The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

School District Examination Report:

Falmouth
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

Visiting Examination Team

Paula Hutton, Coordinating Examiner
Rena Shea, Senior Examiner
Herb Baker, Examiner
Linda Prystupa, Examiner
Fred Savoie, Examiner
John Sheehan, Examiner

After reviewing this report, the Educational Management Audit Council voted to accept its findings at its meeting on October 24, 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 Falmouth Public Schools, Dennis Richards; the school department staff of the Falmouth Public Schools; and the town officials in Falmouth.

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Executive Summary

The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA) examined the Falmouth Public Schools in April 2007. With an average proficiency index of 86 proficiency index (PI) points in 2006 (90 PI points in English language arts and 81 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. Two-thirds of Falmouth's students scored at or above the proficiency standard on the 2006 administration of the MCAS tests.

District Overview

The town of Falmouth is located in Barnstable County in southeastern Massachusetts. It lies on the southwestern coast of Cape Cod and provides an access point to Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket. Falmouth was an early whaling and shipping port, and agriculture, salt works, and sheep herding and wool processing augmented whaling as the early industries of the town. The arrival of the train in 1872 led to Falmouth's development as a summer resort community. Strawberries and cranberries were cultivated in the area for the Boston market. Due to the heavy use of neighboring Camp Edwards during World War II, roads in the area improved and the population grew significantly. Large home building booms occurred in the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s.

The population of Falmouth increases exponentially during the summer months. The town balances the demand for high-end, waterfront property development with environmental conservation. The largest sources of employment within the community currently are educational, health, and social services; retail trade; and professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services. Falmouth is home to the world famous Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute. The town is governed by a Board of Selectmen/Representative Town Meeting form of municipal government.

According to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR), Falmouth had a median family income of $57,422 in 1999, compared to the statewide median family income of $63,706, ranking it 240 out of the 351 cities and towns in the commonwealth. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the town had a total population of 32,660 with a population of 5,626 school-age

children, or 17 percent of the total. Of the total households in Falmouth, 26 percent were households with children under 18 years of age, and 36 percent were households with individuals age 65 years or older. Thirty-six 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 Falmouth Public Schools had a total enrollment of 4,144. The demographic composition in the district was: 88.6 percent White, 3.5 percent African-American, 3.3 percent Hispanic, 1.4 percent Asian, 1.2 percent Native American, 2.0 percent multi-race, non-Hispanic; 0.8 percent limited English proficient (LEP), 16.9 percent low income, and 15.8 percent special education. Ninety-three percent of school-age children in Falmouth attended public schools. The district offers school choice, and 21 students from other school districts attended the Falmouth schools in 2005-2006. A total of 220 Falmouth students attended public schools outside the district, including 183 students who attended Upper Cape Cod Regional Vocational Technical School and 35 students who attended charter schools.

The district has seven schools serving grades pre-kindergarten through 12, including four elementary schools serving grades pre-kindergarten through 4, one primary school serving grades 5 and 6, one middle school serving grades 7 and 8, and one high school serving grades 9 through 12. Falmouth Public Schools' administrative team consists of a superintendent, an assistant superintendent of finance and personnel, a director of curriculum and instruction, and a director of pupil personnel services. Each elementary school has a principal as well as varying amounts of assistance from an assistant principal or teachers with administrative duties. The Lawrence Middle School has a principal and two vice principals and the high school has a principal. The district has a nine-member school committee.

In FY 2006, Falmouth's per pupil expenditure (preliminary), based on appropriations from all funds, was $11,523, compared to $11,196 statewide, ranking it 112 out of the 325 of 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 $38,039,171 to $41,952,187; Chapter 70 aid increased from $4,231,106 to $4,439,706; the required local contribution increased from $30,202,519 to $32,265,939; and the foundation

enrollment decreased from 4,464 to 4,172. Chapter 70 aid as a percentage of actual net school spending decreased from 11.1 to 10.6 percent over this period. From FY 2004 to FY 2005, total curriculum and instruction expenditures as a percentage of total net school spending decreased from 67 to 66 percent.

Context

Falmouth has four elementary schools, three of which were named after the geographic sections of East Falmouth, North Falmouth, and Teaticket; the fourth elementary school is Mullen-Hall. The Morse Pond School serves grades 5 and 6 and the Lawrence Junior High School serves grades 7 and 8 for the entire town. According to administrator interviewees, the schools were redistricted prior to 2003 in order to avoid serving all the children from lower income or racial minority families in one or two lower elementary schools. According to the former and current superintendents, the real reason for redistricting was school overcrowding. Students make two transitions from one school to another before proceeding to the high school. In 2006-2007, Falmouth High School was undergoing a change in principal leadership, a renovation of the building facility, and a restructuring of its service delivery models and the division of labor within the school. In the last two years, Falmouth has welcomed new administrators from the superintendent of schools to central office and four principals. Under the leadership of the new superintendent, the district engaged in the 21st Century Schools initiative Partners in Learning as a district change model and successfully pursued a grant from the Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy to restructure the high school.

