How Is Your School District Performing?

A look at

Bridgewater-Raynham

Regional School District

2004–2006

EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT AUDIT COUNCIL

Office of Educational Quality and Accountability

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The five-member Educational Management Audit Council (EMAC) and its agency, the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA), were established by the Massachusetts Legislature in July 2000 to examine public school districts in the commonwealth. The mission of the EMAC and EQA is to provide independent verification of schools' and districts' efforts to promote higher levels of academic achievement among their students, as measured by the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests.

The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability would like to acknowledge the professional cooperation extended to the audit team by the Massachusetts Department of Education; the superintendent of the Bridgewater-Raynham Regional School District, Robert McIntyre; the school department staff; and the town officials of Bridgewater and Raynham.

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INTRODUCTION

Test scores provide one method of assessing student achievement, but a variety of factors affect student performance. The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA) was created to examine many of these additional factors by conducting independent audits of schools and districts across the commonwealth. The agency uses these audits to:

- Provide a comprehensive evaluation of each school district's performance;
- Publish annual reports on selected districts' performance;
- Monitor public education performance statewide to inform policy decisions; and
- Provide the public with information that helps the state hold districts and schools, including charter schools, accountable.

In January 2007, the EQA conducted an independent examination of the Bridgewater-Raynham Regional School District for the period of 2004–2006. This school district was selected for a site review. The EQA analyzed Bridgewater-Raynham students' performance on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests and identified how students in general and in subgroups were performing. The EQA then examined critical factors that affected student performance in six major areas: leadership, governance, and communication; curriculum and instruction; assessment and evaluation; human resource management and professional development; access, participation, and student academic support; and financial and asset management effectiveness and efficiency.

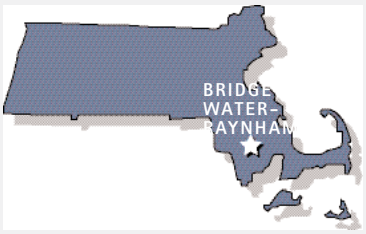
The review was based on documents supplied by the Bridgewater-Raynham Regional School District and the Massachusetts Department of Education; correspondence sent prior to the EQA team's site visit; interviews with representatives from the school committee, the district leadership team, school administrators, and teachers; numerous classroom observations; and additional documents submitted while the EQA team visited the district. The report does not take into account documents, revised data, or events that may have occurred after June 2006. However, district leaders were invited to provide more current information.

EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT AUDIT COUNCIL ACTION

The Educational Management Audit Council accepted this report and its findings at their meeting of October 1, 2007.

Putting the Data in Perspective

Raynham, MA



DISTRICT

Population: 36,924
Median family income: $71,153
Largest sources of employment: Retail trade, accommodation, food services, health care and social services.
Local government: Board of Selectmen/Open Town Meeting

SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS

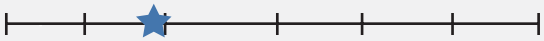
School committee: 8 members
Number of schools: 7
Student-teacher ratio: 16.9 to 1
Per Pupil Expenditures: $8,860
Student enrollment:
Total: 5,790
White: 93.3 percent
Hispanic: 1.8 percent
African-American: 2.5 percent
Asian-American: 1.3 percent
Native American: 0.1 percent
Limited English proficient: 0.0 percent
Low income: 8.3 percent
Special education: 17.1 percent

Sources: 2000 U.S. Census and Massachusetts Department of Education.

MCAS Performance at a Glance, 2006

	DISTRICT	STATE
Average Proficiency Index	82	78
English Language Arts Proficiency Index	90	84
Math Proficiency Index	75	72

Performance Rating



Very High | High | Moderate | Low | Very Low | Critically Low

The Average Proficiency Index is another way to look at MCAS scores. It is a weighted average of student performance that shows whether students have attained or are making progress toward proficiency, which means they have met the state's standards. A score of 100 indicates that all students are proficient. The Massachusetts DOE developed the categories presented to identify performance levels.

HOW DID STUDENTS PERFORM?

Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) Test Results

Students in grades 3–8 and grade 10 are required to take the MCAS tests each year in one or more specified subject areas, including English language arts (ELA), math, and science and technology/engineering (STE). Beginning with the class of 2003, students must pass the grade 10 math and ELA tests to graduate. Those who do not pass on the first try may retake the tests several more times.

The EQA analyzed current state and district MCAS results to determine how well district students as a whole and subgroups of students performed compared to students throughout the commonwealth, and to the state goal of proficiency. The EQA analysis sought to answer the following five questions:

1. Are all eligible students participating in required state assessments?

On the 2006 MCAS tests in ELA, math, and STE, eligible students in Bridgewater-Raynham participated at levels that met or exceeded the state's 95 percent requirement.

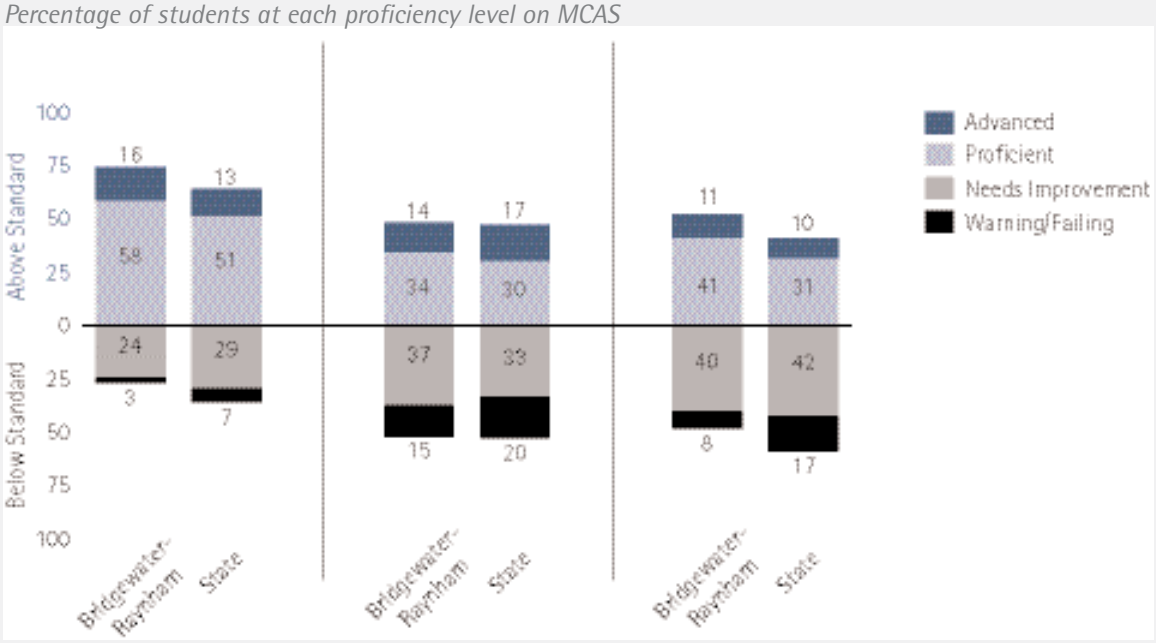
2. Are the district's students reaching proficiency levels on the MCAS examination?

