal receives a written progress report from the Superintendent at this time.

Formal evaluations are completed in late June and include a summary evaluation of the principal's success or failure in meeting his/her goals and responsibilities. The Superintendent grades each principal on whether their performance exceeded, met or was below expectations for each of the Principles for Effective Leadership. The Superintendent issues a performance based raise of between zero and five percent based on this evaluation.

APS has appointed four new principals since education reform went into effect. One elementary school is currently being run by an interim principal. One principal who was on a two-year contract was non-renewed after his second year. No performance based raise was given to this principal after the first year.

All APS administrators that are on individual contracts are evaluated in a similar pay for performance scale. Since this procedure began, performance based raises have ranged between zero and six percent with an average of four percent.

The Auburn Administrators Association is an administrative union that represents two assistant principals and the directors of special education, technology, fine arts, and athletics. Since 1998/99, members of the association have also been evaluated on the same pay for performance basis. The director of curriculum and professional development was a member of this association prior to receiving the contracted position of assistant superintendent.

Teachers

APS teachers without professional status are observed and reviewed between two and four times per year depending on the school. Professional status teachers are observed and reviewed twice during every other year. Teacher evaluations are performed and written by building principals. At the high school and middle school, responsibilities are divided equally between the principal and assistant principal. The director of special education is included in evaluations of special education staff.

APS administrators have received evaluation training through professional development courses which included but is not limited to Observing and Analyzing Teaching and Collecting and Analyzing Data. Beginning in 1997/98, APS used these courses and other supplements to assemble a common language and concept system for talking about teaching.

Teachers are required to set personal goals for improvement at the start of every year. The district's evaluation procedure involves a pre-observation meeting used to discuss format, expectations and the Seven Principles of Effective Teaching. Following the formal observation, the principal writes a brief summary of the events and the teachers performance. A post-observation meeting is held between the principal and teacher to discuss any concerns either party may have concerning the observation. At the end of the school year the principal completes a formal evaluation form that addresses and comments on the teachers performance in each area of the Seven Principles of Effective Teaching. The teacher's performance is judged to be either professionally competent or needs improvement.

Any teacher with professional status receiving a needs improvement is immediately placed on the next year's evaluation schedule and a plan of action for improvement. Mentoring is also used as a remedial supplement for under performing teachers. If after two years on a plan of action for improvement teachers do not meet APS standards, the district begins termination proceedings.

Teachers without professional status that receive a needs improvement are non-renewed for the following year.

For the 1998/99 school year, 86 teachers were evaluated. Of these, 34 were teachers without professional status. Since education reform, APS has removed 12 teachers with professional status and two teachers without professional status.

18. Accounting and Reporting

The audit team traced a sample of expenditures reported to DOE to APS accounting and budget records. The audit team also met with the town accountant and with a representative of the certified public accounting firm which audits the town. The audit team was satisfied that adequate safeguards exist for proper internal controls. Based

upon a sample, expenditure reports were generally an accurate representation of APS expenditures in total. The audit team noted that certain specific expenditures in the sample were misclassified on the end-of-year report and suggested that the business administrator review DOE's guidelines for student and financial reporting.

There appears to be a good working relationship between school and town offices. The town of Auburn has taken positive actions on recommendations in a recent DLS financial management review.

The audit team noted that the school committee has not been approving payrolls before the town treasurer receives them. DLS has ruled that even after the passage of education reform, the school committee remains the head of the school department for approving bills and payrolls under M.G.L. Ch.41 §§41 and 56. The audit team found sufficient offsetting controls to mitigate the potential of inappropriate expenditure of funds including the Superintendent's sign-off and the town accountant's review. By law, the school committee has fiscal oversight responsibility. We therefore suggest that APS and the town of Auburn review this process.

19. Review of Expenditures

The audit team completed a review of APS expenditures and purchasing controls, analyzed the accounting system and selected accounts from the FY99 general ledger. The review showed that purchasing procedures and controls are in place and that signoffs and authorizations are being utilized. Separation of duties and responsibilities is maintained throughout the school system and the town accountant provides general oversight and audit review.

In order to assist in the control of maintenance costs, APS uses its own carpenter and electrician to perform maintenance under the director of maintenance.

20. High School Accreditation

Auburn High School is currently accredited with a warning status. The accreditation visit by NEASC took place in October 1997. The report was particularly critical of the facility indicating that "health and safety issues, noise, air pollution, traffic concerns, inadequate handicapped accessibility and major repair and renovation needs are factors that impede effective and learning from taking place in this facility." Of the 31 NEASC recommendations, resolution for about one-half of them appears, by the two-year update report, to depend upon building a new high school (see section 24). *Chart 20-1* identifies the status of NEASC's recommendations.

*Chart 20-1***Auburn Public Schools
Status of Accreditation Recommendations**

Area	NEASC Rec's	Completed	In Progress	Rejected	Planned for the Future
Statement of Purpose	8	6	2		
Curriculum and Instruction	23	20	2	1	
Student Support Services	7	7			
Library Tech. & Media	11	10	1		
Admin., Faculty & Staff	7	7			
School Facilities	31	13	7	1	
Community Support & Involvement	6	5		1	
Financial Support	3	3			10
School Climate	12	12			
Assessment of Student Learning & School Perform.	10	10			
Total	118	93	12	3	10

Note: Data obtained from APS

21. Grade 3 Transiency

Student transiency is generally defined as the percentage of students who enter and/or leave the system after the first day of school. Transiency poses an educational problem because students may lose the benefit of a sequential and coherent school program as they move from school to school.

According to *Chart 21-1*, of the 14 communities of similar population to Auburn, APS has a relatively low transiency percentage, 13.4 percent, below the statewide average of 19.6 percent. APS has a relatively high stable population percent of grade 3 students who attended APS in grades 1, 2 and 3. This stability percentage, 86.6 percent, is above the statewide average of 80.4 percent. Results from that test are categorized by students who have taken the test under routine conditions. Students who did not take the test or were given extra time are excluded.

Chart 21-1

Transiency and Stability - 3rd Grade**Selected Communities****Student Population Participating in the 1998 Iowa 3rd Grade Reading Test**

Community	Stable Population	Total Population	Stable Population Percent	Transiency Percent
Swansea	98	166	59.0%	41.0%
Swampscott	130	172	75.6%	24.4%
Westborough	183	235	77.9%	22.1%
Northbridge	151	186	81.2%	18.8%
Amesbury	174	208	83.7%	16.3%
Bellingham	170	202	84.2%	15.8%
Westport	119	141	84.4%	15.6%
Abington	160	189	84.7%	15.3%
Norton	203	238	85.3%	14.7%
Easthampton	132	154	85.7%	14.3%
Longmeadow	172	199	86.4%	13.6%
Bedford	109	126	86.5%	13.5%
Auburn	175	202	86.6%	13.4%
Duxbury	206	237	86.9%	13.1%
East Longmeadow	187	211	88.6%	11.4%
Statewide	54,047	67,233	80.4%	19.6%

Note: Student population includes only students tested under "routine" conditions.
Data obtained from DOE's 1998 Iowa Grade 3 reading test summary results.

22. Special Education and Transitional Bilingual Education

Special Education (SPED)

According to *Chart 22-1*, APS had a SPED participation rate of 11.1 percent in FY98, 5.5 percentage points lower than the state average of 16.6 percent reported by DOE. APS numbers are significantly below state averages because of the use of "504 plans," which are an alternative to SPED classification. These plans were a product of the 1973 Federal Rehabilitation Act. Students on 504 plans are not on Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) and have to be formally reviewed at the end of the year, rather than quarterly as SPED guidelines require. Districts do not receive federal SPED dollars for these students. According to the APS director of special services, the reduction of formal paperwork requirements allows personnel to spend more time working with students and that students on 504 plans benefit from not having the stigma of being labeled a SPED student attached to them. APS typically has between 80 and 100 students on 504 plans.