According to 2006-2007 adequate yearly progress (AYP) accountability data, both the special education and low-income subgroups were not attaining AYP status in English language arts (ELA) at grades 5-6 and grades 7-8. In mathematics, the district was not making AYP for the same subgroups at grades 6-8. In response, the district made a number of changes. It eliminated thematic committees and created preK-12 curriculum committees for each subject area. The district also added new committees, such as an information technology committee, a standards-based report card committee, and a transition committee for grades 4/5, 6/7, and 8/9 to improve curriculum articulation and student achievement. It also developed local formative assessments at each grade level to help inform instructional practice, and was in the process of implementing the use of better tools, such as technology to make data accessible at the classroom level. On the

other hand, the district was just beginning to deal with high rates of retention, absenteeism, chronic absenteeism, and dropouts.

Overall, the district was in the process of total restructuring at both the lower grades, with horizontal alignment across K-4 schools, and the upper grades, by restructuring the facility, personnel, and programs at the high school. The district's least well developed and defined curriculum was in science and technology. According to MCAS data, the rate of improvement in student achievement was lowest in science, although the district enjoys a unique local situation in which it has a well established parent and community volunteer program and a large number of parents employed in the field of scientific research at the Woods Hole marine research facility and related industries located in Falmouth.

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 2-5, 2007, the EQA conducted an independent examination of the Falmouth 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, parents on school councils, the district leadership team, school administrators, and teachers; classroom visits; 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 Falmouth 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 'High' in English language arts (ELA) and 'High' in math. Over this period, student performance improved by nearly one PI point in ELA and by close to three PI points in math, which closed the district's average proficiency gap by 11 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 Falmouth 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, approximately two-thirds of all students in Falmouth attained proficiency on the 2006 MCAS tests, much more than that statewide. Nearly three-quarters of Falmouth students attained proficiency in English language arts (ELA), more than three-fifths of Falmouth students attained proficiency in math, and more than two-fifths of Falmouth students attained proficiency in science and technology/engineering (STE). Ninety-nine percent of the Class of 2006 attained a Competency Determination.

- Falmouth's average proficiency index (API) on the MCAS tests in 2006 was 86 proficiency index (PI) points, eight PI points greater than that statewide. Falmouth's average proficiency gap, the difference between its API and the target of 100, in 2006 was 14 PI points.
- In 2006, Falmouth's proficiency gap in ELA was 10 PI points, six PI points narrower than the state's average proficiency gap in ELA. This gap would require an average improvement in performance of more than one PI point annually to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP). Falmouth's proficiency gap in math was 19 PI points in 2006, nine PI points narrower than the state's average proficiency gap in math. This gap would require an average

improvement of more than two PI points per year to achieve AYP. Falmouth's proficiency gap in STE was 25 PI points, four PI points narrower than that statewide.

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

Between 2003 and 2006, Falmouth's MCAS performance showed slight improvement overall, little improvement in ELA and STE, and some improvement in math.

- The percentage of students scoring in the 'Advanced' and 'Proficient' categories rose by eight percentage points between 2003 and 2006, while the percentage of students in the 'Warning/Failing' category decreased by four percentage points. The average proficiency gap in Falmouth narrowed from 19 PI points in 2003 to 15 PI points in 2006. This resulted in an improvement rate, or a closing of the proficiency gap, of 23 percent.
- Over the three-year period 2003-2006, ELA performance in Falmouth showed little improvement, at an average of more than one-half PI point annually. This resulted in an improvement rate of 14 percent, a rate lower than that required to meet AYP.
- Math performance in Falmouth showed more improvement, at an average of more than two PI points annually. This resulted in an improvement rate of 27 percent, also a rate lower than that required to meet AYP.
- Between 2004 and 2006, Falmouth had little improvement in STE performance, increasing by one PI point over the two-year period. This resulted in an improvement rate of four percent.

Do MCAS test results vary among subgroups of students?

Of the eight measurable subgroups in Falmouth in 2006, the gap in performance between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups was 20 PI points in ELA and 29 PI points in math (regular education students, students with disabilities, respectively).

- The proficiency gaps in Falmouth 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 half the students in these subgroups 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, nearly three-quarters 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. Roughly 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 Falmouth, the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in ELA narrowed from 23 PI points in 2003 to 22 PI points in 2006, and the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in math narrowed from 33 to 27 PI points during this period.

- All student subgroups in Falmouth had improved performance in ELA between 2003 and 2006, although for most subgroups the improvement was slight. The most improved subgroup in ELA was African-American students.
- In math, all subgroups in Falmouth also showed improved performance between 2003 and 2006. The most improved subgroup in math was students with disabilities.