On average, slightly more than three-fifths of all students in Bridgewater-Raynham attained proficiency on the 2006 MCAS tests, more than that statewide. Nearly three-quarters of Bridgewater-Raynham students attained proficiency in English language arts (ELA), nearly half of Bridgewater-Raynham students attained proficiency in math, and more than half of Bridgewater-Raynham students attained proficiency in science and technology/engineering (STE). Ninety-seven percent of the Class of 2006 attained a Competency Determination.

- Bridgewater-Raynham's average proficiency index (API) on the MCAS tests in 2006 was 82 proficiency index (PI) points, four PI points greater than that statewide. Bridgewater-Raynham's average proficiency gap, the difference between its API and the target of 100, in 2006 was 18 PI points.

BRIDGEWATER-RAYNHAM SCORES COMPARED TO STATE AVERAGES, 2006

Percentage of students at each proficiency level on MCAS



- In 2006, Bridgewater-Raynham's proficiency gap in ELA was 10 PI points, six PI points narrower than the state's average proficiency gap in ELA. This gap would require an average improvement in performance of more than one PI point annually to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP). Bridgewater-Raynham's proficiency gap in math was 25 PI points in 2006, three PI points narrower than the state's average proficiency gap in math. This gap would require an average improvement of slightly more than three PI points per year to achieve AYP. Bridgewater-Raynham's proficiency gap in STE was 20 PI points, nine PI points narrower than that statewide.

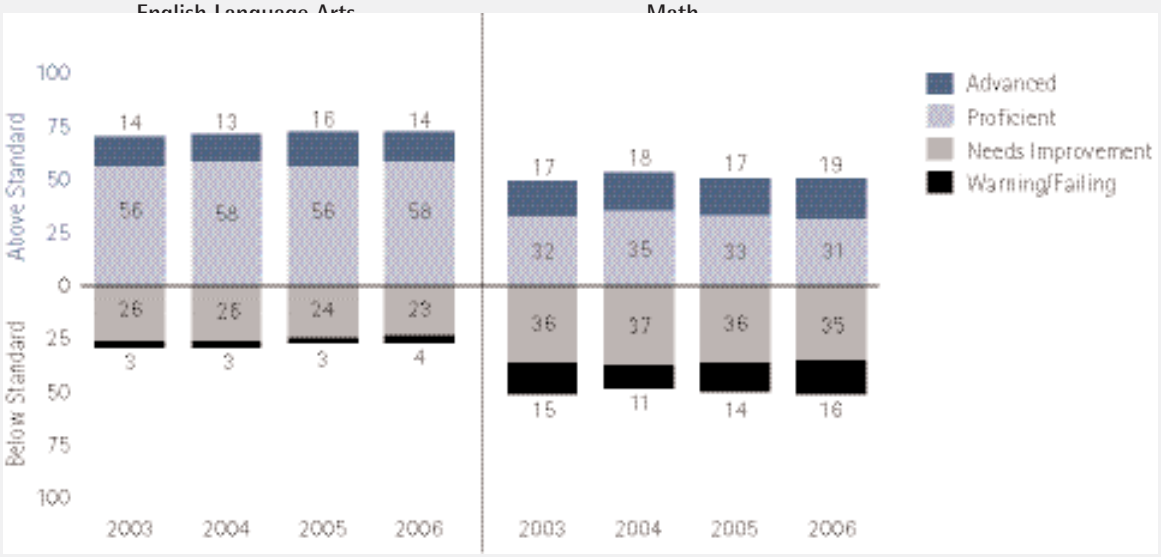
3. Has the district's MCAS test performance improved over time?

Between 2003 and 2006, Bridgewater-Raynham's MCAS performance showed no improvement overall, in ELA, or in math, and slight improvement in STE.

- The percentage of students scoring in the 'Advanced' and 'Proficient' categories rose by one percentage point between 2003 and 2006, while the percentage of students in the 'Warning/Failing' category also increased by one percentage point. The average proficiency gap in Bridgewater-Raynham was 19 PI points in both 2003 and 2006.
- Over the three-year period 2003-2006, ELA performance in the district remained flat at 89 PI points.

