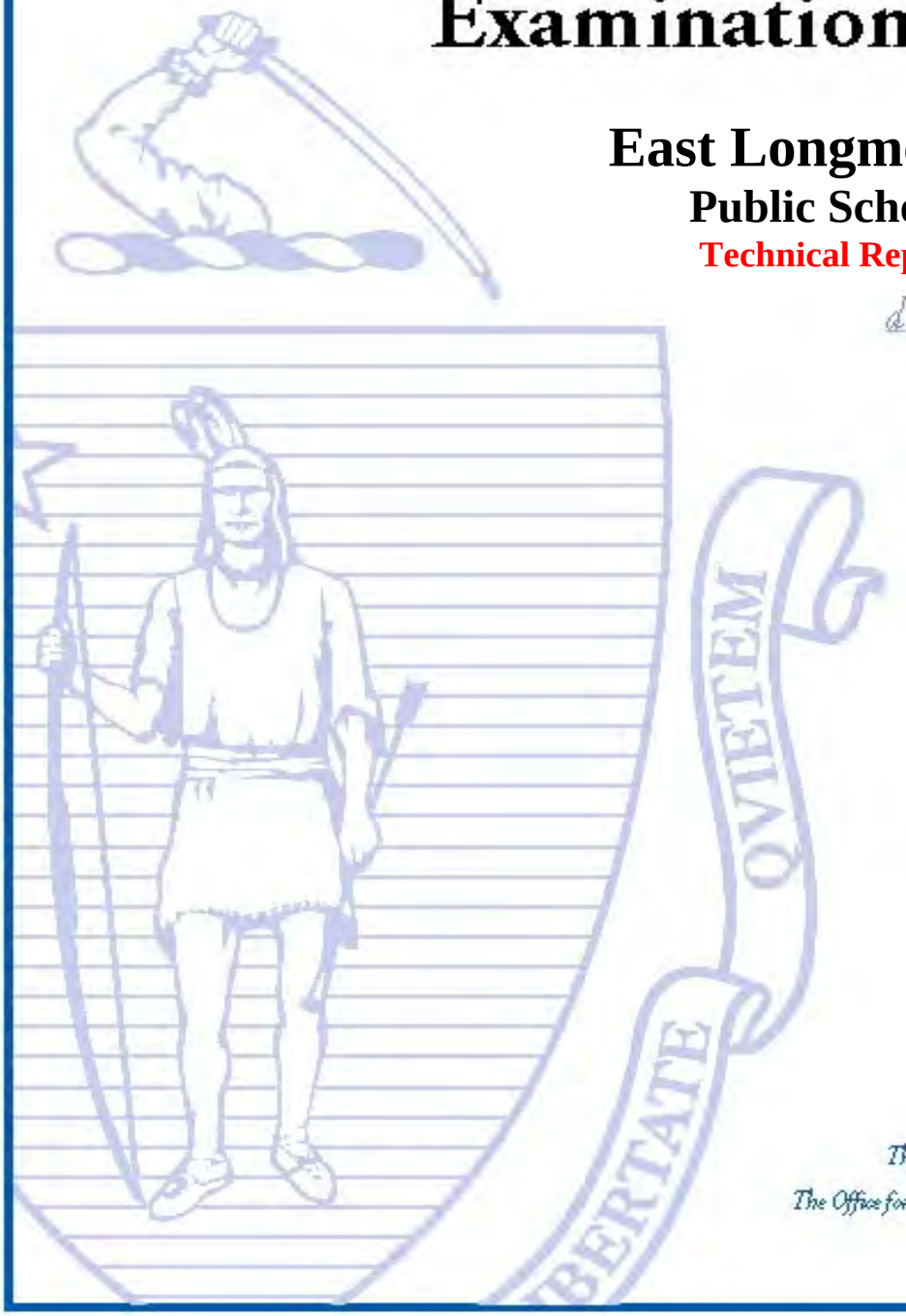
The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

School District Examination Report:

East Longmeadow
Public Schools
Technical Report

data driven
standards based
learner centered



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

2004 - 2006

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Office of Educational Quality and Accountability

Educational Management Audit Council

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The Educational Management Audit Council accepted this report and its findings at their meeting of November 29, 2007.

The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability would like to acknowledge the professional cooperation extended to the audit team by the Department of Education; the Superintendent of the East Longmeadow Public Schools, Edward Costa; the school department staff of the East Longmeadow Public Schools; and the town officials in East Longmeadow.

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Executive Summary

The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA) examined the East Longmeadow Public Schools in April 2007. With an average proficiency index of 86 proficiency index (PI) points in 2006 (93 PI points in English language arts and 78 PI points in math), the district is considered a 'High' performing school system based on the Department of Education's rating system (found in Appendix A of this report), with achievement above the state average. Nearly two-thirds of East Longmeadow's students scored at or above the proficiency standard on the 2006 administration of the MCAS tests.

District Overview

The town of East Longmeadow is located in Hampden County south of Springfield on the Connecticut border, in the Connecticut River Valley of southwestern Massachusetts. East Longmeadow is known for its rich sandstone deposits; sandstone quarries were the main industry for much of the town's history. The largest sources of employment within the community are educational, health, and social services, followed by manufacturing and retail trade. The town is governed by a Board of Selectmen/Administrative Assistant/Open Town Meeting form of municipal government.

According to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR), East Longmeadow had a median family income of $70,571 in 1999, compared to the statewide median family income of $63,706, ranking it 114 out of the 351 cities and towns in the commonwealth. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the town had a total population of 14,100 with a population of 2,861 school-age children, or 20 percent of the total. Of the total households in East Longmeadow, 36 percent were households with children under 18 years of age, and 34 percent were households with individuals age 65 years or older. Thirty-three percent of the population age 25 years or older held a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 33 percent statewide.

According to the Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE), in 2005-2006 the East Longmeadow Public Schools had a total enrollment of 2,818. The demographic composition in the district was: 93.8 percent White, 2.7 percent African-American, 2.2 percent Asian, 1.2 percent Hispanic, 0.0 percent Native American, 0.0 percent multi-race, non-Hispanic; 0.0 percent limited English proficient (LEP), 6.0 percent low income, and 22.5 percent special education.

Ninety-six percent of school-age children in East Longmeadow attended public schools. The district does not offer school choice, but 52 students from other school districts, including some from Springfield in the METCO program, attended the East Longmeadow schools in 2005-2006. A total of 24 East Longmeadow students attended public schools outside the district, including nine students who attended the Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter School.

The district has five schools serving grades pre-kindergarten through 12, including three elementary schools serving grades pre-kindergarten through 5, one middle school serving grades 6 through 8, and one high school serving grades 9 through 12. The administrative team consists of a superintendent, a business manager, an administrator of student services, and a director of curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Each elementary school has a principal, the middle school has a principal and assistant principal, and the high school has a principal, assistant principal, and dean of students. The district has a five-member school committee.

In FY 2006, East Longmeadow's per pupil expenditure, based on appropriations from all funds, was $9,216, compared to $11,211 statewide, ranking it 270 out of the 328 school districts reporting data. The district exceeded the state net school spending requirement in each year of the review period. From FY 2004 to FY 2006, net school spending increased from $20,115,860 to $22,511,109; Chapter 70 aid increased from $3,278,506 to $3,415,856; the required local contribution increased from $14,419,630 to $16,081,730; and the foundation enrollment increased from 2,661 to 2,747. Chapter 70 aid as a percentage of actual net school spending decreased from 16.3 to 15.2 percent over this period. From FY 2004 to FY 2005, total curriculum and instruction expenditures as a percentage of total net school spending increased from 67.5 to 68.4 percent.

Context

The superintendent and business manager have been in East Longmeadow for nine years, and the high school principal has served there his entire professional career, but other administrators are fairly new. East Longmeadow is a high-performing district with student achievement problems in two areas: K-8 math and districtwide special education. Considering the lack of diversity and poverty in the town, the school district has a high special education population, which in 2005-2006 averaged 23 percent, compared to the state average of 17 percent.

East Longmeadow has abandoned the use of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) at all levels for the use of formative assessments in ELA that give teachers much more frequent information to use to adapt individual instruction. The district is not yet using a system of formative assessments in mathematics. At the time of the review, it adjusted the curriculum maps, increased time for math instruction, and is on the road to implementing Investigations math at both upper elementary (grade 3-5) schools. Although the district has looked at MCAS trends and patterns and has done an item analysis at the middle school in math, it has not yet done a root cause analysis to find the reason for the low math achievement and, as of 2006, the need for corrective action at this level.

The district has aligned its district and school goals, and all schools used the same format for the School Improvement Plans (SIPs). To focus the work of each school, respective school goals were required to be SMART goals, SMART being the acronym for specific and strategic, measurable and monitored, action oriented and agreed upon, realistic and results oriented, and timed and tracked. The district, through its analysis of data, enabled each school to develop goals consistent with the strategic plan that addressed the needs of its students. Schools set a minimum of three SMART goals, two of which addressed the improvement of student achievement, particularly in the disciplines of ELA and mathematics.

The district has been engaged in curriculum mapping, initiated by the superintendent, for three years. The documented curriculum was not complete at the time of the review, but the district did have curricula for the tested areas that included standards, benchmarks, timelines, and some suggestions for assessment. The assessments were described in global and generic terms since the district had developed few specific, curriculum-based measures of attainment. According to interviewees, instructional strategies and resources were deliberately not included in the curriculum, which allowed for a wide variance of interpretation of best practices to use in instruction. Although the district had a well developed structure of committees which actively engaged many teacher-leaders and served to keep the curriculum aligned, most instruction and assessment for mastery was vague and left open to interpretation.

Since East Longmeadow's assessment system was incomplete, the district was limited in its ability to use various forms of assessment data to internally evaluate programs in order to

improve them. For example, the proportion of East Longmeadow's special education population was much higher than the state average, yet an analysis of the special education program has not been completed. Administrators and teachers also acknowledged that the district conducted little regular or systematic analysis of student subgroup representation in advanced and/or accelerated programs. A review of the Advanced Placement (AP) data revealed that students from the district's two primary subgroups, the special education and low-income populations, were significantly underrepresented in these higher level programs.

East Longmeadow has very high standards for hiring new teachers. The district would not interview a candidate who lacked appropriate Massachusetts certification. The district is able to hire the best teachers, even if they started higher on the salary scale. There was little consistency and much disagreement among administrators, principals, teachers, and union representatives with respect to whether the district did both observational and summative evaluations or whether they were one and the same. A challenge for the district will be giving teachers appropriate and critical feedback over a long career of teaching to foster ongoing professional growth; the district has yet to develop a process that everyone consistently uses with confidence and equally understands. As a high growth community, another challenge for East Longmeadow is to develop a long-range facilities plan to accommodate the increasing number of students in its schools.

The EQA Examination Process

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

From April 23-26, the EQA conducted an independent examination of the East Longmeadow Public Schools for the period 2004-2006, with a primary focus on 2006. This examination was based on the EQA's six major standards of inquiry that address the quality of educational management, which are: 1) Leadership, Governance, and Communication; 2) Curriculum and

Instruction; 3) Assessment and Program Evaluation; 4) Human Resource Management and Professional Development; 5) Access, Participation, and Student Academic Support; and 6) Financial and Asset Management Effectiveness and Efficiency. The report is based on the source documents, correspondence sent prior to the on-site visit, interviews with the representatives from the school committee, the district leadership team, school administrators, and teachers, and additional documents submitted while in the district. The report does not consider documents, revised data, or comments that may have surfaced after the onsite visit.

For the period under examination, 2004-2006, this report finds East Longmeadow to be a 'High' performing school district with an average proficiency index of 86 proficiency index (PI) points in 2006, marked by student achievement that was 'Very High' in English language arts (ELA) and 'High' in math on the 2004-2006 MCAS tests. Over this period, student performance improved by one PI point in ELA and by three PI points in math, which closed the district's average proficiency gap by 13 percent.

The following provides a summary of the district's performance on the 2006 Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests and the findings of the EQA examination.

Summary of Analysis of MCAS Student Achievement Data

Are all eligible students participating in required state assessments?

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

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

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

- East Longmeadow's average proficiency index (API) on the MCAS tests in 2006 was 86 proficiency index (PI) points, eight PI points greater than that statewide. East

Longmeadow's average proficiency gap, the difference between its API and the target of 100, in 2006 was 14 PI points.

- In 2006, East Longmeadow's proficiency gap in ELA was seven PI points, nine PI points narrower than the state's average proficiency gap in ELA. This gap would require an average improvement in performance of less than one PI point annually to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP). East Longmeadow's proficiency gap in math was 22 PI points in 2006, six PI points narrower than the state's average proficiency gap in math. This gap would require an average improvement of less than three PI points per year to achieve AYP. East Longmeadow's proficiency gap in STE was 16 PI points, 13 PI points narrower than that statewide.

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

Between 2003 and 2006, East Longmeadow's MCAS performance showed little improvement overall and in math, and a slight decline in ELA and 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 remained the same. The average proficiency gap in East Longmeadow narrowed from 15 PI points in 2003 to 14 PI points in 2006. This resulted in an improvement rate, or a closing of the proficiency gap, of five percent.
- Over the three-year period 2003-2006, ELA performance in East Longmeadow showed a slight decline of nearly one PI point.
- Math performance in East Longmeadow showed a slight improvement of two PI points during this period. This resulted in an improvement rate of 10 percent, a rate lower than that required to meet AYP.
- Between 2004 and 2006, STE performance in East Longmeadow declined by approximately one-half PI point.

Do MCAS test results vary among subgroups of students?

MCAS performance in 2006 varied among subgroups of East Longmeadow students. Of the eight measurable subgroups in East Longmeadow in 2006, the gap in performance between the

highest- and lowest-performing subgroups was 15 PI points in ELA and 23 PI points in math (regular education students, students with disabilities, respectively).

- The proficiency gaps in East Longmeadow in 2006 in both ELA and math were wider than the district average for students with disabilities, African-American students, and low-income students (those participating in the free or reduced-cost lunch program). Less than two-fifths of the students with disabilities, less than three-fifths of the African-American students, and less than half of the low-income students attained proficiency.
- The proficiency gaps in ELA and math were narrower than the district average for regular education students, White students, and non low-income students. For each of these subgroups, two-thirds or more of the students attained proficiency.
- The proficiency gap for male students was wider than the district average in ELA but narrower in math, while the proficiency gap for female students was narrower than the district average in ELA but wider in math. Approximately two-thirds of the students in both subgroups attained proficiency.

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

In East Longmeadow, the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in ELA narrowed from 16 PI points in 2003 to 15 PI points in 2006, and the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in math narrowed from 30 to 22 PI points over this period.

- All student subgroups in East Longmeadow had either a decline or no change in performance in ELA between 2003 and 2006. The subgroup with the greatest decline in ELA was African-American students.
- In math, all subgroups in East Longmeadow showed improved performance between 2003 and 2006. The most improved subgroups in math were African-American students and students with disabilities.

Standard Summaries

Leadership, Governance, and Communication

The EQA examiners gave the East Longmeadow Public Schools an overall rating of 'Satisfactory' on this standard. They rated the district as 'Satisfactory' on twelve and 'Needs Improvement' on one of the thirteen performance indicators in this standard.

The East Longmeadow school district has enjoyed considerable stability at the leadership level. The superintendent has served the district since his appointment in 1998. The majority of school committee members have served a minimum of two three-year terms. The combined total of elected years of service among the five committee members reached 24 after the recent election. Newly elected members received training from the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) and attended a daylong induction/orientation program provided by the superintendent that identified emerging issues and concerns. Stability and longevity also existed within the administrative ranks as several individuals served the district for many years. The stability of leadership permeated the district wherein administrators, staff, and community members voiced confidence in and valued the quality of work and the commitment of the staff to the district's students.

The superintendent annually presented educationally sound budgets to the school committee for its consideration. The budget requests represented the priority needs of the district and its students as perceived by district leaders and as articulated in the district strategic plan and the school plans. The district effectively communicated those needs, purposefully advocated for their adoption within the community, and successfully communicated their importance to town officials.

The superintendent effectively governed the district and developed plans to meet its needs. The district revised and implemented a comprehensive strategic plan that included 10 goals and ensured that site-based plans complied with it. A template for the site-based plans enabled each principal to provide a context for plan development that included the achievement of its students and an action plan that required a commitment to SMART goals, SMART being the acronym for specific and strategic, measurable and monitored, action oriented and agreed upon, realistic and results oriented, and timed and tracked, that focused the improvement efforts at each school.

District leaders regularly reviewed and annually reported to the school committee the progress made in the achievement of both district and site-based goals.

The superintendent met weekly with district leaders to share issues of mutual interest and concern and to stay abreast of school-based activities, events, and issues. The superintendent delegated authority to district principals and held them accountable for the success of their respective school and its students. Principals appreciated the confidence that the superintendent placed in them and recognized that his evaluation of their performance rested on their success in achieving their goals and their success in meeting the standards described in their evaluation document.

The district lacked a formal program evaluation process with respect to its special education program to determine the reason that special education students represented a high proportion of district students. Perceptions that families may have become attracted to the district due to the quality of educational programs may have some merit, yet a more formal program analysis may yield additional insights as to the root cause of such high special education enrollment rates.

The superintendent and school committee enjoyed a collegial relationship with leaders of the East Longmeadow Education Association. The superintendent met regularly with association leaders and, along with a member of the school committee, met monthly with building representatives and association leaders to share mutual concerns and anticipate potential disputes.

Curriculum and Instruction

The EQA examiners gave the East Longmeadow Public Schools an overall rating of 'Needs Improvement' on this standard. They rated the district as 'Satisfactory' on two and 'Needs Improvement' on eight of the ten performance indicators in this standard.

The documented curriculum in East Longmeadow contained some, but not all, of the suggested essential components. Curricula for the tested core content areas included standards, benchmarks, timelines, and assessments. Observed assessments were described in global and generic terms and the district had few curriculum-based measures. Instructional strategies and resources were deliberately not included in the curriculum. Some benchmark assessments at the

high school level and in science districtwide were more specific, but the criteria for determining mastery were not stated.

Coordinated teams with defined roles established the infrastructure in East Longmeadow to ensure horizontal and vertical alignment of the district's curricula. Monitoring of the implementation of curricula at the same grade levels at the elementary schools or in the same courses at the high school ensured consistency and uniformity. The vertical alignment facilitated the articulation of curricula, especially at the junctures between schools. The teams were under the central supervision of the director of curriculum, instruction, and assessment, in cooperation with the superintendent and building principals.

Each school in East Longmeadow had adequate leadership to oversee the use, alignment, consistency, and delivery of curriculum. While there was a process to ensure consistency of implementation of curriculum, the district did not have a reliable way of determining the effectiveness of curricular delivery because it lacked formative measures of student progress. Building principals collaborated with department heads and other specialists on most curriculum-related tasks. Prior to the period under review, curriculum development, revision, and monitoring were largely site based under the direction of the building principals. During the period under review, the locus of control moved closer to the central office in order to give greater focus and direction to efforts to create more consistency between the intermediate (grade 3-5) schools, and to improve overall student performance, particularly in mathematics. East Longmeadow had an established cycle for curriculum development and modification and adopted materials based on research on best practices.

Instructional leadership in East Longmeadow was broadly based, encompassing a number of individuals, and interviewees indicated a lack of clarity about those actually responsible for performing the role. While East Longmeadow administrators actively monitored teachers in the classroom, their focus was more on fidelity of implementation of the curriculum than the quality of instruction. The EQA examiners found little evidence of high expectations for student learning in observed classes.

The use of technology to individualize instruction was limited in East Longmeadow, and the adequacy of provisions for technology varied from school to school. During the period under

review, East Longmeadow assessed the relationship between learning time and student achievement and increased instructional time in mathematics.

The sources of formative and summative student performance data were limited in the district, and student achievement results were used primarily for curriculum revision, identification of struggling and accelerated students, and provision of support services. Based on an analysis of the results of the MCAS tests, the primary summative measure used, the district adopted a scientifically-based program in mathematics. There was little systematic use of achievement data to determine professional development topics and improve teaching and learning.

Assessment and Program Evaluation

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

In 2003-2004, East Longmeadow eliminated the use of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) across the district. For many years this assessment had been routinely administered to students at most grade levels. It was expensive to administer, and since it was a summative evaluation it had limited usefulness to inform instruction in a standards-based curriculum. Similarly, the district had also used the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test for many years, but teachers came to realize that the grade-level expectations for reading were too low and that using "the Gates" did little to inform instruction. Shortly after that, through a grade 1 reading grant from the Department of Education, the district began to use one of the recommended assessments, the DIBELS, to inform instruction in reading. In East Longmeadow, this began the building of an assessment system from the bottom up. The district added the DRA and GRADE at various grade levels to give teachers the information they needed to better plan instruction in English language arts. This assessment system in ELA was not in use at the middle school through grade 10 at the high school at the time of the review.

In math, the district continued to depend on the use of teacher-generated assessments, textbook unit tests, or the MCAS tests to gather information on math achievement. Therefore, no standardized, formative assessment was used in math at any level of the district in order to

inform instruction, particularly at the middle school level, where district subgroups were not making AYP and the district was in corrective action.

Since East Longmeadow's assessment system was incomplete in ELA and math across the district, the district was limited in using data to internally evaluate programs in order to improve them. Although the district participated in mandatory or customary external evaluations, such as the Coordinated Program Review (CPR) or accreditations by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), it did not conduct any internal evaluations of programs, such as special education or middle school math, which was a weak performance area. Without gathering internal programmatic data, the district was unable to make informed decisions regarding modifications that should be made. Additionally, without looking at the quality of internal programs, the district was unable to determine whether the SMART goals, recommended by school improvement councils throughout the district as a means to improve student achievement, were having the desired effect.

In response to the need to raise student achievement for subgroup populations, the district added more time on learning at each school in both ELA and math based on anecdotal data and some underlying assumptions about the high quality of instruction and the use of "best teaching practices." To improve student achievement, each school added more time both within the school day and after the regular school day, at all levels.

During the period under review, the district relied heavily on conjecture and anecdotal evidence from teachers and administrators to determine whether changes made in a program were actually contributing to student achievement.

Human Resource Management and Professional Development

The EQA examiners gave the East Longmeadow Public Schools an overall rating of 'Satisfactory' on this standard. They rated the district as 'Excellent' on two, 'Satisfactory' on five, and 'Needs Improvement' on six of the thirteen performance indicators in this standard.

District administrators and the school committee placed a high priority on hiring only highly qualified candidates for open positions. Professional staff could not interview in the district

without already possessing the appropriate certification. According to interviewees, most of the professional openings in the district occurred due to retirements, rather than people seeking employment elsewhere. East Longmeadow usually had a large pool of experienced candidates to choose from, and principals were able to choose the best person for the open position. All of the teachers in the random sample of personnel files reviewed and all of the administrators in the district had appropriate and updated certification. The district did not have any teachers on waiver during the period under review.

Prior to the start of the school year, the district held a new staff induction day, and the district had a regular mentoring program for teachers. The superintendent directly mentored new administrators and principals. Professional development was aligned with the SMART goals listed in the SIPs. The district had not developed changes in supervision practices to determine whether new programs and training were being fully implemented and used.

Districtwide induction topics included: information on substitutes; crisis plans and Connect-ED; curriculum mapping; IDEA/504/METCO/Title 9; student code of conduct; staff personnel policy books and intranet; district strategic plan; evaluation systems and rubrics; and the ELPH Character program. For three years, districtwide professional development was focused on mapping the curriculum at all levels. The elementary schools had site-based initiatives on using formative testing in literacy and implementing the Investigations program in mathematics. In 2004-2005, administrators had received training on using the DOE's Performance Improvement Mapping (PIM) process, and teachers received training in data analysis as they worked on grade-level or vertical curriculum committees. Individual professional development plans were required by the district and submitted directly to the central office.

The school committee evaluated the superintendent on an annual basis, and the evaluation was considered to be informative, instructive, and likely to promote growth and professional development.

Principals presented little evidence that the district used effective systems of supervision to implement school goals for improving student achievement in their respective assignments. All principals claimed to use a walk-through process, but the examination found no evidence of a consistent protocol used across the district. There was also disagreement among administrators,

principals, teachers, and union representatives as to whether the district had observation and summative forms, whether they were one and the same, or whether the self-evaluation was a mandatory part of the documentation.

The superintendent evaluated administrators on an annual basis. Administrators evaluated non-professional status teachers annually and professional status teachers in alternating years. Teachers were required to fill out a self-study form that mirrored the indicators on the evaluations. Some principals attached the self-studies to the summative evaluations, and therefore the process of using them was not consistent. Overall, all teacher evaluations were informative.

Access, Participation, and Student Academic Support

The EQA examiners gave the East Longmeadow Public Schools an overall rating of 'Satisfactory' on this standard. They rated the district as 'Satisfactory' on nine and 'Needs Improvement' on one of the ten performance indicators in this standard.

The district's schools provided a range of educational services and supplementary programs designed to meet student learning needs and improve academic achievement. The district had implemented or expanded a variety of early intervention services, in-school remedial, and supplementary programs in regular and special education during the period under review. The increased use of standardized diagnostic and formative assessments, especially at the elementary level, served to generate more and better student achievement data and identify students performing below grade level. Student Assistance Teams (SATs) and special education staff at all grade levels worked to identify students in need and to formulate interventions to best suit their needs. Although the district's proportion of limited English proficient (LEP), transient, and homeless student populations remained very low, the district had appropriate policies and procedures in place to ensure that these populations were provided with a full range of appropriate services and assistance.

Administrators and teachers acknowledged that the district conducted little regular or systematic analysis of student subgroup representation in advanced and/or accelerated programs. They were unable to accurately describe how closely subgroup enrollment and achievement rates paralleled overall population proportions. Although interviewees stated that the district encouraged and

allowed students who did not meet qualifying criteria and academic prerequisites to select honors and Advanced Placement (AP) classes, a review of the data revealed that students from the district's two primary subgroups, the special education and low-income populations, were significantly underrepresented in these higher-level programs.

East Longmeadow developed a comprehensive attendance policy and a set of implementation procedures that were in place in every school in the district. Each school's student handbook detailed attendance policies, enforcement practices, and consequences when absence limits were exceeded. Administrators described an extensive set of procedures employed by the schools to support their student attendance and punctuality policies and expectations, including frequent letters, phone calls, and parent conferences. In 2006, daily attendance for the district averaged 95.9 percent, compared to the state rate of 93.8 percent.. Analysis of data revealed uniformly positive results in the attendance rates and patterns of each of the district's five schools, including the high school. Teacher absences averaged nine days excluding professional development days, except at the middle school where the rate was higher due to necessary medical absences.

The number of disciplinary infractions and suspensions remained low in East Longmeadow and well below the state averages. From 2003 to 2006, the out-of-school suspension rate in all the district's schools averaged approximately half that of the state average, student retention rates at all grade levels remained substantially below state averages, and East Longmeadow High School's dropout rate averaged just under one percent, compared to the state average of almost four percent. Administrators and staff attributed these positive indicators to consistent enforcement of district disciplinary and attendance policies and ongoing communication between school and home.

Financial and Asset Management Effectiveness and Efficiency

The EQA examiners gave the East Longmeadow Public Schools an overall rating of 'Satisfactory' on this standard. They rated the district as 'Satisfactory' on all thirteen performance indicators in this standard.

The superintendent developed the budget through an open and participatory process. The school site-based budget committees and principals, with input from staff and school councils, met from

June to November to develop the school's budget needs for each school. The business manager projected all contractual obligations and fixed costs for the next fiscal year. The town appropriations committee met with all town departments in November and provided instruction for the budget process. In December, members of the administrative team along with the superintendent met with the school committee to discuss identified budget needs and to review site-based requests and districtwide fixed costs. Budget development decisions reflected the needs of the district and not what the town could afford. Following an open forum in December, the school committee approved a budget that it considered equitable and defendable and submitted it to the town appropriations committee by the first week in January. The school committee and town appropriations committee held open meetings from January to May to review and negotiate the budget, and the school committee held several public budget forums during the same period to communicate the needs of the school department to the public. The school department budget presented at the annual town meeting had the support and favorable recommendation of the town appropriations committee.

The school committee received monthly budget reports and periodically approved requests for transfers. Principals did not receive monthly budget reports since they had access to the financial accounting system and had the ability to control and track their budgets and manage their funds at all times. Central office personnel regularly reviewed and monitored expenditures to ensure spending remained within fiscal budget limits. The district did not allow accounts to run into the negative and transfers were made for any negative balances. The district used purchase orders to encumber expenditures from all funds for goods and/or services. Adequate internal controls existed in the business office to ensure the district adhered to procurement laws and processed payroll correctly.

The district exceeded the net school spending (NSS) requirement of the Education Reform Act. The tax levy was at the maximum allowable. Over $1,000,000 from free cash supported the town's annual budget, and the town designated approximately $500,000 of this amount for the school budget.

Parent-teacher organizations (PTOs) at each elementary school and the middle school organized fund raising and spent their money on enrichment, cultural, and community-based activities. The

East Longmeadow Educational Endowment Fund, a non-profit private foundation, raised money and awarded grants to teachers to augment educational opportunities not provided for in the budget process.

The district had five schools in generally good condition and maintained them with an in-house custodial staff. They were clean and had systems to ensure student safety. The town's department of public works provided grounds maintenance and exterior building maintenance. The district obtained the services of outside vendors for maintenance tasks that the town did not perform or that were beyond the scope of in-house personnel.

The district maintained a five-year capital plan that was included as part of the strategic plan, detailed the five school buildings and districtwide capital improvements, was updated and prioritized yearly, and was presented to the school committee for its approval. Per the East Longmeadow Town By-Laws, the plan was submitted in September to the town capital planning committee that studied all proposed capital outlays.

The Meadowbrook Elementary School had eight permanent modular classrooms to accommodate the full-day kindergarten program. Principal and interest payments on the project were made from tuition funds collected. In 2006, the town held a debt exclusion vote for the construction of 12 new permanent modular classrooms, and voters approved it in order to alleviate overcrowded conditions at each of the three elementary schools.

Analysis of MCAS Student Achievement Data

The EQA's analysis of student achievement data focuses on the MCAS test results for 2003-2006, with primary attention paid to the 2006 MCAS tests. This analysis is framed by the following five essential questions:

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

In order to respond accurately to these questions, the EQA subjected the most current state and district MCAS test results to a series of analyses to determine whether there were differences between the mean results of district students and those of students statewide or among student subgroups within the district. Descriptive analyses of the 2006 MCAS test results revealed differences between the achievement of students in East Longmeadow and the average scores of students in Massachusetts.

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

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

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

indicates that all students in the aggregate or in a subgroup are proficient. It can be calculated for overall achievement as well as achievement in an individual subject. Please see Appendix A for more detailed information about the proficiency index.

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

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

Achievement

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

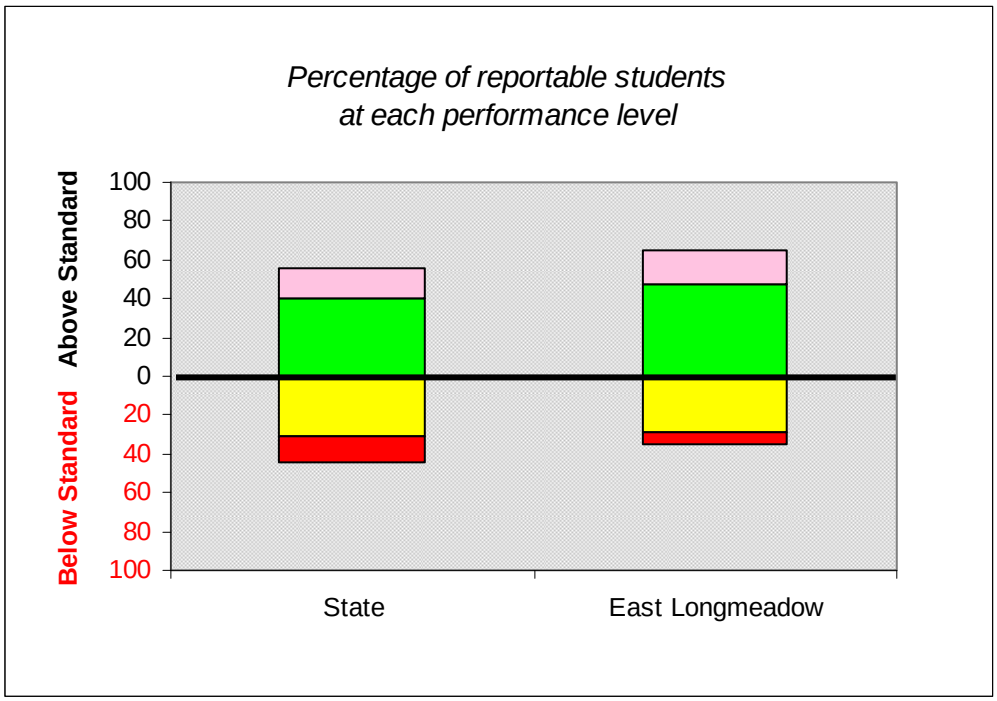
Findings:

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

- East Longmeadow's average proficiency index (API) on the MCAS tests in 2006 was 86 proficiency index (PI) points, eight PI points greater than that statewide. East Longmeadow's average proficiency gap, the difference between its API and the target of 100, in 2006 was 14 PI points.