Standard Summaries

Leadership, Governance, and Communication

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

The district's administrative team experienced many changes during the period under review, including a new superintendent, an interim director of curriculum and instruction, and three new principals. By the time of the onsite visit in March 2007, the district also had a new director of curriculum, a new director of pupil personnel, and an interim principal. In addition, the town elected two new members of the school committee to join the seven veteran members. While the

committee did not have a formal mentoring program, according to school committee interviewees, veteran members were readily available to offer any needed support for new members.

The superintendent and members of central administration met with newly elected school committee members prior to their first meeting to review school committee operations and its role as a policymaking board and an advocacy group for students. The school committee had subcommittees in the areas of budget, curriculum, grants, negotiations, and policy, and members also participated on ad hoc boards and committees. While there was evidence the school committee had reviewed, updated, and added several policies, some of the policies in the handbook had effective dates in the 1970s and 1980s. The committee has engaged the services of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) to update the manual, and it expected to approve the new manual in June 2008.

Overall, the EQA team documented many changes that were evident in the district during the period under review , school year 2003-2004 to school year 2005-2006. By the date of the EQA visit in March 2007, the EQA examiners could trace and document changes in leadership throughout the district that positively impacted the organizational structure of the district. The examiners also found updated organizational systems within the district, resulting in positive changes in curriculum and instruction.

The school committee, new superintendent, and town officials focused on building a collaborative culture to ensure the needs of all students were met throughout the year. The school committee, finance committee, and selectmen met to review the budget needs both of the community and of the schools prior to the adoption of the final budget. The community was invested in the 21st Century Schools initiative Partners in Learning, which encouraged all members of the educational community to focus on qualities associated with schools in which students are academically successful, motivated, and emotionally secure. During the summer of 2006, a two-day school/community meeting, which enabled approximately 50 people to explore the nine qualities associated with the initiative, and a two-day administrators' meeting were held for people to share their insights for district improvement.

The superintendent delegated the leadership of schools and programs to the respective principals and directors. Central office administrators met in alternating weeks as a team and met individually on a weekly basis with the superintendent. In addition, the full administrative team met once per month, and the superintendent created agendas for these meetings with input from administrators. The district maintained an up to date website that provided much information about the school district and increased communication with the public It also encouraged members of the community to ask questions and share their ideas with the superintendent via e-mail.

The district had a strategic plan covering the years 2004-2007 that included nine goals. It also had an annual tactical plan focusing on specific activities, timelines, and expected outcomes. The plan included both the district's vision and the mission statements, which were evident in school buildings and student handbooks and on the district website. The school committee formally adopted the plan and discussed it at least three times during the year. Each school had a three-year School Improvement Plan (SIP), which was normally voted on by the school committee and reviewed on an annual basis, that included accomplishments as well as areas still in need of improvement. Beginning in 2005-2006, the district placed greater emphasis on the full alignment of the district strategic plan and the SIPs.

The district analyzed MCAS data on a regular basis to determine trends and patterns and individual needs of students. The administration provided the school committee and the community at large with regular reports on the MCAS test results outlining the achievements and areas of weakness across the school district. Additional data collected consisted of those from local common assessments, quarterly assessments, SATs, and district-created Open-Response Questions (ORQs) to detect noted weaknesses across the district.

Curriculum and Instruction

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

In 2005-2006 and 2006-2007, the Falmouth Public Schools had begun to make significant strides toward developing its curricula, although it had not yet completed this across all subjects and

grades. The math curriculum was the most developed and the science curriculum was the least developed. In 2005-2006, the superintendent hired an interim director of curriculum who established preK-12 curriculum committees for all tested subjects and for technology integration. The interim director organized completed curricula, assessments, and resources and began to organize them into K-12 curriculum and assessment systems that were aligned with the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks. In 2006-2007, the superintendent hired a new director of curriculum and instruction to complete the remaining work. In this process, all stakeholders shared in the curriculum development, and at the high school a current employee was put into a position dedicated to increased attention to curriculum and instruction, especially at grade 9.

The district held department, team, and professional development meetings and began horizontal alignment across classes and schools. It organized curriculum meetings with representatives of all levels to begin vertical alignment across grade levels, in order to ensure coherence and avoid gaps and redundancies. Although the district had written curricula in ELA and math, they did not contain the following components: written objectives, resources, instructional strategies, timelines/pacing guides, measurable outcomes, and benchmark assessments. The district had some local assessments, such as the ORQs, but lacked an overall assessment system that would efficiently make the best use of these data and the analysis of them. The district had also not yet fully begun to analyze student subgroup data for use in monitoring programmatic strengths and weaknesses or in assessing the effectiveness of programs.