BRIDGEWATER-RAYNHAM ELA SCORES COMPARED TO MATH SCORES

Percentage of students at each proficiency level on MCAS

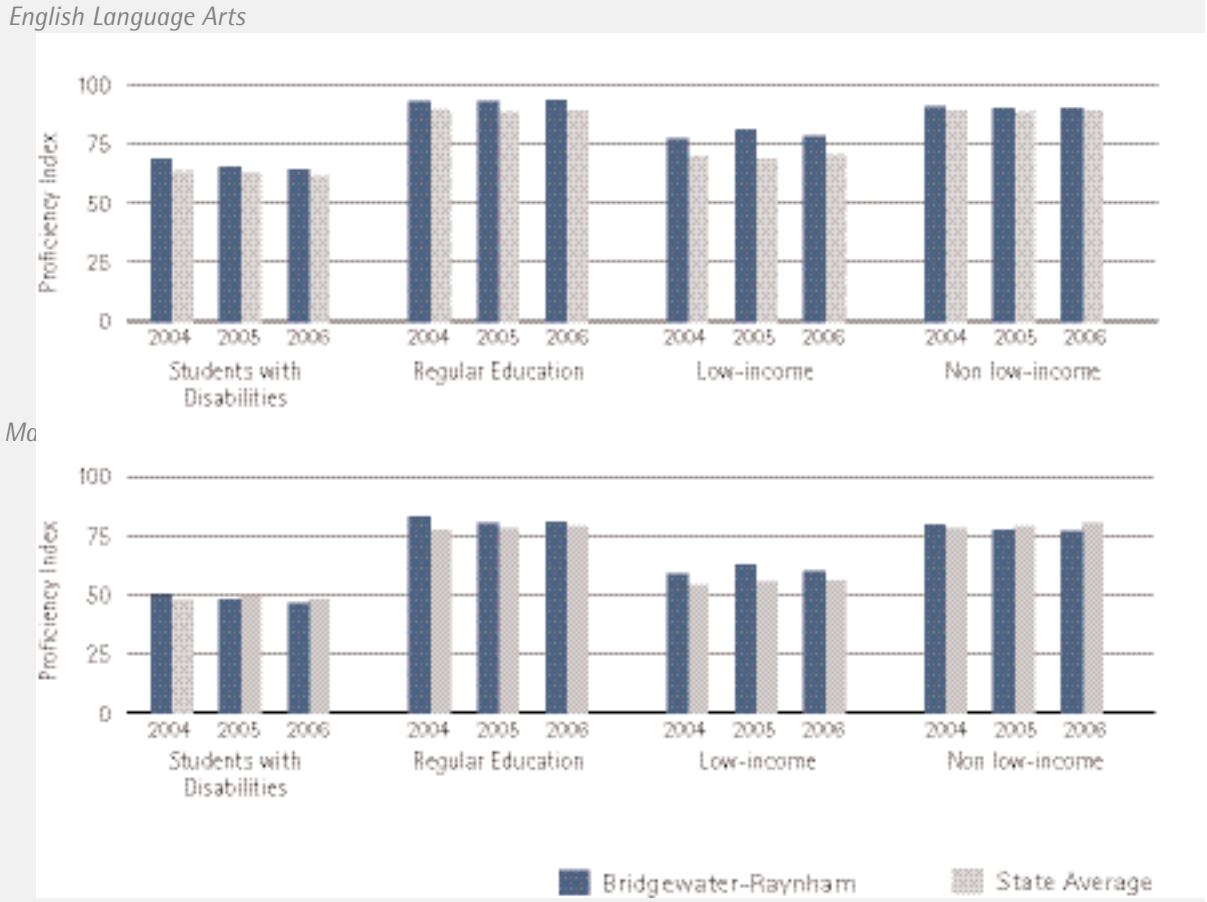


- Math performance in the district showed a slight decline of one-half PI point in this period.
- Between 2004 and 2006, Bridgewater-Raynham had an improvement in STE performance, increasing by slightly more than one PI point annually over the two-year period. This resulted in an improvement rate of 10 percent.

4. Do MCAS test results vary among subgroups of students?

- MCAS performance in 2006 varied substantially among subgroups of Bridgewater-Raynham students. Of the eight measurable subgroups in Bridgewater-Raynham in 2006, the gap in performance between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups was 25 PI points in ELA and 31 PI points in math (regular education students, students with disabilities, respectively).
- The proficiency gaps in Bridgewater-Raynham in 2006 in both ELA and math were wider than the district average for students with disabilities, African-American students, low-income students (those participating in the free or reduced-cost lunch program), and male students. Less than half of the students in these subgroups attained proficiency, with the exception of the male student subgroup in which less than three-fifths of the students did so.
- The proficiency gaps in ELA and math were narrower than the district average for regular education students, White students, non low-income students, and female students. For each of these subgroups, more than three-fifths of the students attained proficiency.

BRIDGEWATER-RAYNHAM STUDENTS' IMPROVEMENT OVER TIME, COMPARED TO STATE AVERAGES



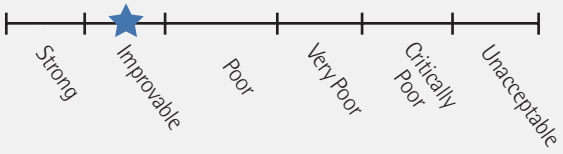
5. Has the MCAS test performance of the district's student subgroups improved over time?

- The performance gap in Bridgewater-Raynham between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in ELA widened from 27 PI points in 2003 to 29 PI points in 2006, and the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in math widened from 33 to 34 PI points over this period.
- Regular education students, non low-income students, and White students had improved performance in ELA between 2003 and 2006. The most improved subgroup in ELA was regular education students.
- In math, only regular education students and African-American students showed improved performance between 2003 and 2006, with African-American students making greater improvement.

Performance at a Glance

Management Quality Index

The Management Quality Index is a weighted average of the district's performance on 67 indicators that measure the effectiveness of a district's management system. Bridgewater-Raynham received the following performance rating:



WHAT FACTORS DRIVE STUDENT PERFORMANCE?

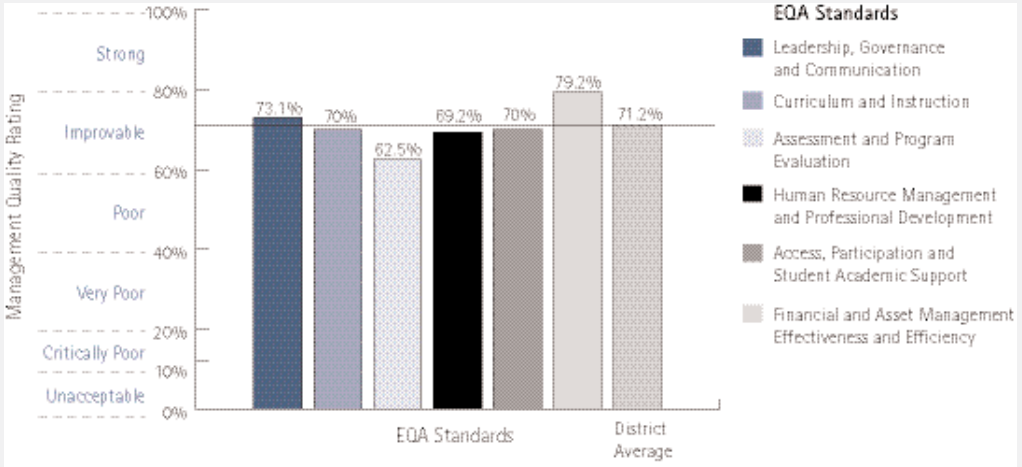
Overall District Management

To better understand the factors affecting student scores on the MCAS tests, the EQA analyzes district performance on 67 indicators in six areas: leadership, governance, and communication; curriculum and instruction; assessment and program evaluation; human resource management and professional development; access, participation, and student academic support; and financial and asset management effectiveness and efficiency. Taken together, these factors are a measure of the effectiveness – or quality – of a district's management system. A score of 100 percent on the Management Quality Index (MQI) means that the district meets the standard and performed at a satisfactory level on all indicators. However, it does not mean the district was perfect.

In 2006, Bridgewater-Raynham received an overall MQI score of 'Improvable' (71.2 percent). The district performed best on the Financial Management standard, scoring 'Improvable.' It was rated lowest on the Assessment and Program Evaluation standard. Given these ratings, the district performed as expected on the MCAS tests during the review period. Those scores have remained relatively flat in ELA, and declined in math during the review period, and the district's average proficiency gap widened by nearly two PI points. On the following pages, we take a closer look at the district's performance on each of the six standards.

A CLOSER LOOK AT MANAGEMENT QUALITY

Bridgewater-Raynham, 2004–2006



Leadership, Governance, and Communication

Ultimately, the success or failure of district leadership was determined by how well all students performed. As measured by MCAS test performance, Bridgewater-Raynham ranked among the 'High' performing school districts in the commonwealth, with scores that were 'Very High' in ELA and 'Moderate' in math.

Leadership and Communication

The leadership of the Bridgewater-Raynham Regional School District consisted of the superintendent and the eight-member school committee. The district lacked adequate funding to staff classrooms, school supervisory positions, and the central office despite support from the school committee for educationally sound budgets. The lack of funding created a situation in which Raynham "gifted" the school district additional funds. As a result, inequities occurred between the Raynham Middle School and the Williams Middle School in Bridgewater, such as the existence of library services in the former but not the latter. The district did not use student achievement data to inform budget development and policy changes.

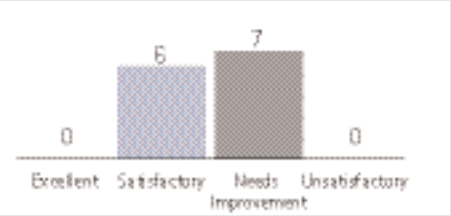
Participating communities did support the construction of a new high school, the renovation and conversion of the current high school to a middle school, and the renovation of the Williams Middle School. The school district provided educational facilities for its students that EQA examiners found to be in 'very good' to 'excellent' condition. The district planned its future space requirements and developed a building program to satisfy its space needs into the near future.