- In 2006, East Longmeadow's proficiency gap in ELA was seven PI points, nine PI points narrower than the state's average proficiency gap in ELA. This gap would require an average improvement in performance of less than one PI point annually to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP). East Longmeadow's proficiency gap in math was 22 PI points in 2006, six PI points narrower than the state's average proficiency gap in math. This gap would require an average improvement of less than three PI points per year to achieve AYP. East Longmeadow's proficiency gap in STE was 16 PI points, 13 PI points narrower than that statewide.

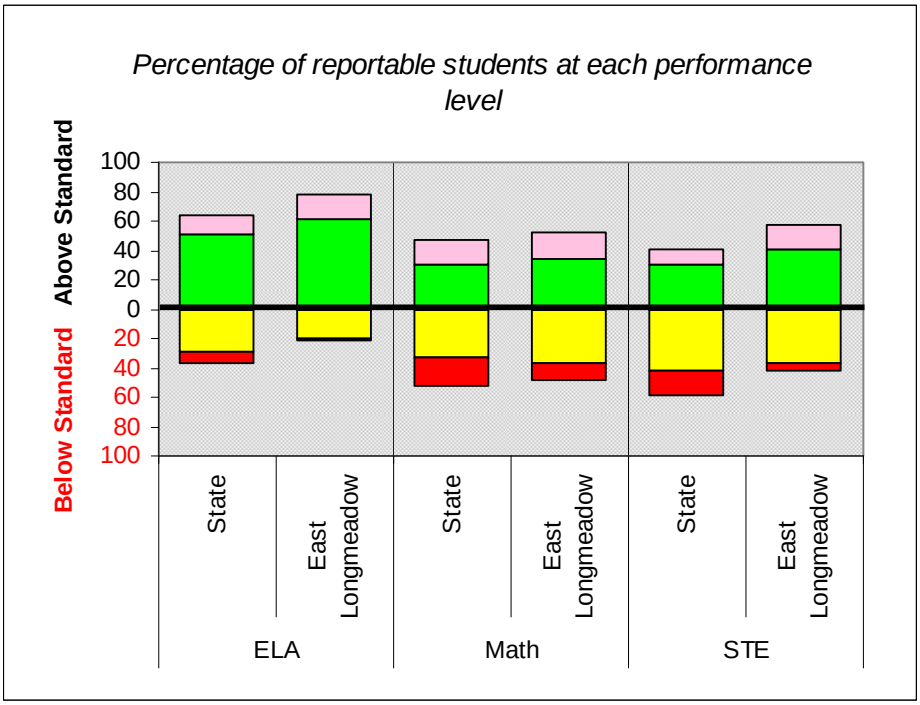
Figure/Table 1: Student MCAS Test Performance, All Students, 2006



	State	East Longmeadow
Advanced	15	17
Proficient	41	48
Needs Improvement	31	28
Warning/Failing	14	6
Percent Attaining Proficiency	56	65
Average Proficiency Index (API)	78.3	85.5

In 2006, 65 percent of East Longmeadow students attained proficiency on the MCAS tests overall, nine percentage points more than that statewide. Six percent of East Longmeadow students scored in the 'Warning/Failing' category, eight percentage points less than that statewide. East Longmeadow's average proficiency index (API) on the MCAS tests in 2006 was 86 proficiency index (PI) points, eight PI points greater than that statewide. East Longmeadow's average proficiency gap in 2006 was 14 PI points.

Figure/Table 2: Student MCAS Test Performance, by Subject, 2006



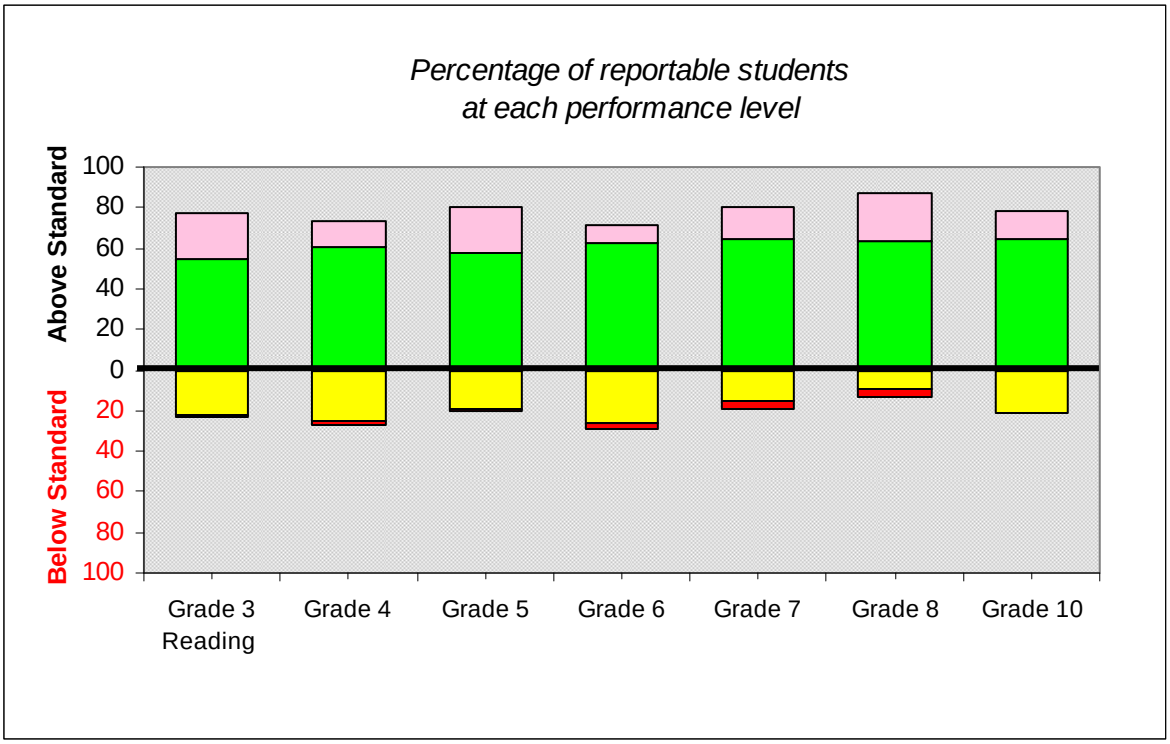
	ELA		Math		STE	
	State	East Longmeadow	State	East Longmeadow	State	East Longmeadow
Advanced	13	17	17	18	10	17
Proficient	51	61	30	34	31	41
Needs Improvement	29	20	33	37	42	36
Warning/Failing	7	2	20	11	17	6
Percent Attaining Proficiency	64	78	47	52	41	58
Proficiency Index (PI)	84.3	92.5	72.3	78.4	71.4	83.7

In 2006, achievement in English language arts (ELA), math, and science and technology/engineering (STE) was higher in East Longmeadow than statewide. In East Longmeadow, 78 percent of students attained proficiency in ELA, compared to 64 percent statewide; 52 percent attained proficiency in math, compared to 47 percent statewide; and 58 percent attained proficiency in STE, compared to 41 percent statewide.

East Longmeadow students had stronger performance on the 2006 MCAS tests in ELA than in math and STE. The proficiency index for East Longmeadow students in ELA was 93 PI points; in math, it was 78 PI points; and in STE, it was 84 PI points. These compare to the statewide figures of 84, 72, and 71 PI points, respectively.

The proficiency gap for East Longmeadow students was seven PI points in ELA, 22 PI points in math, and 16 PI points in STE. These compare to the statewide figures of 16, 28, and 29 PI points, respectively. East Longmeadow's proficiency gaps would require an average annual improvement of less than one PI point in ELA and less than three PI points in math to meet AYP.

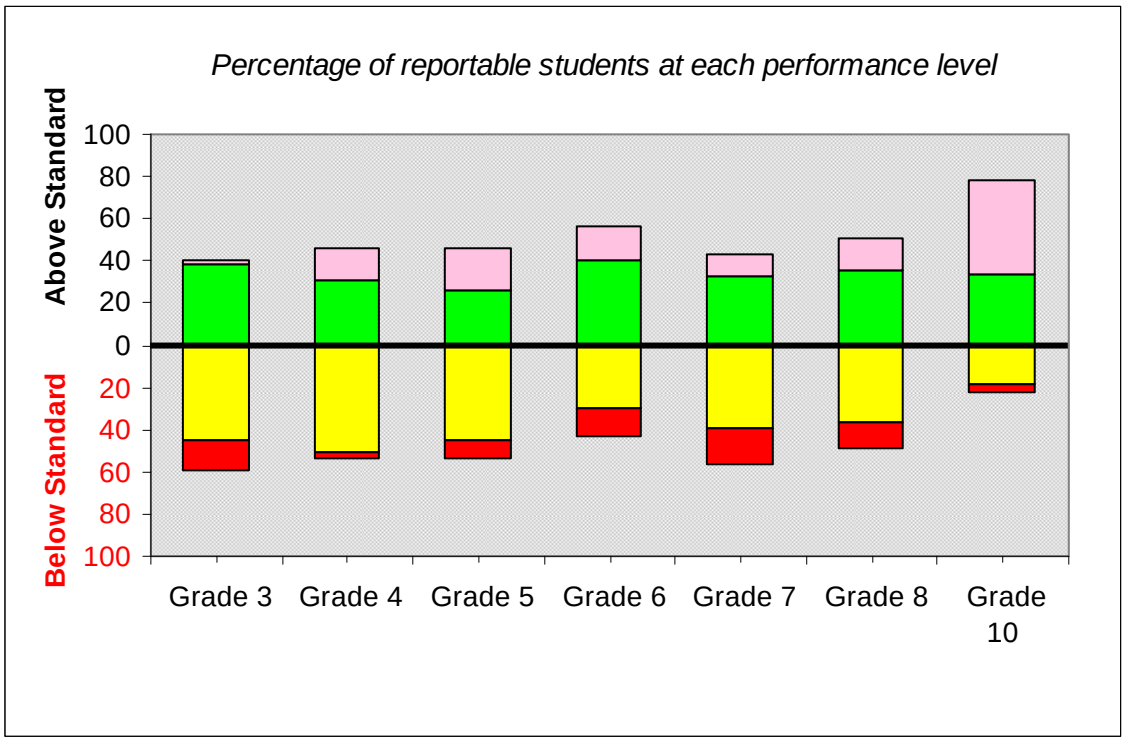
Figure/Table 3: Student MCAS English Language Arts (ELA) Test Performance, by Grade, 2006



	Grade 3 Reading	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 10
Advanced	22	12	22	9	16	24	14
Proficient	55	61	58	62	65	64	64
Needs Improvement	22	25	19	26	15	10	21
Warning/Failing	1	1	1	3	4	3	0
Percent Attaining Proficiency	77	73	80	71	81	88	78

The percentage of East Longmeadow students attaining proficiency in 2006 in ELA varied somewhat by grade level, ranging from a low of 71 percent of grade 6 students to a high of 88 percent of grade 8 students.

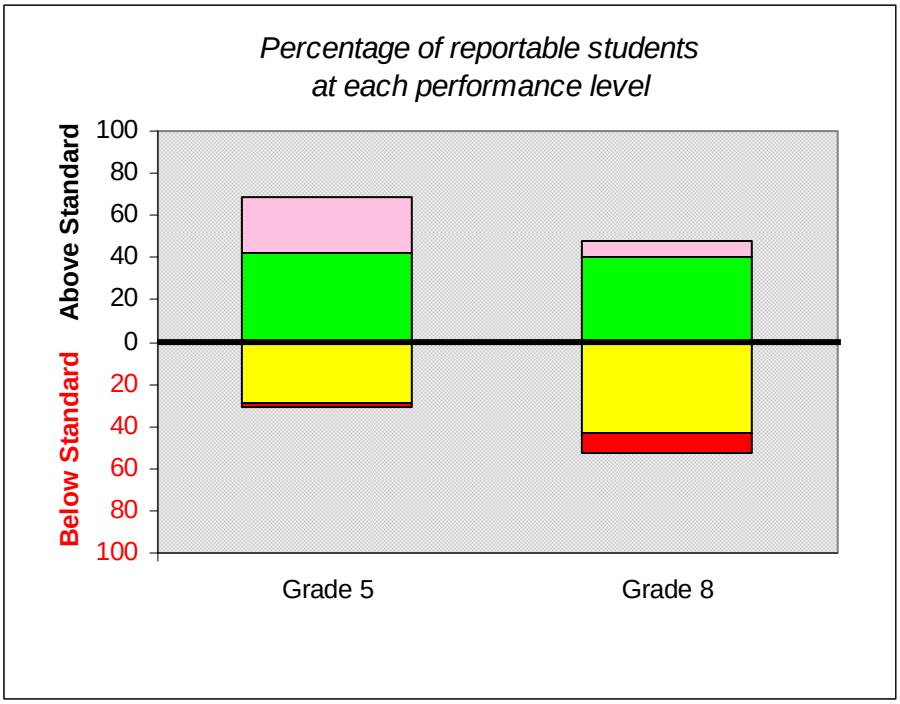
Figure/Table 4: Student MCAS Math Test Performance, by Grade, 2006



	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 10
Advanced	2	16	20	16	10	15	44
Proficient	39	30	26	41	33	36	34
Needs Improvement	45	50	45	30	39	36	18
Warning/Failing	15	3	9	14	18	13	4
Percent Attaining Proficiency	41	46	46	57	43	51	78

The percentage of East Longmeadow students attaining proficiency in 2006 in math also varied by grade level, ranging from a low of 41 percent of grade 3 students to a high of 78 percent of grade 10 students.

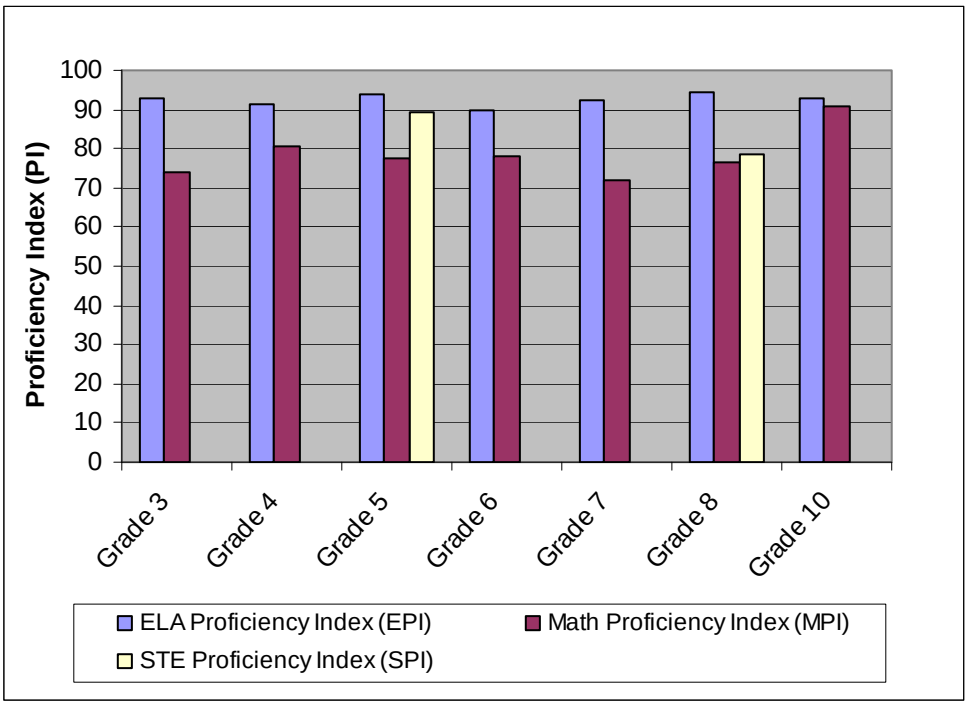
Figure/Table 5: Student MCAS Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) Test Performance, by Grade, 2006



	Grade 5	Grade 8
Advanced	27	7
Proficient	42	40
Needs Improvement	29	43
Warning/Failing	2	9
Percent Attaining Proficiency	69	47

In East Longmeadow in 2006, 69 percent of grade 5 students attained proficiency in STE, and 47 percent of grade 8 students did so.

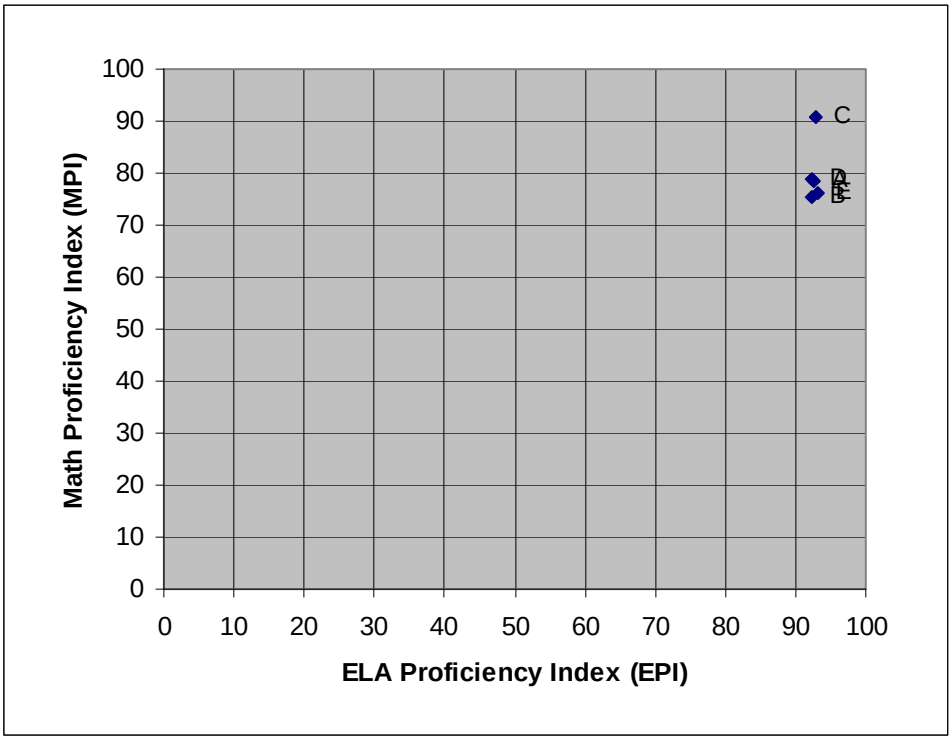
Figure/Table 6: Student MCAS Proficiency Indices, by Grade and Subject, 2006



	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 10
ELA Proficiency Index (EPI)	92.8	91.1	94.0	89.9	92.2	94.6	92.8
Math Proficiency Index (MPI)	74.1	80.5	77.7	78.0	71.7	76.4	90.7
STE Proficiency Index (SPI)			89.4			78.5	

By grade, East Longmeadow's ELA proficiency gap in 2006 ranged from a low of five PI points at grade 8 to a high of 10 PI points at grade 6. East Longmeadow's math proficiency gap ranged from a low of nine PI points at grade 10 to a high of 28 PI points at grade 7. East Longmeadow's STE proficiency gap was 11 PI points at grade 5 and 21 PI points at grade 8.

Figure/Table 7: Student MCAS ELA Proficiency Index vs. Math Proficiency Index, by School, 2006



		ELA PI	Math PI	Number of Tests
A	East Longmeadow	92.5	78.4	3,020
B	Birchland Park Middle	92.3	75.3	1,352
C	East Longmeadow High	92.8	90.7	444
D	Mapleshade Elementary	92.2	79.0	599
E	Mountain View Elementary	93.1	76.0	625

East Longmeadow's ELA proficiency gap in 2006 was seven PI points at East Longmeadow High School and Mountain View Elementary School and eight PI points at Birchland Park Middle School and Mapleshade Elementary School. East Longmeadow's math proficiency gap ranged from a low of nine PI points at East Longmeadow High School to a high of 25 PI points at Birchland Park Middle School.

Equity of Achievement

Do MCAS test results vary among subgroups of students?

Findings:

- MCAS performance in 2006 varied among subgroups of East Longmeadow students. Of the eight measurable subgroups in East Longmeadow in 2006, the gap in performance between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups was 15 PI points in ELA and 23 PI points in math (regular education students, students with disabilities, respectively).

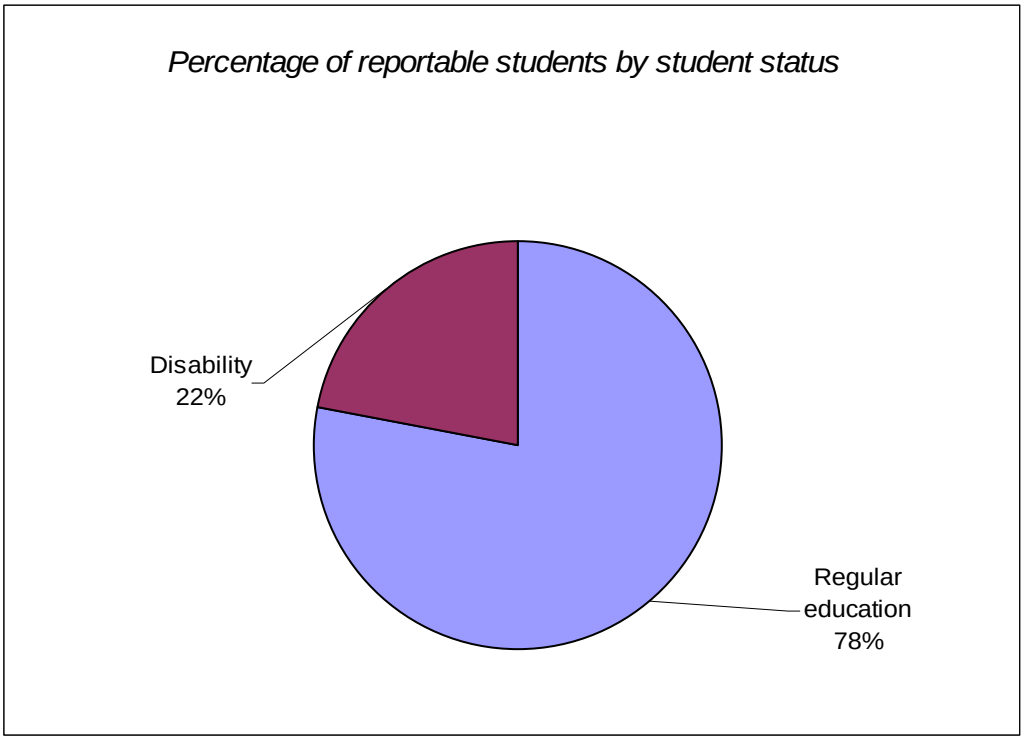
- The proficiency gaps in East Longmeadow in 2006 in both ELA and math were wider than the district average for students with disabilities, African-American students, and low-income students (those participating in the free or reduced-cost lunch program). Less than two-fifths of the students with disabilities, less than three-fifths of the African-American students, and less than half of the low-income students attained proficiency.

- The proficiency gaps in ELA and math were narrower than the district average for regular education students, White students, and non low-income students. For each of these subgroups, two-thirds or more of the students attained proficiency.

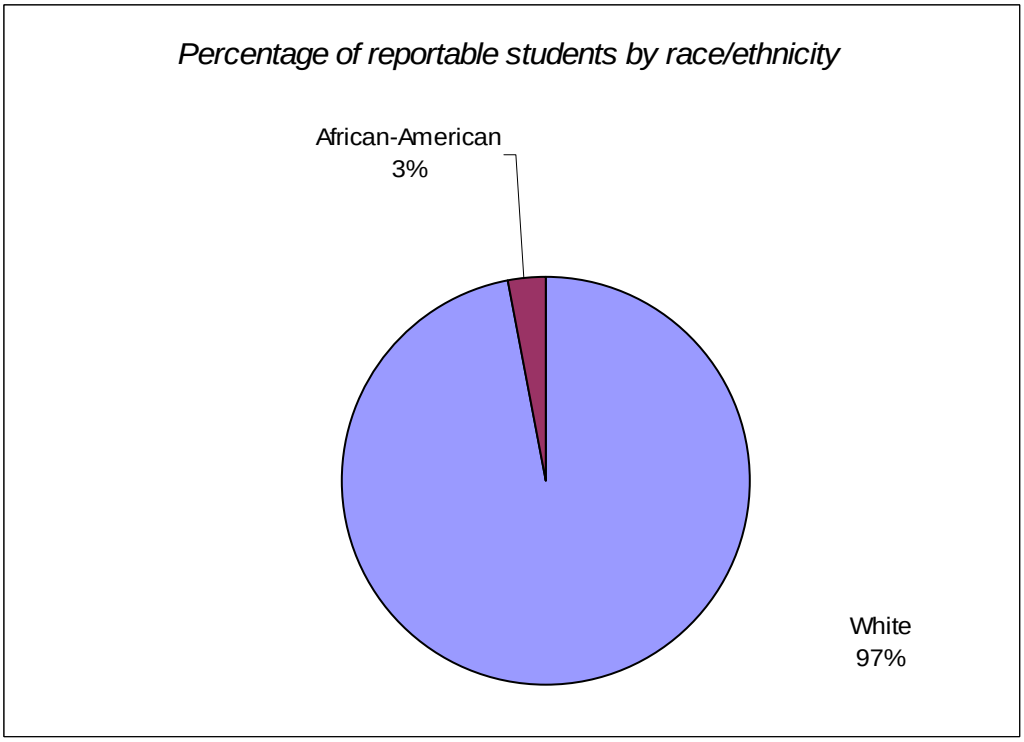
- The proficiency gap for male students was wider than the district average in ELA but narrower in math, while the proficiency gap for female students was narrower than the district average in ELA but wider in math. Approximately two-thirds of the students in both subgroups attained proficiency.

Figures 8 A-C/Table 8: Student Population by Reportable Subgroups, 2006

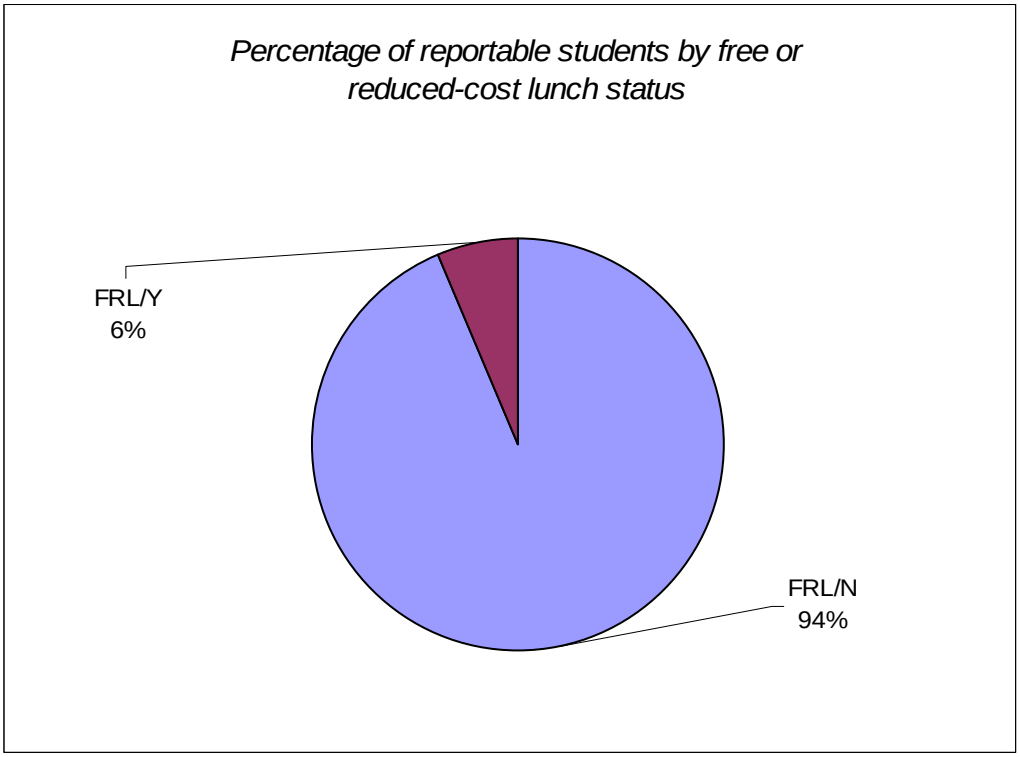
A.



B.



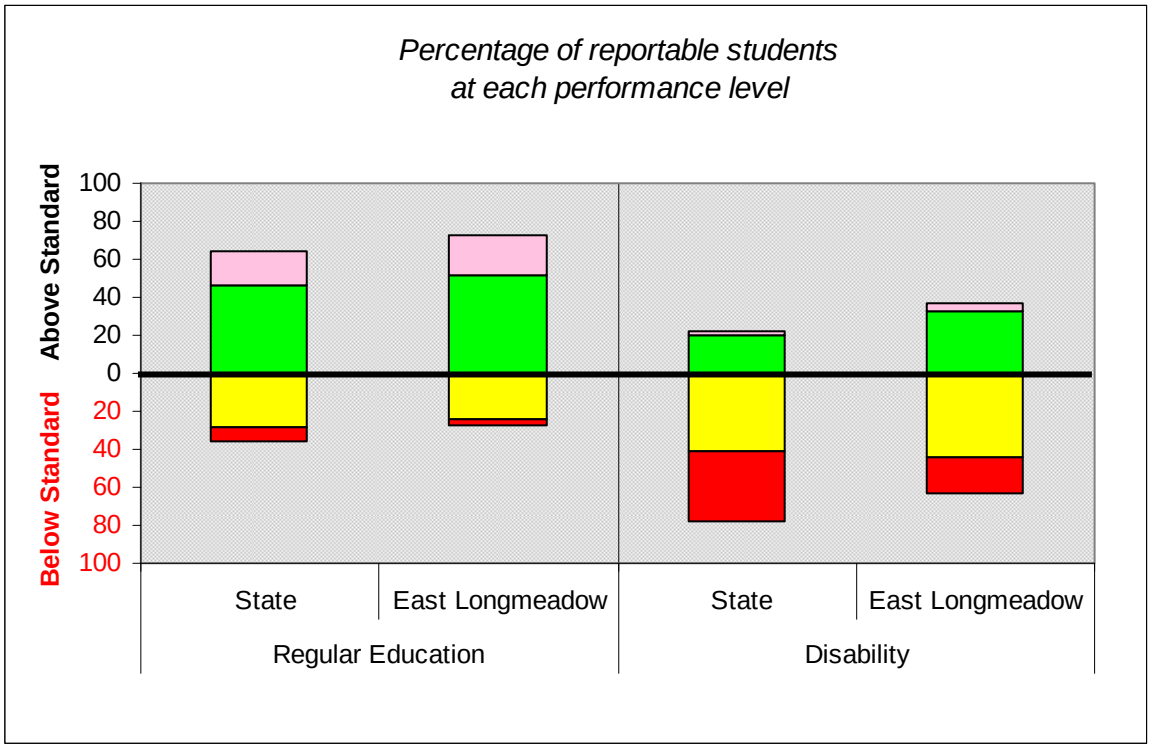
C.



	Subgroup	Number of Students
Student status	Regular education	1,181
	Disability	334
Race/ethnicity	White	1,419
	African-American	45
Free or reduced-cost lunch status	FRL/N	1,418
	FRL/Y	97

In East Longmeadow in 2006, 22 percent of the students were students with disabilities, three percent were African-American students, and six percent were students participating in the free or reduced-cost lunch program.