Through a distributed leadership model, district and school administrators, teacher-leaders, and teachers at each school began to work collaboratively in order to introduce best practices such as differentiated instruction and to raise the expectation for accountability in order to ensure effective instruction. The district had embarked on working toward the goal of raising the level of integration of technology into classroom instruction by creating technology committees. Based on documentation and classroom visits, the district still had a way to go to assure equitable distribution of technology, more consistent use of technology, and alignment of all available software to curricula.

According to interviewees, administrators monitored effective instruction by the use of informal walk-throughs. They conducted formal observations and evaluations twice per year. With

respect to professional status teachers, using alternative teacher evaluation options in the district could result in one full formal evaluation every eight years. This would occur with professional status teachers when in year two a formal evaluation was performed, an alternative "focus" or project evaluation was performed two years later, a "formal walk-through" performed another two years later, and another two years passed until a formal evaluation was performed based on actual classroom observation. The "focus" evaluation and "formal walk-through" evaluations were not considered to be aligned with the requirements of the Education Reform Act.

When classroom observations were done, the Skillful Teacher model was used. Administrators and principals told the examiners that they were all familiar with the language of this model but did not consider themselves to be proficient.

During the period under review, the district emphasized accountability by instituting some common exams in some subject areas. In 2005-2006, the district began to analyze the results of these exams for strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum or in teaching and learning. According to interviewees, the majority of teachers did not yet feel sufficiently trained to analyze and use data to their fullest potential in order to drive instruction. The district primarily relied on central office personnel or school-based leaders to analyze the student achievement data.

Interviewees did not regard themselves as knowledgeable in ways of disaggregating MCAS results to improve student achievement, especially for subgroup populations. They stated that they were just beginning to look for trends of strengths and weaknesses in responding to test items. According to MCAS data, the percentage of Falmouth students who attained overall proficiency on the MCAS tests was 58 percent in 2003, 61 percent in both 2004 and 2005, and 67 percent in 2006.

Assessment and Program Evaluation

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

In 2005-2006, the district began to implement an assessment system for use districtwide. Various schools had piloted or were using a range of assessments at grades K-4, which differed

from those in use at grades 5-6 and grades 7-8. When the present superintendent arrived in the fall of 2005, his first priority was to gather information from stakeholders about what the mission of the schools should be and to develop systems to move the district there. In 2005-2006, the new superintendent hired a veteran director of curriculum to work in Falmouth for a year as the interim director of curriculum and instruction to evaluate the status of curriculum development and assessment. The director of curriculum also articulated a long-term plan outlining the necessary steps to create complete preK-12 curricula, with appropriate benchmarks, and a system of assessment. The plan also addressed the kind of technology needed to manage the district's data and the professional training needed for its use. This would enable administrators and teachers to develop proficiency in using data with the hope that their use in making decisions would become a districtwide expectation.

The district presented little evidence that it had routinely used analysis of student achievement or other data for program evaluation prior to the arrival of the present superintendent. At the beginning of the period under review, veteran administrators and lead teachers had not had formal training in using TestWiz to analyze MCAS student achievement data. In contrast, by 2006-2007 the district and school leadership had completed some training, developed a new mission, and developed some updated tools using technology. The district had begun to routinely use the analysis of program evaluations to initiate, modify, or discontinue programs and services that were not contributing to its newly developed mission. At the beginning of the period under review, the district had not yet considered the effects on student achievement, either positive or negative, of such factors as poor attendance, the use of site-based reading programs at each elementary school, the effect of high chronic absenteeism, or sorting students into gifted and talented programs at an early age. By the end of the period under review, administrators had engaged in considering the potential effect of a wider range of factors on student achievement and were collecting data to study the issues in order to make better decisions.

Human Resource Management and Professional Development

The EQA examiners gave the Falmouth Public Schools an overall rating of 'Needs Improvement' on this standard. They rated the district as 'Satisfactory' on five, 'Needs Improvement' on seven, and 'Unsatisfactory' on one of the thirteen performance indicators in this standard.

The district had hiring practices in place during the period under review that resulted in the employment of an effective teaching staff. Principals were responsible for the hiring and firing of teachers, teacher assistants, and other personnel assigned to their respective school, subject to the review and prior approval of the superintendent. Existing outdated policy and procedural documents were largely ignored. The superintendent was responsible for the employment of principals; however, a school committee representative did participate on the interview committee. Administrators and faculty considered the hiring practices to be open, fair, and effective. A review of the professional licensing found all personnel appropriately credentialed with the exception of two high school teachers.

The district provided a broad array of professional opportunities through in-service, graduate courses, curriculum committee participation, mentoring and coaching, professional development providers, and study groups. Goals of district, school, and individual educators informed the program. Required training in data analysis was not provided by the district until the 2006-2007 school year. The use of item analysis and analysis of disaggregated data was limited to that which the curriculum office provided.