The school committee and superintendent spent considerable time each year meeting with all stakeholders in the district. Through the use of cable television, the local radio, municipal offices, parent meetings, newsletters, and newspapers, the administration disseminated meaningful information.

Performance at a Glance

Ratings on Performance Indicators

In this area, districts are rated on 13 performance indicators. Bridgewater-Raynham received the following ratings:



Areas of Strength

- The district's leadership regularly reported progress on the strategic plan and the School Improvement Plans (SIPs) to the school committee and the community.
- The committee and superintendent advocated strongly for adequate funding, although the district exceeded the minimum net school spending requirement in only two out of the three years of the review period.

Areas for Improvement

- School leadership did not use disaggregated student assessment data effectively. For example, according to interviewees, subgroups did not participate in honors and AP classes.
- School leaders did not monitor student achievement throughout the year. The school district lacked a system to effectively evaluate student achievement and to evaluate educational programs.

Planning and Governance

During the period under review, the district received guidance from two strategic plans, one for 1999-2005 and one for 2006-2011. Clear mission and vision statements provided the foundation for these plans. Staff, parents, and community members provided input into the strategic plans. The district developed eight core values and five goals as part of its 2006-2011 strategic plan. The eight core values and five goals were clearly communicated to all stakeholders.

Each school had an approved School Improvement Plan (SIP). Through the use of a Strategic Action Plan Status Report template, the district attempted to align its SIPs to the District Improvement Plan (DIP) or strategic plan. The superintendent directed principals and directors to tie budget requests to the SIPs and DIP; however, this initiative did not always occur. Each principal and/or school council reported to the school committee on the progress of the school's SIP.

During the period under review, the district lacked a system-wide plan to monitor student achievement throughout the year, other than through the MCAS test data. It did use student achievement data to make changes to its educational programs, such as the employment of additional staff to provide remediation for students in need. The district used little disaggregated data other than data received from the Department of Education (DOE). Budget constraints placed severe restrictions on the district's ability to move all students into the proficiency range on the MCAS tests. During this time, the evaluations of the superintendent, central office personnel, and principals were not linked to improving student achievement.

Curriculum and Instruction

The Bridgewater-Raynham Regional School District faced a number of challenges in the areas of effective curriculum development and instructional practice — essential elements of efforts to improve student performance.

Aligned Curricula

During the period under review, the Bridgewater-Raynham Regional School District had aligned curricula in the core subjects of English language arts, math, and science. The district developed curriculum guides for use by teachers in pre-kindergarten through grade 12. Documents contained objectives, expected student outcomes, instructional strategies, resources, and assessments. The district also developed benchmarks in ELA, math, and science at the high school level and planned to complete benchmark documents in the core subject areas for pre-kindergarten through grade 8 by June 2007.

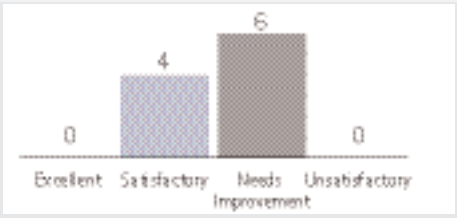
In 2004, the district experienced significant budget reductions that impacted the system through the loss of key personnel. These cuts resulted in the elimination of the district's seven-member curriculum department and reduced it to one central administrator. As a result, the structure for curriculum oversight changed. Department heads for ELA, math, and science at the high school became responsible for preK-12 curriculum articulation in addition to their regular teaching duties and their responsibility for teacher observations in grades 6-12 in their particular subject areas. Scheduling differences between schools as well as structures within schools for meetings made it difficult to continue the degree of horizontal and vertical articulation that had been present with the existence of the district curriculum office.

The district had designed a multi-year curriculum review plan that began in 2002. During the period under review, the district developed extensive cur-

Performance at a Glance

Ratings on Performance Indicators

In this area, districts are rated on 10 performance indicators. Bridgewater-Raynham received the following ratings:



Areas of Strength

- Teachers in grades preK-12 used district-developed curriculum guides in ELA, math, and science.
- A multi-year curriculum review cycle used by the district provided direction for the review and revision of curriculum during the period under review.

Areas for Improvement

- Significant budget reductions in 2004 resulted in the elimination of the seven-member curriculum office that had been responsible for curriculum oversight for the district.
- Educational technology was available in the district, but sustained and consistent technology integration into the curriculum was lacking.
- The district primarily used the results from the MCAS tests to monitor student achievement.
- In addition to their teaching duties at the high school, department heads for ELA, math, and science were responsible for curriculum oversight preK-12 and for writing observations of subject area teachers in grades 6-12.

riculum documents for ELA, math, and science. Additionally, a revision of the science guide occurred during the cycle. However, numerous factors hampered the district's ability to adhere completely and effectively to the multi-year curriculum review plan. Limited funding impacted the acquisition of needed textbooks and resource materials for multiple grade levels, resulting in the revision of implementation timelines. Further, difficulty in recruiting outside educators for visiting teams responsible for reviewing the existing curriculum affected the review process. Educators in the district identified concerns about the lack of program analysis to determine the effect on student achievement. In addition, the district lacked a process for evaluating the effectiveness of time allotment changes on student achievement.

Effective Instruction

Observations of 66 classrooms disclosed positive and safe climates in which students and teachers exhibited positive relationships and students treated peers with respect. Teachers planned lessons based on the state curriculum frameworks. Observations revealed that students were made aware of the lesson objectives in 97 percent of classrooms observed, and teachers used classroom time effectively in 94 percent of classrooms observed. Students were actively engaged in their learning, and classroom management was excellent. Teachers used questioning techniques that encouraged elaboration, thought, and broad involvement in 80 percent of the observed classrooms. However, observations revealed that in only 28 percent of the classrooms did the teacher plan multiple tasks and use a variety of resources to engage all levels of learners. Additionally, elements of effective instruction that were not observed to any great degree included the use of differentiated instruction (23 percent), student use of technology (nine percent), multiple resources to address diverse learners (52 percent), and high expectations for student work (41 percent).

Educational technology in the district was available and included multiple resources for student use and for teachers to enhance instruction. The district purchased such programs as Study Island to track student progress, and HomeworkNOW to help parents and students access homework assignments online. Although educational technology was available and used for particular purposes, the district did not require mandatory teacher training in its application, nor was there a system-wide initiative to integrate educational technology into the curriculum. Interested teachers signed up for technology offerings through the district's professional development program and shared their knowledge informally with fellow teachers. Classroom observations by the EQA examiners revealed technology integration in only 18 percent of classrooms at the elementary level, 10 percent at the middle school level, and none at the high school level.

Assessment and Program Evaluation

Student assessment data include a wealth of information for district and school leaders on strengths and weaknesses in the local system, providing valuable input on where they should target their efforts to improve achievement.