Figure/Table 9: Student MCAS Test Performance, by Student Status Subgroup, 2006

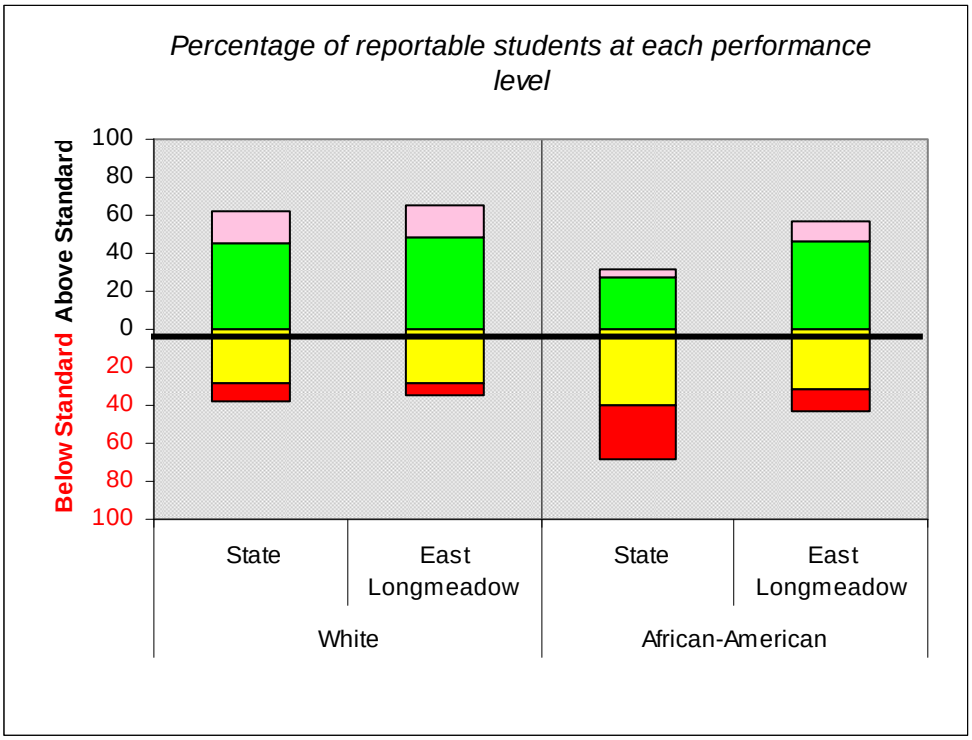


	Regular Education		Disability	
	State	East Longmeadow	State	East Longmeadow
Advanced	18	21	2	5
Proficient	46	52	20	32
Needs Improvement	28	24	41	45
Warning/Failing	8	3	36	18
Percent Attaining Proficiency	64	73	22	37
Average Proficiency Index (API)	84.0	89.6	55.9	70.5

In East Longmeadow in 2006, the proficiency rate of regular education students was nearly two times greater than that of students with disabilities. Seventy-three percent of regular education students and 37 percent of students with disabilities attained overall proficiency on the MCAS tests.

East Longmeadow's average proficiency gap in 2006 was 10 PI points for regular education students and 29 PI points for students with disabilities. The average performance gap between regular education students and students with disabilities was 19 PI points.

Figure/Table 10: Student MCAS Test Performance, by Race/Ethnicity Subgroup, 2006

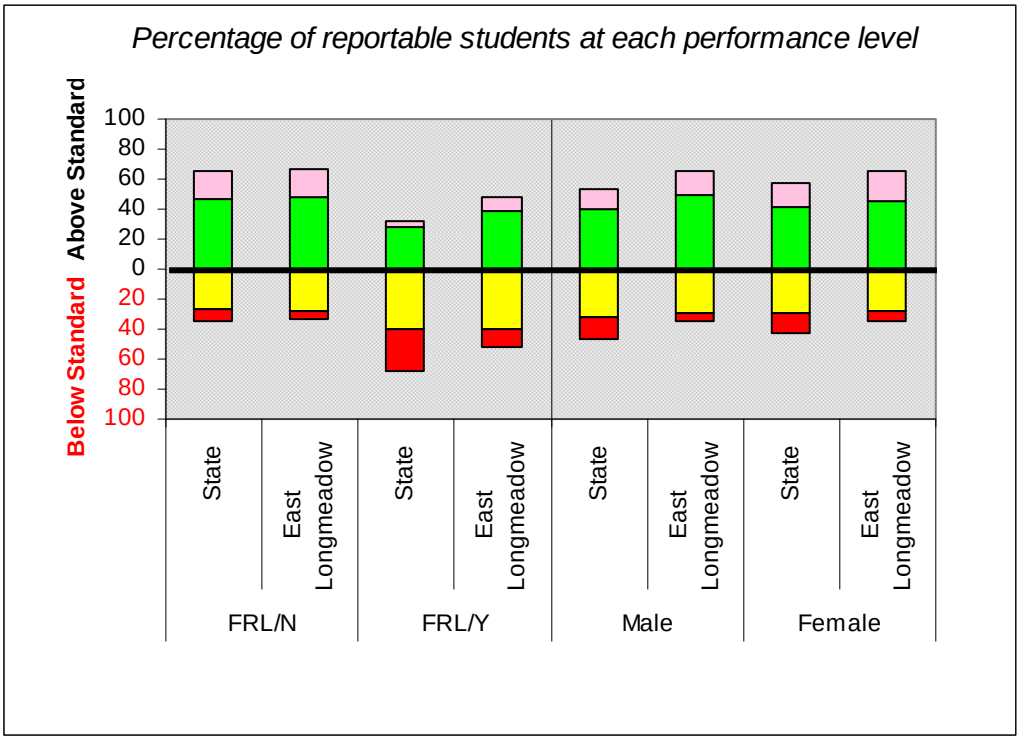


	White		African-American	
	State	East Longmeadow	State	East Longmeadow
Advanced	17	18	4	11
Proficient	45	48	27	46
Needs Improvement	29	28	40	31
Warning/Failing	9	6	28	11
Percent Attaining Proficiency	62	66	31	57
Average Proficiency Index (API)	82.9	85.7	63.2	80.9

In East Longmeadow in 2006, performance on the MCAS tests varied by race/ethnicity, as 66 percent of White students and 57 percent of African-American students attained overall proficiency.

East Longmeadow's average proficiency gap in 2006 was 14 PI points for White students and 19 PI points for African-American students. The average performance gap between White and African-American students was five PI points.

Figure/Table 11: Student MCAS Test Performance, by Socioeconomic Status and Gender Subgroups, 2006

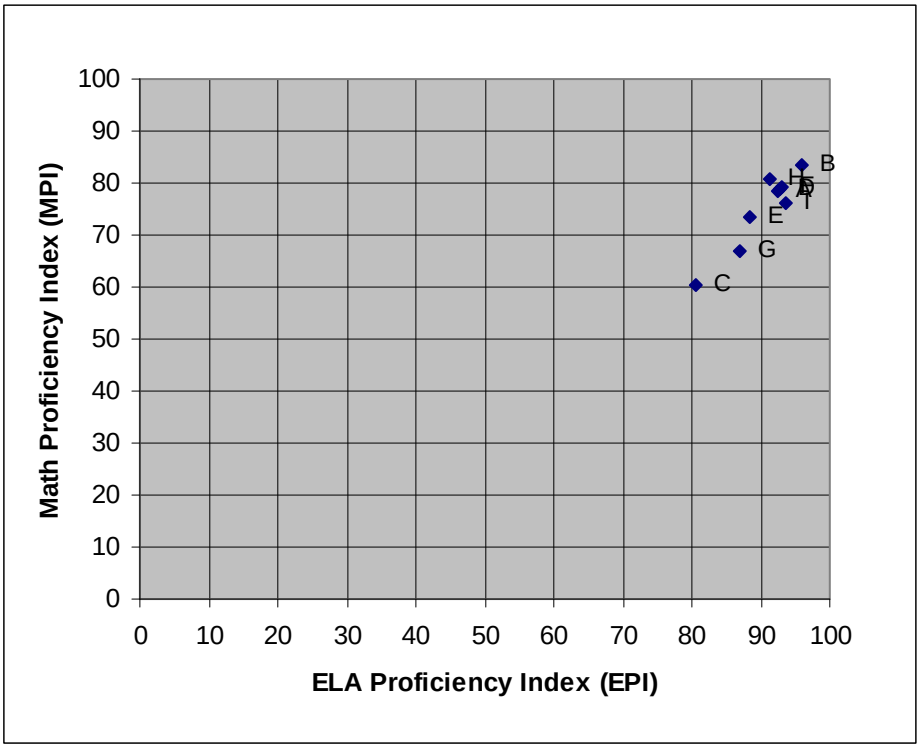


	FRL/N		FRL/Y		Male		Female	
	State	East Longmeadow	State	East Longmeadow	State	East Longmeadow	State	East Longmeadow
Advanced	19	18	5	9	13	16	17	19
Proficient	46	48	27	39	40	50	41	46
Needs Improvement	27	28	40	40	32	29	29	28
Warning/Failing	8	6	27	12	15	5	13	7
Percent Attaining Proficiency	65	66	32	48	53	66	58	65
Average Proficiency Index (API)	84.5	86.1	63.5	77.0	77.1	86.0	79.6	84.9

In East Longmeadow in 2006, 48 percent of low-income (FRL/Y) students attained overall proficiency on the MCAS tests, compared to 66 percent of non low-income (FRL/N) students. The average proficiency gap was 23 PI points for low-income students and 14 PI points for non low-income students, and the average performance gap between the two subgroups was nine PI points.

Performance on the 2006 MCAS tests was comparable for male and female students in East Longmeadow, with 65 percent of female students and 66 percent of male students attaining overall proficiency. The average proficiency gap was 14 PI points for male students and 15 PI points for female students, and the average performance gap between the two subgroups was one PI point.

Figure/Table 12: Student MCAS ELA Proficiency Index vs. Math Proficiency Index, by Subgroup, 2006

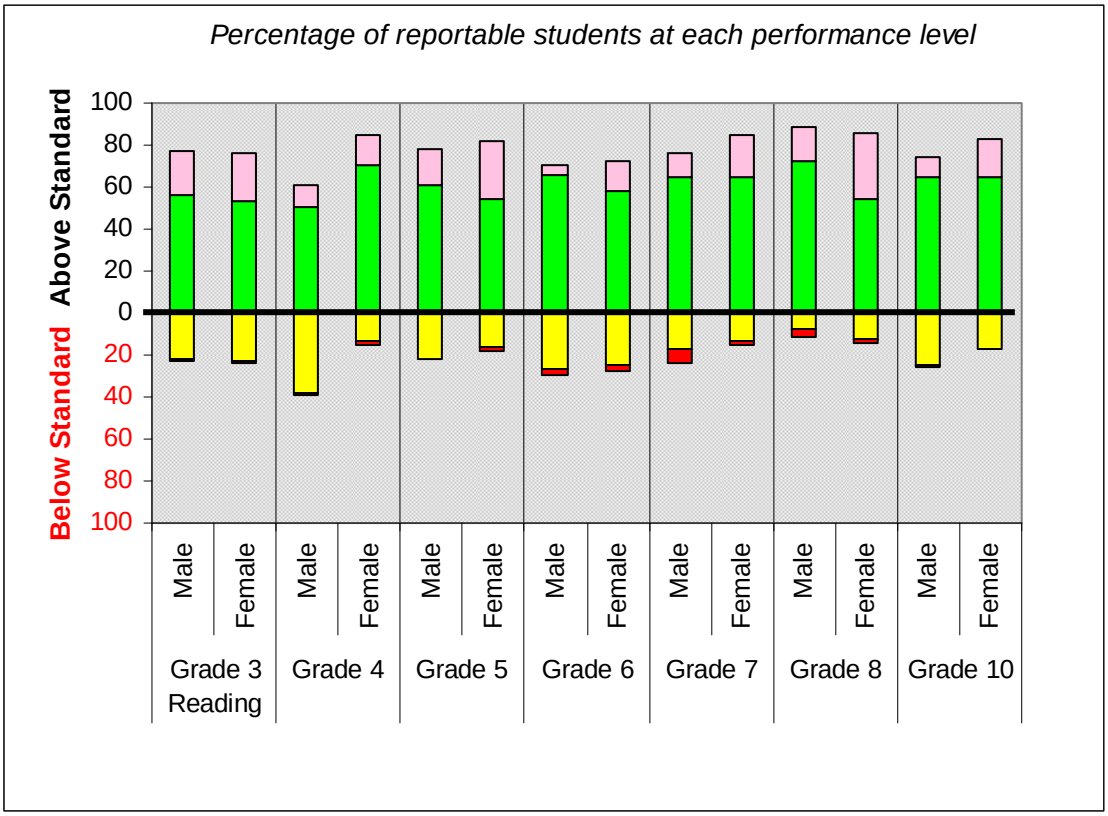


		ELA PI	Math PI	Number of Tests
A	East Longmeadow	92.5	78.4	3,020
B	Regular Education	95.9	83.4	2,363
C	Disability	80.5	60.4	657
D	White	92.7	78.7	2,831
E	African-American	88.3	73.3	89
F	FRL/N	92.9	79.2	2,826
G	FRL/Y	87.1	66.8	194
H	Male	91.3	80.7	1,539
I	Female	93.7	76.1	1,481

Of the eight measurable subgroups in East Longmeadow in 2006, the gap in performance between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups was 15 PI points in ELA (regular education students, students with disabilities, respectively) and 23 PI points in math (regular education students, students with disabilities, respectively).

The proficiency gaps in East Longmeadow in 2006 in both ELA and math were wider than the district average for students with disabilities, African-American students, and low-income (FRL/Y) students. The proficiency gaps in ELA and math were narrower than the district average for regular education students, White students, and non low-income (FRL/N) students. The proficiency gap for male students was wider than the district average in ELA but narrower in math, while the proficiency gap for female students was narrower than the district average in ELA but wider in math.

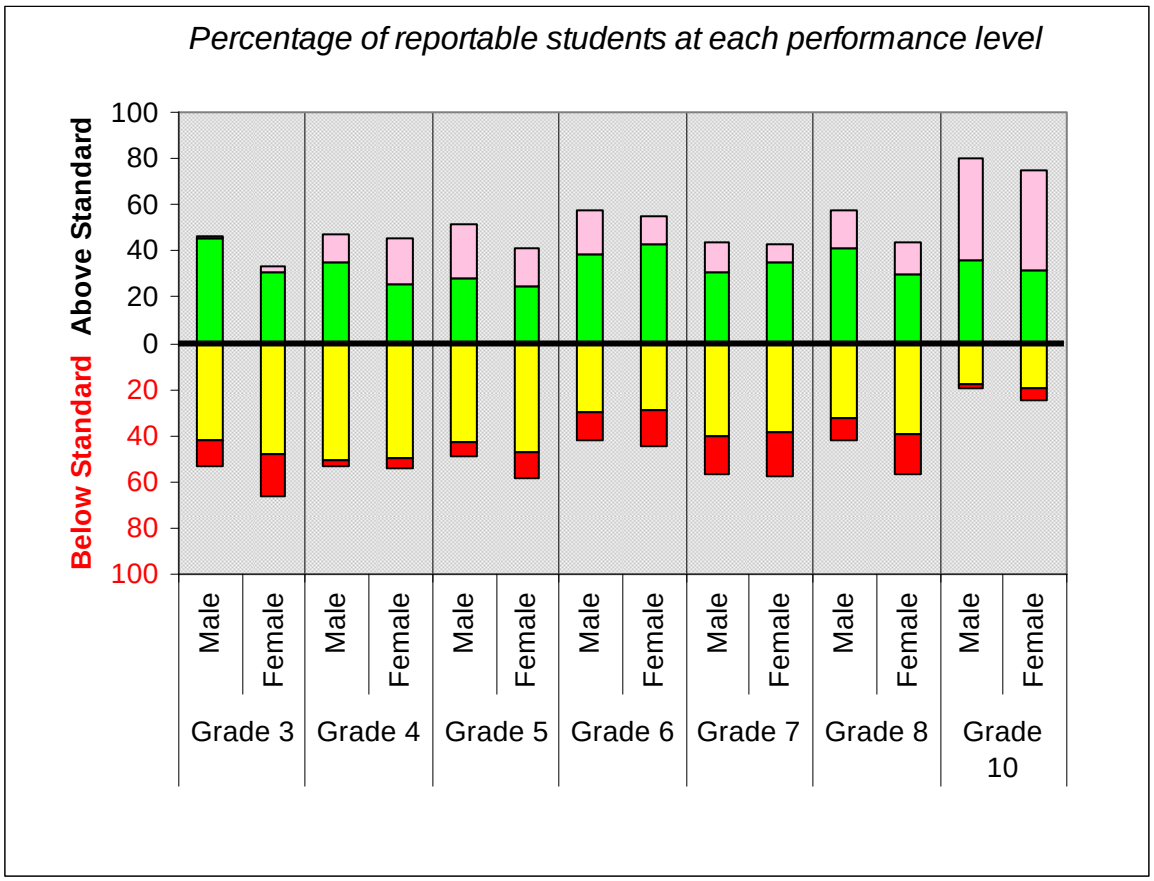
Figure/Table 13: Student MCAS English Language Arts (ELA) Test Performance, by Grade and Gender, 2006



	Grade 3 Reading		Grade 4		Grade 5		Grade 6		Grade 7		Grade 8		Grade 10	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Advanced	21	23	10	14	17	27	5	14	11	20	16	32	10	19
Proficient	56	53	51	70	61	55	66	58	65	64	73	54	64	64
Needs Improvement	21	23	38	13	22	16	27	25	17	14	7	12	25	17
Warning/ Failing	1	1	1	2	0	2	3	3	6	2	4	2	1	0
Percent Attaining Proficiency	77	76	61	84	78	82	71	72	76	84	89	86	74	83

In East Longmeadow in 2006, female students outperformed male students on all grade-level ELA tests except at grades 3 and 8.

Figure/Table 14: Student MCAS Math Test Performance, by Grade and Gender, 2006



	Grade 3		Grade 4		Grade 5		Grade 6		Grade 7		Grade 8		Grade 10	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Advanced	1	3	11	20	24	17	19	12	13	8	17	13	45	44
Proficient	46	30	35	26	28	24	39	43	30	35	41	30	36	32
Needs Improvement	42	48	51	50	43	47	30	29	40	39	33	40	17	20
Warning/ Failing	11	18	2	5	6	12	12	16	17	18	9	17	2	5
Percent Attaining Proficiency	47	33	46	46	52	41	58	55	43	43	58	43	81	76

On the 2006 MCAS tests in math, male students outperformed female students at all grade levels, except at grades 4 and 7, where both subgroups performed the same.

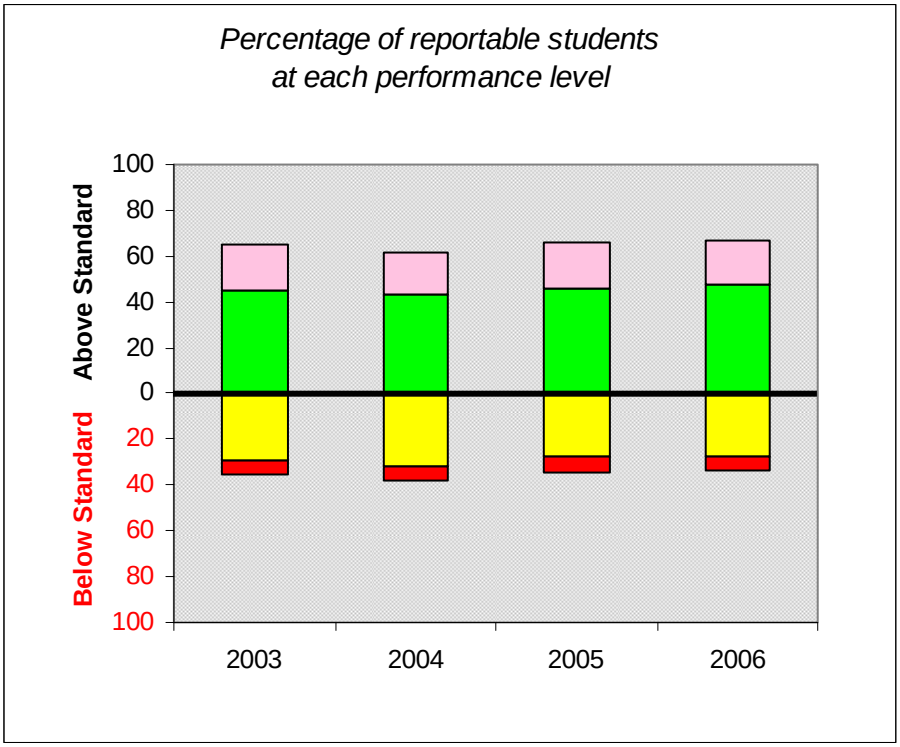
Improvement

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

Findings:

- Between 2003 and 2006, East Longmeadow's MCAS performance showed little improvement overall and in math, and a slight decline in ELA and 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 remained the same. The average proficiency gap in East Longmeadow narrowed from 15 PI points in 2003 to 14 PI points in 2006. This resulted in an improvement rate, or a closing of the proficiency gap, of five percent.
- Over the three-year period 2003-2006, ELA performance in East Longmeadow showed a slight decline of nearly one PI point.
- Math performance in East Longmeadow showed a slight improvement of two PI points during this period. This resulted in an improvement rate of 10 percent, a rate lower than that required to meet AYP.
- Between 2004 and 2006, STE performance in East Longmeadow declined by approximately one-half PI point.

Figure 15/Tables 15 A-B: Student MCAS Test Performance, All Students, 2003-2006



A.

	2003	2004	2005	2006
Advanced	20	18	20	19
Proficient	45	44	46	47
Needs Improvement	29	32	28	28
Warning/Failing	6	7	7	6
Percent Attaining Proficiency	65	62	66	66
Average Proficiency Index (API)	85.2	83.9	85.3	86.0

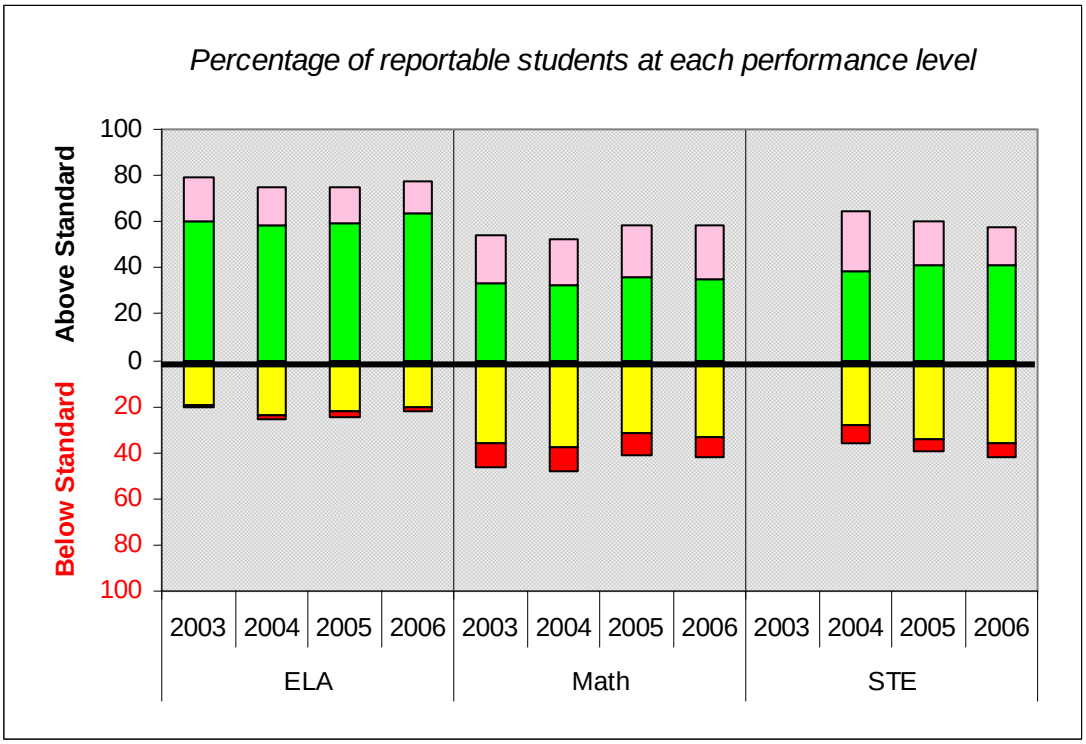
B. n-values

	2003	2004	2005	2006
Advanced	294	261	309	291
Proficient	675	624	715	721
Needs Improvement	431	454	430	422
Warning/Failing	93	95	102	87
Total	1,493	1,434	1,556	1,521

Note: Trend data include grades for which testing was administered for each subject in all four years; therefore, the 2006 data may differ from those reported in Figure/Table 1.

The percentage of East Longmeadow students attaining overall proficiency on the MCAS tests increased from 65 percent in 2003 to 66 percent in 2006. The percentage of students in the 'Warning/Failing' category remained at six percent in 2003 and in 2006. The average proficiency gap in East Longmeadow narrowed from 15 PI points in 2003 to 14 PI points in 2006, resulting in an improvement rate of five percent.

Figure/Table 16: Student MCAS Test Performance, by Subject, 2003-2006



	ELA				Math				STE			
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2003	2004	2005	2006	2003	2004	2005	2006
Advanced	19	16	16	14	20	20	23	23		26	19	17
Proficient	60	58	59	63	34	33	36	35		38	41	41
Needs Improvement	19	23	22	20	36	38	32	33		28	34	36
Warning/ Failing	1	2	2	2	10	10	10	9		7	6	6
Percent Attaining Proficiency	79	74	75	77	54	53	59	58		64	60	58
Proficiency Index (PI)	92.8	91.3	90.5	92.0	79.4	78.4	81.3	81.4		84.3	84.2	83.7

Note: Trend data include grades for which testing was administered for each subject in all four years; therefore, the 2006 data for ELA and math may differ from those reported in Figure/Table 2. STE data for 2003 are not available.

The percentage of East Longmeadow students attaining proficiency in ELA decreased from 79 percent in 2003 to 77 percent in 2006. The proficiency gap in ELA widened from seven PI points in 2003 to eight PI points in 2006.

The percentage of East Longmeadow students attaining proficiency in math increased from 54 percent in 2003 to 58 percent in 2006. The proficiency gap in math narrowed from 21 PI points in 2003 to 19 PI points in 2006, resulting in an improvement rate of 10 percent, a rate lower than that required to meet AYP.

The percentage of East Longmeadow students attaining proficiency in STE decreased from 64 percent in 2004 to 58 percent in 2006. The proficiency gap in STE remained at 16 PI points in 2004 and in 2006.

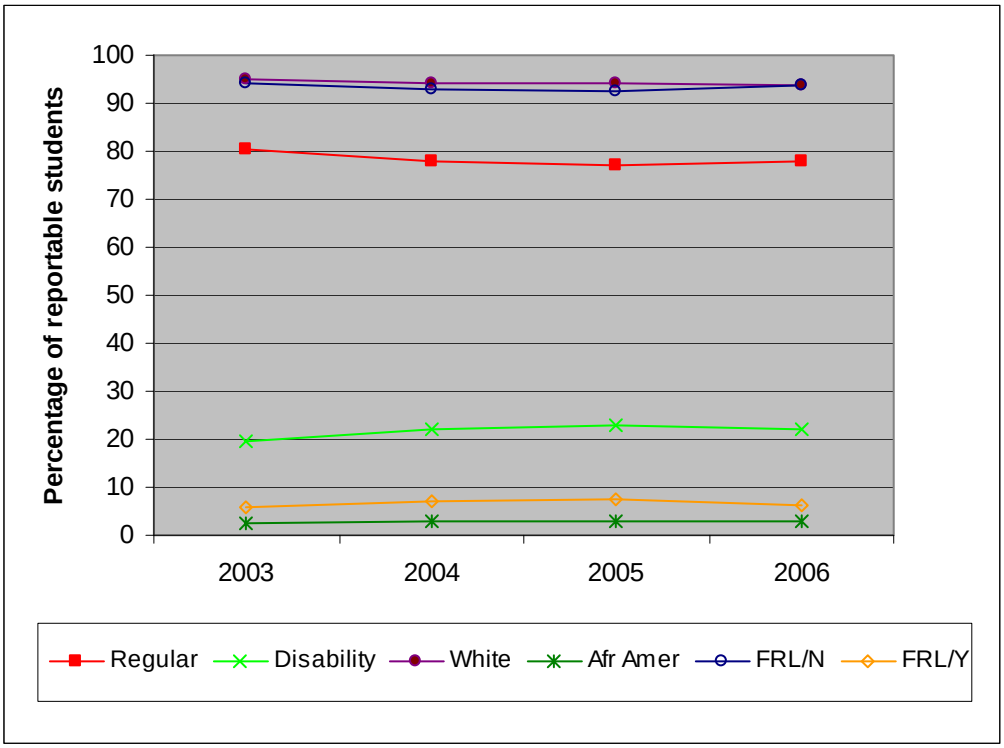
Equity of Improvement

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

Findings:

- In East Longmeadow, all student subgroups had either a decline or no change in performance in ELA between 2003 and 2006. The subgroup with the greatest decline in ELA was African-American students.
- In math, all subgroups in East Longmeadow showed improved performance between 2003 and 2006. The most improved subgroups in math were African-American students and students with disabilities.
- The performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in ELA narrowed from 16 PI points in 2003 to 15 PI points in 2006, and the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in math narrowed from 30 to 22 PI points over this period.

Figure/Table 17: Student Population by Reportable Subgroups, 2003-2006



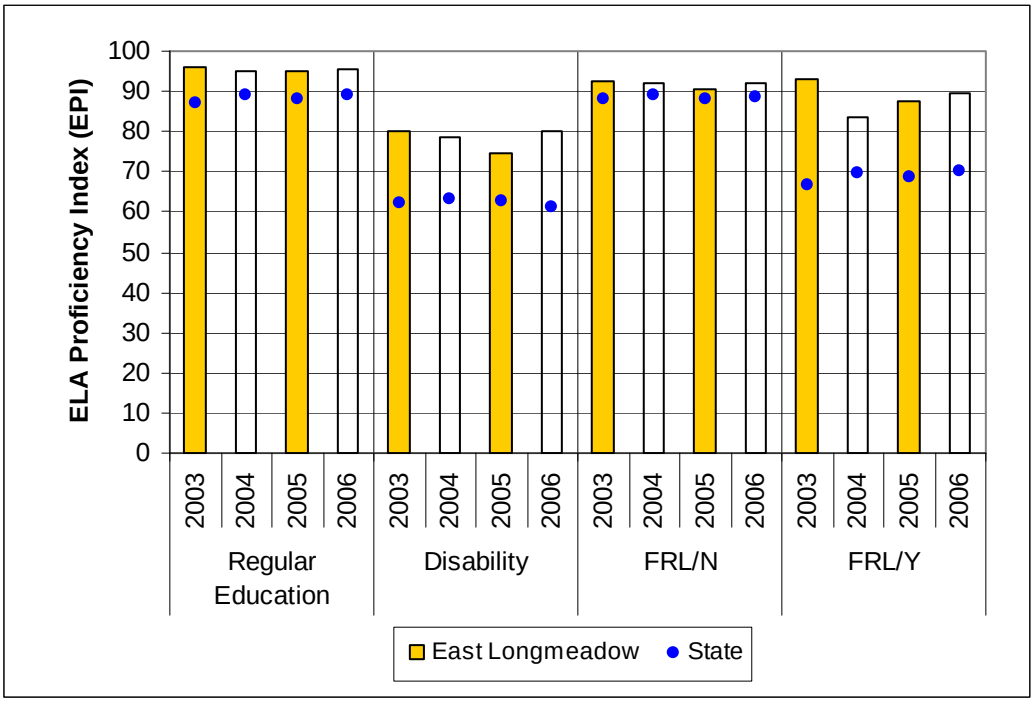
	Number of Students				Percentage of students			
	2003	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**
East Longmeadow	1,019	1,250	1,303	1,515	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Regular	818	975	1,002	1,181	80.3	78.0	76.9	78.0
Disability	201	275	301	334	19.7	22.0	23.1	22.0
White	970	1,177	1,227	1,419	95.2	94.2	94.2	93.7
African-American	27	38	39	45	2.6	3.0	3.0	3.0
FRL/N	959	1,161	1,204	1,418	94.1	92.9	92.4	93.6
FRL/Y	60	89	99	97	5.9	7.1	7.6	6.4

Note: The 2006 percentages of students reported here may differ from those reported in Figure 8; the percentages shown here are based on the total number of students in the district, whereas the percentages shown in Figure 8 are based on the number of students in reportable subgroups.

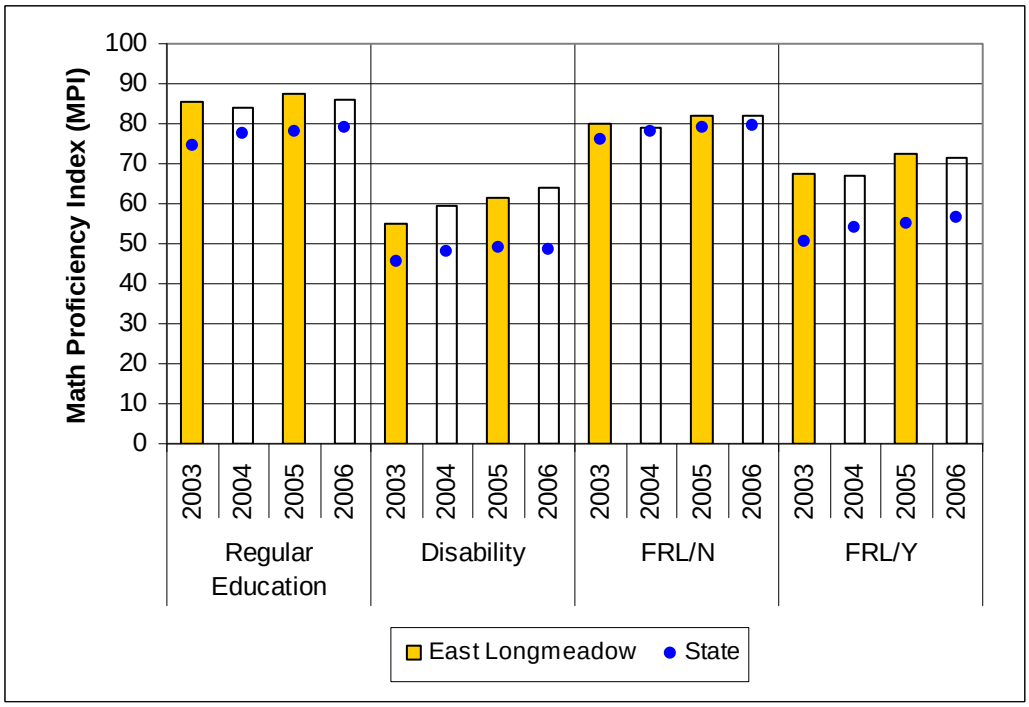
Between 2003 and 2006, the proportion of students with disabilities increased by more than two percentage points, the proportion of non-White students increased by one and one-half percentage points, and the proportion of low-income (FRL/Y) students increased by one-half percentage point.