A formal teacher mentoring program did not exist in the district until the summer of 2006 under the current superintendent. The first group of mentors received six hours of training. The district has not established formal support for staff hired on waiver. According to interviewees, the district did not have a formal mentoring program for new administrators, although they did have the opportunity to meet periodically with retired administrators, which was helpful.

Administrator and teacher evaluations were informative but not particularly instructive, nor did they promote growth and overall effectiveness. The failure of administrators to provide specific recommendations for professional growth prevented the teacher accountability system from influencing the professional development program. The administrative evaluation system did not address the attainment of measurable improvement in student achievement but did stress improvement, growth, and collegial relationships in conversation and practice. A connection between effective administrator performance and compensation was still under deliberation by the superintendent because of the complexity of the issue.

Access, Participation, and Student Academic Support

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

The Falmouth school district offered a variety of human and instructional resources to provide quality programs characterized by rigor and accessibility. The administration assigned school psychologists and school adjustment counselors to all buildings in the school system. The district housed math and literacy specialists at each building for grades K-6, while grades 7-12 had department chairs for each of the tested content areas.

The district utilized summative and formative assessments to identify students in need of services and to adjust or modify the K-12 curriculum for them. Assessments dealing with literacy at grades K-4 included the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) and the Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI). At the middle school, common assessments in the content areas and the MCAS tests provided formative and summative assessment data, which staff could use to make adjustments and accommodate students' needs. At the high school, the district used common assessments, the MCAS tests, Advanced Placement (AP) exams, and SATs to provide information on student achievement.

Each school had a referral process to enroll students into support programs, combined with an Instructional Support Team (IST) that thoroughly evaluated each request. Specific programs such as Reading Recovery at the primary level, MCAS support at the middle school level, and teaming at grade 9 provided support and direction for many students and enabled the district to identify students who might be at risk academically or emotionally. The district looked at data of low-performing students and closely monitored subgroup participation and achievement on the MCAS tests and provided support services for students who might be in danger of failing. A host of psychological services for testing and emotional diagnosis, along with SRTs at each building, provided the infrastructure for subgroups participation The district attempted to teach all students using an inclusive model with identified special education personnel.

A gifted and talented program existed at grades 3-6 that provided additional rigor for those students who had completed the general curriculum. At the middle school, within the team

concept, accelerated classes in ELA and math enabled the district to raise the bar for those students who desired a more academically challenging curriculum. The high school offered advanced and college prep classes at each level. In addition, a problem-solving team in the sophomore year enabled students who might be in danger of failing the MCAS tests to get the required support in a small team format, with special education personnel assigned.

According to DOE data, the district experienced above average student chronic absenteeism. Interviewees explained to EQA examiners that there were a variety of causes for this absenteeism, but also admitted that the district needed to take a closer look at this problem. According to data on teacher absences submitted to the EQA by the district, the EQA examiners found that staff absenteeism also exceeded state averages. High numbers of absences of students and staff, when considered together, impacts the number of days that students are taught by their regular classroom teacher. When asked about staff absences, interviewees did not feel that staff absenteeism represented a problem in the district. The district viewed days absent in excess of the contractual sick and personal days (18 days) as being a potential problem, but stated in interviews that teachers rarely exceeded that limit, with the exception of teachers on maternity leave or with long-term illness. The district had a system-wide policy for discipline procedures at each school and included the discipline codes in student handbooks. The policy clearly spelled out consequences for the violation of school rules, including detention, suspension, and exclusion. The district required that teachers verbally explain these rules during the first days of school in the fall. The district had a process for in-school and out-of-school suspensions including parental conferences, letters sent home, and an appeal process.

According to interviewees, the district worked hard to prevent grade-level retentions and student dropouts. A. variety of support systems existed at each building to prevent retentions, while the high school had a series of support programs to prevent dropouts. If a student did drop out of school, the system provided the student and his or her parent/guardian with a list of alternatives that would enable the child to receive a General Educational Development (GED) certificate, at a minimum.

Financial and Asset Management Effectiveness and Efficiency

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

The district's well documented budget process included a definitive timeline and preparation procedures as well as clear directions for all participants. The process involved the participation of school committee members, administrators, teaching staff, parents, and town officials throughout the entire budget period. Principals developed their budgets online and submitted them electronically to central administration. School and municipal administrators and officials met often during the budget preparation period to review and estimate available revenues. After the school committee approved budgets and the finance committee and board of selectmen reviewed them, the school administration made them widely available by placing copies in public places such as libraries and mailing copies to all town meeting members. The completed budget document contained a detailed narrative, prepared by the administration, which included the financial condition of the school and community, budget history covering the prior eight years, and sources of state aid and revenues to the school district.