As a percentage of total enrollment, SPED enrollment has averaged 13.4 percent during the 1990s. SPED enrollment increased from 1997 to 1998 after five consecutive years of decreasing membership. The percentage of substantially separate students in FY98 was three percent. This represents the fifth consecutive year to show a decrease in that percentage.

Chart 22-1

**Auburn Public Schools
SPED Enrollment
Based on October 1 Reports**

School Year Ending	Total Enrollment	Total SPED	SPED as % of Total Enrollment	Substantially Separate	Substantially Separate as % of SPED
1991	2,112	345	16.3%	15	4.3%
1992	2,103	369	17.5%	24	6.5%
1993	2,220	362	16.3%	24	6.6%
1994	2,268	320	14.1%	17	5.3%
1995	2,314	286	12.4%	12	4.2%
1996	2,338	248	10.6%	10	4.0%
1997	2,354	235	10.0%	8	3.4%
1998	2,422	269	11.1%	8	3.0%

Note: Data obtained from APS

APS has a program at the middle school for developmentally delayed students that services children that would otherwise have to be tuitioned out-of-district. The program began in 1998 and is staffed by one full-time SPED teacher, two full-time and one part-time instructional aides. For FY2000, the program has six all day students (one is tuitioned in) and three partial day students. The APS estimated its annual cost savings for operating this program at between \$50,000 and \$100,000 including tuition and transportation expenses.

According to *Chart 22-2*, the increase in SPED costs from FY93 to FY98 was \$579,482, or 53.8 percent, while the increase in total school district expenditures reported to DOE for the same time period was \$3.2 million, or 27.8 percent. SPED expenditures for FY93 increased from 9.5 percent of the total district expenditures to 11.4 percent in FY98. APS is a member of the Southern Worcester County Educational Collaborative. For FY2000, two APS students are participating in the collaborative and eight collaborative students from out-of-district are being taught in Auburn.

Chart 22-2

Auburn Public Schools
Total SPED Expenditures as Reported to DOE
(in whole dollars)

	FY93-FY98				
	FY89	FY93	FY98	\$ Incr. / Decr.	% Incr. / Decr.
SPED Program	\$ 847,331	\$ 1,004,878	\$ 1,520,672	\$ 515,794	51.3%
SPED Transportation	\$ 55,666	\$ 71,549	\$ 135,237	\$ 63,688	89.0%
Total SPED	\$ 902,997	\$ 1,076,427	\$ 1,655,909	\$ 579,482	53.8%

Note: Data obtained from APS

Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE)

APS does not have a bilingual program. Currently, there are no English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers or students in APS. Two Pakistani students are enrolled for the 1999/2000 school year. A tutor was hired to assist them with their learning.

23. Dropout and Truancy

Chart 23-1 identifies Auburn's dropout rates from FY93 to FY97 in comparison to the state average and to the average of 14 communities of similar population to Auburn.

Chart 23-1

High School Dropout Rates
Selected Communities
FY93 - FY97

Community	FY93	FY94	FY95	FY96	FY97
Easthampton	3.8%	4.5%	3.9%	4.2%	5.3%
Westport	2.8%	3.3%	1.5%	2.9%	4.5%
Norton	2.8%	4.4%	2.5%	2.3%	3.9%
Abington	0.6%	2.0%	2.7%	1.5%	3.2%
Swansea	2.3%	0.0%	2.0%	2.7%	3.1%
Northbridge	1.8%	1.7%	1.2%	2.7%	2.2%
Amesbury	2.4%	2.8%	4.1%	4.0%	2.2%
Bellingham	2.0%	2.7%	0.7%	1.4%	1.7%
Westborough	1.2%	1.3%	1.9%	1.2%	1.4%
Swampscott	0.3%	2.3%	2.2%	1.5%	1.2%
Auburn	0.5%	1.4%	1.5%	0.0%	0.5%
East Longmeadow	0.8%	1.1%	0.4%	0.5%	0.4%
Bedford	0.2%	1.0%	1.4%	0.7%	0.3%
Longmeadow	0.5%	0.1%	0.0%	0.5%	0.1%
Duxbury	0.4%	0.7%	0.7%	0.4%	0.1%
Average These Communities	1.5%	2.0%	1.8%	1.8%	2.0%
Median These Communities	1.2%	1.7%	1.5%	1.5%	1.7%
State Average	3.5%	3.7%	3.6%	3.4%	3.4%

Note: Data provided by DOE

APS' dropout rate was 0.5 percent in FY97, significantly less than the state average of 3.4 percent. According to the previous chart, APS has the fifth lowest dropout rate of the 14 selected communities.

A Pupil Personnel committee at the high school comprised of the principal, assistant principal, three guidance counselors and the school nurse meets weekly to deal with student issues such as chronic absence, personal or emotional problems or poor student achievement. The group notifies teachers of personal issues involving their students as it is necessary.

Project Enterprise is an alternative education program at AHS that services between 20 and 25 students from grades 9 through 12. Staffed by two teachers (one academic and one vocational) and an aide, the program helps students struggling academically. Students can receive instruction in academic or vocational courses between one and five periods per day. The vocational component operates a self-supporting business that does silk screening and T-shirt production. APS tuitions-in students from other districts for this program.

AHS has an "8-o'clock policy" regarding attendance. Any student that arrives after 8:00 a.m. without parental consent is sent home. Parental consent must be in the form of a telephone call. The principal indicated to the audit team that tardiness has decreased greatly since this policy was adopted. The school nurse telephones parents regarding unexcused absences.

A grant-funded General Education Development (GED) program has been offered evenings at AHS since January 1999.

24. Maintenance and Capital Improvement

Maintenance

The audit team made site visits to two of the four elementary schools, the middle school and the high school.

The audit team found the schools to be generally clean. At one elementary school, boxes and other school supplies were piled in the corridor for lack of storage space. At this same school, there was visible water staining in three classrooms caused by structural deterioration to the outside wall.

Capital Improvement

Each year, capital spending proposals are submitted to the business administrator for submission to the Superintendent's administrative council for review, on to the school committee for their recommendations and vote, to the town's executive secretary and then to the town's finance committee. These proposals become part of a separate town

meeting article. The school committee's operating budget contains a lesser amount of funds for minor repairs.

Building a new high school has been under consideration by the town for over 10 years. The original building was constructed in 1935 with major additions in 1954 and 1970. A proposition 2½ debt exclusion for a \$48 million school plan was soundly defeated in the spring of 1990. That summer, NEASC placed the high school on probation status due to facilities deficiencies. In FY92, in apparent reaction to the probation status, Auburn voters approved a \$1 million capital expenditure exclusion which addressed window replacements at several schools, a boiler replacement and traffic concerns at the high school, roof repairs at the high and middle schools and fire safety upgrades in all schools. Accreditation was returned in 1992.

As indicated in section 20 of this audit, the 1997 NEASC report indicated facility concerns. Currently, the town is committed to financing a \$40 million construction and renovation project for the schools. The project's scope, some argue, has changed over time so that the initial cost projection is too low. To afford the plan, the town has informally capped the school operating budget to a 4-4.5 percent annual increase and the town operating budget to a 3-3.5 percent increase. The plan also makes certain assumptions as to future debt, revenues and town growth. The plan was reportedly supported by the board of selectmen, the school committee and by the finance committee and the town meeting formally adopted it in February 1998.

Chapter 194 §241 of the acts of 1998 established school building maintenance spending requirements. Each school district's compliance with the requirement is based on the district's actual spending as reported on the end-of-year report. Any district not meeting the requirement has an opportunity to request a waiver based on unanticipated or extraordinary changes in maintenance spending. The waiver must be approved by the Commissioner of Education and by the Deputy Commissioner of

Revenue for Local Services. Districts which do not meet the requirement and which do not qualify for a waiver must work with DOE and DOR to develop a remediation plan. If appropriate action is not taken, school building assistance funds will be jeopardized. For FY99, the district's spending requirement was \$508,663. Spending submitted to DOE on the FY99 end-of-year report is shown as \$718,491.