Figures 18 A-D/Table 18: MCAS Proficiency Indices, by Subgroup, 2003-2006

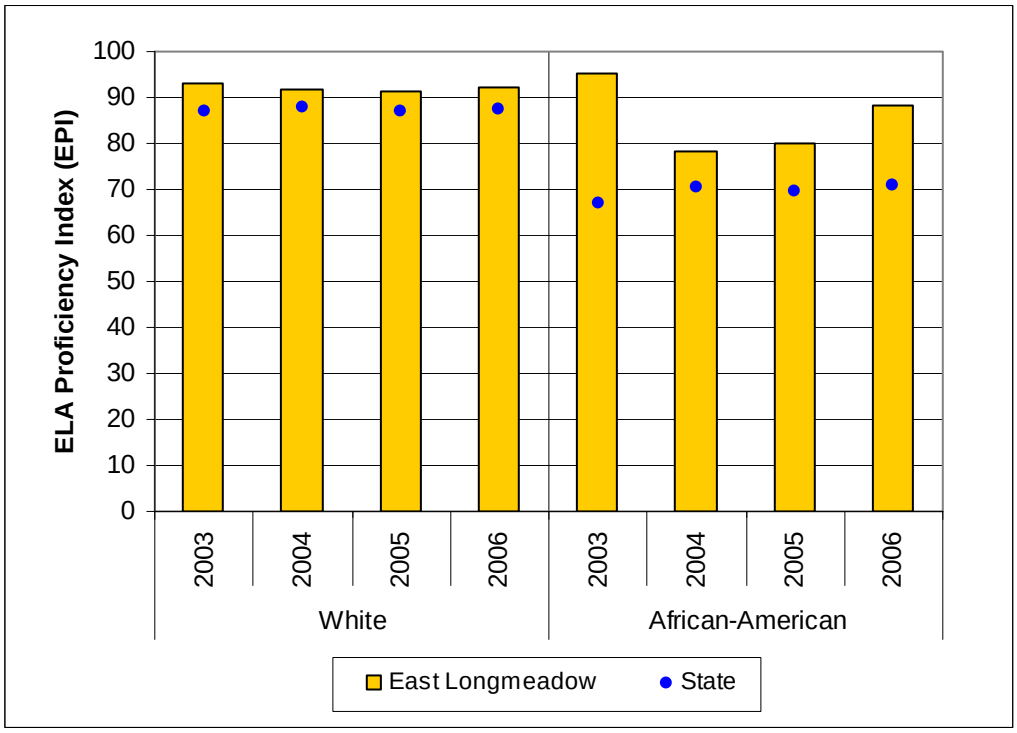
A.ELA Proficiency Index (EPI) by Student Status and Free or Reduced-Cost Lunch Subgroups



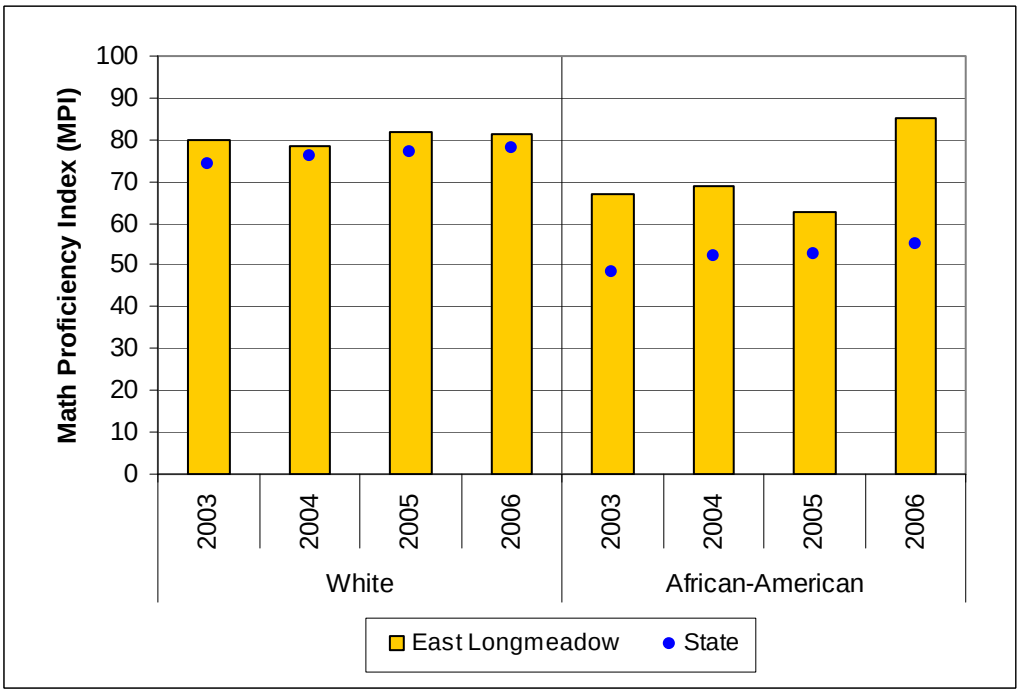
B. Math Proficiency Index (MPI) by Student Status and Free or Reduced-Cost Lunch Subgroups



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



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

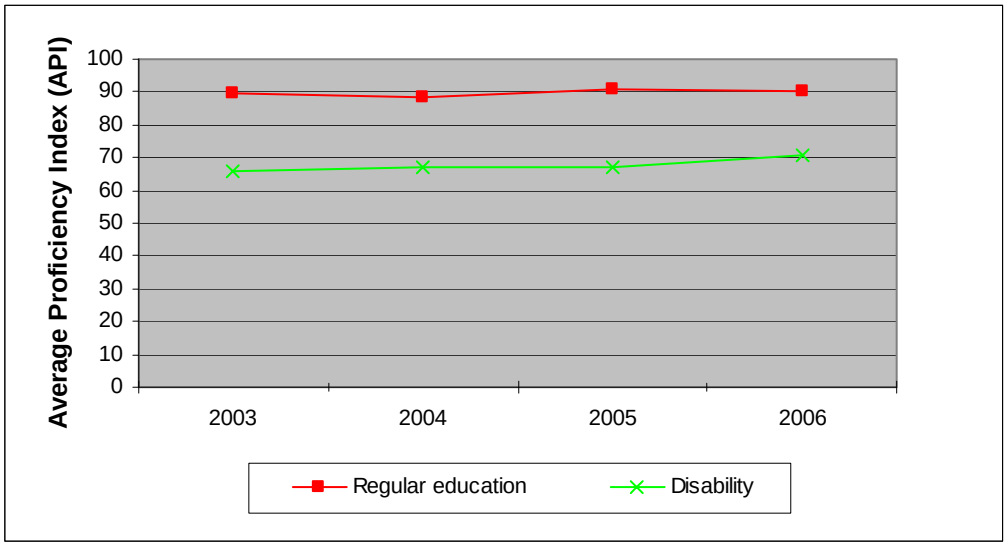


State				East Longmeadow			
Subgroup	**Year**	**EPI**	**MPI**	**Subgroup**	**Year**	**EPI**	**MPI**
Regular Education	2003	87.3	74.7	Regular Education	2003	95.9	85.3
	2004	89.2	77.4		2004	94.9	84.0
	2005	88.3	78.2		2005	95.1	87.6
	2006	89.0	78.9		2006	95.3	86.1
Disability	2003	62.1	45.3	Disability	2003	80.0	55.0
	2004	63.3	47.9		2004	78.5	59.4
	2005	62.9	49.0		2005	74.8	61.3
	2006	61.2	48.4		2006	80.0	63.9
FRL/N	2003	87.9	75.9	FRL/N	2003	92.7	80.1
	2004	88.9	78.1		2004	91.8	79.2
	2005	88.3	79.0		2005	90.7	81.8
	2006	88.6	79.7		2006	92.2	82.1
FRL/Y	2003	66.6	50.7	FRL/Y	2003	93.1	67.7
	2004	69.7	53.9		2004	83.5	66.9
	2005	68.8	55.0		2005	87.7	72.7
	2006	70.0	56.3		2006	89.6	71.3
White	2003	86.9	74.4	White	2003	93.0	79.8
	2004	87.7	76.2		2004	91.7	78.5
	2005	87.1	77.2		2005	91.1	81.9
	2006	87.4	77.8		2006	92.3	81.5
African-American	2003	67.1	48.4	African-American	2003	95.3	67.0
	2004	70.5	52.3		2004	78.3	68.8
	2005	69.4	52.8		2005	80.2	62.5
	2006	70.9	55.2		2006	88.1	85.4

In East Longmeadow, all student subgroups had either a decline or no change in performance in ELA between 2003 and 2006. The subgroup with the greatest decline in ELA was African-American students. In math, all subgroups in East Longmeadow showed improved performance between 2003 and 2006. The most improved subgroups in math were African-American students and students with disabilities.

The performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in ELA narrowed from 16 PI points in 2003 to 15 PI points in 2006, and the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in math narrowed from 30 to 22 PI points over this period.

Figure/Table 19: Student MCAS Test Performance, by Student Status Subgroup, 2003-2006

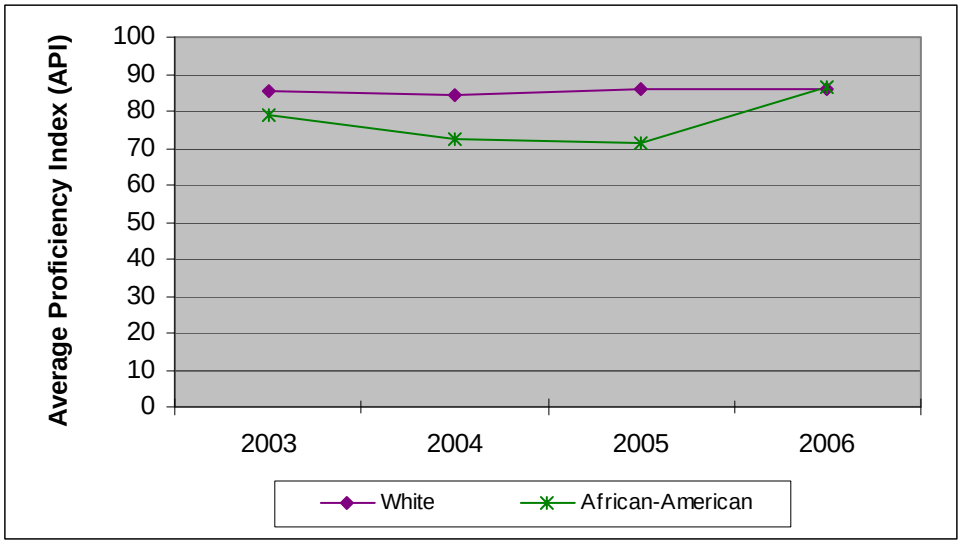


		API	EPI	MPI	Percent Attaining Proficiency ELA	Percent Attaining Proficiency Math
Regular education	2003	89.9	95.9	85.3	87	63
	2004	88.6	94.9	84.0	84	61
	2005	90.9	95.1	87.6	85	68
	2006	90.1	95.3	86.1	86	66
Disability	2003	65.8	80.0	55.0	48	16
	2004	67.3	78.5	59.4	43	22
	2005	67.0	74.8	61.3	42	27
	2006	70.9	80.0	63.9	48	30

Students with disabilities in East Longmeadow had improved overall performance on the MCAS tests between 2003 and 2006, while the performance of regular education students was relatively flat during this period. The average proficiency gap for East Longmeadow's regular education students remained at 10 PI points. The average proficiency gap for students with disabilities narrowed from 34 to 29 PI points, resulting in an improvement rate of 15 percent.

Between 2003 and 2006, the average performance gap between regular education students and students with disabilities narrowed by five PI points.

Figure/Table 20: Student MCAS Test Performance, by Race/Ethnicity Subgroup, 2003-2006

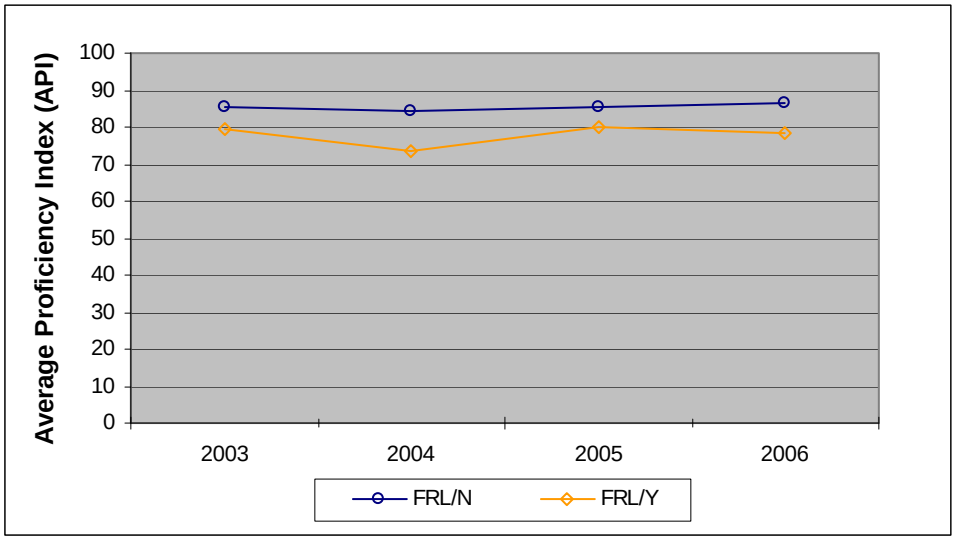


		API	EPI	MPI	Percent Attaining Proficiency ELA	Percent Attaining Proficiency Math
White	2003	85.5	93.0	79.8	80	55
	2004	84.1	91.7	78.5	76	52
	2005	85.9	91.1	81.9	76	59
	2006	86.2	92.3	81.5	78	58
African-American	2003	78.9	95.3	67.0	81	27
	2004	72.5	78.3	68.8	47	38
	2005	71.4	80.2	62.5	50	38
	2006	86.7	88.1	85.4	76	67

African-American students in East Longmeadow had improved overall performance on the MCAS tests between 2003 and 2006, while White students had relatively flat performance. The average proficiency gap for White students remained at 14 PI points. For African-American students, the average proficiency gap narrowed from 21 to 13 PI points, resulting in an improvement rate of 37 percent.

Between 2003 and 2006, the average performance gap between White students and African-American students changed from seven PI points in favor of White students to one-half PI point in favor of African-American students.

Figure/Table 21: Student MCAS Test Performance, by Socioeconomic Status Subgroup, 2003-2006

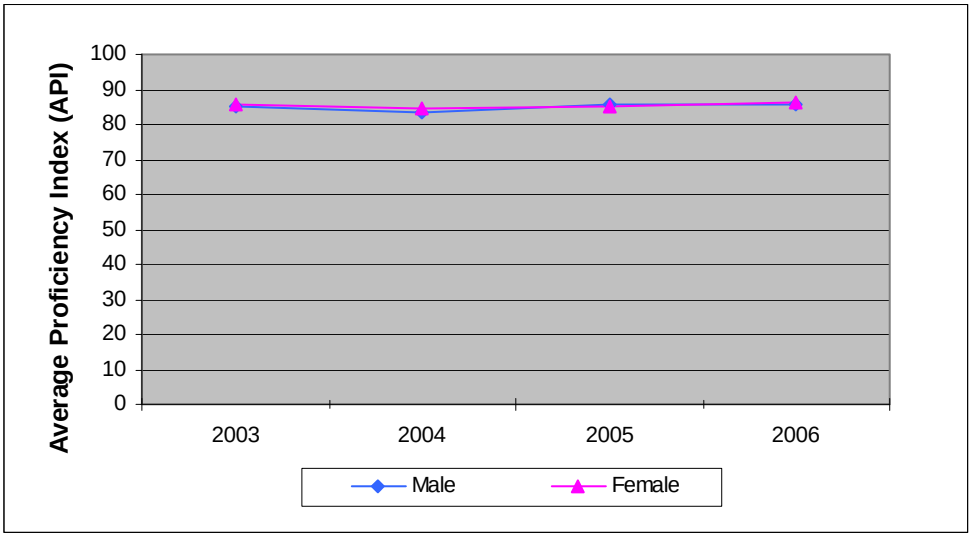


		API	EPI	MPI	Percent Attaining Proficiency ELA	Percent Attaining Proficiency Math
FRL/N	2003	85.5	92.7	80.1	80	55
	2004	84.5	91.8	79.2	76	54
	2005	85.6	90.7	81.8	76	59
	2006	86.5	92.2	82.1	78	60
FRL/Y	2003	79.2	93.1	67.7	75	31
	2004	73.7	83.5	66.9	54	36
	2005	80.0	87.7	72.7	65	46
	2006	78.6	89.6	71.3	78	37

The non low-income (FRL/N) subgroup in East Longmeadow had improved overall performance on the MCAS tests between 2003 and 2006, while the low-income (FRL/Y) subgroup had relatively flat performance. The average proficiency gap for low-income students remained at 21 PI points. For non low-income students, it narrowed from 14 to 13 PI points, resulting in an improvement rate of seven percent.

Between 2003 and 2006, the average performance gap between low-income students and non low-income students widened by one PI point.

Figure/Table 22: Student MCAS Test Performance, by Gender Subgroup, 2003- 2006



		API	EPI	MPI	Percent Attaining Proficiency ELA	Percent Attaining Proficiency Math
Male	2003	84.9	91.4	79.9	77	56
	2004	83.3	89.3	79.1	68	55
	2005	85.5	89.4	82.4	72	62
	2006	86.0	89.5	83.3	71	62
Female	2003	85.4	94.1	79.0	82	52
	2004	84.3	93.2	77.5	82	49
	2005	85.3	92.0	80.4	79	56
	2006	86.1	94.7	79.4	84	54

Both gender subgroups in East Longmeadow had improved overall performance between 2003 and 2006 on the MCAS tests. The average proficiency gaps for both male and female students narrowed from 15 PI points to 14 PI points. These gains resulted in improvement rates of seven percent for male students and five percent for female students.

Participation

Are all eligible students participating in required state assessments?

Finding:

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

n-Values by Subgroup and Performance Level, 2006

Subgroup	Performance Level	ELA	Math	STE
East Longmeadow	ALL LEVELS	**1,511**	**1,509**	**447**
	Advanced	258	269	74
	Proficient	928	513	184
	Needs Improvement	295	564	162
	Warning/Failing	30	163	27
Regular Education	Advanced	245	248	65
	Proficient	777	453	157
	Needs Improvement	154	412	123
	Warning/Failing	5	69	5
Disability	Advanced	13	21	9
	Proficient	151	60	27
	Needs Improvement	141	152	39
	Warning/Failing	25	94	22
Limited English Proficient	Advanced	0	0	0
	Proficient	0	0	0
	Needs Improvement	0	0	0
	Warning/Failing	0	0	0
White	Advanced	246	253	71
	Proficient	872	485	174
	Needs Improvement	272	526	149
	Warning/Failing	26	151	24
Hispanic	Advanced	2	0	0
	Proficient	11	4	1
	Needs Improvement	7	13	2
	Warning/Failing	0	3	1
African-American	Advanced	4	6	1
	Proficient	28	13	6
	Needs Improvement	10	18	7
	Warning/Failing	3	7	2
Asian	Advanced	5	8	1
	Proficient	15	11	2
	Needs Improvement	6	6	4
	Warning/Failing	1	2	0
Free or Reduced-Cost Lunch/No	Advanced	250	259	72
	Proficient	870	496	176
	Needs Improvement	270	511	142
	Warning/Failing	24	146	25
Free or Reduced-Cost Lunch/Yes	Advanced	8	10	2
	Proficient	58	17	8
	Needs Improvement	25	53	20
	Warning/Failing	6	17	2
Male	Advanced	99	146	46
	Proficient	484	280	92
	Needs Improvement	170	276	72
	Warning/Failing	18	66	13
Female	Advanced	159	123	28
	Proficient	444	233	92
	Needs Improvement	125	288	90
	Warning/Failing	12	97	14

n-Values by Grade and Year, 2003-2006

Grade	Year	ELA	Math	STE
Grade 3	2003	182	0	0
	2004	205	0	0
	2005	195	0	0
	2006	199	199	0
Grade 4	2003	206	206	0
	2004	190	190	0
	2005	206	206	0
	2006	202	201	0
Grade 5	2003	0	0	0
	2004	0	0	216
	2005	0	0	203
	2006	211	212	213
Grade 6	2003	0	194	0
	2004	0	222	0
	2005	0	227	0
	2006	210	209	0
Grade 7	2003	215	0	0
	2004	215	0	0
	2005	230	0	0
	2006	233	234	0
Grade 8	2003	0	230	0
	2004	0	217	216
	2005	0	211	211
	2006	234	232	234
Grade 10	2003	221	221	0
	2004	201	199	0
	2005	238	238	0
	2006	222	222	0
All Grades	2003	824	851	0
	2004	811	828	432
	2005	869	882	414
	2006	1,511	1,509	447

Notes

Trend data include grades for which testing was administered for each subject in all four years. The following grades are included in the trend data for 2003-2006 reported in Figures/Tables 15-22 and in the table of n-values by grade and year:
English language arts (ELA): 3, 4, 7, 10
Math: 4, 6, 8, 10
Science and technology/engineering (STE): 5, 8

Data for science and technology/engineering (STE) are not included in computing overall proficiency and the average proficiency index (API); they will be included beginning in 2007 when STE becomes a graduation requirement.

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

Subgroup inclusion is based on the number of students and the number of schools in the district. To be included as reportable, a subgroup must have at least 10 times the number of schools in the district. Subgroup inclusion for all years of the trend data is based on the 2006 data.

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

Rounded values may result in slight apparent discrepancies.

Standard Findings and Summaries

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

I. Leadership, Governance, and Communication

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

Standard Rating: Satisfactory

Findings:

- The district developed and implemented a comprehensive strategic plan with which the schools aligned their site-based improvement plans.
- District leaders developed, nurtured, and enjoyed strong collegial relationships with school committee members, town officials, and staff members.
- The district had not conducted a formal program evaluation of its special education program despite a significantly higher than average percentage of special education students enrolled within the district.
- The superintendent annually recommended educationally sound budgets to the school committee based upon the perceived needs of the district and its students.

- The National School Boards Association and the Massachusetts Association of School Committees recognized the district for the quality of its evaluation process of the superintendent.

Summary

The East Longmeadow school district has enjoyed considerable stability at the leadership level. The superintendent has served the district since his appointment in 1998. The majority of school committee members have served a minimum of two three-year terms. The combined total of elected years of service among the five committee members reached 24 after the recent election. Newly elected members received training from the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) and attended a daylong induction/orientation program provided by the superintendent that identified emerging issues and concerns. Stability and longevity also existed within the administrative ranks as several individuals served the district for many years. The stability of leadership permeated the district wherein administrators, staff, and community members voiced confidence in and valued the quality of work and the commitment of the staff to the district's students.

The superintendent annually presented educationally sound budgets to the school committee for its consideration. The budget requests represented the priority needs of the district and its students as perceived by district leaders and as articulated in the district strategic plan and the school plans. The district effectively communicated those needs, purposefully advocated for their adoption within the community, and successfully communicated their importance to town officials.

The superintendent effectively governed the district and developed plans to meet its needs. The district revised and implemented a comprehensive strategic plan that included 10 goals and ensured that site-based plans complied with it. A template for the site-based plans enabled each principal to provide a context for plan development that included the achievement of its students and an action plan that required a commitment to SMART goals, SMART being the acronym for specific and strategic, measurable and monitored, action oriented and agreed upon, realistic and results oriented, and timed and tracked, that focused the improvement efforts at each school. District leaders regularly reviewed and annually reported to the school committee the progress made in the achievement of both district and site-based goals.

The superintendent met weekly with district leaders to share issues of mutual interest and concern and to stay abreast of school-based activities, events, and issues. The superintendent delegated authority to district principals and held them accountable for the success of their respective school and its students. Principals appreciated the confidence that the superintendent placed in them and recognized that his evaluation of their performance rested on their success in achieving their goals and their success in meeting the standards described in their evaluation document.

The district lacked a formal program evaluation process with respect to its special education program to determine the reason that special education students represented a high proportion of district students. Perceptions that families may have become attracted to the district due to the quality of educational programs may have some merit, yet a more formal program analysis may yield additional insights as to the root cause of such high special education enrollment rates.

The superintendent and school committee enjoyed a collegial relationship with leaders of the East Longmeadow Education Association. The superintendent met regularly with association leaders and, along with a member of the school committee, met monthly with building representatives and association leaders to share mutual concerns and anticipate potential disputes.

Indicators

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the period under review, the district revised and implemented a strategic plan. Based upon a review of the documents provided, the plan described the mission, belief statements, guiding principles, and strategic goals of the district. Initially adopted in 1999, the district revised the plan in 2004 and set the educational focus for the district for the ensuing five years. According to the superintendent and corroborated by members of the school committee, the plan

and its accompanying goals enabled the district to maintain its focus and direction during the period under review. The process used to create and revise the plan included all constituents within the community. Through the use of an internal and external scan, constituents identified priorities for the district from the perspective of staff members as well as that of students, parents, and community members. The superintendent created and distributed a survey entitled "What is hot and what is not" in an effort to gather the opinions and interests of the East Longmeadow educational community.

The district leadership team assembled and organized the proposed priorities into a cohesive and coherent document. The team identified common themes that indicated appropriate priorities to which the school committee and district leaders applied realistic and attainable objectives. The plan included student performance goals driven by assessment data that articulated the need to improve student achievement and revise programs and redirect resources as necessary. Strategic goal #10 required the district to "Enable all students to pass the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS)." A review of the MCAS data revealed that in the 2006 test administration, 65 percent of district students scored in the 'Advanced' and 'Proficient' categories, compared to the statewide average of 56 percent.

According to the superintendent and other district leaders, student achievement data caused the district to institute a new math program, the Connected Math Program (CMP), six years ago at the middle school level; pilot the Investigations program at the elementary school; and map the district's curriculum based upon the concepts shared with the staff by national education consultant Heidi Hayes Jacobs.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district enjoyed and nurtured respectful and collegial relationships with the school committee members during the time under review. According to the superintendent and corroborated by members of the school committee, each newly elected member participated in

the On Board training administered by the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC). Additionally, each newly elected member received an induction briefing from the superintendent concerning emerging issues, concerns, and priorities within the district. On average, these induction meetings lasted one day or more. School committee members acknowledged and praised the energy and effort of the superintendent to brief them and enable them to "hit the ground running."

The school committee regularly reviewed student achievement data through presentations by district leaders at its twice-monthly scheduled meetings. The superintendent made comprehensive presentations through an annual report of the district's progress on meeting the goals of the strategic plan. Similarly, principals reported progress achieved on the School Improvement Plans (SIPs) each June. The committee also reviewed presentations from the principals each October when they outlined their respective SIP for that year. According to school committee members, the committee reached its decisions, particularly budgetary decisions, being mindful of performance data and the corresponding impact on student achievement.

The district did not use a formal policy development/revision process during the period under review. The district determined policy revisions on an ad hoc basis. According to the superintendent and corroborated by school committee members, from time to time the superintendent and/or individual school committee members identified policies in need of revision or creation. This process did not enable the district to review policies on a consistent, predictable, and regularly scheduled basis.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the period under review, the district relied on limited data, except at the elementary level, in making programmatic decisions. The elementary schools introduced the use of the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE), and Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) in an effort to better

understand the challenges faced by students in English language arts. However, the district lacked formative assessment data with which to make program decisions and modifications. For example, the district did not use data to analyze its special education program particularly with respect to achievement in mathematics, where special education students were not making AYP. In 2005-2006, special education students comprised 23 percent of district students, six percentage points higher than the state average. According to its 2006-2007 No Child Left Behind (NCLB) report card, the district's special education students failed to meet AYP in math in grades 3-5 and in grades 6-8. Based on the most recent MCAS results, the DOE had identified the middle school as in need of corrective action as a result of the low performance in math of its special education students.

According to the superintendent, the director of curriculum, instruction, and assessment reviewed, organized, and disseminated the MCAS data. The leadership team, consisting of central office administrators and school-based leaders, analyzed and identified strengths, weaknesses, and trends and discussed potential intervention strategies as appropriate. During the period under review and based on documentation provided by the district, each school focused its improvement efforts in the area of increasing overall student achievement. A review of the SIPs submitted to the EQA revealed that in 2005-2006, each school described and committed itself to goals and objectives that focused on the improvement of student achievement in the areas of ELA and mathematics. These goals, entitled SMART goals, SMART being the acronym for specific and strategic; measurable and monitored; action oriented and agreed upon; realistic and results oriented; and timed and tracked, provided the focus for the work of each school. The district, through its analysis of data, enabled each school to develop goals consistent with the strategic plan that addressed the needs of its school population.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

East Longmeadow Public Schools aligned its district strategic plan and its SIPs during the period under review. A review of the site-based plans and the strategic plan and interviews with district

leaders revealed a direct correlation and connection between the district's priorities and those of each school within the district. The district adopted one template to ensure consistency and clarity in the formulation of each site-based plan. Based upon the district template, each plan provided a context in which the school determined and designed its goals. The template included the following components: 1) introduction; 2) school mission statement; 3) school philosophy (optional); 4) shared decision-making committee; 5) school demographic data; 6) student achievement data; 7) site-based professional development; 8) annual needs assessment plan; 9) parent involvement in the school; 10) safety and discipline data; 11) school environment, culture, and diversity; 12) extracurricular activities for students; and 13) school site educational SMART goals and improvement of student performance.

Schools set a minimum of three SMART goals, two of which addressed the improvement of student achievement. Student performance data cited in component 6 of the plan influenced the goals set, particularly in the disciplines of ELA and mathematics. A review of the 2005-2006 SIPs revealed that each school in the district set a goal for the improvement of instruction in ELA and mathematics and an increase in student achievement in each area.

According to district leaders and in compliance with the requirements of the SMART goal template, each goal included the following: 1) the identification of the district strategic goal to which it correlated; 2) an action step; 3) method of measurement; 4) person responsible for monitoring; and 5) the intended results.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district allocated its resources based on educational priorities and on a per pupil basis within the schools. According to the superintendent, the district did not "track" money to individual students or groups of students. The district preferred to be neutral in its allocations and ensured that equitable resources remained available to all students. The district dispersed its Title I funds to both Mapleshade Elementary School and Birchland Park Middle School, in accordance with

the guidelines of the federal government. The district's participation in the METCO program provided approximately $250,000 in additional state funding to partially offset the cost of enrolling approximately 50 students from Springfield in the East Longmeadow schools. The district employed MCAS teachers at the secondary level in an effort to reduce the number of students who had not yet reached the 'Proficient' 'level on the MCAS exams.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The superintendent annually recommended an educationally sound budget to the school committee during the period under review. Based upon interviews with the superintendent and members of the school committee, the district began its budget development process each October. Principals presented school priorities at district leadership team meetings. The school business manager identified and calculated the cost of contractual obligations and other fixed expenditures. District leaders subsequently prioritized other budgetary requests and presented the budget to the school committee in December. The school committee conducted a public meeting on the budget and elicited comments from the community. In January of each year, the school committee adopted its needs-based budget and forwarded it to the town-wide appropriations committee for its consideration. The school committee and appropriations committee engaged in further discussions and negotiations until both parties reached an acceptable town-wide balanced budget. Annually, the appropriations committee presented the school budget as a line item within the town budget for adoption at the town meeting.

Throughout the process, the superintendent and district leaders acted as advocates for and as a resource to the school committee and town officials in the final adoption of the school budget. The priorities reflected in the school budget represented the adopted district strategic goals and the SMART educational goals set within each SIP. The SMART goals explicitly anticipated the improvement of student achievement and guided the budgetary decision-making in this regard.