With the exception of 2004-2005, during the period under review the school committee's operational budget requests presented to the annual town meeting were in agreement with the recommendation of the finance committee and the board of selectmen. The town approved the budget at the town meeting, as requested; however, the town voted down a school committee request at the 2006 annual town meeting to place a $750,000 operational override on the ballot for the purchase of additional textbooks, technology, and full-day kindergarten.

The school district had experienced reductions and level funding in Chapter 70 aid and reductions in state and federal grant receipts in 2004-2005 and 2005-2006. It began to receive increases in Chapter 70 aid in fiscal years 2006 and 2007. From FY 2003 to FY 2007, the school committee's operating budget experienced an average annual increase of 3.1 percent. According to the district's End of Year Pupil and Financial Reports, expenditures were relatively level for professional development, textbooks and related media, and general educational supplies during the period under review. Student enrollment in the district, according to Department of

Education October 1 data, decreased from 4,578 students in 2003 to 4,144 students in 2006, a reduction of 434 students.

Falmouth High School was undergoing a major renovation project during the period under review. The construction project occurred while school was in session and the district had 16 portable classrooms in place to accommodate students. In the district's facilities inventory the district had self rated every school as being in 'good condition.' Except for the high school and one elementary school, all schools had been renovated between 1988 and 2003. The Massachusetts School Building Authority in its 2006 building needs survey rated the schools in the first category: "Building is in good condition with few or no building systems needing attention."

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 Falmouth 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 Falmouth; 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?

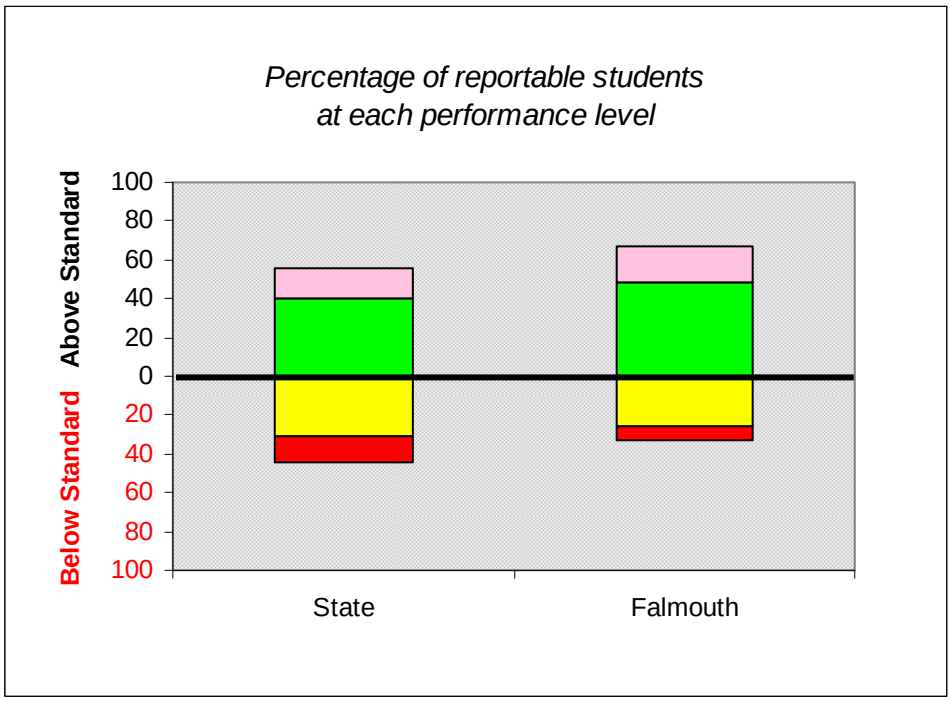
Findings:

- On average, approximately two-thirds of all students in Falmouth attained proficiency on the 2006 MCAS tests, much more than that statewide. Nearly three-quarters of Falmouth students attained proficiency in English language arts (ELA), more than three-fifths of Falmouth students attained proficiency in math, and more than two-fifths of Falmouth students attained proficiency in science and technology/engineering (STE). Ninety-nine percent of the Class of 2006 attained a Competency Determination.

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

- In 2006, Falmouth's proficiency gap in ELA was 10 PI points, six PI points narrower than the state's average proficiency gap in ELA. This gap would require an average improvement in performance of more than one PI point annually to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP). Falmouth's proficiency gap in math was 19 PI points in 2006, nine PI points narrower than the state's average proficiency gap in math. This gap would require an average improvement of more than two PI points per year to achieve AYP. Falmouth's proficiency gap in STE was 25 PI points, four PI points narrower than that statewide.