There are currently four modular classrooms at the middle school. Two additional modulars are planned for two elementary schools.

25. Curriculum Development

In 1990, the director of curriculum was appointed to Superintendent and no replacement was hired due to budget constraints. The Superintendent retained most of the responsibilities for curriculum. The Superintendent created a curriculum council comprised of the Superintendent, school committee member(s), parents, teachers and APS administrators. Over the next two years, the committee developed a "position

paper” that detailed the educational philosophy and guiding principles for APS. Based largely on national standards and the latest curriculum research which allowed for a smooth transition to the state frameworks defined by education reform, the “position paper” became the foundation of the curriculum.

A new director of curriculum and professional development was hired in 1996 and was appointed to the position of assistant superintendent for curriculum and development in 1999. One of the first accomplishments of the new director of curriculum was designing a systemwide matrix that details the appropriate lessons that correspond to each learning standard for all grades (k-12). The format of APS curriculum matrix has been adopted as a model by the Curriculum Library Alignment and Sharing Project (CLASP), a 150 member collaborative of directors of curriculum and technology from mostly public school districts.

Currently, APS is undergoing a districtwide initiative to improve literacy skills. Writing across all disciplines is being stressed in the classroom exercises and testing.

APS is in the process of “calibrating the curriculum.” This initiative is intended to bring APS performance standards and grading expectations in line with MCAS standards and expectations. Phase one of the project establishes a common performance baseline so that uniformity exists in grading among different teachers and schools. Phase two will create student-friendly rubrics to teach the standards effectively. Teachers will work with students to show examples of what good writing looks like and what the six traits (ideas and content, organization, conventions, word choice, sentence fluency and voice) of good writing are and how to create them.

The assistant superintendent for curriculum receives input and cooperation from high school department heads, middle school curriculum coordinators, elementary school literacy coordinators and principals. Monthly meetings are held at each level throughout the school year.

IV. Employee Survey

The audit team conducted a confidential survey of all employees of APS to provide a forum for teachers and staff to express their opinions on education in APS. Approximately 288 questionnaires were delivered to school staff and 146 responses were received and tabulated, a response rate of 51 percent. Areas covered by the survey include:

1. education reform,
2. education goals and objectives,
3. curriculum,
4. planning,
5. communications and mission statements,
6. budget process,
7. professional development,

8. supplies,
9. facilities, and
10. computers and other education technology.

Appendix E shows the teachers' answers to the survey questions. The Superintendent also received a summary of the responses.

Eighty-seven percent of teachers think that education reform issues are considered when their own school plans are made and 80 percent think that also applies to districtwide plans. Eighty-six percent believe that the school district is taking positive steps to improve education and 73 percent state that their job has changed because of education reform.

Eighty six percent of teachers have a clear understanding about the school district's goals and objectives (and how they relate to their jobs (82 percent). Sixty-seven percent feel they have a role in the development of these goals and objectives, and 76 percent confirm that there are indicators used to measure progress toward them.

They survey indicates that 30 percent of teachers do not think that an increase in school funding is tied directly to improvements in education. Fifty-five percent of teachers think that improvements in education at the school would have occurred without education reform.

Teachers are positive about curriculum development in Auburn. Seventy-three percent believe that the curriculum is coherent and sequential. Seventy-one percent believe that the curriculum now in use in their school will improve student test scores while only four percent said that it would not. Eighty-four percent of the teachers feel that there is a coherent, on-going effort with APS to keep curriculum current and 73 percent feel that teachers play an important role in reviewing and revising the curriculum. Sixty-six percent feel that the curriculum does not impact test scores as much as how a subject is taught by a teacher.

Seventy percent of teachers believe professional development is making a difference and will improve education in APS. Sixty-eight percent feel that there is an adequate professional development program in Auburn, and 76 percent believe that the program is tied to the new frameworks and assessments. Ninety-one percent of the teachers participated in the professional development in 1998/99.

Sixty-four percent of the teachers feel they have generally received sufficient and appropriate supplies to do their job. This figure increases to 79 percent when asking about basic educational supplies (e.g. chalk, paper, pens, pencils etc.). Sixty-five percent of the teachers think they have been supplied with a sufficient number of current edition textbooks. However, 86 percent of the teachers say students are not given a copy of the textbooks to keep at home.

Forty-four percent of the teachers rate the overall state of the school facilities with regards to cleanliness, security, maintenance and structural integrity, as good to excellent while the same percentage rates the facilities as not good to inadequate. Further review of high school teacher responses shows that 71 percent to 79 percent of teachers rate the overall state of school facilities, classrooms, labs, teaching rooms/areas and common areas as not good to inadequate. Overall, 80 percent of the teachers agree that “the school administration makes an effort to provide a clean and safe working environment.”

V. Superintendent’s Statement – Education Reform

As part of this review, the Superintendent was asked to submit a brief statement expressing her point of view with respect to three areas:

1. school district progress and education reform since 1993;
2. barriers to education reform; and
3. plans over the next three to five years.

VI. Appendix

Appendix A1	School Committee Budgets
Appendix A2	FTE Teachers by Selected Discipline
Appendix B1	Foundation Budget Line Items Targets and Expenditures FY94, FY96-FY98 - Table
Appendix B2 - 3	Foundation Budget Line Items Targets and Expenditures FY94, FY96-FY98 - Graph
Appendix C	Mass. Educational Assessment Program (MEAP)
Appendix D	Comparison of 1998 MCAS Average Scaled Scores
Appendix E	Employee Survey Results
Appendix F	Superintendent's Statement on Education Reform Accomplishments, Barriers and Goals
Appendix G	Auditee's Response

Appendix A-1

Auburn Public Schools School Committee Budgets (in thousands of dollars)

Category	FY89	FY93	FY89 - FY93 \$ Incr.	% Incr.	FY97	FY98	FY93 - FY98 \$ Incr.	% Incr.
1000 - Administration:								
Salary	\$210	\$313	\$103	48.8%	\$273	\$290	(\$22)	-7.2%
Expenses	\$60	\$39	(\$21)	-35.0%	\$101	\$80	\$41	105.2%
2000 - Instruction:								
Salary	\$6,457	\$7,330	\$873	13.5%	\$8,964	\$9,359	\$2,029	27.7%
Textbooks	\$88	\$4	(\$84)	-95.7%	\$93	\$74	\$71	1889.3%
Other Expenses	\$351	\$207	(\$144)	-40.9%	\$370	\$482	\$274	132.3%
3000 - Other School Services:								
Salary	\$121	\$136	\$15	12.8%	\$257	\$250	\$114	83.5%
Transportation	\$255	\$287	\$32	12.6%	\$293	\$294	\$7	2.5%
Other Expenses	\$100	\$50	(\$50)	-49.7%	\$82	\$107	\$56	112.9%
4000 - Operations and Maintenance:								
Salary	\$497	\$545	\$47	9.5%	\$630	\$683	\$138	25.3%
Heat, Gas and Utilities	\$280	\$238	(\$42)	-15.0%	\$274	\$293	\$55	23.3%
Repairs and Other Expenses	\$498	\$152	(\$346)	-69.4%	\$163	\$169	\$16	10.8%
6000 - Community Services:								
Salary	\$2	\$0.4	(\$2)	-80.0%	\$0	\$0	(\$0.4)	-100.0%
Expenses	\$2	\$0	(\$2)	-100.0%	\$0	\$0	\$0	N/A
Non-Public Transp. SPED	\$79	\$71	(\$8)	-10.7%	\$46	\$49	(\$22)	-30.5%
7000 - Fixed Assets:								
Expenses	\$143	\$5	(\$137)	-96.2%	\$0	\$0	(\$5)	-100.0%
9000 - Programs with Other Systems:								
Tuitions	\$163	\$142	(\$21)	-12.6%	\$54	\$243	\$101	71.1%
Other Expenses	\$5	\$4	(\$1)	-20.0%	\$7	\$11	\$7	162.5%
Total School Committee Budget:	\$9,309	\$9,522	\$214	2.3%	\$11,607	\$12,382	\$2,860	30.0%