The adopted FY 2004 school budget lacked sufficient funds to maintain the current level of service. As a result, the district eliminated 14 positions. In ensuing fiscal year budgets, the district restored a number of the positions eliminated. Despite these restorations, the district lacked the capacity to provide additional oversight in the area of overall program evaluation and effectiveness.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the period under review, the district annually reported to the school committee its progress on achieving the goals set in both the district strategic plan and the SIPs. Based on interviews with district leaders and corroborated by school committee members, the school committee scheduled a meeting each June that featured reports on the progress on the goals of the strategic plan and SIPs. The superintendent presented the district's achievement on each of the district goals. Similarly, the principals reported their success in the attainment of the SMART goals. At that meeting, the principals also identified those areas which they intended to include as SMART goals in the revised plan for the ensuing year that would present to the school committee the following October. Based upon a review of the documentation provided by the district and confirmed in interviews with district leaders, the plans included at least two SMART goals per year based on the improvement of student performance in ELA and mathematics.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district annually provided aggregated and disaggregated data to school staff. The director of curriculum, instruction, and assessment recorded and disseminated data either on Excel spreadsheets or through the use of the TestWiz program. Although the principals received some

training in the use of TestWiz, the director of curriculum, instruction, and assessment assumed the primary responsibility for data preparation and analysis at both the district and school levels. Based on interviews with the superintendent and other district leaders, the philosophy of the district and its practice focused the analysis of disaggregated data at the individual student level rather than at the subgroup level. According to the superintendent, the district believed in the importance of understanding the academic challenges each student faced. The superintendent commented that with this approach, the district better understood and attempted to meet the needs of each student within the district. Based upon documentation received from the Department of Education (DOE), the district had identifiable subgroup populations of special education students and low-income students. The district recognized the need to design programs that responded to the needs of its special education students. According to the superintendent, the district may have become a haven for families of disabled students due to the attractiveness of the programs that the district offered. With respect to its students from low-income families, the district had not designed any specific programs but expressed its commitment to provide high quality academic programs for all of its students.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district monitored student achievement data both formally and informally. Annually, the superintendent and principals presented student achievement data and their success in meeting strategic goals and SMART goals to the school committee. Additionally, weekly leadership team meetings included occasional updates on progress on SMART goals. According to the principals, the superintendent, in his evaluation of their performance, conducted a midyear review conference with each principal to ascertain the extent to which the SMART goals had been implemented. Principals set SMART goals annually and those goals reflected the academic needs of each school's students based upon an analysis of student achievement data. During the period under review, the district revised its curriculum and implemented curriculum maps in each discipline at grades preK-12. Based upon interviews with district leaders, six years ago the

district implemented the CMP at the middle school and more recently piloted the Investigations math program at the elementary level in an effort to raise student math achievement at grades K-8. The district also adopted the John Collins Writing Program in an effort to raise writing proficiency among district middle school students.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

According to the superintendent and members of the school committee, the committee conducted an annual evaluation of the superintendent. The district adopted an evaluation instrument that reflected the principles of effective administrative leadership. The instrument identified five leadership domains for which the committee held the superintendent accountable. The domains included: 1) policy and governance; 2) planning and assessment; 3) instructional leadership; 4) communications and community relations; and 5) professionalism. The domains included 30 separate performance standards and indicators that further clarified the more discrete areas in which the committee evaluated the performance of the superintendent. Annually, the superintendent and school committee set additional growth goals that became part of the superintendent's performance evaluation. Each year the superintendent completed a self-evaluation report based upon the five performance domains and submitted it to the committee for its consideration. In the preparation of the summative evaluation of the superintendent, each committee member completed the evaluation instrument and applied a rating scale to each of the 30 performance standards. The numerical scale ranged from one for unsatisfactory performance to nine for distinguished performance. The committee chair compiled the numerical ratings from each member and prepared a composite summative evaluation score. The composite document separated the superintendent's total evaluation rating score into one of four performance quadrants. The quadrants ranged from 30 to 67 points for not meeting performance standards to 203 to 270 points for exemplary performance. The annual compensation provided to the superintendent depended on the quadrant in which his performance score landed. According to school committee members, the district's success in the attainment of the strategic goals factored

into the evaluation of the superintendent, as well as those performance standards within the summative instrument that focused on the leadership efforts of the superintendent to advance student achievement. The chair prepared a summary narrative that captured in text the committee's assessment of the superintendent's performance. According to the superintendent and school committee members, the National School Boards Association (NSBA) and the MASC recognized the district for its adoption and implementation of the superintendent evaluation process.

The superintendent annually evaluated district leaders. A review of personnel files revealed that the superintendent evaluated each administrator during the period under review. The superintendent prepared his evaluation and used an instrument that reflected the Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership. Similar to the process used to evaluate the superintendent, the superintendent set goals with each administrator, reviewed each one's success in meeting SMART goals, held midyear progress conferences, and requested that each district leader complete the self-evaluation instrument. The superintendent prepared a numeric rating ranging from one to four for each of the 27 performance indicators and compiled a composite rating score. According to the principals, the superintendent based compensation decisions in part on the score received and the performance quadrant achieved, and principals' success in implementing the site-based goals.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The superintendent effectively and appropriately delegated authority and responsibility to each school principal and other district leaders during the period under review. According to principals, the superintendent set clear expectations and held them responsible for the success of their schools and students. The superintendent monitored their success in meeting SMART goals and based his evaluation of and compensation decisions for them in part on that success. The principal's success in his/her evaluation did not directly correlate to student achievement data.

According to the superintendent and corroborated by district leaders, each administrator understood the importance of raising student achievement. Failure to do so over a period of time would reflect negatively in his/her evaluation and ultimately in contract renewal decisions, by the school committee with respect to the superintendent's performance and by the superintendent with respect to the performance of other district leaders.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district promoted collegial and respectful relations with its staff and employee associations. According to the superintendent and corroborated by teachers' association leaders, the superintendent and association leaders met several times per month to share concerns, anticipate issues, and resolve potential disputes. The parties characterized these meetings as cordial, informative, and productive. The district also conducted a monthly meeting between association leaders, building representatives, a member of the school committee, and the superintendent. Similarly, these meetings identified issues, brainstormed resolutions, and avoided contentious disputes. Association leaders worked cooperatively with the school committee and district leaders to ensure that district students received a quality education. According to the superintendent, the teachers' association agreed to not receive a cost of living increase for FY 2007 in an effort to avoid staff layoffs and program reductions. Interviews with district leaders and teachers revealed to the EQA examiners a staff that valued and respected the contributions of each other and enjoyed the collaborative and congenial culture within the district.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district employed a variety of precautionary measures to ensure the safety of its students and staff. During the period under review, that district had in place safety plans at each of its schools. Visits by the EQA team members to district schools revealed that entrance to the buildings required the use of a buzzer system, visitor identification, a sign-in procedure, and the adornment of a visible visitor's badge. According to the superintendent, a camera surveillance system recorded activity outside the buildings. The district also equipped all of its buses with black boxes and some with cameras. According to principals interviewed, each classroom teacher possessed safety manuals, and the schools regularly scheduled emergency drills and lockdowns and practiced evacuation procedures.

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

II. Curriculum and Instruction

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

Standard Rating: Needs Improvement

Findings:

- East Longmeadow's documented curriculum lacked instructional strategies and resources; formative or benchmark assessments were generic and lacked mastery criteria.
- The district had an established process for aligning the curriculum and maintaining the alignment; curriculum development committees met regularly to make adjustments.
- The district had a cycle and defined procedure for curriculum development and renewal, involving a network of school-based and districtwide groups. Each group had a clear role and purpose.
- The quality of instruction in East Longmeadow varied from class to class and from school to school, according to classroom observations conducted by the EQA.
- Central office administrators took action to close the gap in the district between ELA and mathematics achievement by introducing an inquiry-based approach to mathematics at the elementary schools and increasing instructional time at both the elementary and middle school levels.
- The district lacked clarity about whose role it was to improve teachers' instruction. Principals focused primarily on implementation of the curriculum rather than the quality of instruction in their classroom walk-throughs.

- Technology was not integrated into the curriculum, and little evidence was presented or observed of the use of technology to individualize learning.

Summary

The documented curriculum in East Longmeadow contained some, but not all, of the suggested essential components. Curricula for the tested core content areas included standards, benchmarks, timelines, and assessments. Observed assessments were described in global and generic terms and the district had few curriculum-based measures. Instructional strategies and resources were deliberately not included in the curriculum. Some benchmark assessments at the high school level and in science districtwide were more specific, but the criteria for determining mastery were not stated.

Coordinated teams with defined roles established the infrastructure in East Longmeadow to ensure horizontal and vertical alignment of the district's curricula. Monitoring of the implementation of curricula at the same grade levels at the elementary schools or in the same courses at the high school ensured consistency and uniformity. The vertical alignment facilitated the articulation of curricula, especially at the junctures between schools. The teams were under the central supervision of the director of curriculum, instruction, and assessment, in cooperation with the superintendent and building principals.

Each school in East Longmeadow had adequate leadership to oversee the use, alignment, consistency, and delivery of curriculum. While there was a process to ensure consistency of implementation of curriculum, the district did not have a reliable way of determining the effectiveness of curricular delivery because it lacked formative measures of student progress. Building principals collaborated with department heads and other specialists on most curriculum-related tasks. Prior to the period under review, curriculum development, revision, and monitoring were largely site based under the direction of the building principals. During the period under review, the locus of control moved closer to the central office in order to give greater focus and direction to efforts to create more consistency between the intermediate (grade 3-5) schools, and to improve overall student performance, particularly in mathematics. East Longmeadow had an established cycle for curriculum development and modification and adopted materials based on research on best practices.

Instructional leadership in East Longmeadow was broadly based, encompassing a number of individuals, and interviewees indicated a lack of clarity about those actually responsible for performing the role. While East Longmeadow administrators actively monitored teachers in the classroom, their focus was more on fidelity of implementation of the curriculum than the quality of instruction. The EQA examiners found little evidence of high expectations for student learning in observed classes.

The use of technology to individualize instruction was limited in East Longmeadow, and the adequacy of provisions for technology varied from school to school. During the period under review, East Longmeadow assessed the relationship between learning time and student achievement and increased instructional time in mathematics.

The sources of formative and summative student performance data were limited in the district, and student achievement results were used primarily for curriculum revision, identification of struggling and accelerated students, and provision of support services. Based on an analysis of the results of the MCAS tests, the primary summative measure used, the district adopted a scientifically-based program in mathematics. There was little systematic use of achievement data to determine professional development topics and improve teaching and learning.

Indicators

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The documented curriculum in East Longmeadow contained some, but not all, of the essential components. Curricula for the tested core content areas of ELA, mathematics, and science included standards, benchmarks, timelines, and assessments. The assessments were loosely described, especially for ELA and mathematics at the elementary and middle school levels. The district had few curriculum-based measures in any domain during most of the period under

review. According to district administrators and teachers, instructional strategies and resources were not included in the East Longmeadow curriculum by design.

Teachers and administrators told the EQA team that the district curriculum guides were originally developed in 2000-2001. These guides consisted of student learning outcomes from the state curriculum frameworks, categorized by standards and arranged by grade level. Teachers and administrators told the EQA examiners that the guides were living documents and revisions were frequent. Based primarily upon analysis of district MCAS test results, changes were made in both the sequence of the outcomes at a grade level and the assignment of outcomes to grade levels.

East Longmeadow augmented the curriculum guides with maps in each domain at every grade level. The maps consisted of monthly timelines, benchmark skills, and related assessments. Teachers and administrators told the EQA examiners that teachers and department heads developed the maps over a three-year period beginning in 2002-2003. A consultant engaged by the district framed the process and provided assistance to staff over the first two years. In interviews, administrators and teachers told the EQA team that teachers have since revised the maps at least annually under the direction of grade-level or disciplinary department heads. The director of curriculum, instruction, and assessment provided guidance and technical support for this task in consultation with the building principals. Teachers and administrators gave the EQA team many examples of changes in the content, sequencing, and assignment of benchmark skills resulting from this deliberative process.

Assessments correlated with the benchmark skills were described generically in the maps, especially in ELA and mathematics at grades K-8. For example, “homework, worksheets and tests and quizzes” were the assessment strategies associated with the grade 5 mathematics skill “Recognize and use the commutative and associative properties.” In interviews with the EQA team, administrators and teachers explained that it was difficult to be more specific since teacher-generated tests and unit tests were not formally and systematically used to assess student progress, and East Longmeadow had not yet adopted standardized formative or summative measures in mathematics.

Interviewees went on to say that the DIBELS at grades K-2 and the GRADE at grades 3-5 would be included in the curriculum as measures of the reading benchmarks once all elementary teachers were trained to administer them and interpret the results.

Benchmark assessments in ELA and mathematics at the high school level and in science at grades K-12 were specific, but the criteria for determining mastery were not stated. For example, in the Honors English 9 curriculum, "Short story unit test" was the assessment associated with a number of benchmark skills including "identify foreshadowing." While short story unit test referred to a specific test administered by teachers of the course, the mastery criteria were not described. Similarly, in the science guide specific labs and projects were often cited as benchmark assessments, but without listing the mastery criteria.

Administrators and teachers told the EQA examiners that instructional strategies were intentionally not addressed in district curriculum documents. They explained that teachers exchanged promising practices at grade-level, departmental, and faculty meetings, and went on to state that many teachers already had a repertoire of strategies and techniques that went well beyond what could be reduced to writing in a guide. In response to a question from the examiners about the need to direct beginning and new teachers, administrators and teachers stated that assigned mentors and seasoned colleagues provided opportunities for growth through professional dialogue, cross-observations, and assistance in the moment. Citing the example of a new teacher who brought much to the department, a department head stated that excessive control might prevent new teachers from offering new techniques and a different perspective. Administrators and teachers added that veteran staff would regard the inclusion of instructional strategies as prescriptive and a constraint on individual creativity and initiative. One teacher concluded, "We need to maintain the integrity of our own styles."

The district curriculum guides did not include a listing of resources and supplementary materials associated with the benchmarks and standards. Administrators and teachers stated that this also was intentional. Administrators told the EQA team that texts and supplements were listed separately in the high school program of studies, and by grade and discipline for the entire district in a comprehensive document revised annually and issued to staff. The EQA examiners reviewed both the program of studies and the comprehensive list. Since these sources were not

incorporated in the curriculum, the application of the texts and supplements in realizing the learning objectives was unclear. In answer to further questions, some interviewees stated that it was not possible to include resources in the guides because the two intermediate schools (grades 3-5) used different basal readers and small texts. Others stated that while the learning objectives were common and uniform, teachers at each school had discretion to choose their own resources and materials.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

East Longmeadow had an established infrastructure to ensure both horizontal and vertical alignment of the curricula. Grade-level and departmental teams, composed of teachers and department heads, monitored implementation of curricula at the same grade levels at the elementary and middle schools and in the same courses at the high school to ensure consistency and uniformity in content, pacing, and rigor. Teams, composed of teachers and department heads representing grade spans within the district, monitored the vertical alignment and facilitated the articulation of curricula, especially at the junctures between schools. All of these groups were under the central supervision of the district director of curriculum, instruction, and assessment, who collaborated with the superintendent and building principals.

Administrators and teachers told the EQA team that the three-year curriculum mapping initiative in East Longmeadow resulted in an aligned curriculum. East Longmeadow teachers and department heads wrote a curriculum map for each discipline at every grade level and for every high school course. The EQA team reviewed these maps. Each contained content standards and student learning outcomes ordered sequentially in a monthly implementation calendar. Administrators told the EQA examiners that these maps were revised continuously, and adjustments in the sequence and emphasis were frequent. Content was also modified to address gaps and redundancies and to align it with changing state and national standards. Administrators gave examples of these adjustments.

Administrators and teachers told the EQA team that elementary grade-level teams met up to twice each month with their department heads. During these meetings, pacing guides and

benchmarks were used as references to ensure uniformity of content in each discipline from class to class at a grade level within each school. One teacher told the EQA team that these meetings kept "everybody on the same page." Elementary principals told the EQA examiners that they monitored horizontal and vertical alignment of the curriculum by attending certain grade-level meetings, meeting monthly with their department heads, and visiting classrooms.

One elementary principal stated that she walked through every class at a grade level without notice on a given day during ELA, math, and science times to determine how well teachers were abiding by the curriculum guides and expectations. She followed up when teachers did not have child-centered reasons for deviating from the guides. In interviews, teachers at every level confirmed that principals made frequent classroom walk-throughs.

Grade-level teachers and department heads in the two intermediate schools met monthly to ensure uniformity of the curriculum from grade to grade within the schools. Middle school content area department heads and teachers met with their counterparts at the other grade levels, and high school department heads met with their teachers once each month. These meetings served the dual purpose of ensuring both horizontal and vertical alignment.

The director of curriculum held separate monthly meetings with K-5, 6-8, and 9-12 department heads to ensure vertical and horizontal alignment of curricula. Occasionally the vertical meetings overlapped by a grade to enhance articulation and continuity. In 2005-2006, a literacy committee consisting of the two building principals, a literacy specialist, and the director of curriculum, instruction, and assessment met to address the need for greater uniformity between the two intermediate schools in curricula, programs, and interventions. In 2006-2007, the superintendent created a similar committee with a focus on greater consistency between the two schools in mathematics and improving student performance in mathematics.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Each school in East Longmeadow had adequate leadership to oversee the use, alignment, consistency, and delivery of curricula. While it had a process to ensure the consistency of implementation of curricula, the district did not have a reliable way of determining the effectiveness of curricular delivery during the course of the year since it lacked formative measures of student progress.

Principals were accountable for the accomplishment of the academic goals in their SIPs, but there were few incremental assessments of progress toward the accomplishment of learning outcomes and SIP academic goals. No formative assessments were in place in mathematics, with the exception of teacher-generated tests and unit tests, and these were not systematically analyzed. Administrators told the EQA team that East Longmeadow was just beginning to use the DIBELS and GRADE formatively to assess early literacy skill acquisition and identify students in need of remediation.

Although building principals acknowledged their ultimate responsibility for curriculum leadership and were usually identified as leaders by teachers in their schools, the EQA examiners found that leadership in the schools was distributed. That is, principals collaborated closely with department heads and other specialists on most curriculum-related tasks and delegated certain responsibilities, especially those requiring content expertise or deep data analysis.

Prior to the period under review, curriculum development, as well as revision and monitoring, was largely site based under the direction of the building principals. During the period under review, the locus of control moved closer to the central office in order to give greater focus and direction to efforts to create more consistency between the two intermediate schools, and to improve overall student performance, particularly in mathematics. The EQA examiners learned that the intermediate schools' literacy and mathematics committees and the selection of Investigations to supplement the Scott Foresman-Addison Wesley mathematics at grades K-5 were largely central office initiatives.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The EQA examiners found little evidence of a formal process for providing active leadership and support for effective instructional strategies, techniques, and methods in each school. There was also a lack of specificity about the individuals in the district responsible for providing instructional leadership. Instructional strategies and techniques were not components of the district curriculum documents. Few recommendations for improving instruction were found in a review of a representative sample of teacher evaluations. In observations of district classes, the EQA examiners did not find many examples of the use of instructional planning to accommodate a range of different learning styles and variation of instructional techniques.

In interviews with the EQA team, administrators and teachers stated that instructional leadership was broadly based, but the number of individuals cited as instructional leaders was so encompassing that there appeared to be lack of clarity about who was actually responsible for performing the role. For example, in answer to a question about who provides instructional leadership, some interviewees cited building principals, others department heads, and still others mentors and even colleagues. Many teachers and administrators stated that everyone provided instructional leadership. One said, “We all do it, and there’s no one in charge.”

In interviews with the EQA examiners, principals and assistant principals stated that they were the only evaluators of their teachers and that it was a challenge for them to complete the pre- and post-conferences, observations, and written reports associated with the evaluation procedure. While they said that they commented on the quality of instruction and made specific recommendations for improving instructional techniques and methods in evaluations of teachers’ performance, the EQA examiners found very few examples of this in a review of a sample of teacher evaluations.

Department heads told the EQA team that they did not routinely observe teachers in the classroom and were not evaluators. They further stated that they occasionally discussed

techniques and methods at team and departmental meetings, but not systematically or on a regular basis. The EQA team reviewed the job description of department heads and found no references to dissemination of strategies for improving instruction among their duties and responsibilities.

The East Longmeadow curriculum maps and guides did not contain any suggested or recommended instructional strategies. Teachers and administrators stated that this was because the district honored the professionalism of teachers by according them discretion to use the methods most compatible with their teaching styles and preferences. One administrator stated that teachers were already using best practices and there was no need to be prescriptive in the curriculum documents.

The EQA examiners observed lessons in 46 district classrooms. Teachers were observed planning multiple tasks that engaged all levels of learners in 15 percent of the these classrooms, and teachers were observed engaging in a variety of techniques, such as differentiated instruction, in nine percent of the classrooms.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

East Longmeadow had an established cycle for curriculum development and modification and used research about scientifically-based programs and best practices to inform decisions about program adoption and instructional materials. The district had few summative and formative measures to supplement the MCAS tests. Analysis of the MCAS test results consisted primarily of five-year trend data and student responses to test items. The interpreted data were used to modify the curriculum and to provide support and assistance to at-risk students. Formal subgroup analysis in East Longmeadow was limited to the special education population.

Central office administrators told the EQA team that in 2003-2004, the school committee had suspended the three-year curriculum development, review, and revision process set forth in

district documents to support the curriculum mapping initiative. The cycle was scheduled to resume in 2007-2008.

Administrators and teachers further stated that grade-level and department teachers and department heads updated the curriculum maps throughout the process, keeping them current. The district had an established infrastructure and a clear process for curriculum development and revision. The district defined the roles and relationships of the school and district teams involved in curriculum development.

Administrators and teachers told the EQA examiners that the superintendent and central office administrators selected Investigations in Number, Data, and Space to supplement the core mathematics program at grades K-5, based on a review of the guiding principles in the state mathematics framework and research on scientifically-based programs. The need for the program was demonstrated by district MCAS trend results showing that East Longmeadow students consistently performed better in ELA than in mathematics, and an item analysis revealing student weaknesses in mathematical reasoning and number sense. According to EQA data, in 2006 the proficiency gap in East Longmeadow was seven proficiency index points in ELA and 22 points in math.

In 2005-2006, the district sponsored an in-service education series intended to help elementary teachers blend Investigations with the core Scott Foresman-Addison Wesley base program. In 2006-2007, Investigations was piloted at the Mountain View School and was voluntarily used in some classrooms at the Meadow Brook and Mapleshade Schools as part of a phased-in adoption procedure.

In 2003-2004, East Longmeadow was awarded a literacy grant. Under the terms of the grant, the DIBELS testing began in grade 1. Over the next two years, teachers in grades K-2 were trained in the DIBELS. In 2005-2006, the GRADE test was adopted in grades 3-5. Central administrators and building principals told the EQA team that these assessments would be used in the future to identify students requiring interventions and to assess the effectiveness of the district's early literacy curriculum. They further stated that the district was in the process of developing a balanced literacy program with guided reading in grades K-5 by supplementing the

Harcourt base program in grades K-2 and the Silver Burdett Ginn base program in grades 3-5 with trade books and leveled libraries.

Administrators told the EQA examiners that the district disaggregated achievement data on the special education population to determine whether students on Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) were making AYP. Administrators stated that the other district subgroups were statistically insignificant. A review of DOE data for 2005-2006 by the EQA team did not support this belief. According to DOE statistics, low-income students constituted six percent of the district population in East Longmeadow, and the district's low-income students performed below the level of the overall district population on the MCAS tests. In 2006, less than half of the students who qualified to receive free or reduced-cost lunch in East Longmeadow achieved proficiency.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the period under review, East Longmeadow assessed the relationship between learning time and student achievement. When trend data showed that district results in mathematics were consistently lower than in ELA, the district changed the approach at the elementary level in accordance with the guiding principles of the state mathematics framework and increased the length of the instructional period in mathematics for all grade K-5 students. According to interviewees, they did this to allow more time for constructivist and discovery methods. Administrators and teachers told the EQA team that the math period must allow time for a whole-group introductory lesson, exploration in small groups, and a whole-group conclusion conducted by the teacher. Mathematics time was also increased for at-risk students at the middle and high schools with the provision of supplemental services before, during, and after school.

Central office administrators and building principals told the EQA examiners that instructional time in mathematics was increased from 45 minutes in grades 1-5 to 60 minutes daily in grades 1-3, to 70 minutes in grade 4, and to 75 minutes in grade 5. At the middle school, instructional time in mathematics was increased by 45 minutes each week. At the high school, administrators

told the EQA examiners that although the overall time was constant, Algebra I was converted from a one-semester to a full-year course. As a result, students were enrolled in a 41-minute class for the full year instead of an 82-minute class for half the year. The math department intended to improve student retention of content and skills by making the change to a year-long course.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Technology was available in East Longmeadow during the period under review, but the adequacy of the provisions varied from school to school. For example, technology was state of the art and widely available at the new middle school but dated and sparse at the high school. The use of technology as an instructional tool was limited in all schools, except in technology education courses.

East Longmeadow reported to the DOE that the district had a student per modern computer ratio of 4.4 to one in 2004-2005. This compared favorably with the state average of 4.9 to one. All middle school classrooms and nearly all elementary school classrooms were wired for the Internet. East Longmeadow High School had four computer labs, but most classrooms lacked Internet access. Administrators reported that the high school was lagging behind in technology.

In school site visits, the EQA team saw computer labs with multiple stations at the Meadow Brook, Mountain View, and Mapleshade Schools. The new Birchland Park Middle School was equipped with computer labs and a television studio, and offered exploratory modules in technology engineering, television production, keyboarding, computer exploration, and computer applications. In the course of observing 46 district classes, the EQA examiners counted 117 computers, an average of 2.5 computers per class, but students were observed using computers for learning in only one of these classes, which was a computer programming class.

The EQA examiners reviewed the district K-12 technology curriculum, which contained standards, learning outcomes, examples of learning activities, and assessments to determine

mastery at each grade level, and the five-year district technology plan, which contained specific goals to increase the amount and use of technology. This plan described four levels of teacher competency and a related training program. Teachers and administrators stated that the goal was to ensure that every teacher would attain Level I competency, and also indicated that most teachers had at least Level I skills. The district recently offered teachers credit for online courses through the professional development program.

Administrators reported that the town provided the schools with $158,250 in a warrant article for hardware renewal during the period under review. The district received an additional $250,000 yearly under a three-year warrant article, beginning in 2006-2007. In interviews, teachers told the EQA team that the district lacked adequate funds for software. For example, applications of technology were limited in high school science, and interviewees stated that this was a constraint in aligning the district science curriculum with the Massachusetts Science and Technology/Engineering Curriculum Framework.

Each school had a technology expert on staff to troubleshoot and assist with computer operations, maintenance, and applications. This expert typically performed this role in addition to other duties and was paid a stipend. One administrator stated that assistive technology was provided to certain students under special education management by the special education department, and gave specific examples of technology for multiple-handicapped and hearing-impaired students.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

While East Longmeadow administrators actively monitored teachers in the classroom, according to interviewees, their focus was on fidelity of implementation of the curriculum rather than the quality of instruction. The examiners found little evidence of systematic monitoring of instruction followed by specific verbal or written commendations and recommendations. Principals encouraged informal sharing of best practices at some departmental and faculty meetings.

When asked to specify practices demonstrating high expectations for student learning, administrators stated that they hoped to observe student-centered rather than teacher-dominant instruction, with an emphasis on discovery learning and making meaning. One principal stated, "I look for who is doing the thinking." Administrators went on to say that they reviewed student work and projects for evidence of higher order cognitive skills, such as evaluation and interpretation. In interviews, teachers reported few instances of feedback from an administrator on the quality of student work and ways of increasing expectations for student learning following classroom visits. When asked by the EQA team, teachers gave different definitions of high expectations, indicating a lack of consensus and a need for agreement with common terms. According to classroom observations conducted by the EQA team, practices to raise the level of student engagement and cognition were not institutionalized, deeply rooted, or pervasive in East Longmeadow. According to EQA observations, high expectations were not evident in approximately one-third of district classes, and the frequency of high expectations ranged from 79 percent at the lower elementary (K-2) level to 63 percent at the upper elementary (grades 3-5) level.

East Longmeadow offered opportunities for enrichment and acceleration. The district established a gifted and talented program nine years ago. Teachers and administrators described the program as "push in and pull out." Teachers conducted some of the activities within regular education classrooms and others outside the classroom and targeted learners who met specific eligibility criteria. This pull-out program removed higher performing students from the regular education program, in effect creating a homogeneous and accelerated instructional group. In 2004, East Longmeadow adopted an acceleration policy permitting students demonstrating proficiency to skip a grade or a required course.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Although East Longmeadow used formative and summative student achievement data for curriculum development and renewal, it did not necessarily use them to monitor and improve teachers' instruction or to provide resources and professional development to improve teaching and learning. The sources of student performance data were limited in East Longmeadow, and the district used the results primarily for curriculum revision, identification of struggling and accelerated students, provision of support services, and adoption of scientifically-based programs aligned with the standards in the state curriculum frameworks.

East Longmeadow was beginning to use the DIBELS and GRADE as formative assessments of early literacy skills. Teachers and administrators told the EQA team that the results were used to identify struggling students and to provide appropriate support services. During the period under review, the district was not yet ready to use the DIBELS, GRADE, and DRA as measures of curricular and instructional effectiveness. East Longmeadow lacked any standardized formative measures in mathematics, with the exception of tests used to determine placement and progress in algebra.

The district relied upon the MCAS test data as its primary summative measure. The MCAS test results were analyzed initially by central office administrators and building principals and subsequently in each school in an inclusive process involving the entire staff. Common final examinations were administered in some high school courses. Interviewees stated that the results informed decisions about curricula and programs rather than instruction, and the discussions were informal and sometimes undocumented.

Based upon a review of five-year MCAS trend data and an item analysis of student responses to questions in each domain, district administrators revised the sequence of the benchmarks in the curriculum guides and maps and adopted programs more consistent with the principles set forth in the state curriculum frameworks. As cited, East Longmeadow adopted Investigations in Number, Data, and Space in 2004 to supplement the Scott Foresman-Addison Wesley mathematics in grades K-5. During the period under review, the district was also progressively implementing a balanced literacy program in grades K-5, with guided reading techniques and

leveled classroom libraries. East Longmeadow provided professional development for teachers related to these initiatives.

Administrators told the EQA examiners that the district had not formally and routinely identified the instructional implications of student performance data. They further stated that administrators and teachers needed more training on the systematic use of formative and summative data to improve teaching and learning and to perform root cause analysis.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the site visit, the EQA examiners observed a total of 46 randomly selected classrooms and recorded the presence or absence of 26 attributes reflected in the Principles of Effective Teaching. The attributes were grouped into five categories: classroom management, instructional practice, expectations, student activity and behavior, and climate. The EQA examiners checked the attributes that they observed in each of the five categories during their time spent in the classroom. The EQA examiners visited classrooms at the district's five schools as follows: 21 classrooms at the elementary schools, 11 classrooms at the middle school, and 14 classrooms at the high school. In total, the EQA examiners made observations in 19 ELA classrooms, 12 math classrooms, 11 science classrooms, and four classrooms of other subjects.

Classroom management refers to the maintenance of order and structure within the classroom. Positive indicators of classroom management were evident in 90 percent of the classrooms observed districtwide, with 96 percent at the elementary school level, 95 percent at the middle school level, and 75 percent at the high school level.

Instructional practice was the largest category reviewed by the examiners. Effective instructional practice is considered evident when the teacher's questions transcend direct recall and include open-ended questions that require the use of higher order thinking skills. Students

should be encouraged to go beyond their initial responses, to analyze, to synthesize, to compare and contrast, and to explain their own thinking. Class time should be focused on student learning. Students who have finished their work should be provided with other appropriate tasks; students who are off task should be redirected to their task. The work should engage all students; it should be age-appropriate, and attuned to many learning modalities, including auditory, visual, and kinesthetic. The pace of the class should be appropriate, challenging, and engaging for all students. Instruction should be differentiated so that all learners are challenged. The lesson should be clearly aligned with the state curriculum frameworks and either posted on the board or cited in the teacher's planner. The lesson's objectives should be clear and explicitly articulated. The teacher should use standards-based instruction to set objectives, to plan activities, to assess the effect of the lesson, and to measure progress for all learners. Positive indicators of instructional practice were evident in 64 percent of the classrooms observed districtwide, with 72 percent at the elementary school level, 58 percent at the middle school level, and 57 percent at the high school level. Teachers were observed planning multiple tasks that engaged all levels of learners in 13 percent of district classrooms. Teachers were observed engaging in a variety of instructional techniques, such as differentiated instruction, in six percent of district classes.

Expectations refers to the maintenance of high standards for students by teachers. Evidence of high expectations could include recent examples of high quality student work posted in the classroom. In addition, high quality work should be evident through rubrics that may sometimes be generated by students. Tasks should be challenging for all students, and all students should have access to the same curriculum, although the instruction and strategies may be adapted to the needs of students. The teacher should clearly maintain and communicate high expectations for student work during class time. All students should be expected to be on task and engaged in the lesson. High expectations for students were evident in 68 percent of the classrooms observed districtwide, with 68 percent at the elementary school level, 68 percent at the middle school level, and 70 percent at the high school level. Classroom time was focused on challenging academic tasks and the teacher communicated expectations of high quality of work from students in 56 percent of observed district classrooms.