Student Assessment

The Bridgewater-Raynham Regional School District had many assessment practices in place even though the school committee did not have a policy regarding student assessment. The district realized the importance of data analysis and hired a consultant to assist it in data analysis 10 years prior to the site review. After receiving the data, the consultant not only analyzed them but also disseminated them to staff. District administrators, principals, and teachers continued to improve their data analysis skills, and in 2004-2005 the district established building assessment teams at each school in the district. The primary function of each building assessment team was not only to analyze and disseminate MCAS data to the school's staff but also to develop a building-based MCAS Improvement Plan.

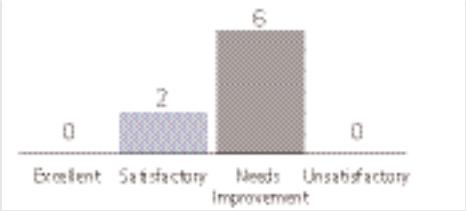
During the 2004-2005 school year, school assessment teams met on a quarterly basis with the district's assessment team to discuss progress made toward the goals in each building's MCAS Improvement Plan. The functioning of the district and building assessment teams was curtailed as a result of the budget cuts that the district sustained in 2004. At that time, the district's curriculum team suffered a severe reduction that resulted in one district curriculum administrator remaining. As a result, in 2005-2006 the school assessment teams met irregularly with the assistant superintendent for curriculum to discuss progress on the MCAS Improvement Plans.

Budget limitations also impacted the number of summative and formative assessments available within the district. Therefore, the systemic use of

Performance at a Glance

Ratings on Performance Indicators

In this area, districts are rated on 8 performance indicators. Bridgewater-Raynham received the following ratings:



Areas of Strength

- The district had many assessment practices in place, including use of school assessment teams made up of teachers, team leaders, department heads, and principals.
- Realizing the importance of data analysis, the district hired a consultant 10 years before the review period to assist in data analysis and its dissemination to staff.

Areas for Improvement

- The use of formative assessments was not systemically driven but rather was limited to individual school assessment preferences. Benchmarks were in place at the high school but not at grades preK-8. The district's goal was to develop these preK-8 benchmarks in the future.
- No formal evaluation program was in place for the evaluation of programs in the district.
- Student assessment data were not used to assign staff.

formative assessments was limited. The MCAS tests were the only standardized tests given during the 2005-2006 school year. In the past, the district administered the California Achievement Test (CAT). In addition, at the elementary level the Gates MacGinitie, the Dynamic Indicators of Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), and the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) were used to measure students' progress, and a writing development continuum and running records were in place for these students. Their use varied from school to school, based on the preference of the principal.

The district used a variety of ways to communicate student achievement data to the community, including televised presentations to the school committee. The MCAS scores were also available on the district's website. The high school provided aggregate data on its students' SAT and AP scores to the local newspapers and through its website. The superintendent presented an annual written report on student achievement to the community.

The high school developed benchmarks for the core content areas but the EQA team received conflicting evidence as to their use. No benchmarks existed at grades preK-8, although their development was a district goal for the future.

A review of student assessment results showed that the skills in the Math Central Program were not aligned with those in the state curriculum frameworks. Teachers who used the program were forced to develop their own supplementary materials to cover these skills as funds were not available to purchase additional materials.

Based on the MCAS test results, the high school created MCAS remediation courses, which developed into mandatory credit courses. A remediation program was also implemented at the middle school level. The district purchased the Study Island program to help all students in grades 3-8 prepare for the MCAS tests.

Program Evaluation

The district did not have a formal evaluation plan. With the exception of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) evaluation and a mandated Department of Education Coordinated Program Review (CPR), the district did not engage in voluntary external or internal evaluations. Informal discussions of school or grade-level programs did occur at staff meetings throughout the district.

Human Resource Management and Professional Development

To improve student academic performance, school districts must recruit certified teaching staff, offer teacher mentoring programs and professional development opportunities, and evaluate instructional effectiveness on a regular basis in accordance with the provisions of the Education Reform Act of 1993.

Hiring Practices and Certification

The Bridgewater-Raynham Regional School District followed an established process in recruiting and hiring its professional staff. Although the process of paper screening and interviewing potential candidates varied slightly from one principal to the next, all principals felt that their first choice for a vacancy had been chosen by the central administration the vast majority of the time. In some cases, financial limitations had been placed on the hiring process. Principals reported that they consistently made teaching assignments for their new personnel, trying to assign the new teacher where his/her strengths were the greatest.

When administrative positions were vacant, a wider posting would take place and screening committees of teachers, parents, and community members would interview potential candidates and assist in the hiring process.

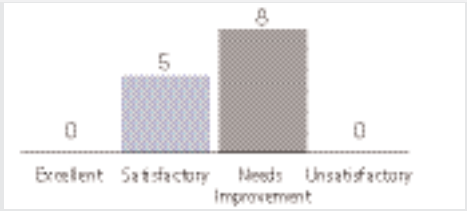
The percentage of the district's teachers and administrators who held appropriate licensure was 98.5 percent (384 of 390), and more than half of the district's 104 paraprofessionals were "highly qualified." The few teachers who had been hired on waivers were expected to actively work toward becoming certified, and the central office expected their respective principals to closely monitor their licensure progress.

The district offered a comprehensive orientation program to its new teachers and also reinstated, during the period under review, the mentoring program that had existed in the past. All the district's first-year teachers were assigned veteran teacher mentors.

Performance at a Glance

Ratings on Performance Indicators

In this area, districts are rated on 13 performance indicators. Bridgewater-Raynham received the following ratings:



Areas of Strength

- The district funded and reinstituted its induction program for first-year teachers starting in 2004, and continued to successfully operate the program throughout the period under review. Experienced mentors met regularly with their mentees throughout the school year.

Areas for Improvement

- None of the professional development offerings provided training in data analysis, nor were they adequately funded.
- District administrators wrote only informative and descriptive comments in the teacher evaluations.

Both the district's administrators and teachers deemed the program very helpful and successful. No formal mentoring program existed for new administrators, but their colleagues informally provided guidance.

Professional Development

Professional development opportunities for the district's teachers took place during the equivalent of four professional development days (two full days and four half days) during each school year. The district's teachers stated that they had input into professional development offerings. In the absence of many districtwide professional development initiatives, the school district offered a number of professional development modules to teachers focused on subject matter and grade-level topics; however, none of these "modules" dealt with developing data analysis skills or differentiated instruction. All interviewees, administrators, and teachers alike agreed that adequate funding was not available for proper professional development during the period under review.

Evaluation

Both teachers and administrators in the district had been observed and evaluated by their supervisors in a timely fashion, and the instruments used in most cases followed the standards required by the Education Reform Act. The most significant exception to this was the superintendent's evaluation. It was found to be a compilation of comments made by school committee members on specific areas of expertise rather than a document following the tenets of the Education Reform Act.