Note: Data obtained from APS

Appendix A-2

Auburn Public Schools FTE Teachers By Selected Discipline

Discipline	FY89	FY93	FY97	FY98	FY89 - FY93		FY93 - FY98		FY97 - FY98	
					Incr.	% Incr.	Incr.	% Incr.	Incr.	% Incr.
Early Childhood	0.5	2.0	3.7	3.3	1.5	300.0%	1.3	65.0%	(0.4)	-10.8%
Elementary	56.0	52.0	59.8	57.8	(4.0)	-7.1%	5.8	11.2%	(2.0)	-3.3%
English	11.2	12.2	13.6	12.0	1.0	8.9%	(0.2)	-1.6%	(1.6)	-11.8%
Mathematics	12.5	11.4	11.0	13.5	(1.1)	-8.8%	2.1	18.4%	2.5	22.7%
Science	10.2	11.7	10.2	10.0	1.5	14.7%	(1.7)	-14.5%	(0.2)	-2.0%
Social Studies	9.0	9.4	10.8	10.0	0.4	4.4%	0.6	6.4%	(0.8)	-7.4%
Foreign Language	6.3	6.5	6.5	6.5	0.2	3.2%	0.0	0.0%	0.0	0.0%
Business	1.6	4.5	1.4	1.0	2.9	181.3%	(3.5)	-77.8%	(0.4)	-28.6%
Art	2.2	2.2	2.0	2.0	0.0	0.0%	(0.2)	-9.1%	0.0	0.0%
Music	1.8	2.8	2.6	3.0	1.0	55.6%	0.2	7.1%	0.4	15.4%
Physical Education	4.0	3.4	4.0	6.0	(0.6)	-15.0%	2.6	76.5%	2.0	50.0%
Reading	6.8	4.9	4.5	5.0	(1.9)	-27.9%	0.1	2.0%	0.5	11.1%
Industrial Arts	4.0	3.3	0.0	3.4	(0.7)	-17.5%	0.1	3.0%	3.4	N/A
Health	1.5	1.6	3.0	1.0	0.1	6.7%	(0.6)	-37.5%	(2.0)	-66.7%
SPED	14.7	16.4	14.0	13.0	1.7	11.6%	(3.4)	-20.7%	(1.0)	-7.1%
Home Economics	2.5	2.8	2.2	1.4	0.3	12.0%	(1.4)	-50.0%	(0.8)	-36.4%
Driver Education	0.2	3.3	0.0	0.0	3.1	1550.0%	(3.3)	-100.0%	0.0	N/A
Occupational Education	0.2	0.0	3.2	3.2	(0.2)	-100.0%	3.2	N/A	0.0	0.0%
Physics	0.6	0.5	1.0	0.4	(0.1)	-16.7%	(0.1)	-20.0%	(0.6)	-60.0%
Media Specialist	1.0	2.0	4.6	3.5	1.0	N/A	1.5	75.0%	(1.1)	N/A
Behavioral Sciences	0.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	(0.6)	-100.0%	0.0	N/A	0.0	N/A
Math and Science	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	N/A	1.0	N/A	1.0	N/A

Note: Data obtained from 10/1 School System Summary Reports. Adjustments made by audit team to allow for comparison.

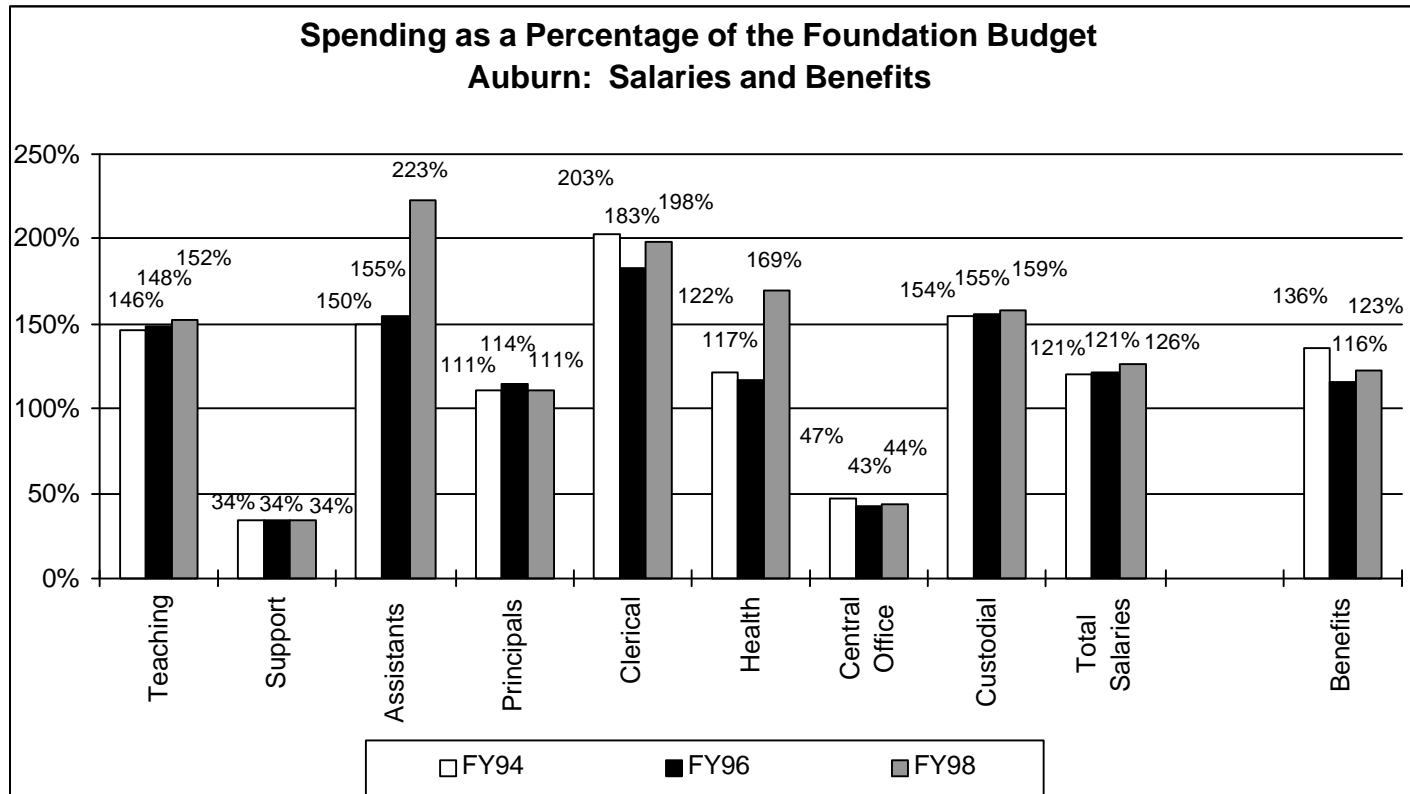
Appendix B-1

Net School Spending According to Foundation Budget Categories (in thousands of dollars)