Positive student activity and behavior are considered evident when students are actively engaged in the learning process. They must show a clear understanding of the objective of the lesson and interact with the teacher and each other in accomplishing the tasks at hand. They should be attentive and responsive. While the environment may be busy and constructive, it must also be controlled and orderly. There should be few distractions, and the learning process must be clearly evident. Indicators of positive student activity and behavior were evident in 67 percent of the classrooms districtwide, with 69 percent at the elementary school level, 68 percent at the middle school level, and 63 percent at the high school level. Students were observed using technology for learning in only one district classroom, a computer programming class.

Finally, the concept of *climate* is considered evident when the classroom is welcoming, and the teacher is an active listener and treats all students with respect. Students should listen attentively to and be respectful of all other students. Many resources and means beyond the textbook should be available for learning; these may include technology, manipulatives, cassettes, visuals, overhead projectors, and a classroom library. Positive indicators of climate were evident in 83 percent of the classrooms observed districtwide, with 98 percent at the elementary school level, 85 percent at the middle school level, and 57 percent at the high school level.

Summary of Classroom Observations

	Number of Classrooms				Average Class Size	Average Paraprofs. per Class	Computers		
	ELA	Math	Other	Total			Total Number	Number for Student Use	Average Students per Computer
Elementary	13	4	4	21	21.7	1.0	48	40	11.4
Middle	1	4	6	11	19.4	0.3	55	47	4.5
High	5	4	5	14	18.6	0.1	44	30	8.7
Total	19	12	15	46	20.2	0.6	147	117	7.9

	Classroom Management	Instructional Practice	Expectations	Student Activity & Behavior	Climate
Elementary					
Total observations	81	136	57	87	62
Maximum possible	84	189	84	126	63
Avg. percent of observations	96%	72%	68%	69%	98%
Middle					
Total observations	42	57	30	45	28
Maximum possible	44	99	44	66	33
Avg. percent of observations	95%	58%	68%	68%	85%
High					
Total observations	42	72	39	53	24
Maximum possible	56	126	56	84	42
Avg. percent of observations	75%	57%	70%	63%	57%
Total					
Total observations	165	265	126	185	114
Maximum possible	184	414	184	276	138
Avg. percent of observations	90%	64%	68%	67%	83%

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

III. Assessment and Program Evaluation

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

Standard Rating: Needs Improvement

Findings:

- The district analyzed its MCAS data through its organization of school-based horizontal and districtwide vertical teams.
- The district was in the process of deciding how to use technology to manage, and aid in the analysis of, data from formative assessments, the MCAS tests, and report cards in order to increase efficiency and to help inform all aspects of decision-making.
- The district had established formative assessment practices in ELA at the elementary level but primarily relied on teacher assessments, anecdotal information, and report card grades in math to inform practice.
- The district was not yet using formative assessments at the middle school level in ELA or math, and district subgroups were not making AYP in math.
- The district used vertical and school-based teams to help establish SMART goals in each SIP, but the analysis was limited to analysis of the MCAS data and anecdotal performance data, rather than a system of formative assessments used in each school, subject area, or specific program.

- The district had developed a standards-based report card at grades K-5 and was "in the process" of reporting student achievement based on a standards-based curriculum.
- The high school's system of grading students every 30 school days and contacting parents every 15 school days with regard to students' progress served to keep teachers, students, and parents informed of student achievement and to inform teacher instruction.

Summary

In 2003-2004, East Longmeadow eliminated the use of the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) across the district. For many years this assessment had been routinely administered to students at most grade levels. It was expensive to administer, and since it was a summative evaluation it had limited usefulness to inform instruction in a standards-based curriculum. Similarly, the district had also used the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test for many years, but teachers came to realize that the grade-level expectations for reading were too low and that using "the Gates" did little to inform instruction. Shortly after that, through a grade 1 reading grant from the Department of Education, the district began to use one of the recommended assessments, the DIBELS, to inform instruction in reading. In East Longmeadow, this began the building of an assessment system from the bottom up. The district added the DRA and GRADE at various grade levels to give teachers the information they needed to better plan instruction in English language arts. This assessment system in ELA was not in use at the middle school through grade 10 at the high school at the time of the review.

In math, the district continued to depend on the use of teacher-generated assessments, textbook unit tests, or the MCAS tests to gather information on math achievement. Therefore, no standardized, formative assessment was used in math at any level of the district in order to inform instruction, particularly at the middle school level, where district subgroups were not making AYP and the district was in corrective action.

Since East Longmeadow's assessment system was incomplete in ELA and math across the district, the district was limited in using data to internally evaluate programs in order to improve them. Although the district participated in mandatory or customary external evaluations, such as the Coordinated Program Review (CPR) or accreditations by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) and the New England Association of Schools and

Colleges (NEASC), it did not conduct any internal evaluations of programs, such as special education or middle school math, which was a weak performance area. Without gathering internal programmatic data, the district was unable to make informed decisions regarding modifications that should be made. Additionally, without looking at the quality of internal programs, the district was unable to determine whether the SMART goals, recommended by school improvement councils throughout the district as a means to improve student achievement, were having the desired effect.

In response to the need to raise student achievement for subgroup populations, the district added more time on learning at each school in both ELA and math based on anecdotal data and some underlying assumptions about the high quality of instruction and the use of "best teaching practices." To improve student achievement, each school added more time both within the school day and after the regular school day, at all levels.

During the period under review, the district relied heavily on conjecture and anecdotal evidence from teachers and administrators to determine whether changes made in a program were actually contributing to student achievement.

Indicators

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

According to interviewees, administrators and teachers analyzed the MCAS data at each school by grade level. Teachers looked for trends and patterns and did an item analysis to determine which topics were problematic for students. The district used formative and summative assessments less consistently. At various levels, teachers increasingly used summative tests to sort and place students into leveled programs, such as gifted and talented, reading instead of foreign language, pre-algebra in middle school, remedial courses in lieu of an elective, and honors or AP courses at the high school.

In 2003-2004, the district discontinued the use of the ITBS due to a reduction in the school budget. The district continued to use the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test until the receipt of a grade 1 reading grant at Meadow Brook School for grades preK-2, when the DIBELS was chosen and teachers were trained to use it and interpret its results. Seeking more formative information, the school began using the DRA in 2006-2007 and was in the process of looking at all the information to make decisions about reading instruction.

The district had two schools for grades 3-5. According to interviewees, the district established a literacy committee one or two years prior to the EQA review to ensure there was a core of consistency in reading practices and assessment at grades K-5. At grades 3-5, the GRADE was administered twice a year, which began in one school in 2005-2006 and in the other school in 2006-2007. The DRA was also given to struggling readers, numbering 20 to 40 students in each school, as a second source of formative information. The district did not give a comparable formative assessment in mathematics.

At the middle school, all students in grade 6 received reading instruction three times a week, in addition to ELA instruction. In the past they had taken the Gates-MacGinitie and, for the first time in 2006-2007, the district was giving the GRADE to all students. Interviewees stated that at the end of the year, the GRADE scores would be used as a basis, along with teacher recommendation and overall performance skills in a five-week exploratory experience, to determine whether a student would continue to take reading in grades 7 and 8, or would be offered the option to take French or Spanish as a foreign language. Throughout the period under review, teachers used the CMP at grade 6 and continued to use it at grades 7 and 8 unless teachers recommended that the student take pre-algebra and algebra in grades 7 and 8. The district did not administer any formative or summative assessments other than the MCAS tests. The middle school did use the Iowa Algebra Aptitude Test at the end of grades 6 and 7 to assess mathematics proficiency and used it to inform placement in advanced math classes. As of 2006, the middle school was in corrective action for its students' MCAS performance in math.

At the high school, only a few courses that had multiple sections had common final exams or projects required, with the exception of the new grade 9 biology course. A team of teachers developed the curriculum maps with common assessments in the summer of 2006. The high

school purchased a Scantron machine so that it could efficiently key assessments to the curriculum frameworks. The high school used a four-by-four block schedule with a two-semester system. Students had the option to take three levels of courses in most subject areas, and teachers, in conjunction with grade 9 guidance staff, placed students based on recommendations and the results of the grade 8 MCAS tests. Teachers primarily relied on teacher-generated tests and grade reports completed six times a year, with progress reported to parents at the midpoint of each marking period.

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

Rating: Excellent

Evidence

According to the DOE, almost all students participated in all appropriate MCAS assessments. The district informed parents of the expectation that all students should be in school to take the MCAS tests through student handbooks, district and school websites, principal newsletters, school and district calendars, and frequent reminders from teachers and principals. For example, in 2005-2006, 99.1 percent of all students participated in the MCAS ELA tests, 99.2 percent of all students participated in the MCAS math tests, and 99.8 percent of all students participated in the MCAS STE tests.

In the regular education program, 99.1 percent of students participated in the ELA tests, 99.2 percent of students participated in the math tests, and 100 percent of students participated in the STE tests.

In the special education program, 99.4 percent of students with disabilities participated in the ELA tests, 99.4 percent of students with disabilities participated in the math tests, and 99 percent of students with disabilities participated in the STE tests.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district used a number of reporting instruments to report to the public on district, school, and individual student progress. For example, the district reported to the school committee on progress made on SIP goals in October and June. A continuous topic of discussion at monthly administrative team, committee, and faculty meetings was having SIP goals reflect DIP goals.

District and school leaders were in the process of creating an assessment system to measure the attainment of goals, progress, and effectiveness of programs. During the period under review, the focus of assessment was primarily school based. The use of specific assessments began as a school-based decision at the primary level and then carried over to other schools through horizontal and vertical planning and discussion of committees, such as the literacy committee. The district presented little evidence that an assessment system had been established for grades 5-9 in ELA and in math, where performance was the weakest in the district. With the exception of the new biology course being implemented at grade 9, there was little evidence of coherence in the vertical alignment of the science curriculum and that a system of formative and summative assessments had been implemented.

The district was beginning to use a standards-based report card in grades K-2 and had recently developed a standards-based report card for grades 3-5. Traditional grading was used at the middle and high school levels. The high school issued report cards six times per year instead of quarterly, with progress reports sent home at the midpoint of each marking period.

The district had not yet developed a vertical, system-wide plan to manage data so that data could be more efficiently organized, especially for the purpose of internal program analysis. According to interviewees, teachers at the middle school have been using GradeQuick software to create report cards. At the high school, teachers were using Rediker software to manage the MCAS scores and issue report cards and progress reports. The results of formative and

summative assessments of students in grades preK-8 were transferred to the high school in individual student files that contained multiple documents collected throughout the school years.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The district and school leadership used the MCAS data to analyze trends and patterns and to perform individual item analyses. When the district received the MCAS data from the DOE, the director of curriculum divided them up and parceled them out to respective principals. She was also the main source of districtwide analysis of the MCAS data and principals could request further analysis at this level. Principals regarded her as the expert in the district on using TestWiz, and principals and teachers had not had in-depth or common training in using TestWiz at the school level.

Through the organization of grade team leaders and department heads from preK-12, principals led the MCAS analysis with teachers at each grade level and within each school. Grade team leaders and department heads met monthly in both horizontal and vertical configurations. All schools were grade configured with the exception of the two grade 3-5 schools, where representative teachers had the opportunity to meet across schools through efforts such as the literacy committee. According to the Meadow Brook principal, although her teachers did not have their own MCAS data to analyze, in addition to looking at the results from the DIBELS and DRA, they also reviewed the grade 3 districtwide results, since Meadow Brook was the feeder school.

The district had the most well developed benchmarks at the primary level in ELA. According to interviewees, at grades K-2 the teachers did "progress monitoring" every six weeks. The district gave the DRA students in grades 3-5 who were not meeting with success in order to get more information and also scheduled them to receive more specialized help in grades 3 and 4 if needed. According to interviewees, teachers used the Basal 2000 series and a guided reading

approach. They also used leveled books, and one principal stated that the school had purchased 450 leveled books.

In math, one school was piloting Investigations with Addison Wesley and the other primarily used Addison Wesley and was integrating the use of Investigations. This was a phased-in adoption of the math program. Formative assessments were generally not yet in use with the exception of teacher-generated tests.

At the middle school, there was little evidence presented of the use of formative assessments and the attainment of periodic benchmarks. At the high school, interviewees indicated that they used common rubrics, across all departments, published in the handbook and on the school's website, to help teachers focus on the attainment of school-wide benchmarks.

Although the district had been focused on a districtwide curriculum mapping project in the last five years and had established local benchmarks in the last two years, little evidence was presented to the examiners that the district had a formalized system for assessing progress on these benchmarks in ELA, math, and science based on coordinated use of formative assessments.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

According to the evidence presented, the district relied more on anecdotal evidence than formative assessment results and other pertinent and systematically collected data in order to measure the effectiveness of instructional and support programs. One exception cited was the fact that the district had looked at five-year trend data in elementary math, reviewed the "guiding principles" in the state math curriculum framework, and decided that the district should no longer use a traditional approach to teaching mathematics. It needed to add what the guiding principles suggested, such as using an exploratory approach and teaching number sense and mathematical reasoning. When looking at individual students who had not scored well on the MCAS math tests, teachers found that many were special education students who had scored lowest in the number sense, measurement, and geometry standards. In response, individual

schools developed after-school programs to provide more time on learning, targeting re-teaching within these standards. For the most part, the effectiveness of instructional support programs was not assessed in the district.

At the elementary level, teachers used the MCAS tests at the end of grade 5 to recommend students for inclusion in a gifted and talented program at the middle school. Prior to this grade level, teachers relied on local assessment and teacher recommendation for pull-out two times a week for accelerated, project-oriented instruction for the highest performing students. At this level, the elementary schools had also developed a "push-in system" for gifted and talented exposure for the enrichment of all students. According to interviewees, the district was looking for a better way to identify students who were highly creative and gifted, but who may not be currently performing at the highest levels according to the MCAS results. There was little evidence presented that the effectiveness of the gifted and talented program in place at the time of the review had been evaluated. The district also had a promotion/acceleration policy in place, setting criteria for students to skip a grade if certain grade criteria were met, the district they reported that this was rarely used.

Overall, the district presented little evidence that the district looked at whole programs, such as the use of Investigations or Addison Wesley at grades K-5, to determine whether reliance on one program or another produced different results in math attainment at the end of grade 5. Not all elementary teachers had been equally trained to use Investigations when the program had been implemented in grades K-5. At grades 3-5, the district used Title IIA funds to hire additional math teachers to reduce class size. Teachers organized Math Nights for parents to encourage them to work with their children on mathematics. At grades 3-5, one school had higher math results than the other, but it was unclear as to whether this was a matter of different demographics or inconsistent fidelity of implementation with respect to the math program.

At the middle school, which was in corrective action in math for subgroup populations, the teachers relied on anecdotal evidence to make programmatic changes for those students. Rather than looking at the CMP and its alignment with the state curriculum standards, district staff looked at trends and patterns or individual scores and targeted low-performing students. For example, overall teachers noticed that students were not performing well on answering open-

response questions. Therefore, they invited speakers on measurement and number sense, participated in training on MCAS scoring of those questions, and began to use released MCAS questions through SmartEDU to provide more MCAS practice. They also adopted and received training in the John Collins Writing Program.

According to interviewees, two additional hours of math contact were added for those students scoring in the 220 range on the MCAS tests, and one additional hour of math contact was added for those students scoring in the 238 range. In classroom observations of a gifted and talented class, students were looking at an individual item analysis of the specific problems on which they had lost points on the prior year's MCAS test and were doing them over in an effort to correctly answer similar questions on the upcoming MCAS test.

According to interviewees, the middle school petitioned the school committee in 2006-2007 to hire an MCAS math teacher as of February 1, 2007. Students on IEPs received an additional 45 minutes of math, two times a week, in lieu of unified arts. Interviewees speculated that when the district took back about 30 students from a collaborative program two years ago, it contributed to low math performance at the middle school grades. However, they had little data analysis to support this commonly held perception.

The district had very few English language learner (ELL) students in the district. Interviewees could remember only isolated students from Brazil or China who had very little command of the English language. To accommodate ELL students, the district scheduled tutoring from 7:00-7:30 a.m. and hired a teacher on a consulting basis to administer the Massachusetts English Language Assessment-Oral (MELA-O) or the Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment (MEPA).

The EQA examiners discovered the existence of programs in grades 3-12 for advanced, gifted, and talented students, but did not see any evidence in documentation or interviews that there were any internal evaluations of the programs or that there were policies implemented to increase subgroup representation in these courses and programs.

At the high school, in response to low individual MCAS scores, the guidance department scheduled students with low grade 8 MCAS scores into MCAS preparation classes, which were team taught by an ELA and a math teacher. Students received additional instruction in reading

and math strategies. Low-performing students took this class for one semester in lieu of an elective course and took it in addition to their regular math and ELA courses, which were graduation requirements.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Mapping the curriculum, sharing the maps, and coming to consensus on the curriculum across the district could be considered an internal auditing process. The district engaged in this focused activity, supported by professional development, from 2002 to 2005. What seemed to be lacking, according to interviewees, was a focus on root cause analysis when analyzing areas of weakness, such as the math program at grades 3-5 and 6-8, according to the MCAS results.

With respect to external audits, the district participated in mandatory assessments such as the CPR and the NEASC and NAEYC visits. The high school was three years away from a NEASC visit and was currently participating in the NAEYC self-study for recertification. Birchland Park Middle School had recently participated in a New England League of Middle Schools (NELMS) review, which had commended Birchland Park for its involvement in teaming; standards-based instruction; appropriate grouping practices; interdisciplinary instruction; active, hands-on classrooms; and an appropriate climate for learning and parental involvement. According to a letter dated March 9, 2006, the lack of an advisory and a social development program for students to be more aware of the changes that were occurring during this time of development was a concern. The letter also acknowledged that the school was currently working on improving the effectiveness of its transition program between grades 5 and 6. According to interviewees, in response to the report, a middle school goal for 2007-2008 focused on creating an advisor-advisee program. Since the NELMS review was based on indicators other than achievement, the report made no mention of that fact that in 2006 the school was in corrective action for math, having failed to make AYP among subgroup populations. Furthermore, district and school leadership had not yet analyzed the root causes of low math achievement in order to

inform administrators and teachers about what steps needed to be taken to improve the effectiveness of the math program, service delivery, and ultimately math achievement at the middle school level.

In response to questions about the effectiveness of other programs, such as the gifted and talented or special education programs, answers from district administrators revealed that there was little attention given to studying the effectiveness of formal programs. For example, in East Longmeadow enrollment in special education was very high at 23 percent in 2005-2006 compared to the state average of 17 percent. Yet, interviewees could provide only anecdotal evidence with respect to the reasons this rate was so high. The special education population in the state included a much more diverse population of students compared to that in East Longmeadow, where 94 percent of the population was White, six percent was low income, and no students were of limited English proficiency (LEP). In comparison, the respective state averages were 72.4 percent White, 28.8 percent low income, and 5.3 percent LEP.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district and school leadership annually reviewed student assessment results and other pertinent data to make changes in instructional programs at each school site. Principals cited the use of SMART goals as the way they connected perceived needs to prioritized goals and translated them into action steps.

According to interviewees, principals had the authority to maximize effectiveness in assigning staff and allocating time and resources. They rarely, if ever, cited reassigning staff as a way to maximize effectiveness, although they did state that they were able to seek, find, and hire the very best teachers when an opening occurred in their schools. Overall, they stated that it was rare that teachers resigned from their teaching positions unless they moved from the area or they retired.

Principals also stated that they had the authority to reallocate priorities in their respective school budgets and contributed to prioritizing the district budget as a member of the administrative team. As cited, more time on learning was often a recommendation from grade-level or subject-specific committees. Principals were generally able to fund the addition of time during and after the regular school day at all levels.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Overall, the district and individual schools were just beginning to look at different types of data to evaluate specific programs such as the use of Investigations in grades K-5 or reading programs in grades K-3. The district was making modifications in literacy and math at the elementary level. The principals also told the EQA that they evaluated the quality of instruction by doing walk-throughs, yet there was no specific protocol that they all used in the district. Principals most often cited adherence to the curriculum maps as what they looked for while making classroom visits. The curriculum maps across the district lacked specific information on instructional strategies and resources to use and formative assessments to administer. When asked, principals stated that when doing walk-throughs, they looked for qualities of instruction such as having an agenda on the board, activity-based classrooms, student-centered instruction, and active engagement on the part of students.

The EQA examiners visited 46 classrooms across grades K-12. The examiners noted a predominance of whole-class instruction and a lack of instructional differentiation to meet student learning needs within each classroom. Furthermore, they observed little technology in use (in four percent of the classrooms visited), even when hardware was available. The EQA examiners also noticed little use of a variety of instructional techniques to engage all students (observed in nine percent of the classrooms visited). According to the EQA examiners, classroom time was considered to be focused on challenging academic tasks in 65 percent of the classrooms visited.

The district had in place a system of curriculum maps that left instructional strategies and use of resources "open to the creativity" of the teacher. Interviewees agreed that much of "how something should be taught" was not listed in the curriculum maps and rather was conveyed through "oral tradition." Some interviewees at the district and school levels told the EQA that they were not planning to change this in the future. Other interviewees expressed the opinion that to include this information "would be restrictive and inhibit teacher creativity." Many administrators cited training in differentiated strategies as a need in the future. Interviewees clearly stated that the use of "best practices" was a clear expectation of the district administrators. They cited cultural norms in East Longmeadow that honored the professionalism of the teachers in the district, and interviewees stated that they did not want to over-prescribe what teachers should do in the curriculum maps.

The district and school leadership used analysis of individual student results, rather than root cause analysis or program analysis, to initiate, modify, or discontinue programs and services to target specific needs. Most of the modifications made to programs added time for learning during the school day for specific groups of students or added time after school for targeted groups of students. The district did not routinely evaluate programs that required additional funding such as the gifted and talented program or after-school programs. Instructional programs were not necessarily evaluated for their effectiveness based on improved student achievement. The district implemented some programs and modifications based on the perception that they would improve student achievement, rather than based on a root cause analysis of a problem followed by data-driven decision-making.

The district modified or discontinued assessment programs that administrators considered to be no longer beneficial. For instance, school and district leaders decided to discontinue the use of the ITBS and the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test because they felt that they needed more specific data on student achievement in ELA. In response, the district implemented the use of the DIBELS, DRA, and GRADE to provide formative assessment information. Another example cited was at the high school where a Scantron was purchased to help teachers create a more efficient and effective system of developing better MCAS-like tests.

More time on learning was added at all levels, and although pre and post-tests might be given, there was little analysis done as to whether access to those programs helped the students who had attended them, as compared to those students in need who had not attended the programs. For example, when interviewees were asked to what they attributed an accelerated rate of improvement at the high school in ELA and math, instead of citing data analysis or pointing to a modified program, they attributed the gains to affective factors, such as students taking the MCAS tests more seriously or the fact that each student felt valued and included at the high school.

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

IV. Human Resource Management and Professional Development

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

Standard Rating: Satisfactory

Findings:

- The district only hired appropriately certified teachers and kept the search open until one was hired.
- During the period under review, the district created a mentoring program and trained mentors for teachers; the superintendent mentored new principals and administrators.
- By the end of the period under review, the district trained teachers and principals to analyze the MCAS data and started implementing at the primary level various systems of formative assessment in ELA.
- The district had a large number of promotional opportunities and ways to recognize teachers, which tended to help retain teachers in the district.
- The superintendent's contract did not link compensation and continued employment to improved student achievement.
- In a random sample of 40 teacher evaluations, EQA examiners found all to be informative but only seven to be instructive with comments and suggestions intended to promote improved teaching.

- Examiners found no evidence of a consistent, formal walk-through protocol for the supervision of teachers that was used by all principals.
- The district provided updated written safety and crisis plans and ongoing training for teachers who had opportunities to practice the procedures.

Summary

District administrators and the school committee placed a high priority on hiring only highly qualified candidates for open positions. Professional staff could not interview in the district without already possessing the appropriate certification. According to interviewees, most of the professional openings in the district occurred due to retirements, rather than people seeking employment elsewhere. East Longmeadow usually had a large pool of experienced candidates to choose from, and principals were able to choose the best person for the open position. All of the teachers in the random sample of personnel files reviewed and all of the administrators in the district had appropriate and updated certification. The district did not have any teachers on waiver during the period under review.

Prior to the start of the school year, the district held a new staff induction day, and the district had a regular mentoring program for teachers. The superintendent directly mentored new administrators and principals. Professional development was aligned with the SMART goals listed in the SIPs. The district had not developed changes in supervision practices to determine whether new programs and training were being fully implemented and used.

Districtwide induction topics included: information on substitutes; crisis plans and Connect-ED; curriculum mapping; IDEA/504/METCO/Title 9; student code of conduct; staff personnel policy books and intranet; district strategic plan; evaluation systems and rubrics; and the ELPH Character program. For three years, districtwide professional development was focused on mapping the curriculum at all levels. The elementary schools had site-based initiatives on using formative testing in literacy and implementing the Investigations program in mathematics. In 2004-2005, administrators had received training on using the DOE's Performance Improvement Mapping (PIM) process, and teachers received training in data analysis as they worked on grade-level or vertical curriculum committees. Individual professional development plans were required by the district and submitted directly to the central office.

The school committee evaluated the superintendent on an annual basis, and the evaluation was considered to be informative, instructive, and likely to promote growth and professional development.

Principals presented little evidence that the district used effective systems of supervision to implement school goals for improving student achievement in their respective assignments. All principals claimed to use a walk-through process, but the examination found no evidence of a consistent protocol used across the district. There was also disagreement among administrators, principals, teachers, and union representatives as to whether the district had observation and summative forms, whether they were one and the same, or whether the self-evaluation was a mandatory part of the documentation.

The superintendent evaluated administrators on an annual basis. Administrators evaluated non-professional status teachers annually and professional status teachers in alternating years. Teachers were required to fill out a self-study form that mirrored the indicators on the evaluations. Some principals attached the self-studies to the summative evaluations, and therefore the process of using them was not consistent. Overall, all teacher evaluations were informative.

Indicators

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the period under review, the district had policies and practices in place for the employment of both teaching staff and administrative professional staff. School committee policy GCE stated that the superintendent and principals determined the personnel needs of the district and schools, and required administrators to take into consideration the "characteristics of the town and the need for a heterogeneous staff." School committee policy GCF, Professional Staff Hiring, detailed the method and qualifications for individuals hired as administrators, principals, and teachers. Policy GA, Personnel Policies Goal, stated that the East Longmeadow

Public Schools required the superintendent and principals to implement strategies and procedures to recruit, hire, and retain professional staff with the strongest commitment to quality education, and the "greatest probability of effectively implementing the system's learning program." Additionally, the teachers' contract salary appendix indicated the superintendent "may modify after consultation with the Association, up to three steps to inexperienced new hires" in an area in which the superintendent determines there is a shortage of qualified teachers.

Employment practices during the period under review were consistent across the district in that the hiring process began with the building principal, who generated a posting notice that he/she forwarded to the superintendent's office. The posting notice consisted of the name of the school, a description of the vacancy, length of the vacancy, and benefits. School committee policy required that for staff recruiting and the posting of vacancies, the district should "not overlook the talents and potential of individuals already employed by the system," and the teachers' contract required the district to post all vacancies in schools with a copy sent to the teachers' union. Interviewees indicated that for teacher vacancies, in addition to posting the vacancy in all schools, the district placed newspaper advertisements in Springfield's *The Republican* and *The Reminder* and on the East Longmeadow district website and the DOE website. For administrative vacancies, interviewees indicated that in addition to local advertisements, the district placed advertisements in the Worcester *Telegram & Gazette* and *The Boston Globe*.

According to interviewees, an interview team, comprised of the principal and teachers, interviewed the teacher candidates, including those professional staff members requesting transfers, and gave input to the principal. Interviewees indicated that for high school and middle school vacancies, members of the interviewing team may also include department heads, guidance counselors, assistant principals, and sometimes parents. Interviewees indicated that prior to making an official offer of employment to the finalist, the principal checked references, received a copy of the candidate's certification, read reference letters, and determined the appropriate salary. The principal sent the name of the finalist to the superintendent for approval, along with a completed information packet. The superintendent's office completed a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check, and the superintendent approved the appointment.

Principals stated that the superintendent encouraged them to seek and hire the best possible candidates for each position and felt the hiring process resulted in the employment of an effective teaching force, which was one they perceived as having the likelihood of advancing student achievement.

2. All professional staff had appropriate Massachusetts licensure.

Rating: Excellent

Evidence

All professional staff had appropriate Massachusetts licensure. Professional staff hiring policy file GCF required the district to strive to attract, secure, and retain the highest qualified personnel for all professional staff positions. School committee policy required the superintendent to see that persons considered for employment in the school meet "all certification requirements" and the specific requirements of the position sought.

According to documents presented to the EQA, the 12 administrators employed by the district all held appropriate licensure for their positions. A review of administrators' personnel files by the EQA examiners verified that all administrators held Massachusetts certification for the positions they held.

For the period under review, all professional staff had appropriate Massachusetts licensure. According to documentation presented by the district, 100 percent of the district's teachers had appropriate Massachusetts licensure for the teaching assignments that they held. District interviewees indicated that they interviewed only certified candidates. When asked whether the principal could hire a non-licensed applicant if the district had a vacancy in a hard to fill area and had no certified applicants, an interviewee responded that the district would re-advertise for the vacant position and the principal would need a very good reason to hire an unlicensed applicant. Principal interviewees indicated they had multiple licensed applicants for each vacant position, including hard to fill positions. One principal indicated that in 20 years he could not remember a single instance in which he hired an unlicensed teacher. A review of the superintendent's 2005 convocation (opening of school meeting) document indicated that the district received an average of 50 applicants for each vacancy.

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

Rating: Excellent

Evidence

Interviewees indicated that the school committee, superintendent, and principals placed a high priority on recruiting, selecting, and hiring only certified applicants for vacant positions. Thus, for the period under review, the district hired and employed only licensed professional staff.

Documents submitted to the EQA by the district indicated that 100 percent (223 of 223) of teachers held Massachusetts licensure. A review of 40 randomly selected teacher personnel files indicated that 100 percent showed evidence of appropriate licensure. Further, documents submitted to the EQA by the district indicated that 100 percent (12 of 12) administrators held Massachusetts licensure. The EQA examiners' review of all 12 administrators' personnel files verified evidence of appropriate certification.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

School committee policy file IJOC-A and the teachers' contract required the district to assign a mentor to each beginning or new teacher, with additional support for beginning teachers from principals, department chairs, other trained mentors, union representatives, and outside professional development providers. Additionally, file IJOC-A described mentor candidate requirements as three years of teaching experience and a master's degree, or five years of teaching experience and a bachelor's degree, or national board certification and one year experience in the East Longmeadow Public Schools. The district required mentors and mentees to meet at least one time per week at the beginning of the school year, observe each other's classroom, co-teach, and attend relevant professional development offerings together such as

MCAS scoring, peer group meetings, and orientation. The mentor was to analyze and evaluate the beginning teacher's practice in relation to evaluation criteria.

Interviewees indicated that during the period under review, the district trained mentor teachers. For example, district documents indicated that in April and May 2005, the district offered three two-hour mentor sessions for experienced teachers not previously trained. The elements of the training included Introduction to Mentoring, Diagnosing and Analyzing Classroom Management, and Analysis of Teaching Strategies. Documentation indicated that in 2005 the district trained 25 experienced teachers to be mentors. Mentors received a yearly stipend of $200.

During the period under review, interviewees indicated the East Longmeadow Public Schools provided beginning teachers with mentors. Interviewees indicated that the district did not provide mentors for experienced teachers who were new to the school district.

Documents provided to the EQA indicated that during each of the years under review, prior to the start of the school year the district held a new staff induction day. The district divided the induction day into a half-day, districtwide induction and a half-day, site-based induction. The districtwide induction topics included: information on substitutes; crisis plans and Connect-ED; curriculum mapping; IDEA/504/METCO/Title 9; student code of conduct; staff personnel policy books and intranet; district strategic plan; evaluation systems and rubrics; and the ELPH Character program. Interviewees indicated that the afternoon, site-based induction for new teachers consisted of building orientation and time for the new teacher to meet with his or her mentor.

Administrators who were new to the district indicated that mentoring consisted of meeting with the superintendent once per week for most of the first year to discuss key questions and issues. One administrator who was new to the district indicated that, in addition to receiving assistance from the superintendent, she received guidance from the retired administrator whom she had replaced.

Documents submitted to the EQA indicated that the district reported the status of the East Longmeadow Public Schools' mentoring program to the DOE on an annual basis. The yearly

report included the list of beginning teachers served, the number of trained mentors, and the number of formal mentoring sessions developed.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

For the period under review, the district began to develop data initiatives to use test data and other sources of data to enhance student achievement.