The EQA team examined 55 randomly selected summative evaluations of teachers and found that all included informative and/or descriptive comments but none included instructive and/or constructive statements. The administrators' evaluations included no mention of improving student achievement scores, and only 35 percent (six of 17) of the evaluations had instructive comments. Administrators expressed satisfaction with the evaluation process followed by their superiors.

Access, Participation, and Student Academic Support

Students who are at risk of failing or dropping out need additional support to ensure that they stay in school and achieve proficiency.

Services

The district provided access to all educational programs for all students. Assessment results revealed that students in grades 6-8 in the aggregate failed to meet AYP in math. As a result, the district hired additional math teachers to provide math remediation to students in those grades. Students in grades 9 and 10 identified as at risk by their math teachers received additional math classes.

Implementation of the Study Island program provided ELA and math support to students in grades 3-8. Building assessment teams created individual student success plans (ISSPs) for those students who scored in the 'Warning/Failing' category on the MCAS tests.

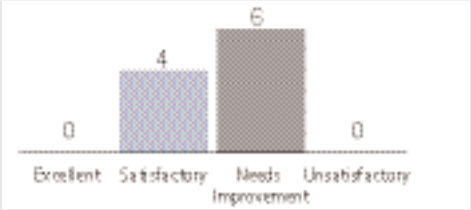
The preK-4 schools used formative assessments to measure student progress, mainly in literacy. However, the schools lacked consistency in their use of the formative assessments. Districtwide, the use of aggregated and disaggregated student achievement data to make changes to support at-risk students was limited.

The district did not have policies, procedures, or practices in place to increase subgroup representation in AP or accelerated courses. No students were excluded from such courses, but there was no formal program to attract students from underrepresented groups into these courses.

Performance at a Glance

Ratings on Performance Indicators

In this area, districts are rated on 10 performance indicators. Bridgewater-Raynham received the following ratings:



Areas of Strength

- The district implemented Study Island to provide all grade 3-8 students with remedial support and enrichment in ELA and Math.
- The Excel night school served as a dropout prevention program. It provided a safety net for students with children, retained students, and students who worked 40 to 50 hours per week.

Areas for Improvement

- The high school attendance rate of 92.8 percent in 2005-2006 was below the state average of 94.5 percent. High school students averaged 12.2 percent absenteeism compared to the state average of 9.4 percent. The rate of chronically absent grade 12 students approached 25 percent. The administration did not analyze absenteeism by subgroup.
- The EQA examiners found little evidence of formative assessment data analysis. The district relied primarily on summative MCAS test data to identify students who failed to meet expectations.

Attendance, Discipline, and Dropout Prevention Services

The Bridgewater-Raynham Regional High School student absenteeism rate exceeded the state average. According to the student handbook, students were allowed absences totaling 15 days. This allotment was a decrease from 45 to 25 days to the current 15 days over the last 15 years. A team comprised of the high school attendance officer, school resource officer, nurse, and guidance counselors monitored daily attendance and followed up with telephone calls to parents or guardians of chronic absentees. Students lost credits based on their number of absences.

According to district data, teachers were absent on average 10.4 days per year excluding professional development days, and 11.7 days per year including professional development days. This resulted in attendance rates of 94.3 and 93.7 percent, respectively. Policies and procedures were in place when a teacher was absent to ensure consistency in the delivery of curriculum. The teachers' contract language provided an incentive for the buyback of unused sick days upon their retirement.

During the period under review, difficult budgetary decisions resulted in increased class sizes and staff cuts. In addition, a school adjustment counselor position was eliminated from the high school. During the same period, the new high school administration tightened the enforcement of the disciplinary code. This resulted in increased disciplinary violations.

The district encouraged students to make up failed or missed classes during summer school and retentions were infrequent. Bridgewater-Raynham had a dropout rate that was below the state's dropout rate for each year of the review period. The implementation of the Excel night program for students who may otherwise have dropped out of school provided an opportunity for these students to complete their high school education.

Financial and Asset Management Effectiveness and Efficiency

Effective districts develop budgets based on student needs, submit financial documentation in a timely fashion, employ staff with MCPPO credentials, and ensure that their facilities are well maintained.

Budget Process

School committee members, town officials, and administrators described the budget development process as open and participatory. Principals and department heads sought input from staff and school councils and, along with district administrators, prepared and submitted to the school committee a recommended budget for their respective schools that they considered necessary to continue the existing educational programs and to add new programs and staff. The district began to make some budget decisions based on student performance data during the last year of the review period. The district did not conduct evaluation-based reviews to determine the cost effectiveness of its instructional programs, but did conduct cost-effectiveness reviews of non-instructional programs, such as its transportation programs.

At four information sessions scheduled in March, the superintendent presented each of the following topics: curriculum and instruction, special education, transportation, and fixed costs. At each session, the superintendent provided a line item explanation of the chosen topic of the evening. The school committee adopted an annual budget which the school district treasurer certified in April and sent to the selectmen in each town for voter approval at the respective town meetings in May. The openness of the budget process resulted in additional town involvement and support, and the cessation of rumors about district bank accounts with sizeable balances.

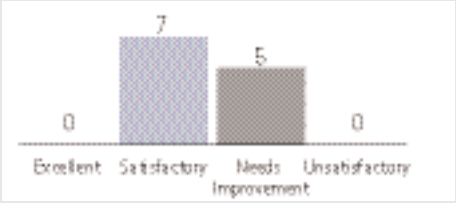
Financial Support

The district did not receive adequate funding to provide for effective instructional practices and to provide for adequate operational resources. Officials from both Raynham and

Performance at a Glance

Ratings on Performance Indicators

In this area, regional districts are rated on 12 performance indicators. Bridgewater-Raynham received the following ratings:



Areas of Strength

- The district undertook a new construction and renovation project at the Williams Middle School and a construction project for a new regional high school.

Areas for Improvement

- The district did not conduct an evaluation-based review process to determine the cost effectiveness of its instructional programs.
- The district did not receive adequate funding to provide for effective instructional practices and to provide for adequate operational resources, and the district failed to meet the net school spending requirement in fiscal year 2005.
- The presence of tax-exempt, state-owned properties in the town of Bridgewater represented a loss of significant revenue, while economic growth in the town of Raynham increased its revenue.
- The schools had systems to ensure student safety that differed from building to building.

Bridgewater indicated support for the school district budget. The officials from the town of Bridgewater believed they had been responsive in supporting the budget during the period under review, but the town had limited financial resources available. Bridgewater lacked business and had not experienced economic growth. No viable locations existed in the town for commercial development. The existence of the tax-exempt state college, state prison, and other state-owned properties represented a loss of significant revenue. The town relied heavily on revenue received from the state. The school budget was not acted upon at the May town meeting but was voted in June after the final state aid figure was available.

Economic growth in Raynham continued during the period under review. At the May town meeting, the voters approved the school budget as presented. The approval of a smaller school budget at the Bridgewater town meeting in June affected Raynham's apportioned assessment. When the school committee adjusted the budget and approved a lower amount based on the Bridgewater vote, the town of Raynham "gifted" the remainder of the funds already approved for the school budget at its May town meeting.