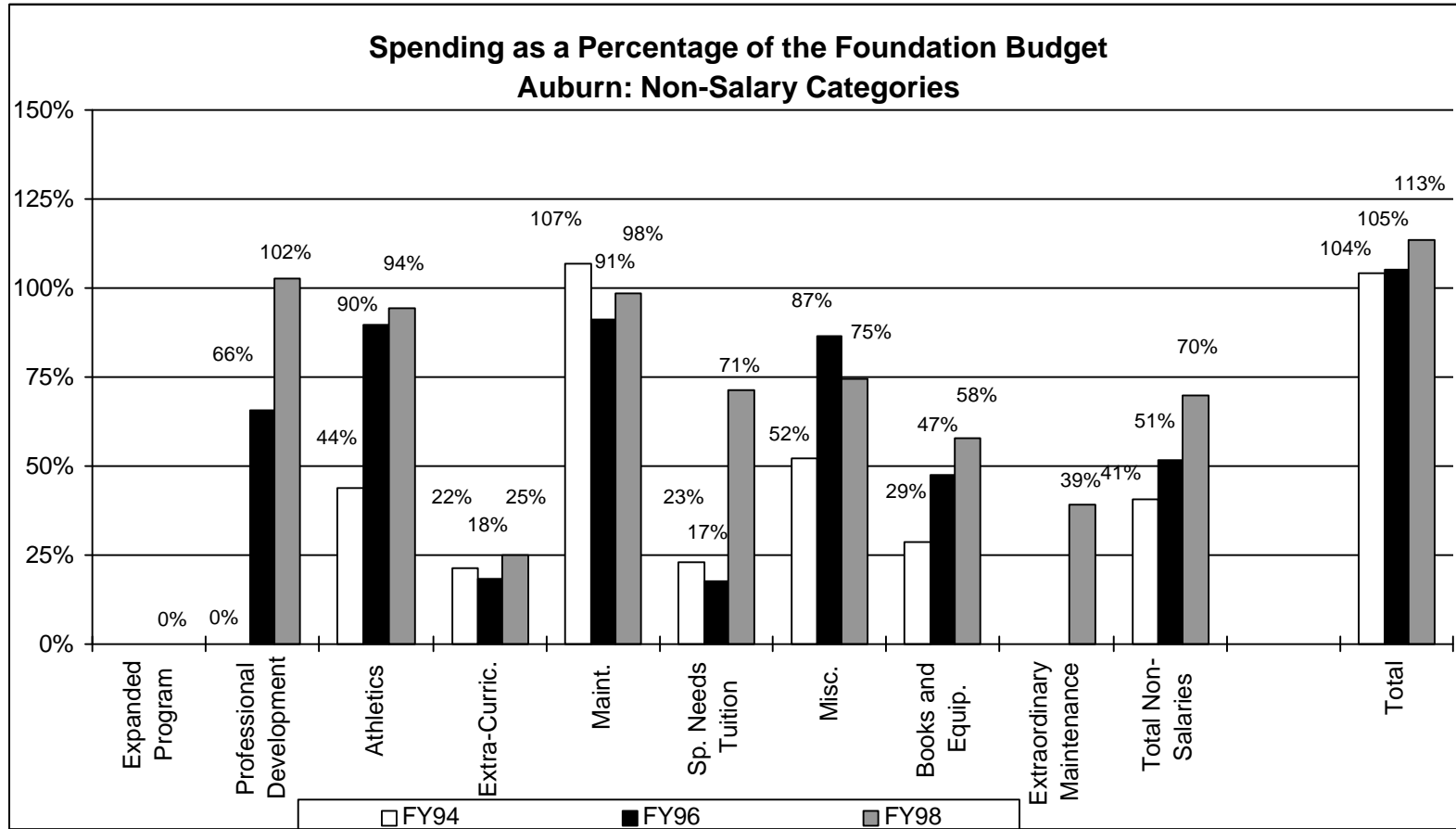
	Variance								
	Reported Expenditures			Foundation Budget			Expend. Over(under) Foundation		
	FY94	FY96	FY98	FY94	FY96	FY98	FY94	FY96	FY98
Teaching Salaries	\$6,334	\$6,732	\$7,290	\$4,324	\$4,547	\$4,800	\$2,009	\$2,185	\$2,491
Support Salaries	\$464	\$477	\$508	\$1,354	\$1,406	\$1,491	(\$891)	(\$929)	(\$983)
Assistants' Salaries	\$300	\$335	\$504	\$200	\$217	\$226	\$99	\$119	\$278
Principals' Salaries	\$473	\$504	\$515	\$426	\$442	\$466	\$48	\$62	\$49
Clerical Salaries	\$505	\$474	\$542	\$248	\$259	\$273	\$256	\$215	\$269
Health Salaries	\$110	\$112	\$170	\$91	\$96	\$100	\$20	\$16	\$70
Central Office Salaries	\$189	\$178	\$193	\$400	\$417	\$440	(\$211)	(\$239)	(\$247)
Custodial Salaries	\$575	\$607	\$656	\$374	\$392	\$414	\$202	\$216	\$242
Total Salaries	\$8,950	\$9,420	\$10,379	\$7,417	\$7,775	\$8,211	\$1,533	\$1,645	\$2,168
Benefits	\$1,409	\$1,265	\$1,417	\$1,037	\$1,090	\$1,151	\$373	\$174	\$267
Expanded Program	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$37	\$60	\$66	(\$37)	(\$60)	(\$66)
Professional Development	\$0	\$117	\$193	\$170	\$179	\$189	(\$170)	(\$61)	\$4
Athletics	\$66	\$132	\$151	\$151	\$148	\$160	(\$85)	(\$15)	(\$9)
Extra-Curricular	\$15	\$13	\$19	\$70	\$71	\$77	(\$55)	(\$58)	(\$57)
Maintenance	\$546	\$492	\$561	\$511	\$538	\$570	\$35	(\$47)	(\$9)
Special Needs Tuition	\$67	\$54	\$233	\$294	\$311	\$326	(\$227)	(\$257)	(\$93)
Miscellaneous	\$109	\$190	\$173	\$209	\$219	\$231	(\$100)	(\$29)	(\$59)
Books and Equipment	\$186	\$320	\$413	\$651	\$678	\$717	(\$465)	(\$357)	(\$304)
Extraordinary Maintenance	\$0	\$0	\$148	\$341	\$359	\$380	(\$341)	(\$359)	(\$232)
Total Non-Salaries	\$989	\$1,319	\$1,891	\$2,433	\$2,563	\$2,716	(\$1,444)	(\$1,244)	(\$825)
Total	\$11,349	\$12,003	\$13,688	\$10,887	\$11,428	\$12,077	\$462	\$575	\$1,610
Revenues	\$0.3	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0.3	\$0	\$0
Net School Spending	\$11,348	\$12,003	\$13,688	\$10,887	\$11,428	\$12,077	\$461	\$575	\$1,610

Note: Data Obtained from DOE and APS. Total are rounded.