Interviewees told the EQA and a review of documents verified that for some of the period under review, each school also began to develop initiatives to use data to enhance student achievement. For example, site-based professional development documents indicated that in 2005-2006, East Longmeadow High School offered professional development in analysis of the MCAS data. In 2005-2006, Mapleshade School and Mountain View School offered professional development in using NCS Mentor for open-response math questions and MCAS analysis for teachers. For paraprofessionals, the district offered MCAS administration and accommodations, alternative MCAS/assessment portfolios, and MCAS analysis. In 2005-2006, Meadow Brook School offered professional development in looking at student work/formative assessment, educational assessment, and the DIBELS reading assessment for grade K-1 teachers and paraprofessionals. In 2006, Meadow Brook School continued the DIBELS training and offered the DIBELS reading assessment training for grade 2 teachers and paraprofessionals.

Interviewees indicated that during the period under review, schools gathered student achievement data primarily from the MCAS tests, the DIBELS, and teacher assessments to identify students' strengths and weaknesses. For example, the middle school, using the MCAS math data, identified students with low math scores. The principal altered the math schedule to provide additional math time for students with MCAS scores of 230 or lower. In addition, in 2005-2006 the middle school offered a voluntary, after-school MCAS preparation program. For 2006-2007, interviewees indicated that the middle school provided a mandatory, after-school

MCAS preparation program and sent letters to parents indicating that their children could benefit from this additional assistance.

Interviewees indicated that the districtwide professional development included some use of data. For example, district interviewees indicated that the superintendent devoted a portion of one of four districtwide professional days to train administrators to examine the data analyses such as those of the MCAS results, attendance, discipline, and dropout data; and AYP information. Interviewees indicated that in 2004-2005, administrators received training in the PIM process. Although some district interviewees indicated that teachers received professional development in data analysis, for most of the review period the training was limited to trend and pattern analysis of the MCAS test results.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

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

According to district interviewees, the district had practices in place that encouraged promotional opportunities for effective teachers. As an example, interviewees indicated that each year the district reposted department head positions and they perceived these positions as promotional opportunities. Interviewees stated that during the period under review, the district hired an assistant principal from within the district. Also, district interviewees indicated that two National Board for Professional Teacher Standards-certified teachers took leadership roles and developed the district's mentor program.

According to district interviewees, the district had practices in place that encouraged professional recognition. A review of East Longmeadow Public Schools' newsletters indicated the district regularly recognized professional staff for their accomplishments. For example, the 2004 district

newsletter recognized the induction of five teachers into the Education Hall of Fame. The 2004 spring district newsletter thanked the Birchland Park Middle School teachers for assisting in winning a $5,000 National Book Contest. The 2005 district newsletter recognized a new principal and a new transportation manager. The 2006 district newsletter recognized retiring staff including teachers, guidance counselors, a librarian, paraprofessionals, cafeteria workers, and custodians. Interviewees indicated that the school committee recognized staff during school committee meetings and the superintendent regularly recognized teachers and students at the yearly convocation. Interviewees also indicated that principals recognized professional staff accomplishments in the school newsletters and at faculty meetings.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Although the professional development program was informed primarily by instructional program content and student assessment, it was not informed by student, teacher, and administrator needs as indicated by program assessments, research-based practices, and the staff evaluation process.

Interviewees stated and a review of documents confirmed that the district had a professional development plan in place during the period under review as required by Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 38Q. School committee policy file GCIA indicated that one of the district's strategic goals was to improve the quality and quantity of professional development for all employees and promote individual accountability for all staff. Additionally, file GCIA indicated that the emphasis of professional development be directed toward the school as the primary unit of change. Each school had a site-based professional development committee comprised of professional staff, support staff, and the building principal. For example, for 2005-2006 documents indicated that Mountain View Elementary School's professional development committee was comprised of the building principal, one grade 3 teacher, two grade 4 teachers,

two grade 5 teachers, and one paraprofessional. One grade 5 teacher was the school representative to the district professional development committee. According to interviewees, during the period under review the school professional development committees aligned professional development to their respective SMART goals. For example, in 2005-2006 Meadow Brook School's SMART goal #2 indicated that the school would develop math activities to increase students' knowledge of math concepts, which had been identified as a weakness by an analysis of the MCAS data. Action step #1 of the SMART goals indicated that teachers would use the Scott Foresman program, Investigations in Number, Data, and Space, to develop lessons on number sense and operations. A review of Meadow Brook's professional development documents for 2005-2006 indicated that teachers received training in math Investigations during two districtwide professional development days. Topics presented included Building Number Sense in Primary Grades, Developing Number Sense with Math Investigations, Investigations in Number, Data, and Space, and Using Investigations in the Classroom.

As a further example, the East Longmeadow High School SMART goal #3 for 2005-2006 indicated that the school would continue to address the findings of the NEASC accreditation report. A review of the school's SIP indicated that the principal and follow-up committee completed the NEASC in-progress recommendations through regularly scheduled meetings and professional development time. On the other hand, professional development was not informed by the staff evaluation process since very few of the evaluations were considered to be instructive or focused on professional growth, based on the random sample the EQA examiners reviewed. Furthermore, very little program analysis or development transpired across the district with the exception of the primary grades with the Reading First initiative and Investigations in math. Major weaknesses in the district, such as being in corrective action in math at the middle school and having a special education student population rate of 23 percent, were programmatic weaknesses that were evident in the DOE data and that were not yet studied to determine whether specific or additional professional development was needed.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Principal interviewees told the EQA that they all spent more time visiting classrooms and doing walk-throughs. The amount of time spent in classrooms ranged widely from school to school. Some principals stated that they were in classes on a daily basis, compared to one principal who stated "not enough; maybe a dozen times a year beyond scheduled observations" for formal evaluations.

The district did not have one form or procedure that all principals used in doing walk-throughs. However, most principals gave similar answers in that they primarily monitored for scope and sequence of the curriculum and that the material was appropriate according to the curriculum map for that grade and subject. They also cited that they looked for adherence to schedules and increased time in mathematics. One principal stated that he looked for actively engaged kids, and that when he came upon a student sleeping in a class he woke him up. None of the principals stated that they looked to see that the professional development training was being put into practice, that they looked for research-based practices, such as evidence of high expectations for learning or active engagement in student-centered classrooms, or that they looked at the overall quality of the instruction.

Changes in curricular programs were supported by accompanying professional development offerings designed to provide teachers with the appropriate skills to implement programmatic changes during the period under review. In contrast, they were not necessarily supported by changes in supervision, the monitoring of instruction, or evaluation standards as written.

Interviewees indicated that the district provided site-based professional development when introducing a new program. For example, Meadow Brook School's SMART goal #2 for 2005-2006 indicated a need to address weaknesses identified by an analysis of the MCAS data. In preparation for achieving this goal, the action step indicated that teachers would use the program, Investigations in Number, Data, and Space, to develop math lessons on number sense and

operations, linking Scott Foresman-Addison Wesley math chapters to Investigations. The education results associated with this goal indicated that all staff participated in professional development training in Investigations. A review of the 2005-2006 professional development documents indicated that Meadow Brook had two professional development days devoted to linking the math chapters to Investigations. This document further indicated that only 54 percent of K-2 teachers were using components of Investigations in their instructional practices to supplement the Scott Foresman-Addison Wesley program.

The district professional development documents submitted to the EQA indicated that the district had a professional development evaluation rating form. Participants were requested to rate the professional development activity for organization; clarity of objectives; relevance; usefulness to addressing personal goals or SMART goals; applicability to area of instruction, practice, or certification; and its usefulness to improve teaching and student learning. A review of professional development committee agendas for the period under review did not indicate that use of the in-service training evaluations was required in all presentations.

The EQA examiners reviewed 40 randomly selected teacher personnel files. Of the 40 evaluation documents reviewed, none showed any variance from year to year that suggested any changes in the expectations in the evaluations, as a result of specific training or the use of new curricula or programs.

Furthermore, individual professional development forms, filled out by each teacher, were sent directly to the central office. When the EQA examiners asked principals whether the forms were matched up with what individual staff needed training in and with the needs expressed in their SIP, the principals stated that they expected that someone at the central office had checked into that because the principals were not responsible for checking and receiving the forms.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

For the period under review in East Longmeadow, the district's evaluation procedures for administrators were aligned with the requirements of the Education Reform Act and met the requirements of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 38, which prescribed that all administrators be evaluated annually.

The school committee policy CBI, Evaluation of the Superintendent, required the school committee to periodically develop a set of performance objectives based on the needs of the school system and to review the superintendent's performance "in accordance with these specified goals." In a review of the superintendent's evaluation, the EQA examiners determined the evaluation was timely, signed, and contained components of education reform. Additionally, the EQA examiners determined that the superintendent's evaluations were informative, instructive, and likely to promote growth and overall effectiveness. A review of the superintendent's contract indicated that it did not specifically link compensation and continued employment to improvement in student achievement.

The district's evaluations for the performance of central office administrators, principals, and assistant principals complied with Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 38 that required annual evaluations. The East Longmeadow Public Schools' AdminTeam Handbook indicated that for administrators, the superintendent used the summative evaluation instrument and the superintendent used formative evaluation goals that had been created by each administrator using the SMART goals template for personal growth throughout the year. Interviewees indicated that the superintendent based the principals' evaluations on execution of the SMART goals.

A review of 11 administrators' personnel files indicated that the district director of curriculum, instruction, and assessment and the assistant principal at Birchland Park Middle School were new to the district in 2006-2007 and so they had not received formal evaluations yet. Of the remaining nine administrators' evaluations, 100 percent were timely, were signed, contained elements of education reform, and were informative. The EQA examiners considered 11 percent (one of nine) likely to promote growth and overall effectiveness. A review of the principals' contract indicated that the evaluation would include an assessment of progress toward mutually

established annual goals. Interviewees indicated that principals conducted a yearly self-evaluation and discussed the self-evaluation components with the superintendent in private. The principals' contract did not specifically link compensation and continued employment to improvement in student achievement.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 38 requires the evaluation of administrators and of teachers without professional status every year and requires the evaluation of teachers with professional status to be observed at least once every two years. The teachers' contract, in Appendix C, described the evaluation procedures and forms for professional status teachers and non-professional status teachers. For professional status teachers, Appendix 3 described that staff "will be observed and receive an observation report once every two years." For non-professional status teachers, Appendix 4 described that staff would be "observed and receive an observation report at least three times per school year." Additionally, Appendix 3 and Appendix 4 each stated that the "self evaluation forms will be completed by June 1."

District interviewees stated that they observed non-professional and professional status teachers as required by contractual obligations. Interviewees indicated that the district used the evaluation document referenced in Appendix C of the teachers' contract for all professional staff. Principal interviewees indicated that in evaluating professional status teachers, they scheduled one observation within two years, completed the evaluation document, and presented the completed evaluation to the teacher during a post-conference. Interviewees indicated that professional status teachers completed a self-evaluation form in the year of the review. The EQA examiners found the self-evaluation form attached to the evaluation form in only some of the personnel files. Interviewees indicated that for non-professional status teachers the principal

observed the teacher three times during each of the first three years and completed the evaluation process prior to June 1. In interviews, some district personnel described the evaluation as a summative evaluation, while other district personnel stated the district had no summative evaluations.

District interviewees stated that strategies to help struggling teachers included alerting department heads, allowing more experienced teachers to assist the struggling teacher, assigning paraprofessionals to the classroom, and providing release time for the teacher to observe colleagues. For the period under review, district administrators indicated that the district terminated two non-professional status teachers for performance issues within the first three years of service.

A review of 40 randomly selected personnel files indicated that all teachers had evaluations on file. Of the 40 evaluations reviewed, 65 percent (26 of 40) were timely and 95 percent (38 of 40) contained signatures of both the teacher and the evaluator. All 40 evaluations reviewed contained elements of education reform. The EQA examiners considered all 40 to be informative, but only 18 percent (7 of 40) to be instructive and 10 percent (four of 40) to be conducive to professional growth or overall effectiveness. The teachers' evaluations did not contain any link to student achievement or improved performance..

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

There was little evidence presented at any school that district administrators used effective systems of supervision to implement school goals for improving student achievement in their respective assignments.

At the primary school, the principal was monitoring the use of the DIBELS as a formative assessment, the increased use of Investigations math strategies, and the increased use of math time. Interviewees at the upper elementary schools presented little evidence that the curriculum

and instruction were consistent from one school to the next. At the high school, the goals in the SIP, which were primarily connected to the NEASC process, did not necessarily match what the principal was looking for when he did walk-throughs in classrooms.

Interviewees indicated that the director of curriculum, instruction, and assessment met twice per month with department heads and provided the MCAS data results. Using the results of the MCAS tests, principals, with input from teachers, developed strategies to improve student achievement.

For example, for 2006-2007 Birchland Park Middle School SMART goal #2 stated that the school "will increase student accountability for writing skills across all content areas and increase awareness of reading and writing of non-fiction." In preparation for achieving this goal, the action step associated with it indicated that a John Collins Writing consultant "will train instructional staff in the skill of writing folder review and math staff with a specific writing consultant." A review of Birchland Park's site-based professional development agenda for 2005 indicated that the professional staff had participated in professional development for Writing Across the Curriculum. Interviewees indicated that in 2005, Birchland Park Middle School also began offering a voluntary long-distance graduate credit course in writing.

What was not stated in any documentation or in any interview sessions was whether there was a system of supervision to check for fidelity of implementation of this school goal of improving student achievement in writing in each respective area of study. The goal started and ended with a small amount of mandatory in-service and the opportunity to take a graduate course. Therefore, mandatory or high expectations for the use of the John Collins Writing Program in every subject were not evident, although a John Collins Writing poster hung in most classrooms. In no middle school classrooms visited was the John Collins Writing methodology used. In addition, no teachers made reference to using the John Collins Writing Program, and the EQA examiners saw no student papers hung up in classrooms that evidenced that students were using the program. There was no mention that grade teams were looking at student work. Writing samples were not required to be sent to the principal. Evidence that there was increased writing in instruction was not required of all teachers or checked for increased student achievement. Furthermore, all teachers were not required to consistently use John Collins Writing daily in their classes, and

there was little checking for the frequency of the use of John Collins Writing or that it was actually increasing the quality of the students' writing.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the period under review, the district's employment, supervision, and professional development processes were not linked and supported by appropriate levels of funding. The district had policies in place for the recruitment and employment of administrators, principals, teachers, and support staff. East Longmeadow Public Schools' personnel policies goals required the superintendent "to develop and implement those strategies and procedures for personnel recruitment, screening, and selection that will result in the employment and retention of individuals with the highest capabilities, strongest commitment to quality education, and greatest probability of effectively implementing the system's learning program." In article XX of the teachers' contract the school committee agreed to appropriate $650 per year to be used for all expenses related to professional development including substitute teachers.

For most of the period under review, interviewees indicated that the hiring process focused on seeking the best qualified candidate for a position without regard to cost. Once employed, the district's focus rested upon professional development growth through supervision, professional development opportunities, and the mentoring program.

Documents submitted to the EQA examiners indicated that during the period under review, due to budget constraints the district eliminated 11 staff positions, including a foreign language teacher position, business teacher position, health teacher position, and special education teacher position, as well as support personnel positions.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

Documents submitted to the EQA indicated the district developed a Comprehensive Crisis Management Plan. A review of this plan indicated that the district required all staff to receive, review, and understand the crisis plan. The plan also indicated that staff received professional development on the crisis plan at a faculty meeting and engaged in mock simulations and drills during the school year. A review of individual school crisis response plans indicated that the schools followed the same professional development format. Individual school crisis response manuals indicated that staff reviewed the manual on the work day prior to the start of school and also reviewed the manual at faculty meetings periodically throughout the year. Interviewees stated that student teachers received crisis response information from the cooperating teacher. Interviewees and documents submitted to the EQA indicated that substitute teachers received crisis response information training prior to the start of school.

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

V. Access, Participation, and Student Academic Support

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

Standard Rating: Satisfactory

Findings:

- East Longmeadow lacked a formal, districtwide system of formative and summative student assessment and program analysis to provide supplementary or remedial services resulting in improved student achievement.
- Between 2003 and 2006, district MCAS performance, although well above the state averages, showed little improvement overall and in math, and a slight decline in ELA and in STE.
- East Longmeadow's special education population, the largest student subgroup in the district, represented approximately 23 percent of the district's enrollment. In 2006, the subgroup failed to meet AYP in mathematics in grades 3-5, and in 2005 and 2006 the middle school special education students failed to meet their MCAS improvement goal in mathematics.
- Administrators and staff helped all students make successful transitions from one program, grade level, or school to another. Their efforts focused on maintaining or improving levels of student performance.

- Throughout the review period, the student attendance, retention, dropout, and out-of-school suspension rates for every school in the district, including the high school, remained substantially better than state averages.
- The high school offered a comprehensive and highly successful AP curriculum and has been recognized by the College Board for its consistently strong student achievement.
- Administrators and faculty believed that high expectations and a tradition of professionalism and collegiality contributed to positive faculty attendance patterns across the district.

Summary

The district's schools provided a range of educational services and supplementary programs designed to meet student learning needs and improve academic achievement. The district had implemented or expanded a variety of early intervention services, in-school remedial, and supplementary programs in regular and special education during the period under review. The increased use of standardized diagnostic and formative assessments, especially at the elementary level, served to generate more and better student achievement data and identify students performing below grade level. Student Assistance Teams (SATs) and special education staff at all grade levels worked to identify students in need and to formulate interventions to best suit their needs. Although the district's proportion of limited English proficient (LEP), transient, and homeless student populations remained very low, the district had appropriate policies and procedures in place to ensure that these populations were provided with a full range of appropriate services and assistance.

Administrators and teachers acknowledged that the district conducted little regular or systematic analysis of student subgroup representation in advanced and/or accelerated programs. They were unable to accurately describe how closely subgroup enrollment and achievement rates paralleled overall population proportions. Although interviewees stated that the district encouraged and allowed students who did not meet qualifying criteria and academic prerequisites to select honors and Advanced Placement (AP) classes, a review of the data revealed that students from the district's two primary subgroups, the special education and low-income populations, were significantly underrepresented in these higher-level programs.

East Longmeadow developed a comprehensive attendance policy and a set of implementation procedures that were in place in every school in the district. Each school's student handbook detailed attendance policies, enforcement practices, and consequences when absence limits were exceeded. Administrators described an extensive set of procedures employed by the schools to support their student attendance and punctuality policies and expectations, including frequent letters, phone calls, and parent conferences. In 2006, daily attendance for the district averaged 95.9 percent, compared to the state rate of 93.8 percent. Analysis of data revealed uniformly positive results in the attendance rates and patterns of each of the district's five schools, including the high school. Teacher absences averaged nine days excluding professional development days, except at the middle school where the rate was higher due to necessary medical absences.

The number of disciplinary infractions and suspensions remained low in East Longmeadow and well below the state averages. From 2003 to 2006, the out-of-school suspension rate in all the district's schools averaged approximately half that of the state average, student retention rates at all grade levels remained substantially below state averages, and East Longmeadow High School's dropout rate averaged just under one percent, compared to the state average of almost four percent. Administrators and staff attributed these positive indicators to consistent enforcement of district disciplinary and attendance policies and ongoing communication between school and home.

Indicators

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the period under review, the district began to make increased use of aggregated data, and to a lesser extent disaggregated data, regarding student achievement and participation to make modifications to educational programs and services. Interviews with administration and staff, as

well as a review of individual SIPs, confirmed the increased attention given to the collection, distribution, and analysis of a variety of student assessment data, including the MCAS results, to inform curriculum, instruction, and support services. The director of curriculum, instruction, and assessment supervised the data collection and dissemination process for the district. She initially received and processed student achievement data and then reviewed and analyzed them with the superintendent and the members of the administrative council, all of whom had received data analysis training. Principals then brought the results back to their individual schools where they shared them with their curriculum department heads at the secondary level, grade-level team leaders at the elementary level, and full faculty. A review of relevant documents confirmed that professional development, as well as faculty, departmental, and grade-level meetings in each school, focused time and attention to enhancing the data analysis skills of teachers and staff. Interviewees generally acknowledged that additional faculty training was still needed and administrators stated that it was planned for the future.

The district's most statistically significant student subgroup was its special education population. It represented approximately 23 percent of the East Longmeadow student body during the period under review. At the grades 3-5 level, as well as at the middle school, the subgroup failed to make AYP in mathematics in 2006. In addition, at the elementary and middle school levels aggregate student MCAS performance in mathematics lagged well behind the district's ELA results.

Interviewees reported that considerable attention and resources have been devoted to analyses of these phenomena and that a number of adjustments and enhancements to academic programs and services had been implemented as a result. They described an increased emphasis on earlier and more systematic, data-based identification of students in need of support(s). At the primary and elementary grade levels, these included the introduction or use of diagnostic assessments such as the Early Reading Inventory (ERI), DRA, DIBELS, and the replacement of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test with the GRADE. At the middle school, the Iowa Algebra Aptitude Test was administered to all students at the end of grades 6 and 7 to assess mathematics proficiency and inform placement. Further, the middle school used cumulative, norm-referenced textbook series unit assessments, as well as informal teacher-developed grade-level tests. High school staff indicated that in addition to the extensive analysis of the MCAS data, key

assessments included the PSAT, SAT, and AP tests, and data from these assessments combined with data generated from common departmentalized final examinations provided administrators and staff with considerable student achievement information.

Student Assistance Teams (SATs) met regularly at all grade levels to identify students in need of specific educational services and/or supports. Individual Student Success Plans (ISSPs) were developed for at-risk students that provided a variety of remedial programs and services in order to ensure their academic success. Interviewees reported that special education staff and IEP teams met regularly, collaborated extensively with guidance counselors and student support specialists, and reinforced the efforts of classroom teachers to meet identified student learning needs.

Based on the student achievement data, interviewees reported that numerous revised and/or new educational programs and supports were implemented during the review period. For example, expanded preschool screenings, better targeted tutorial services, more accurate reading level group placements, increased weekly mathematics instruction, and an MCAS preparation program were identified as among the most significant elementary level responses. Administrators at the middle school identified the schoolwide introduction of the John Collins Writing Program, mandatory tutorial classes for all students who scored in the 'Warning' or 'Needs Improvement' categories on their MCAS mathematics test, and the appointment of an additional math teacher in order to reduce class sizes and provide more instructional support for underperforming students as most noteworthy. Among the programs and services developed at the high school, interviewees cited the creation of a full semester MCAS preparation course for at-risk students in grades 9-11 that integrated language arts and mathematics; a greatly expanded freshman transition program with a substantial study skills component; a major revision to the biology program that included moving it from grade 10 to grade 9; increased reading support for targeted students; and at all grade levels the use of MCAS item analysis data to inform the district's curriculum mapping efforts.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the period under review, the district increased its use of assessments to identify underperforming students and provide them with appropriate support services. Although some formative assessment practices were employed, especially at the elementary schools, the majority of the assessments and performance data used were summative in nature. At the elementary level, administrators reported the increased use of a variety of formative assessments, including the GRADE, DIBELS, and DRA, which, in addition to the MCAS tests, were the primary sources of student performance data. Interviewees explained that traditional teacher-generated tests and quizzes, reading anthology and standardized math unit assessments, and grade-level testing based on the district's curriculum mapping benchmarks were the most commonly used formative assessment tools. Administrators, specialists, and grade-level classroom teachers reportedly worked closely together to analyze assessment data. The district made accommodations such as student referrals for Title I services, remedial reading classes, tutorial assistance, and a wide range of other appropriate academic supports.

Administrators and staff at the middle school reported that no formative assessments were currently in place at grades 6-8 in either ELA or mathematics. They anticipated that their planned full implementation of the GRADE program and the addition of the John Collins Writing Program would provide valuable student performance data that would inform practice and be used to modify instruction in ELA. Administrators and teachers worked in close collaboration to analyze MCAS performance data. Special education staff, reading and math specialists, and classroom teachers participated in or contributed to Student Assistance Team and IEP meetings to develop remedial strategies and support services for students with identified educational needs. According to interviewees, these included scheduled tutorial sessions and additional developmental reading classes, as well as mandatory enrollment in a yearlong MCAS math tutorial. Staff members indicated they used informed instructional activities, assignments, and

assessments in their classes and MCAS item analysis to guide their curriculum design and lesson delivery.

At the high school, in addition to the MCAS tests, interviewees identified the PSAT, SAT, AP tests, and departmentalized common final examinations as the primary sources of summative data on student achievement. They explained that because marking terms at the high school were every 30 days, midterm progress reports and report cards were issued regularly and frequently, thus providing students, parents, and teachers with timely and specific feedback on academic progress. Further, students in grades 9-12 had access to a wide range of courses, academic levels, and educational supports to meet diverse learning abilities and needs. These included MCAS preparation classes, remedial and developmental reading services, and courses in all academic areas (Essential CP Level) designed for students who required extra support and reinforcement of basic understandings and competencies. These classes were smaller in size so that teachers, tutors, and aides could provide individualized and/or small group remediation and instruction. As at the elementary and middle schools, those interviewed indicated that the Student Assistance Teams and IEP teams recommended the design and delivery of supplementary programs and services and that decisions were informed by data. Despite these efforts, according to DOE data, between 2003 and 2006 district MCAS performance, although well above the state averages, showed little improvement overall and in math, and a slight decline in ELA and in STE. Further, all student subgroups showed either a decline or no change in performance in ELA between 2003 and 2006 and only minor improvement in math during that same time period. Finally, at the grade 3-5 level as well as at the middle school, special education students failed to make AYP in mathematics in 2006.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

Interviewees indicated that the district had focused considerable attention on early intervention programs and services during the period under review. An examination of the improvement

plans of the three elementary schools confirmed that much was done to ensure that all students would reach the ELA MCAS benchmark targets by grade 4. Through the expanded and coordinated use of standardized assessments such as the ERI, DIBELS, and GRADE, as well as improved preschool and kindergarten screening procedures, literacy committees in each of the elementary schools were provided with more and better diagnostic data with which to make informed educational decisions for students, to monitor their progress, and assign targeted assistance. Administrators explained that providing early literacy support and interventions was a very high district priority, and that grade K-2 teachers and reading staff worked deliberately to increase emergent reading skills, to reduce special education referrals, and to design individualized instructional experiences for at-risk students. Elementary staff received professional development training in the administration and use of a variety of research-based measurement methods, diagnostic assessments, and remedial programs. Those identified as being used most extensively and successfully by elementary staff included phonemic awareness, and Orton Gillingham, Linda Mood Bell, and Phono-graphix methodologies. In addition, the grade-level team leaders made efforts to increase communication and collaboration among primary and elementary teachers and to complete curriculum maps, informed by the MCAS data, at all grade levels, which was cited as important in the district's literacy efforts.

It should be noted that, with the exception of special education students, all grade 3-5 students in the district achieved AYP in both ELA and mathematics in 2006 and that MCAS scores were well above state averages. A total of 77 percent of grade 3 students and 73 percent of grade 4 students attained proficiency in reading/ELA in 2006.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district devoted considerable attention and effort to the development of effective policies and procedures for school, grade-level, and program transitions for all students. Interviewees described a wide variety of activities and initiatives that supported this objective. For example, a

recently completed preK-12 curriculum mapping project had created a horizontally and vertically aligned curricular experiences for all students. Grade-level team leaders at grades preK-5 and academic department heads at both the middle school and the high school promoted professional communication, collaboration, and uniformity of learning experiences across all the district's schools. Principals reported that they regularly visited classes in their buildings and that they continually monitored curricular scope and sequence for both quality and consistency.

Administrators, guidance staff, and special education personnel described numerous meetings each spring to carefully review the transition needs, including the IEPs, 504 plans, curriculum accommodation plans, and ISSPs, of students transitioning from grade to grade, from elementary school to middle school, and from middle school to high school. Cumulative folders followed each student as they progressed through the grade levels. Interviewees explained that discussions were particularly detailed at the grade 2-3, 5-6, and 8-9 transition points in order to ensure that students were placed in appropriate academic settings, that the continuity of services was provided, and that identified learning needs were systematically addressed. In addition, the district provided a wide variety of orientation activities, school visitation opportunities, curriculum nights, and open house programs to students and families during the spring, summer, and fall.

Those interviewed asserted that much effort and attention was devoted to facilitating students' transition to the high school. The district assigned all freshmen to one guidance counselor who, with the assistance and support of the full department, was responsible for oversight of the yearlong grade 9 transition program and all related activities, meetings, and events. A wide range of relevant topics, including course and credit requirements, community service, career exploration, school rules and regulations, and study skills, constituted the curriculum of this program. High school staff reported that pre- and post-assessments revealed that freshmen found the transition program to be interesting and valuable. Administrators also cited a number of programmatic revisions that had been implemented to facilitate students' academic transition to the high school and to enhance their academic success.

The high school also adjusted the science curriculum to reflect the new MCAS science competency assessment. All freshmen were scheduled to take biology for the 2006-2007 school

year. In addition, a reading program was developed for those students who entered the high school reading below their grade level. Further, according to the high school's SIP, the guidance and mathematics departments collaborated in designing a skills unit for underperforming Algebra I students. Finally, grade 9 and 10 students who scored in the 'Needs Improvement' category or below on their middle school MCAS tests were scheduled for a full-semester, team taught MCAS preparation course that integrated language arts and mathematics instruction.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district had formal, system-wide written policies relative to discipline referrals, grade retentions, attendance, suspensions, and exclusions. The superintendent and administrative council reviewed these district policies and procedures each summer to ensure that practices remained current and effective. An examination of all student handbooks revealed that uniform policies, procedures, and practices were maintained and communicated at each of the schools. All student handbooks were clear, consistent, detailed, and comprehensive. School councils annually reviewed them and distributed them to all families served, as well as made them available on the school's website. Each school used the district's Rediker student management software system to compile detailed data relative to attendance and discipline. Interviewees indicated that administrators and staff regularly accessed and analyzed data in order to be proactive in the identification of problematic behaviors or patterns and to initiate appropriate responses.

Attendance requirements existed and interviewees described them as "being aggressively enforced" at all grade levels. A variety of warning and notification letters, some of which were automatically generated by the software program, were promptly sent to parents when warranted. In more serious or time sensitive circumstances, administrators or staff members would make personal phone calls to parents and/or they would schedule in-school meetings. All schools also had access to the district's Connect-ED automated telephone system, and those interviewed confirmed that they used it extensively to promote communication between school and home.

The DOE statistical indicators reflected favorably on the district's efforts to develop responsible student behaviors. For example, throughout the review period, the student attendance, retention, dropout, and out-of-school suspension rates for every school in the district, including the high school, remained substantially better than state averages. According to DOE data, daily attendance in the district was 95.6 percent in 2006, compared to the state rate of 93.8 percent. This positive pattern was true for both the aggregate population and student subgroups at all grade levels.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district's dropout rate has historically been very low and it continued to be substantially below the state average throughout the period under review. Between 2003 and 2006, the high school's dropout rate averaged just under one percent, a rate almost 75 percent below that of the state. An analysis of the class of 2006 data revealed that only five students out of a cohort of 224 had withdrawn from school. Two additional students who had dropped out of school subsequently returned and graduated prior to October 1, 2006.

Those interviewed asserted that the high school staff did a lot to minimize the number of students leaving school, and that administrators and staff worked in close collaboration to achieve this goal. All of the academic and attendance monitoring systems earlier described combined to help staff identify at-risk students well before an actual withdrawal would occur. The SST, composed of high school special educators, guidance staff, school nurse, and building administrators, worked to design individualized intervention strategies. The team worked in an intensive manner with at-risk students and their families and made use of a wide range of school and community-based support programs, academic modifications, educational placements, and therapeutic services.

Interviewees identified a number of programs provided by or through the high school that they believed contributed greatly to the district's exceptionally low dropout rate. These included the work study and internship program for juniors and seniors, the independent study program,

online courses, and a wide variety of career and technical education opportunities available to East Longmeadow students through the district's affiliation with Holyoke Community College. Administrators and staff felt that the high school responded proactively and appropriately to at-risk students in order to deter them from withdrawing from school and that the district had provided them with adequate resources with which to do so.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

Although the number of homeless and transient students in East Longmeadow had always been exceptionally small, averaging only one or two students annually during the three-year period under review, the district developed and implemented a formal policy and procedures to meet to their needs. The district's special education director coordinated programs and services for these students. East Longmeadow's Homeless Students policy (JFABD) was contained in the school department policy manual. Interviewees stated that the district took its responsibilities seriously and that all of the services and supports required by state and federal statutes were in place and provided to their homeless/transient population. These included ongoing communication with parents and foster parents and extensive collaboration with a variety of state and local agencies and organizations. Although few in number, the district's homeless and transient students were continually monitored by the special education director to provide timely assistance and support when needed.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district had a formal system-wide attendance policy and a comprehensive set of implementation procedures in place in all schools in the district. Each school's student handbook contained detailed attendance policies and enforcement practices and described the consequences for when a student exceeded absence limits. Administrators reported that every

family received a copy of their school's handbook. In addition, all handbooks could also be accessed on the district's website.