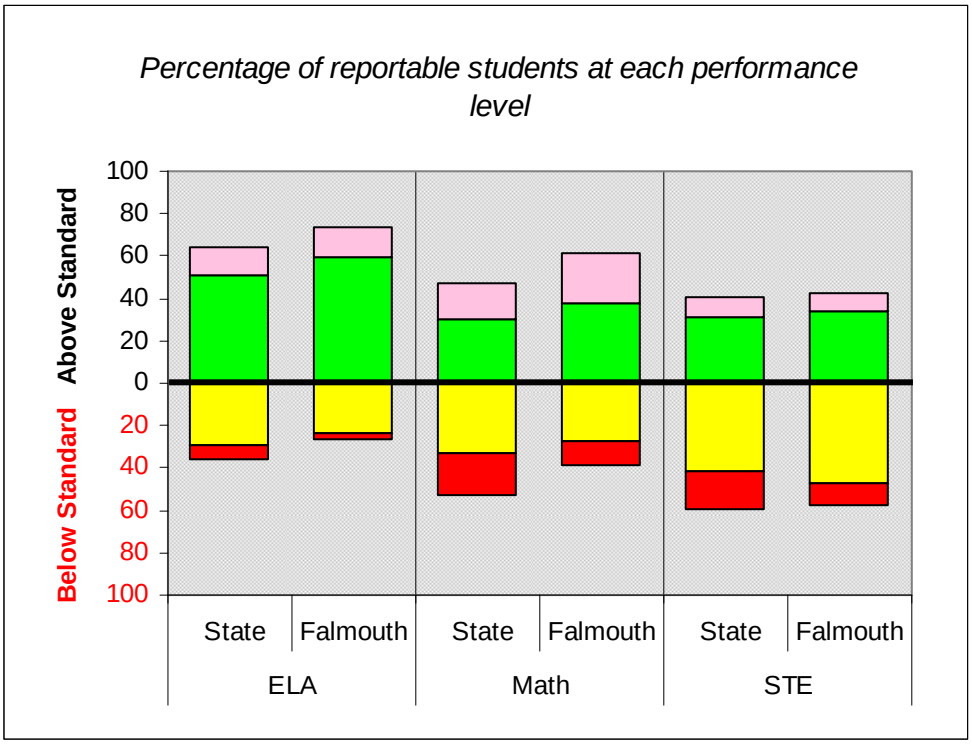
Figure/Table 1: Student MCAS Test Performance, All Students, 2006



	State	Falmouth
Advanced	15	19
Proficient	41	48
Needs Improvement	31	25
Warning/Failing	14	7
Percent Attaining Proficiency	56	67
Average Proficiency Index (API)	78.3	85.7

In 2006, 67 percent of Falmouth students attained proficiency on the MCAS tests overall, 11 percentage points more than that statewide. Seven percent of Falmouth students scored in the 'Warning/Failing' category, seven percentage points less than that statewide. Falmouth's average proficiency index (API) on the MCAS tests in 2006 was 86 proficiency index (PI) points, eight PI points greater than that statewide. Falmouth's average proficiency gap in 2006 was 14 PI points.

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



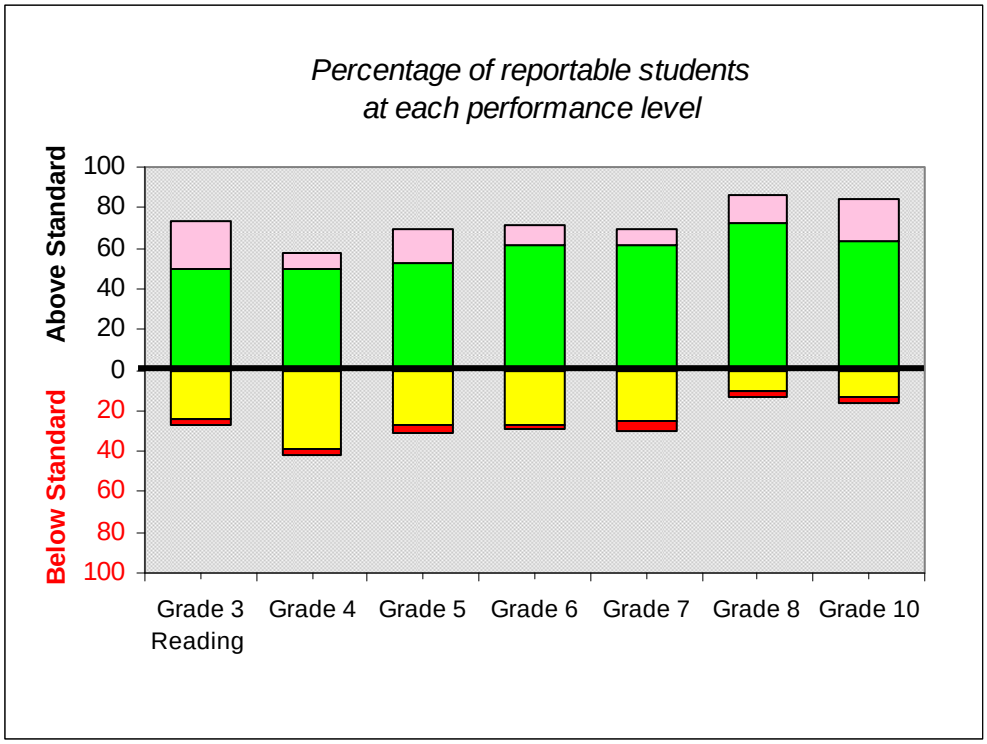
	ELA		Math		STE	
	State	Falmouth	State	Falmouth	State	Falmouth
Advanced	13	14	17	23	10	9
Proficient	51	59	30	38	31	34
Needs Improvement	29	23	33	27	42	47
Warning/Failing	7	3	20	12	17	10
Percent Attaining Proficiency	64	73	47	61	41	43
Proficiency Index (PI)	84.3	89.9	72.3	81.4	71.4	75