Appendix B-2



Appendix B3



Appendix C

Auburn Public Schools Massachusetts Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) Scores

							1988-96	1996	1996 APS
	Grade	1988	1990	1992	1994	1996	Change	State Average	Over/(Under) State Avg.
Reading	4	1320	1370	1420	1410	1420	100	1350	70
	8	1320	1390	1410	1520	1480	160	1380	100
	10	N/A	N/A	N/A	1350	1360		1310	50
Math	4	1330	1380	1430	1390	1440	110	1330	110
	8	1330	1410	1370	1410	1390	60	1330	60
	10	N/A	N/A	N/A	1340	1340		1310	30
Science	4	1320	1400	1440	1420	1450	130	1360	90
	8	1310	1400	1420	1450	1390	80	1330	60
	10	N/A	N/A	N/A	1330	1340		1310	30
Social Studies	4	1300	1380	1440	1400	1390	90	1340	50
	8	1350	1380	1380	1450	1410	60	1320	90
	10	N/A	N/A	N/A	1320	1320		1300	20

Note: N/A indicates that test was not given to all grades in all years. Data obtained from DOE

Appendix D**Comparison Of 1998 MCAS Average Scaled Scores****All Students**

	Auburn Average Scaled Scores	State Average Scaled Scores	Point Difference
Grade 4:			
English Language Arts	233	230	3
Mathematics	238	234	4
Science & Technology	242	238	4
Grade 8:			
English Language Arts	241	237	4
Mathematics	231	227	4
Science & Technology	231	225	6
Grade 10:			
English Language Arts	240	230	10
Mathematics	230	222	8
Science & Technology	233	225	8

All students attending this district for three years or more**Grade 4:**

English Language Arts	234	232	2
Mathematics	239	235	4
Science & Technology	243	239	4

Grade 8:

English Language Arts	242	238	4
Mathematics	234	228	6
Science & Technology	233	227	6

Grade 10:

English Language Arts	240	234	6
Mathematics	232	225	7
Science & Technology	234	228	6

Appendix E

EMPLOYEE SURVEY - Auburn Teachers

Note: Percentages may not add to
100% due to rounding

Rating Scale		
Yes/No Questions		Opinion
yes	1&2	Good to Excellent
No	4 & 5	Not good, inadequate
Not sure, one way or the other	3	OK - could be better, could be worse

1	Education Reform	1&2		4 & 5		3
1.a.	Are you familiar with the issues of Education Reform, the Law passed in 1993?	91%		3%		6%
1.b.	Do you feel you have a good understanding of the purpose and the goals of the law?	80%		6%		14%
1.c.	Do you feel that there is a lot of confusion about what Education Reform is all about?	48%		30%		21%
1.d.	Do you feel the issues of Education Reform are considered when school district plans are made?	80%		4%		16%
1.e.	Do you feel the issues of Education Reform are considered when school-based plans are made?	87%		5%		8%
1.f.	In your opinion is the school district taking positive steps to improve education?	86%		7%		7%
1.g.	Do you feel your job has changed because of Education Reform?	73%		14%		13%
1.h.	Do you think there has been an improvement in student achievement in your school due to Education Reform?	52%		19%		29%
1.i.	Do you think the improvements in education at the school would have happened without Education Reform?	55%		10%		35%
1.j.	Have you perceived an increase in school funding tied directly to improvements in education in your district?	35%		30%		35%

2	Educational Goals and Objectives	1&2		4 & 5		3
2.a.	Are the school administration's goals and objectives generally clear and understandable?	86%		5%		9%

2.b.	Are you clear about the school district's goals and objectives as they relate to your own job?	82%		6%		12%
2.c.	Are there indicators issued to measure progress toward goals and objectives generally?	56%		6%		38%
2.d.	Are there indicators used to measure your progress toward goals and objectives?	76%		7%		17%
2.e.	Do you have a role in developing these goals and objectives?	67%		18%		15%

3 Curriculum		1&2	4 &5		3
3.a.	Do you believe that your district's curriculum is coherent and sequential?	73%		13%	14%
3.b.	Do you believe that your curriculum is challenging and tied to preparing students for life after secondary school?	84%		6%	10%
3.c.	Is there a coherent, on-going effort within the district to keep curriculum current with evolving trends and best practices in pedagogy and educational research?	84%		7%	9%
3.d.	Do teachers play an important role in reviewing and revising curriculum in the district?	73%		11%	16%
3.e.	Will the curriculum now in use in your school improve student test scores?	71%		4%	25%
3.f.	Do you believe that the curriculum content does not impact test scores as much as how a subject is taught by a teacher?	66%		16%	18%

4 Planning		1&2	4 &5		3
4.a.	Is the planning for important issues (e.g. curriculum, budgetary, etc.) within the district a top-down process?	69%		15%	16%
4.a.1.	If the answer is "Definitely yes" (1) or "Generally yes" (2), is there an important role for teachers and professional staff in the planning process?	57%		21%	21%
4.b.	If staff does not have an important role in developing plans, are decisions made by the central office/school committee explained so that you can understand the basis for the decision/policy?	49%		24%	27%

5 Communications and Mission Statement		1&2	4 &5		3
5.a.	Is there adequate on-going communication between teachers and district administrators? In other words, do you think that you know what is going on in the district?	64%		18%	18%
5.b.	Is there adequate communication between you and your superiors?	83%		8%	9%

5.c.	Is there a mission statement in place for your school district?	97%		2%		1%
5.d.	Is there a mission statement in place for your school?	98%		2%		0%
5.e.	Does the mission statement define how the school is run, and how students are taught?	83%		9%		8%
5.f.	Are these mission statements applied in the operation of the school and the teaching of students?	84%		5%		11%

6	Budget Process	1&2		4 &5		3
6.a.	Do you understand your school budget process?	52%		28%		20%
6.b.	Do you understand how the budget process impacts your department?	68%		16%		16%
6.c.	Is the school budgeting process fair and equitable?	39%		17%		44%
6.d.	Are budgetary needs solicited and adequately addressed in the budget process?	42%		18%		39%
6.e.	Once the budget is approved and implemented, does the allocation and use of funds match the publicly stated purposes?	51%		8%		41%
6.f.	Given the circumstances, the school department seems to be doing the best it can with in the school budget process.	65%		11%		24%
6.g.	Are there deficiencies in this process?	38%		16%		46%

7	Professional Development	1&2		4 &5		3
7.a.	Is there an adequate professional development program in your school?	68%		17%		15%
7.b.	Is the program designed to meet school needs and tied to the new frameworks and assessments?	76%		12%		12%
7.c.	Is the program designed to change the content of pedagogy in classrooms?	62%		12%		26%
7.d.	Are there deficiencies in the professional development program?	27%		39%		33%
7.e.	Did you participate in the professional development program in 1997/98?	91%		9%		0%
7.f.	Professional development is making a difference and will improve education in my school district.	70%		12%		18%

8	Supplies	1&2		4 &5		3
8.a.	Have you generally received sufficient and appropriate supplies to do your job?	64%		22%		14%

8.b.	Have you generally received sufficient and appropriate basic educational supplies (e.g. chalk, paper, pens, pencils, etc.) to do your job?	79%		12%		9%
8.c.	Have you generally been supplied with a sufficient number of a current edition of textbooks?	65%		23%		11%
8.d.	Are students given a copy of these textbooks to keep at home during the year?	9%		86%		5%
8.e.	Have you generally been supplied with sufficient ancillary curriculum materials (e.g. current maps, lab supplies, videos, etc.)?	54%		28%		19%
8.f.	Is the process for obtaining supplies and materials effective, time sensitive and responsive to your classroom needs?	65%		21%		14%

9 Facilities		1&2		4 &5		3
9.a.	How would you rate the overall state of school facilities (e.g. cleanliness, security, maintenance, structural integrity)?	44%		44%		12%
9.b.	How would you rate the overall state of classrooms, labs, and other teaching rooms/areas?	45%		38%		17%
9.c.	How would you rate the overall state of the common areas (e.g. hallways, stairwells, and cafeteria)?	51%		33%		16%
9.d.	How would you rate the overall state of the areas outside of the building (e.g. playgrounds, walk-ways and grounds)?	54%		26%		20%
9.e.	Would you agree with the following statement: "The school administration makes an effort to provide a clean and safe working environment."	80%		8%		12%

10 Computers and other Educational Technology		1&2		4 &5		3
10.a.	Are the usage of computers and other technological tools a significant part of the management practices at the school?	63%		14%		22%
10.b.	Are the usage of computers and other technological tools a significant part of the instructional practices at the school?	42%		29%		28%
10.c.	In terms of student usage, are computers generally available only in a computer laboratory setting or library/media center?	49%		40%		10%
10.e.	Do you have a school computer provided for and dedicated for your usage?	37%		61%		1%
10.f.	Is there a school computer provided for and shared by you and other teachers?	55%		41%		4%
10.g.	Are there computers available for and used on a regular basis by students?	69%		21%		9%