The district maintained revolving accounts for only the school lunch program and the athletic fees collected. Administrators and staff successfully pursued partnerships with local businesses and received revenue from donations as well as additional revenue in the form of mini-grants from Bridgewater State College and the North River Collaborative.

Facilities

The district had a written preventive maintenance plan. A long-term school facilities master plan and plan of anticipated projects existed that clearly reflected the future capital development and improvement needs, including educational and program facilities of adequate size. The district undertook a new construction and renovation project at the Williams Middle School and a construction project for a new regional high school. Once the new high school opens, planned for September 2007, the district would schedule the current high school for renovation for use as a middle school. The EQA team determined the district had educational and program facilities that were in very good condition, clean, and well maintained.

Safety

The school buildings had systems in place to ensure student safety that differed from building to building. Each school had crisis plans in addition to the district crisis plan. The district had in place a crisis management team that included members of the town's police and fire departments. The team met regularly throughout the period under review to go over procedural protocols. Each classroom in the district had an easily accessible crisis flip chart for teacher and/or substitute teacher use, and the procedures within the document were reviewed regularly by the respective building principals.

CONCLUSION

The EQA examination found the Bridgewater-Raynham Regional School District Schools to be a 'High' performing district, marked by student achievement that is 'Very High' in ELA and 'Moderate' in math on the MCAS tests. More than three-fifths of Bridgewater-Raynham students scored at or above the proficiency standard on the 2006 administration of the MCAS tests. The EQA gave the district a Management Quality Index rating of 'Improvable,' with the highest rating in Financial Management, and the lowest in Assessment and Program Evaluation.

The regionalization of the Bridgewater-Raynham Public Schools occurred in 1994 with the organization of elementary and middle schools as well as a high school. Over the years, the district experienced stability in its central office staff. The present superintendent was a principal at the district's high school and then became the district's assistant superintendent, as the district has made it a practice, when possible, to promote from within.

In 2004, the district suffered financial difficulties that resulted in severe staff reductions system-wide. The assistant superintendent lost her entire department and had to assume all duties that had been previously shared among seven district staff members. The assistant superintendent has since left the district, and an acting director of curriculum was in place for the 2006-2007 school year. The district also had to make other staff cuts, and these resulted in the elimination of programs and services. At the time of the review, some of these services had been restored, but large class sizes remained a concern with many classes serving 28 to 30 students.

The superintendent and his staff made efforts to open up the budget process, as previously it was viewed as a closed process by many members of the community. Town officials from both communities indicated support for the school budget, but the town of Bridgewater had limited financial resources available while the town of Raynham did not face those same limitations due to its economic growth. In the last two years of the period under review, Raynham "gifted" funds to the school district but earmarked a significant portion of the funds to Raynham schools, which resulted in inequities between the schools in each town. The district did not use student achievement data to inform budget development and policy changes.

District voters approved over $100 million to construct and renovate school facilities. A new $70 million high school was planned to open in September 2007, and the current high school was scheduled to be remodeled into a middle school at a cost of $10 million. Additionally, the district planned to spend $25 million to upgrade the Williams Middle School.

Bridgewater-Raynham had aligned curricula in the core subjects of English language arts, math, and science, and the district developed curriculum guides for use by teachers at all grade levels. These documents contained objectives, expected student outcomes, instructional strategies, resources, and assessments. The district also developed benchmarks in ELA, math, and science at the high school level and planned to complete benchmark documents in the core subject areas for the elementary and middle school levels by June 2007.

Budget limitations impacted the number of summative and formative assessments available within the district, which limited the systemic use of formative assessments. The district relied mostly on the MCAS tests to measure and monitor student achievement, and hired a consultant to assist in the analysis of the data for the past 10 years. In 2004-2005 the district established building assessment teams at each school in the district that created MCAS Improvement Plans for their respective schools; these teams met irregularly in 2005-2006 due to the budget and staff reductions. Based on the MCAS results, the district implemented MCAS remediation classes at the middle schools and high school and purchased the Study Island software program, which was accessible to all grade 3-8 students from school and from home for ELA and math preparation for the MCAS tests. Math remediation received greater attention in the district since students at several grade levels failed to meet AYP in math.

During the period under review, the district administration communicated well with staff and the community. The district strategic plan for 2006-2011 was developed with input from staff, parents, and community members. Progress on School Improvement Plans and the MCAS test results were reported at televised school committee meetings and on the district website.

Teachers expressed satisfaction with teaching conditions and the collegiality of the district. Staff members provided input into the professional development offerings and were required to take offerings that would benefit their instructional practice. Not all teachers were trained in TestWiz but all teachers participated in or received the analyses of the MCAS data. During the period under review, the district reinstated its teacher mentoring program, which both teachers and administrators viewed as successful. No formal mentoring program was in place for administrators. Both administrators and teachers were evaluated in a timely manner and most evaluations followed the standards of the Education Reform Act. However, the superintendent's evaluation by the school committee did not follow the mandated standards.

APPENDIX A: EQA'S DISTRICT EXAMINATION PROCESS

EQA's examination process provides successively deeper levels of information about student performance. All school districts receive an MCAS data review annually, but they do not all receive the full examination every year.

Based on the MCAS results, Educational Management Audit Council (EMAC) policy, and random sampling, approximately 60 districts statewide received a site review. Still other districts — those that do not meet certain performance criteria set by the state Department of Education — received an even more detailed review.

Data-Driven Assessment

Annually, the DOE and EQA's staff assess each public school district's results on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests to find out how students are performing. This review seeks to answer five basic questions:

1. Are the district's students reaching proficiency levels on MCAS?
2. Do MCAS test results vary among subgroups of students (such as minority and low-income students and students with disabilities)?
3. Has the district's MCAS test performance improved over time?
4. Has the MCAS test performance of the district's student subgroups improved over time?
5. Are all eligible students participating in required state assessments?

Standards-Based Examination

Districts with MCAS results that fall within certain thresholds of performance, particularly districts that score below average, may be selected to receive a site review. This review seeks to provide a more complete picture of why the district is performing at that level, examining district management, planning, and actions and how they are implemented at the building level. It focuses in particular on whether the district uses data to inform its efforts.

The report analyzes district performance in six major areas: leadership, governance, and communication; curriculum and instruction; assessment and program evaluation; human resource management and professional development; access, participation, and student academic support; and financial and asset management effectiveness and efficiency. EQA examines a total of 67 indicators to assess whether the district is meeting the standards and provides a rating for each indicator.