At the high school, students could be denied academic credit if they accumulated more than nine days of unexcused absence in a half-year course and 18 days in a full-year course. At the middle and elementary schools, the unexcused absence limit was 13 days a year. Attendance was taken in each building daily, using the district's Rediker student management software system. Student attendance data were carefully monitored by building administrators, guidance staff, and the school nurse and distributed electronically to all staff. According to those interviewed, the compilation and analysis of attendance data were done only in the aggregate and/or for individual students. Reviews of student subgroup attendance data were not a practice within the district's schools. Interviewees asserted that student punctuality and regular daily attendance had long been an expectation throughout the district and that the district gave much effort and attention to them. The district expected a high level of communication between the schools and home. Interviewees described a comprehensive array of procedures and practices employed by the schools to support their attendance policies, including frequent letters, phone calls, and parent conferences. When appropriate, the services of the school resource officer, social service agencies, and the courts were used.

During the period under review, daily student attendance for the district averaged near 96 percent, compared to the state rate of close to 94 percent. A disaggregated analysis of the data revealed uniformly positive attendance rates at all grade levels and in all schools, including the high school.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

Staff attendance information was maintained at the individual schools and carefully monitored by central office and building administrators. Interviewees indicated that regular faculty attendance was a high priority in the district and the district expected principals and teachers to

promote it. Teacher focus groups confirmed that the district clearly communicated this expectation and schools appropriately enforced it. Procedures to be followed in the event of teacher absence included the maintenance of substitute folders, which were described in detail and included in all faculty handbooks. The hiring of substitute teachers was arranged through the central office. Administrators, team leaders (elementary), and department heads (secondary) worked closely with substitute teachers. They were responsible for facilitating the efforts of substitutes, ensuring that they fully implemented lesson plans provided by the classroom teacher to maintain the continuity of instruction. Communication between classroom teachers and substitute teachers was promoted by the use of two-way feedback sheets in cases of teacher absence. Substitute teachers were annually provided with an orientation program and training on relevant school policies, procedures, and safety protocols. In addition to lesson plans, schools provided substitute teachers with the absent teacher's substitute folder, which included detailed information (e.g., medical notices, food allergy alerts, etc.) about those classes and students that the regular teacher was ordinarily supervising.

In interviews with the EQA examiners, administrators and teachers indicated that they did not consider staff absenteeism to be a concern in the district. They expressed the belief that administrative expectations and a long tradition of professionalism and collegiality contributed to consistent and positive faculty attendance patterns across the district. A review of DOE data revealed that the average number of days absent, excluding professional development days, was nine per teacher, and with the exception of the middle school which had incurred an unavoidable series of medically-related teacher absences, this rate was consistent in all of the district's schools.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

Interviews and a review of the district documentation established that the district had programs and procedures in place designed to increase subgroup access and encourage subgroup

participation in advanced and/or accelerated academic programs. At the elementary level, the increased use of standardized testing, such as the DIBELS and GRADE programs, produced more and better data to inform reading level placements, as well as the development of a variety of individualized remedial and support interventions. In addition, the district's gifted and talented program provided enriching educational opportunities to all students through events and activities designed to expose them to a variety of challenging and higher order critical and creative thinking experiences.

Administrators explained that the district introduced leveled classes at the middle school. Using the Iowa Algebra Aptitude Test, in addition to several other clearly defined criteria, teachers placed students into a two-tiered mathematics curriculum that provided a more challenging mathematics program for students with identified computational skills. Additionally, using a comparable set of eligibility rubrics, the middle school teachers assessed all students for foreign language selection at the end of grade 6. In lieu of foreign language, the school provided underperforming students with a range of academic supports, including enhanced reading services and MCAS tutorial classes. Further, the district's gifted and talented program provided middle school students with a wide variety of flexible grouping experiences, including individual, small-group, and whole-class tutorials, focusing on acquisition of skills related to identifed strengths, emphasis on mastery, and problem solving.

The honors curriculum expanded at the high school to include accelerated academic programs at all grade levels and content areas. AP courses were also available to juniors and seniors. The high school offered a comprehensive AP curriculum, and throughout the period under review AP scores were consistently high. Examiners learned that the College Board had formally recognized East Longmeadow High School in writing for the school's superior performance on the 2006 AP examinations.

Qualifying criteria for admission to honors level and AP courses were described in student handbooks and programs of study. They included grades earned in previous classes, qualifying scores on standardized tests, teacher and counselor recommendations, and parental requests. Administrators and guidance personnel at both the middle and high schools stated that students who failed to meet the academic prerequisites were permitted to elect these classes. Guidance

staff encouraged students to take the most challenging courses possible and communicated these expectations to parents. They reported increased examination of student PSAT scores to help identify underperforming students who had the potential to succeed in the high school's more challenging academic programs. Administrators acknowledged that the district had done little analysis of student subgroup representation in AP and honors classes and could not accurately describe how closely subgroup enrollment and achievement rates paralleled overall population proportions. A subsequent review of disaggregated data revealed that, although gender balanced, the representation of student subgroups was well below the proportion of those subgroups in the overall school population.

Interviewees explained that the district offered an extensive range of educational programs, services, and interventions across all grade levels designed to provide appropriate academic supports for underperforming and at-risk students. They described a significant increase in attention and resources focused on mathematics instruction in all the district's schools. Central office and building administrators indicated that the district was committed to helping all students maximize their potential and develop their individual talents and abilities, in order to ultimately minimize the achievement gap.

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

VI. Financial and Asset Management Effectiveness and Efficiency

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

Standard Rating: Satisfactory

Findings:

- The 20 percent reduction in Chapter 70 aid in FY 2004, followed by leveled state funding in FY 2005, impacted the entire school district. The district eliminated 14 positions, increased class sizes, reduced supplies and textbooks, and increased user fees.
- At the time of the EQA visit, the district had successfully reinstated most of the instructional positions eliminated, reduced athletic user fees, and eliminated user fees for participation in extracurricular activities.
- The town provided adequate financial support for the schools.
- The district practiced site-based budgeting. Analysis of student assessment data and SMART goals influenced budget decisions and the allocation of funds.
- During the review period, funds received by the district in federal and state entitlement grants declined, with the exception of the 94-142 special education allocation and METCO funds, which increased.
- The district's accounting technology was fully integrated with the town's software.

Summary

The superintendent developed the budget through an open and participatory process. The school site-based budget committees and principals, with input from staff and school councils, met from June to November to develop the school's budget needs for each school. The business manager projected all contractual obligations and fixed costs for the next fiscal year. The town appropriations committee met with all town departments in November and provided instruction for the budget process. In December, members of the administrative team along with the superintendent met with the school committee to discuss identified budget needs and to review site-based requests and districtwide fixed costs. Budget development decisions reflected the needs of the district and not what the town could afford. Following an open forum in December, the school committee approved a budget that it considered equitable and defendable and submitted it to the town appropriations committee by the first week in January. The school committee and town appropriations committee held open meetings from January to May to review and negotiate the budget, and the school committee held several public budget forums during the same period to communicate the needs of the school department to the public. The school department budget presented at the annual town meeting had the support and favorable recommendation of the town appropriations committee.

The school committee received monthly budget reports and periodically approved requests for transfers. Principals did not receive monthly budget reports since they had access to the financial accounting system and had the ability to control and track their budgets and manage their funds at all times. Central office personnel regularly reviewed and monitored expenditures to ensure spending remained within fiscal budget limits. The district did not allow accounts to run into the negative and transfers were made for any negative balances. The district used purchase orders to encumber expenditures from all funds for goods and/or services. Adequate internal controls existed in the business office to ensure the district adhered to procurement laws and processed payroll correctly.

The district exceeded the net school spending (NSS) requirement of the Education Reform Act. The tax levy was at the maximum allowable. Over $1,000,000 from free cash supported the town's annual budget, and the town designated approximately $500,000 of this amount for the school budget.

Parent-teacher organizations (PTOs) at each elementary school and the middle school organized fund raising and spent their money on enrichment, cultural, and community-based activities. The East Longmeadow Educational Endowment Fund, a non-profit private foundation, raised money and awarded grants to teachers to augment educational opportunities not provided for in the budget process.

The district had five schools in generally good condition and maintained them with an in-house custodial staff. They were clean and had systems to ensure student safety. The town's department of public works provided grounds maintenance and exterior building maintenance. The district obtained the services of outside vendors for maintenance tasks that the town did not perform or that were beyond the scope of in-house personnel.

The district maintained a five-year capital plan that was included as part of the strategic plan, detailed the five school buildings and districtwide capital improvements, was updated and prioritized yearly, and was presented to the school committee for its approval. Per the East Longmeadow Town By-Laws, the plan was submitted in September to the town capital planning committee that studied all proposed capital outlays.

The Meadowbrook Elementary School had eight permanent modular classrooms to accommodate the full-day kindergarten program. Principal and interest payments on the project were made from tuition funds collected. In 2006, the town held a debt exclusion vote for the construction of 12 new permanent modular classrooms, and voters approved it in order to alleviate overcrowded conditions at each of the three elementary schools.

Indicators

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the period under review, the superintendent developed the budget through an open, participatory process. The district's FY 2006 budget was comprehensive, current, and

understandable. The budget document not only provided details which explained and supported the district's requests in a clear manner and reflected the essential needs, but also contained budgetary history and trends as well as enrollment projections. The budget document narrative provided information on other fund sources. The district built the budget upon six categorical blocks: instructional services, student support services, maintenance, utilities, site administration, and districtwide central office services.

From June to November, the schools' site-based budget committees and principals, with input from staff and school councils, worked to develop site-budget needs for each school. In November the school committee and the district administrative team attended the town appropriations committee meeting for all town departments and received instructions for the town budget process, which could include the preparation of an essential needs budget, a zero-percent increase budget, a three-percent increase budget, or a two-percent decrease budget.

Amounts exceeding the percentage designated by the town appropriations committee were considered to be supplemental. In December, members of the administrative team along with the superintendent met with the school committee in a joint budget workshop to discuss identified budget needs and to review site-based requests for additional staffing or needs and districtwide fixed costs. All contractual salaries, utilities, and districtwide accounts for the next fiscal year were projected by the business manager. The superintendent and the business manager developed a draft budget and executive summary, which were submitted to the school committee in December for review. In open session, the school committee discussed, reviewed, edited, and approved an official budget which the school committee considered equitable and defendable. The district submitted the school committee budget to the town appropriations committee by the first week of January.

The town appropriations committee, composed of seven members appointed by the town moderator, considered all articles involving expending, appropriating, raising, transferring, or borrowing money and had full autonomy to develop the town budget presented at the annual town meeting. It met in open meetings with the school committee from January to May to review the budget. Members of the administrative team attended. A liaison from the town appropriations committee was assigned to the school department. The school committee held

several public budget forums during the months of January through April to communicate to the public the needs of the school district.

Central office administrators and town officials in separate interviews expressed the opinion that trust and open communication existed between the school district and the town. Although they sometimes disagreed, the two departments made an effort to work together. The goal of both the school district and the town officials was the presentation of an agreed upon school budget and a balanced town budget at the annual town meeting in May. The school district budget presented at the annual town meeting had the support and favorable recommendation of the town appropriations committee.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

Interviewees stated their SMART goals as well as the analysis of student assessment data influenced budget decisions and the allocation of funds. Interviewees stated the district allocated its resources based primarily on reviews of math and ELA MCAS test scores. In response to needs identified in data analysis, the district budget included new materials, increased remediation, and professional development targeted to address those needs to support student achievement for all students. The district allocated funds to purchase supplemental math materials, additional materials for special needs students, and the DIBELS and GRADE assessments.

The district hired tutors who provided after-school MCAS preparation support to students. It also hired two teachers who provided support to students at the high school in math and ELA. The district piloted Investigations math at the elementary schools, intensified the reading program at grade 3, and added an additional teacher at Mapleshade Elementary School. The Mapleshade and Meadow Brook Elementary Schools shared a health teacher, and Mapleshade hired a math teacher in order to gain more math instructional time.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district exceeded the net school spending (NSS) requirement of the Education Reform Act in each of the years in the period under review. In FY 2004, Chapter 70 aid to the district decreased from the $4,098,133 received in FY 2003 to $3,278,506, an $819,627 or 20 percent reduction. The district received no additional funds in FY 2005 when Chapter 70 aid again totaled $3,278,506. In FY 2006, the district received a 4.2 increase in Chapter 70 aid, or an additional $137,350, for a total of $3,415,856.

The 20 percent reduction in Chapter 70 aid in FY 2004 impacted the entire school district. All schools, as well as the central administrative office, were affected by the reduction in state aid. Interviewees indicated the district did not cut programs but eliminated 14 positions, increased class sizes, and reduced supplies and textbooks. All athletic costs were cut from the budget and charged to the athletic revolving account. The district charged athletic user fees which ranged from $151 to $660, depending on the sport. The cost of extracurricular activities was cut by 50 percent from the budget, and the district also charged user fees for participation in clubs and organizations. Interviewees stated that by FY 2007, the district had successfully reinstated most of the instructional positions eliminated, reduced athletic user fees to $116 for all sports, and eliminated user fees for participation in clubs and organizations.

The business manager prepared a spreadsheet for the administrators showing the site-based operational budgets and how these funds could be used. The district factored site-based budget monies by using the previous October 1 enrollment. The district allocated funds to each school based on the percentage of the total enrollment at each school. Interviewees stated that the district allocated no additional money because of grade-level or programmatic needs.

The school district's per pupil expenditure ranked below the state average during the period under review. Interviewees stated that the town provided adequate financial support for the schools and that the district did an effective job with the funds provided.

Principals, teachers, and parents interviewed stated the age and availability of textbooks presented a problem. A review of documents for the period under review revealed the district expenditure for textbooks from school committee appropriations totaled $119,127 in FY 2004. According to information provided by the DOE, in the document entitled FY05 Expenditures by Function, All Funds, the district expenditure for textbooks totaled $47,877 in FY 2005. The Preliminary FY06 Expenditures Per Pupil, All Funds reported a $57,090 textbook expenditure in FY 2006.

The PTOs at each elementary school and the middle school organized fund raising and spent their money on enrichment, cultural, and community-based activities. The East Longmeadow Educational Endowment Fund, a non-profit private foundation, raised funds through sources such as contributions from businesses, corporate matching gifts, parents, community groups, a dinner dance and silent auction, and a golf tournament. It awarded grants to teachers to augment educational opportunities not provided for in the budget process. Teachers submitted proposals for projects and programs to the foundation. The foundation also funded proposals which impacted students at all grade levels and had repeated benefits for a period of years. During the period under review, the foundation awarded approximately $20,000 yearly directly to the schools.

In an interview with the EQA examiners, the town officials stated the tax levy limit was at the maximum allowable. According to information available on the Department of Revenue website, residential taxes amounted to approximately 83 percent of the amount raised through taxation. Town officials interviewed stated that during the period under review, $1,000,000 from free cash supported the town budget yearly. Approximately $500,000 of this amount was designated for the school budget. The stabilization fund totaled approximately $1,000,000. The unified tax rate for FY 2006 was $17.08 and would decrease to $16.22 in FY 2007. The town evaluated property in a separate third of the town yearly, resulting in property reevaluation every three years.

The town constructed permanent modular classrooms because they were less expensive and reportedly guaranteed for 50 years. At the beginning of the period under review, the town constructed eight permanent modular classrooms costing $1.4 million at Meadowbrook Elementary School to accommodate the full-day kindergarten program. The district paid principal and interest payments on the project from tuition funds collected. At the annual town meeting in May 2006, the voters of East Longmeadow approved the construction of four new permanent modular classrooms at each of the three elementary schools in order to alleviate overcrowded conditions due to increased enrollment. In June 2006, the town passed a $2.872 million debt exclusion vote. During the site visit, the EQA examiners noted construction had started on the project; according to interviewees, the classrooms were scheduled for occupancy by August 1, 2007. Central office administrators and town appropriations committee members expressed confidence that the project qualified for state reimbursement. In an interview with the EQA examiners, town officials indicated the district needed the additional classrooms to alleviate overcrowding and the town was prepared to pay the entire cost, should the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) determine the project ineligible for reimbursement.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

Interviewees stated that the district implemented an evaluation-based review process to determine the cost effectiveness of its programs, initiatives, and activities. A review of out-of-district special education placement costs and an expansion of special education services resulted in the development of an in-house program and the hiring of a teacher and two paraprofessionals at the Mountain View Elementary School, the implementation of an autism program at Mapleshade Elementary School, and the return of students who attended the Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative. In addition, Advanced Placement courses were not offered unless a minimum of 11 students were enrolled.

Central office administrators indicated the district conducted several reviews to determine the cost effectiveness of non-instructional programs. The district provided regular day transportation to students in grades K-6 who resided two or more miles from the school of attendance, as required by law. It charged a $270 user fee for those students ineligible for transportation services but for whom transportation was provided. The district owned 13 buses with a 71-passenger capacity each and maintained six spares in addition to three minibuses used for in-district special education transportation. An examination of transportation costs resulted in no changes to the three-tiered transportation system. The cost of out-of-district special education transportation, which was provided by the Lower Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative, was also examined, along with heat and utilities costs and costs associated with the school lunch program.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

A written agreement, signed by the district business manager and the town accountant, existed between the district and the town that described the manner for calculating and the amounts to be used in calculating the indirect charges levied on the school district budget by the community. This agreement was not reviewed and signed on an annual basis. The district business manager and the town accountant, in separate interviews with the EQA examiners, indicated the indirect charges were accurately levied, and no need existed to review the agreement yearly. Interviewees stated a willingness to renegotiate the charges and calculations should future circumstances warrant a change.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district exceeded the net school spending (NSS) requirement of the Education Reform Act in each of the years of the period under review. A review of the latest DOE document entitled Chapter 70 Trends, FY98 Through FY07 (updated as of June 6, 2007) indicated the district exceeded the NSS requirement in FY 2004 by 13.7 percent, or $2,417,724; in FY 2005 by 16.2 percent, or $3,022,897; and in FY 2006 by 15.5 percent, or $3,013,523.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

In accordance with school committee policy DI, the committee received monthly budget reports during the period under review. Interviewees stated that reports on grants and revolving funds were not regularly provided to the school committee but were made available upon request.

The business office did not distribute monthly budget status reports to the principals. The district practiced site-based budgeting, and according to the AdminTeam Handbook all administrators were trained in this process. The superintendent held principals accountable for all finances and processes in their school building. All principals were expected to know the balance, status, and processes used in the budget and have a working thorough knowledge of the site operational, activity, and donations budgets. The central office provided some training on the use of the MUNIS financial accounting system, which was implemented on July 1, 2007, and principals had been trained in the use of the Unifund financial accounting software used during the period under review. Principals interviewed stated they had a great degree of control over their individual school budgets. Since they had access to the financial accounting system, principals had the ability to control and track their budgets and manage their funds. Principals submitted transfer requests to the business manager during the year for transfers between their site-based line item accounts. Salary accounts were not considered to be site-based accounts. Televised school committee meetings made the budget information public.

School committee policy DBJ, approved June 19, 2006, detailed the process for budget transfer authority. The superintendent periodically recommended to the finance subcommittee of the school committee, which consisted of the chairperson and vice chairperson, requests for transfers. The finance subcommittee reported at the next full school committee meeting the approved transfers. The superintendent met with the finance subcommittee when the need arose to transfer more than $5,000 from one major category to another. The district defined major categories by DOE function code. The business manager regularly reviewed payroll and monitored expenditures to ensure spending remained within fiscal budget limits. No accounts were allowed to run in the negative, and transfers were made for any negative balances. The superintendent kept the school committee informed of escalating fuel costs and the resultant increase in utility costs, as well as increased special education costs.

The district submitted the end-of-year report and final financial grant forms within the timeframe designated by the DOE and did not request an extension of the submission date since the town accountant provided the information to complete Schedules 1 and 19 in a timely manner. The district filed amendments to the end-of-year report, when applicable, in a timely manner. The district did not employ a grants manager, and the responsibility for monitoring all grants belonged to the business manager.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district's accounting technology was fully integrated with the town's. During the period under review, the district and town accountant's office shared and used the Unifund accounting system and Fundsense financial software to maintain accounts payable and payroll. A committee of representatives from all town departments met in FY 2006 to review financial accounting software packages since the DOS-based Unifund software was unable to generate reports

deemed necessary by the town accountant for appropriate fiscal management. A majority of the committee opted to purchase the financial accounting software provided by MUNIS, and on July 1, 2007 the town implemented the program for all its departments.

The district encumbered contracted salary obligations. The district's business office prepared all payroll and vendor warrants, which were reviewed and approved by the business manager, the superintendent, and a school committee member. The district used purchase orders to encumber expenditures for goods and/or services. Central office administrators stated that principals were made aware of the purchase order system, and payment had been denied when expenditures were made without prior issuance of an approved purchase order. The district used the purchase order system for not only expenditures from the local budget but also from grants, revolving accounts, and student activity fund accounts. The business manager and superintendent signed all purchase orders. The business manager used an Excel spreadsheet to update projections of expenditures in all accounts, particularly heat and utilities. The district business office printed the checks, which were forwarded for signature to the treasurer's office at town hall.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The school committee policy DD encouraged the administration to seek and secure all possible sources of state, federal, and other special funds that would enhance the educational opportunities for students. The policy further stated that the superintendent would keep informed of all possible funds available to the school system under the various state and federal programs and the manner in which these funds could best be used in the school system.

Interviewees stated the district had unsuccessfully pursued grants during the period under review and noted the district failed to qualify for competitive federal and state grants because less than six percent of the student population was categorized as low income. Administrators and staff

successfully pursued partnerships with local businesses and received mini grants from donations as well as mini grants from the East Longmeadow Educational Foundation.

A review of DOE documents indicated that the district received $1,331,360 in federal and state entitlement grants in FY 2004. In FY 2005, the district received $1,418,579, and in FY 2006 the district received $1,315,033. The district received Title I funds, which declined from $195,374 in FY 2004 to $166,555 in FY 2006. The district expended the funds to provide services to Mapleshade Elementary School and Birchland Park Middle School. During the period under review, the 94-142 special education allocation increased from $622,086 to $723,175, as did the METCO grant funds from $181,078 to $247,042, while the funds received by the district from all other federal and state grants generally declined. The Kindergarten Enhancement grant in FY 2004 totaled $45,767. The grant totaled, and the district received, $59,900 in both FY 2005 and FY 2006. Medicaid reimbursement received was directly deposited into the general fund of the town and not available to the school district.

The business manager reviewed and monitored all supplemental expenditures. The business office controlled and monitored all grant and revolving funds and the student activity accounts. The business manager conducted an internal audit of the student activity accounts. An external audit of the accounts was not performed by an independent outside auditor. The district implemented the purchase order system for the expenditure of goods and services from the grants, revolving accounts, and student activities, and the business manager and superintendent signed all purchase orders. The business office prepared all payroll and vendor payments from grants and revolving accounts for inclusion on warrants, and the business manager reviewed all warrants to ensure expenditures were appropriate. Adequate internal controls existed in the business office to ensure the district adhered to procurement laws and processed payroll correctly.

Measures existed to ensure complete or accurate deposits in revolving accounts and to ensure the expenditures were for the purpose the account intended. Procedures existed for the handling of cash and for preparing and processing student activity and revolving account deposits and expenditures.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The school committee policy DJE, contained in the policy manual, detailed the district's bidding requirements. Little evidence existed as to when the policy was voted. When bidding limits were questioned by the EQA examiners, central office administrators stated the policy was outdated and needed to be revised. The policy stated, "All purchases of materials and equipment and all contracts for construction or maintenance in amounts exceeding $10,000 will be based upon competitive bidding."

Central office administrators stated the district required no fewer than three quotes for items costing $5,000 and above and formally bid goods and services costing above $25,000, in accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 30B. A review of vendor activity by the EQA examiners indicated the district followed state procurement laws. The district advertised invitations to bid in local newspapers and, when applicable, in the Central Register and the Goods and Services Bulletin. The district also participated in cooperative purchasing through the Lower Pioneer Valley Education Collaborative as well as the Hampshire Council and procured goods from state contracts.

The business manager was certified as a school business administrator and had completed half the courses necessary to obtain MCPPO credentials.

The town hired Thomas J. Scanlon & Associates to conduct a yearly audit of the town's financial statements. The town acquired the services of the audit firm through the bidding process shortly prior to the period under review and awarded the firm a three-year contract. During the period

under review, the town again followed the bidding process and awarded a second three-year contract to the audit firm. A review of audit documents indicated no audit findings.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district did not have a formal, written preventive maintenance schedule. Central office administrators provided the EQA examiners with custodial maintenance calendar worksheets, which listed by month and week the scheduled tasks and was considered to be the maintenance plan. Central office administrators, with input from each building head custodian, developed the worksheets, which they described as "uniform, comprehensive, and detailed." The district contracted each year for boiler, generator, elevator, fire alarm, and fire extinguisher maintenance.

The town's department of public works provided grounds maintenance and exterior building maintenance at the district schools. Head custodians at each building performed minor maintenance tasks. The district obtained the services of outside vendors for maintenance tasks that the town did not perform or that were beyond the scope of in-house personnel and, when warranted, adhered to the provisions of Chapter 30B by obtaining three quotes, by competitively bidding the contract, or by using vendors on the state bid list.

The Facilities Inventory provided by the district noted the MSBA general condition description of each facility ranged from 'moderate' for the Meadow Brook and Mapleshade Elementary Schools and the East Longmeadow High School to 'good' for the Birchland Park Middle School, which was constructed in 2000. After visiting all district buildings, the EQA examiners determined the schools were in generally good condition, clean, and well maintained by the 20 custodians the district employed for its five schools. The district did not reinstate the custodial positions eliminated as a result of reduced Chapter 70 aid in FY 2004.

The EQA examiners noted that there were poorly lit areas of the high school, overcrowded conditions across the district, and inappropriate teaching spaces in the elementary schools. Interviewees stated that the reduction of class size remained a priority, and additional space would be available upon the completion of the construction of the 12 permanent modular classrooms at the elementary schools.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district maintained a five-year capital plan that was included as part of the strategic plan and detailed the five school buildings and districtwide capital improvements. Goal #8 of the district strategic plan, "Provide a Safe and Attractive Environment and Appropriate Facilities for Students and Staff," specifically drove the construction of the capital facilities plan.

Site-based committees, working with their administrators and consultants, developed and updated yearly the capital facilities plan for each school. Much of the information contained in the plan was generated by a facilities study conducted by the architectural firm of Alderman & MacNeish in 2001, as part of the district's preparation to update its facilities study for the School Building Assistance Bureau of the DOE. The study specified many aging items throughout the infrastructure of the five schools. These items were integrated into the facilities capital plan.

In August of each year during the period under review, the superintendent and the district administrative team completed the past year's process that prioritized the total capital needs of the district. In September of each year, a draft of the capital facilities plan was presented to the school committee for review, discussion, modification, and voted approval. Per the East Longmeadow Town By-Laws, the school committee submitted the plan in September to the town capital planning committee. The town capital planning committee, composed of two members appointed by the town appropriations committee and four members appointed by the moderator

and the board of selectmen, studied all proposed capital outlays involving acquisition of land or an expenditure of $20,000 and having a useful life of at least three years.

Throughout the fall and early spring, the town capital planning committee met with the district administration and the school committee. At the annual town meeting held in May, the town capital planning committee presented to the voters its recommendations for capital improvements for the town. Based upon the recommendation of the capital planning committee, the voters of East Longmeadow approved a total of $2,678,848 for capital items in FY 2004, of which $671,347 were related to school projects. In FY 2005, the voters approved $2,141,954 for capital items, of which the town designated $1,258,933 for school projects. The voters approved $6,049,195 for total capital items at the May 2006 annual town meeting, of which $812,826 were for school projects.

Town officials interviewed confirmed the absence of a long-range facilities plan to construct new schools or to renovate and add to existing buildings in order to address the increasing student enrollment. They told the examiners that an additional level could be added to the Birchland Park Middle School, constructed in 2000, to accommodate increased enrollment.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district schools had a system in place to ensure student safety. All buildings had locked exterior doors during the school day. Visitors and late students gained entrance to the building via a buzzer system at the front entrance and reported to the main office to sign in once access was granted. Video surveillance cameras were positioned at each entry, and signs were posted indicating that the building had surveillance cameras. Video cameras were visible in corridors and stairwells at the Birchland Park Middle School, which was constructed in 2000. The schools provided identification badges to visitors at school offices. School staff members were required to wear identification badges. The district obtained a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) check on all employees, volunteers, and chaperones.

Appendix A: Proficiency Index (PI)

The proficiency index is a metric used to measure and compare all schools and school districts regarding their performance on the MCAS tests. The proficiency index is a measure of the level of achievement a district, school, grade, or subgroup has made in relation to the 'Proficient' achievement level on the MCAS tests. There are four indices: the Average Proficiency Index (API), the English Language Arts Proficiency Index (EPI), the Math Proficiency Index (MPI), and the Science and Technology/Engineering Index (SPI). The API currently is a weighted average of the EPI and MPI; the SPI will be included beginning in 2007, when passing the STE test becomes a graduation requirement.

The proficiency index is calculated as follows:

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

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

Example: The Anywhere High School had the following results on the 2006 MCAS tests:

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

The average proficiency index is calculated by adding: 0 + 3.75 + 10.5 + 25.5 + 18 = 57.75

The average proficiency index (API) for the Anywhere High School would be 57.75.

The EPI would use the same calculation using the ELA results for all students taking the ELA exam. The MPI would use the same calculation using the math results for all students taking the math exam. The SPI would use the same calculation using the STE results for all students taking the STE exam.

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

Appendix B: Chapter 70 Trends, FY1997 – FY2006

	Foundation Enrollment	Pct Chg	Foundation Budget	Pct Chg	Required Local Contribution	Chapter 70 Aid	Pct Chg	Required Net School Spending (NSS)	Pct Chg	Actual Net School Spending	Pct Chg	Dollars Over/Under Requirement	Percent Over/ Under
FY97	2,462	1.7	13,013,264	4.3	9,856,422	2,550,355	14.1	12,406,777	4.9	13,241,302	6.6	834,525	6.7
FY98	2,437	-1.0	13,218,350	1.6	10,371,913	2,696,606	5.7	13,068,519	5.3	14,408,637	8.8	1,340,118	10.3
FY99	2,450	0.5	13,799,340	4.4	11,031,567	2,750,419	2.0	13,781,986	5.5	15,501,205	7.6	1,719,219	12.5
FY00	2,522	2.9	14,213,172	3.0	11,643,819	3,128,719	13.8	14,772,538	7.2	17,263,431	11.4	2,490,893	16.9
FY01	2,485	-1.5	14,498,397	2.0	12,192,243	3,563,594	13.9	15,755,837	6.7	17,661,143	2.3	1,905,306	12.1
FY02	2,558	2.9	15,981,513	10.2	12,649,258	4,098,133	15.0	16,747,391	6.3	18,861,931	6.8	2,114,540	12.6
FY03	2,568	0.4	16,512,567	3.3	13,258,630	4,098,133	0.0	17,356,763	3.6	20,848,834	10.5	3,492,071	20.1
FY04	2,661	3.6	17,521,871	6.1	14,419,630	3,278,506	-20.0	17,698,136	2.0	20,115,860	-3.5	2,417,724	13.7
FY05	2,714	2.0	18,450,869	5.3	15,426,120	3,278,506	0.0	18,704,626	5.7	21,727,523	8.0	3,022,896	16.2
FY06	2,747	1.2	19,356,365	4.9	16,081,730	3,415,856	4.2	19,497,586	4.2	22,511,109	3.6	3,013,523	15.5

	Dollars Per Foundation Enrollment			Percentage of Foundation			Chapter 70 Aid as Percent of Actual NSS
	Foundation Budget	Ch 70 Aid	Actual NSS	Ch 70	Required NSS	Actual NSS	
FY97	5,286	1,036	5,378	19.6	95.3	101.8	19.3
FY98	5,424	1,107	5,912	20.4	98.9	109.0	18.7
FY99	5,632	1,123	6,327	19.9	99.9	112.3	17.7
FY00	5,636	1,241	6,845	22.0	103.9	121.5	18.1
FY01	5,834	1,434	7,107	24.6	108.7	121.8	20.2
FY02	6,248	1,602	7,374	25.6	104.8	118.0	21.7
FY03	6,430	1,596	8,119	24.8	105.1	126.3	19.7
FY04	6,585	1,232	7,560	18.7	101.0	114.8	16.3
FY05	6,798	1,208	8,006	17.8	101.4	117.8	15.1
FY06	7,046	1,243	8,195	17.6	100.7	116.3	15.2

Foundation enrollment is reported in October of the prior fiscal year (e.g. FY06 enrollment = Oct 1, 2004 headcount).
Foundation budget is the state's estimate of the minimum amount needed in each district to provide an adequate educational program.
Required Net School Spending is the annual minimum that must be spent on schools, including carryovers from prior years.
Net School Spending includes municipal indirect spending for schools but excludes capital expenditures and transportation.