10.h.	About how many minutes a week does each student use a computer? (Estimated) ____min.					
10.i.	Is the number of available computers sufficient for the number of students?	15%		69%		15%
10.j.	Are the computers in good working order?	51%		28%		22%
10.k.	Are the software packages in the computers uniform and consistent with the instructional level to be provided?	53%		17%		30%

Appendix F

Superintendent's Statement - Education Reform

Dr. Patricia E. Martin
Superintendent of Schools
Auburn, Massachusetts
September 15, 1999

As you are aware, Massachusetts embarked seven years ago on a monumental effort to change and improve our public schools. The passage of the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993 ushered in an era of major changes in how the state could dramatically improve public education through raising educational standards. The power of the Education Reform Act, Chapter 71 of the Acts of 1993 can be found in three components of the Act: funding, Department of Education authority, and school district accountability which includes both student and personnel matters. The Act required the development of a standard, statewide curriculum that is referred to as the Curriculum Frameworks. Each district must now show proof that it has incorporated the frameworks into its curriculum. To test the proficiency of each student within the frameworks, the Act established the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System test (MCAS) whereby students in grades three, four, five, seven, eight, and ten are administered the test every year. The DOE's "Common Core of Learning" and Curriculum Frameworks set the stage for higher learning standards for students.

The Education Reform Act has had an enormous, positive impact on the Auburn Public Schools in three distinct areas. First, the strength of the Common Core of Learning and the Framework documents enabled Auburn's school district administrators to drive teachers forward with clear direction. In 1992 the Auburn Public Schools presented a *Position Paper* that was accepted by the Auburn School Committee. This Position Paper, based on the latest research and national educational standards, had as its core beliefs all the components of the Reform Act's Common Core of Learning. The focus of education in Auburn was clearly directed toward high expectations for students, developmentally appropriate materials, and the best educational practices that reflected brain-based research. Second, the mode of assessment, the MCAS test, provided powerful data that the district was able to use in analyzing student performances in each building, district incorporation of the frameworks in the curriculum, the delivery of the curriculum, and make recommendations for improvements to the curriculum. It is O-W MCAS assessment materials and data that has furnished specific direction to the district. Third, the evaluation of professional staff based on the Principles of Effective Teaching and Effective Administrative Leadership provided an accountability instrument that places high stakes on teacher professionalism. This evaluation accountability enabled the school district to demand a greater responsiveness from professionals to changes in instructional strategies and educational pedagogy.

The power behind the accountability component of Education Reform, and the powerful data provided by the MCAS results, has been an impetus in driving the professional development and curriculum redesign in the Auburn Schools. We as a school district understand that to be effective we do not wait until the results are in to see how we are doing, but rather we monitor every student and help teachers to make checkpoints throughout the year to continually assess students' progress. We focus that accountability for results rests as much with every educator as it does with the students themselves. All our efforts are focused on instructional improvements.

Teaching Force- Professional Development and Curriculum Alignment: The Education Reform Act identified the central importance of professional development as a means to improve student performance. Faculty review of the Auburn Public Schools curriculum as it aligns with the Curriculum Frameworks began in 1994-1995 with the creation of a systemwide Curriculum Council with subgroups entitled Curriculum Study Groups. These Study Groups reviewed, analyzed and recommended changes to our curriculum that was based on brain-based learning and the elements of the Common Core

of Learning. During FY 1996 the Auburn School Committee approved the funding of a position, Director of Curriculum and Professional Development, that would provide for leadership and direct responsibility for systemwide professional development. With the appointment of the Director of Curriculum and Professional Development, the curriculum review and analysis moved to a higher level for improving student achievement through collaborative alignment of curriculum, content institutes, and courses and workshops on teaching techniques that improve student achievement. The professional development offerings were extended to meet teachers' recertification needs with offerings in the areas of curriculum framework study and technology. Thus teachers had the opportunity to accumulate the required number of professional development points through internal offerings.

The district's professional development system was directly linked to state and district accountability. This was to ensure that the professional development led to changes in instructional practices in ways that improve student performances. Even further, school principals were asked to meet with faculty and facilitate with the teachers that their individual professional development plans incorporated the district and state initiatives. The Auburn Public Schools has aggressively and proactively complied with the curriculum implementation and the professional development aspect of the Education Reform Act.

The negotiated contract with the Auburn Education Association increased the teachers work year by two days, those days to be used as full professional development days. In addition half days for teacher professional development was reinstituted. At the beginning of each year, the teachers have been provided with a yearly booklet identifying the various professional opportunities available for all employees. Systemwide teacher meetings were held with extended discussion on the implementation of the Curriculum Frameworks. The locally created weighted curriculum matrix enabled the teachers to identify the strengths and weaknesses existing in the curriculum and recommend immediate and long range action to be taken to resolve the identified weaknesses. We presented an Educational Forum on December 16, 1998, for the community and parents on understanding the MCAS testing, the results of the testing, how classrooms reflect the Common Core of Learning and how the Auburn Public Schools is analyzing, interpreting and using the test data. In addition the Auburn School Administrators participated in a thirty hour Leadership Institute, supported by a state grant, that focused on data analysis and school improvement. The purpose of this training was directly related to the potential data that is available to all districts as a result of the MCAS testing. Auburn's school administrators, having received training in Action Research and Data Analysis, are evolving as data driven, standards-based leaders in their buildings.

In 1997 a Director of Technology was hired whose primary responsibility was to move the school district forward by providing leadership in the technical phase of networking the schools and in the recommendation and purchasing of computers to meet this technology. The 1997-2001 Auburn Technology Plan clearly outlines a steady, incremental plan for technology growth in the schools from networking all buildings, to Purchasing equipment, through integrating technology into the curriculum. We funded the positions of technology facilitators within each building. These facilitators continue to be the conduit through which building level needs for technology and technology professional development are directed. Since 1997 the Auburn Public Schools has networked all the schools, provided professional development for all teachers to meet the varied levels of ability within technology understanding, and used the Internet as a tool for instruction at the High School and Middle School level. In 1999 with the networking technical phase of technology implemented we readvertised the position of Director of Technology to include the role of integrating technology into the curriculum.

Teaching Force-Evaluation: The Auburn School Committee negotiated with the Auburn Education Association the performance standards, "Principles of Effective Teaching and Effective Administrative Leadership", which would evaluate all educators and administrators. On December 7, 1995, a public hearing was held for community input into these performance standards. These standards provided the guidelines for annual evaluation of teachers and administrators who do not hold professional teacher status, and bi-annual evaluation for educators with professional status. Negotiations with the teachers' union and approval of the new evaluation instrument was completed in September, 1996. All principals were trained in the Research for Better Teaching model of evaluation during 1997 and 1998. New administrators are required to take the Observing and Analyzing Teaching I (OAT) as part of their employment in the district. The teacher evaluation component of the Act has also enabled the district to negotiate a new evaluation instrument and procedure from the vantagepoint of student improvement. The standards and the process for evaluation are linked to improve not only the teacher's performance but also the student's performance. The increased accountability in supervision and evaluation of staff has significantly empowered the administrators, and the superintendent, in holding employees to a higher professional standard, even to the consequence of non-renewal of contracts.