APPENDIX B: EXPLANATION OF TERMS USED IN EQA REPORTS

ABA: Applied Behavioral Analysis

ADA: Average Daily Attendance

ALT: MCAS Alternative Assessment

API: Average Proficiency Index (of the English Language Arts Proficiency Index and Math Proficiency Index for all students)

ATA: Accountability and Targeted Assistance

AYP: Adequate Yearly Progress

CAP: Corrective Action Plan

CBM: Curriculum-Based Measures

CD: Competency Determination — the state's interim Adequate Yearly Progress indicator for high schools based on grade 10 MCAS test passing rates

CMP: Connected Math Program

CORI: Criminal Offender Record Information

CPI: Composite Proficiency Index — a 100-point index combining students' scores on the standard MCAS and MCAS Alternative Assessment (ALT)

CPR: Coordinated Program Review — conducted on Federal Education Acts by the DOE

CRT: Criterion-Referenced Test

CSR: Comprehensive School Reform

DCAP: District Curriculum Accommodation Plan

DIBELS: Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills

DIP: District Improvement Plan

DOE: Department of Education

DPDP: District Professional Development Plan

DRA: Developmental Reading Assessment

ELA: English Language Arts

ELL: English Language Learners

EPI: English Language Arts Proficiency Index

ESL: English as a Second Language

FLNE: First Language Not English

FRL/N: Free and Reduced-Price Lunch/No

FRL/Y: Free and Reduced-Price Lunch/Yes

FTE: Full-Time Equivalent

FY: Fiscal Year

Gap Analysis: A statistical method to analyze the relationships between and among district and subgroup performance and the standard of 100 percent proficiency

GASB: Government Accounting Standards Board

GMADE: Group Math Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation

GRADE: Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation

GRADU: The graduation yield rate for a class four years from entry

IEP: Individualized Education Program

Improvement Gap: A measure of change in a combination of the proficiency gap and performance gap between two points in time; a positive improvement gap will show improvement and convergence between subgroups' performance over time

IPDP: Individual Professional Development Plan

IRIP: Individual Reading Improvement Plan

ISSP: Individual Student Success Plan

LASW: Looking at Student Work

LEP: Limited English Proficient

MASBO: Massachusetts Association of School Business Officials

MASC: Massachusetts Association of School Committees

MASS: Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents

MAVA: Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators

MCAS: Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

MCAS-Alt: Alternative Assessment — a portfolio option for special needs students to demonstrate proficiency

MCPPO: Massachusetts Certified Public Purchasing Official

MELA-O: Massachusetts English Language Assessment-Oral

MEPA: Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment

MPI: Math Proficiency Index

MQI: Management Quality Index — an indicator of the relative strength and effectiveness of a district's management system

MUNIS: Municipal Information System

NAEYC: National Association for the Education of Young Children

NCLB: No Child Left Behind

NEASC: New England Association of Schools and Colleges

NRT: Norm-Referenced Test

NSBA: National School Boards Association

NSS: Net School Spending

Performance Gap: A measure of the range of the difference of performance between any subgroup's Proficiency Index and another subgroup's in a given district

PI: Proficiency Index — a number between 0–100 representing the extent to which students are progressing toward proficiency

PIM: Performance Improvement Management

PQA: Program Quality Assurance — a division of the DOE responsible for conducting the Coordinated Program Review process

Proficiency Gap: A measure of a district or subgroup's Proficiency Index and its distance from 100 percent proficiency

QRI: Qualitative Reading Inventory

Rate of Improvement: The result of dividing the gain (improvement in achievement as measured by Proficiency Index points) by the proficiency gap

SAT: A test administered by the Educational Testing Service to 11th and 12th graders

SEI: Sheltered English Immersion

SIMS: Student Information Management System

SIOP: Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol

SIP: School Improvement Plan

SPED: Special Education

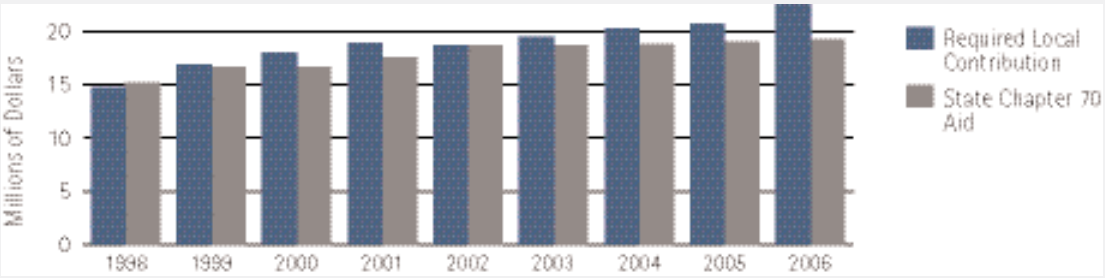
STE: Science and Technology/Engineering

TerraNova: K–12 norm-referenced test series published by CTB/McGraw-Hill

APPENDIX C: STATE AND LOCAL FUNDING, 1998–2006

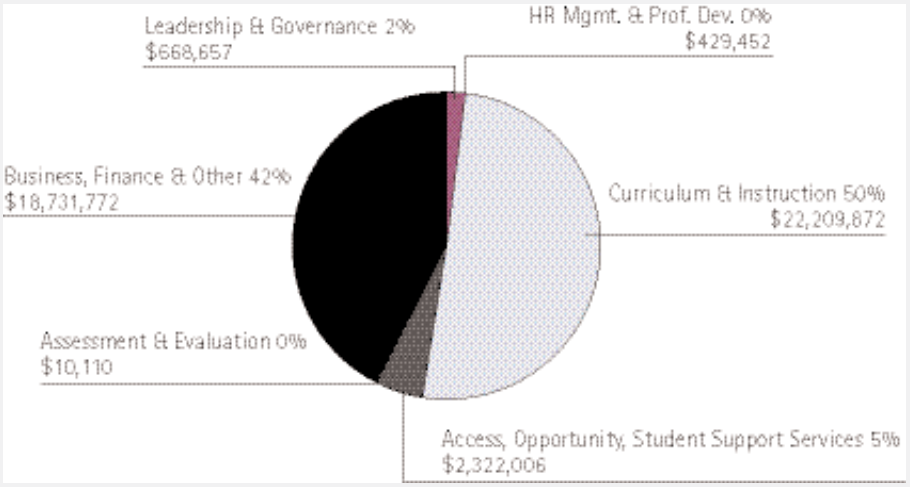
A school district's funding is determined in part by the Chapter 70 program — the major program of state aid to public elementary and secondary schools. In addition to supporting school operations, it also establishes minimum requirements for each municipality's share of school costs. The following chart shows the amount of Bridgewater-Raynham's funding that was derived from the state and the amount that the town was required to contribute. The district exceeded the state NSS requirement in two of the three years of the review period, FY 2004 and FY 2006. From FY 2004 to FY 2006, NSS increased from $39,800,124 to $43,565,748; Chapter 70 aid increased from $18,751,051 to $19,283,254; the required local contribution increased from $20,240,325 to $22,546,085; and the foundation enrollment decreased from 5,918 to 5,801. Chapter 70 aid as a percentage of actual NSS decreased from 47 to 44 percent over this period. From FY 2004 to FY 2005, total curriculum and instruction expenditures as a percentage of total Schedule 1 NSS reported in the End of Year Pupil and Financial Report decreased from 63 to 62 percent.

WHERE DOES THE FUNDING FOR BRIDGEWATER-RAYNHAM REGIONAL COME FROM?



HOW IS THE FUNDING FOR BRIDGEWATER-RAYNHAM REGIONAL ALLOCATED?

FY05 Expenditures By EQA Standards (With City/Town Charges)



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