Barriers to the Implementation of the Education Reform Act of 1993: The Auburn Public Schools, as a suburban community that has locally supported education, has had very few barriers in numbers to implementing the Education Reform Act. But the few barriers we faced have been great in magnitude and impact. One major area is overcrowding of the schools. During the 1996 school year, the Auburn School Committee created a governing policy that addressed the class sizes not to exceed 25 students at the elementary level. The School Administrators and School Committee review budget deliberations and School Improvement Plans with this guiding principle of keeping class sizes low. The Auburn Public Schools is facing a student population growth with diminishing room capacities in the buildings. Our school district has shown an 18% student increase over the past ten years. Our schools are filled to capacity and some of the classes are reaching 27 students per class. Our facilities planning started in 1990 with a long range focus on building a High School and renovating the Middle School and Elementary buildings. The district has purchased four modular buildings for the Middle School to address the overcrowding. With no additional space, the temporary strategy to address large class sizes is to hire Instructional Assistants to provide additional adult interaction with students. Instructional Assistants are provided curriculum training in the delivery of services to the students. It will be necessary to look at purchasing four modular classrooms for the elementary buildings within the next two years. In addition to the modular buildings, the school budget will need to be increased to fund added positions which will reduce the large class sizes numbers. The increase funding for these positions is not readily accessible, as we are an above foundation community and the conservative municipal approach to funding the schools is to meet the minimum contribution and the municipal growth factor. Space shortcomings and funding have prevented us from implementing programmatic improvements such as foreign language at the elementary level, all day or extended day kindergarten, block scheduling at the Middle School, and smaller classes at the High School.

The increasing and unpredictable Special Education costs continue to be a barrier to our planning and implementation of new, innovative programs for the district. As a district we creatively look for means to keep our special needs students within the district thereby avoiding the costly out of district tuitions and transportation.

During the first three years of the Reform Act, the Auburn Public Schools did not have a Director of Curriculum and Professional Development or a Director of Technology. The absence of personnel with the accompanying responsibilities for these critical areas was an initial barrier to the speed and accuracy by which we would move forward. This barrier was eliminated when the School Committee approved the funding for these positions within the 1996 budget.

Five Year Strategic Plan

Over the next three to five years there is a clear direction mapped for the Auburn Public Schools. In the summer of 1998, the Auburn Public Schools Five Year Strategic Plan was developed through a planning committee that included representatives from the following: municipal employees, town meeting members, school district employees, representatives from the teachers' union, administrators, senior citizens, school committee, selectmen, and finance committee members. Ms 1998-2004 Strategic Plan identifies the four goal areas: curriculum, technology, facilities and community relations.

Summary:

In summary, the Auburn Public Schools have responded in a proactive, positive approach to the Education Reform Act of 1993. We have effectively made changes where they were needed, changes which improved the instructional program delivery for students. We will continue to offer student centered, brain-based programs for children.

How did we effect systemic change? The Education Reform Act provided us with the financial support to increase professional development. The WAS tests results provided the district with powerful data through which to analyze our curriculum. The teacher and administrator accountability component provided the impetus to evaluate the professionals by incorporating improvement in student performance.

Professional development before Education Reform was teacher centered. The expectation was that workshops would provide something practical that could be used in the next day's class. Teachers did not expect to change their basic ways of teaching because of the course or workshops. With Education Reform, Auburn provided the teachers with professional development that focused on changes in instructional practices and expectations on how these changes would be seen in classrooms.

Curriculum before Education Reform was often a set of static documents in three ring binders written by dedicated teachers. The taught curriculum was never directly addressed by evaluation. The experienced curriculum was seldom

considered. On the other hand, the MCAS demands that each teacher become an expert in what needs to be taught. In Auburn, the textbooks no longer are the "experts" about content. Teach6rproof curriculum is no longer acceptable. Multiple choice tests and standardized tests no longer set the standard to define learning. Instead, Massachusetts provided a framework for a curriculum whose specific implementation had to be developed locally and which demanded that teachers become professional* and, adjust their lessons to their learners at the same time that they worked toward standards and benchmarks. The Auburn Public Schools has moved away from the text based curriculum into a concept based curriculum with emphasis on instructional strategies, integrated hands-on learning and authentic application of skills.

Teacher evaluation became a skill that principals had to master. All Administrators were trained in the Research for Better Teaching model of evaluation. It was based on high standards of teacher professionalism. The factory model of teaching gave way to the collaborative model to improve student achievement, teachers began to realize that they must collaborate and continue learning throughout their careers. They must look at the formal and informal assessment data, adjust their lessons for their students and provide immediate feedback to the students.

In conclusion, we as a system focused on students and their learning and implemented a systemic reorganization of how students learn and how we assess students. We realigned our curriculum to meet the frameworks. We looked to the community for support by involving the community in our strategic plan. The community supported our requests for additional positions. We involved all administrators in action research for using and understanding data. We used this data to assess and make adjustments to the classroom, to the school and to the district curriculum. We provided training to all administrators in the new approaches to the evaluation of teachers. We negotiated with the teachers the new evaluation instrument that would benefit both the teachers' growth and the students' growth. We hold all personnel accountable for what happens in the schools. We are clear about our beliefs in teaching and learning. We live by these beliefs. The leadership in our schools is focused on improving performance in teaching and learning. We pay attention in a comprehensive and systematic fashion, to the core processes of schooling - teaching and learning.

Appendix G

Auburn Public Schools

"STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE"

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January 12, 2000

Mr. Michael Sentence, Chairperson
Educational Management Accountability Board
Department of Revenue
P.O.Box 9655
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Mr. Sentence:

The Education Management Accountability Board Audit Review conducted in the Auburn Public Schools in August, September and October of 1999 by the Department of Revenue Division of Local Services was challenging, valuable, and instructive. Throughout the intensive process from the introductory interview to the final exit conference, the Project Team members, Director Dieter Wahl, Auditor-in-Charge F. Ellis FitzPatrick, and Auditors Andrew S. Nelson and Anthony Rassias were very professional, knowledgeable and courteous; their report is both accurate and objective.

The Auburn Public Schools and its new administrative team continue to face many challenges from the high expectations of Education Reform. The Education Reform Act has had its most profound impact on the Auburn Public Schools through the law's accountability component, more than through the increases in funding. We are proud of our achievements in:

- scoring above the state average and improving yearly in the state's MEAP tests and in the more recent MCAS tests
- developing a clearly focused Five-Year Strategic Plan
- expanding our Professional Development program to include 3 professional development days and three early-release days in the teacher contract negotiations
- aligning and calibrating our curriculum system-wide

- negotiating a new evaluation instrument for teachers and administrators
- opening a self-contained classroom for developmentally disabled students who were previously tuition out-of-district
- instituting an intervention team program at the Middle School and High School that enables the Auburn Public Schools to have a low drop out rate (0.5%) and low private school enrollments
- instituting community teaching time, "experimero days" and pair/share time at the elementary level that provides weekly common planning time for teachers at no additional expense.

The Auburn Public Schools have responded in a proactive, positive approach to the Education Reform Act of 1993. We have effectively made changes where they were needed, changes that improved the instructional program delivery for students. We as a system focused on students and their learning and implemented a systemic reorganization of how students learn and how we assess students. We looked to the community for their support. We involved the administrators in action research for using and understanding data. We used this data to assess and calibrate our district curriculum. We negotiated with the teachers the new evaluation instrument that would benefit both student growth and teachers growth. We provided training to all administrators in the new approaches to evaluation of teachers. We are clear about our beliefs in teaching and learning. We live by these beliefs. We pay attention in a comprehensive and systematic fashion to the core processes of schooling – teaching and learning.

As Superintendent, I am pleased with the overall outcome of the Education Management Accountability Audit. During our exit interview Dieter Wahl, Director and members of the audit team stated that this report was a 'positive one' and that Auburn's performance is 'solid'. I am proud of the Auburn Public Schools, the strong curriculum-4 innovative approaches to address building, staffing and program needs with limited resources, and the commitment from all personnel to provide safe passage for our children throughout their years in the system.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the audit team for sharing your time and extending the extra effort to ensure that you clearly understood the goals of the Auburn Public Schools. Your professionalism during your visit was exceptional.

Respectfully yours,

Patricia E. Martin, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