In 2006, achievement in English language arts (ELA), math, and science and technology/engineering (STE) was higher in Falmouth than statewide. In Falmouth, 73 percent of students attained proficiency in ELA, compared to 64 percent statewide; 61 percent attained proficiency in math, compared to 47 percent statewide; and 43 percent attained proficiency in STE, compared to 41 percent statewide.

Falmouth students had stronger performance on the 2006 MCAS tests in ELA than in math and STE. The proficiency index for Falmouth students in ELA was 90 PI points; in math, it was 81 PI points; and in STE, it was 75 PI points. These compare to the statewide figures of 84, 72, and 71 PI points, respectively.

The proficiency gap for Falmouth students was 10 PI points in ELA, 19 PI points in math, and 25 PI points in STE. These compare to the statewide figures of 16, 28, and 29 PI points, respectively. Falmouth's proficiency gaps would require an average annual improvement of more than one PI point in ELA and more than two PI points in math to meet AYP.

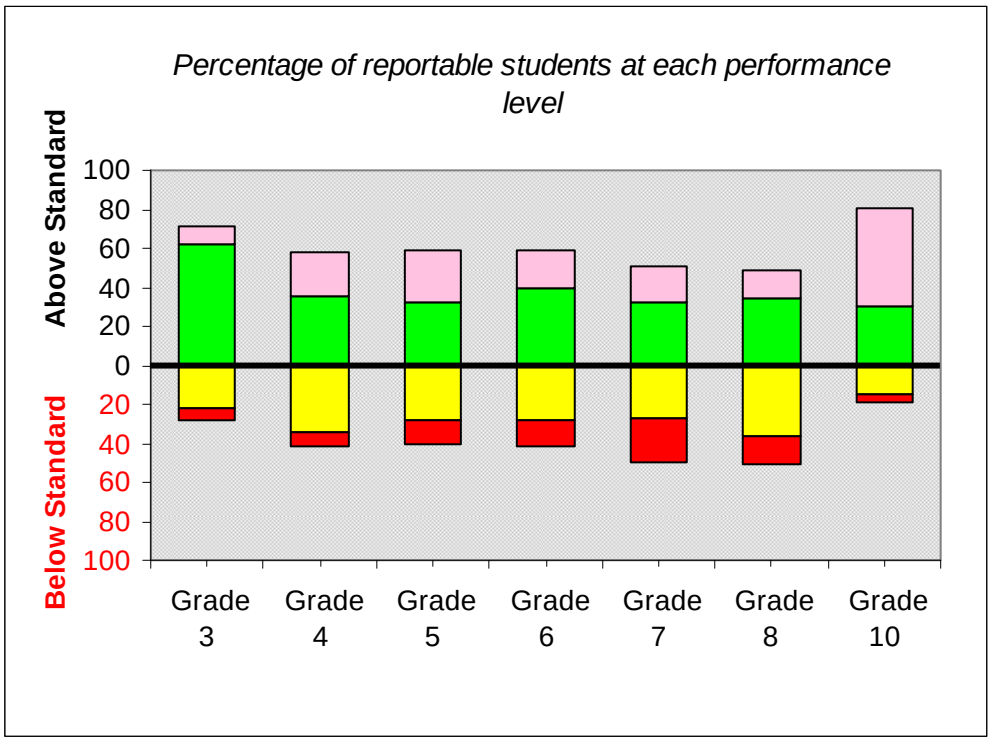
Figure/Table 3: Student MCAS English Language Arts (ELA) Test Performance, by Grade, 2006



	Grade 3 Reading	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 10
Advanced	24	8	17	9	8	14	21
Proficient	50	50	52	62	62	72	63
Needs Improvement	25	39	27	27	25	10	14
Warning/Failing	2	4	3	2	5	3	2
Percent Attaining Proficiency	74	58	69	71	70	86	84

The percentage of Falmouth students attaining proficiency in 2006 in ELA varied by grade level, ranging from a low of 58 percent of grade 4 students to a high of 86 percent of grade 8 students.

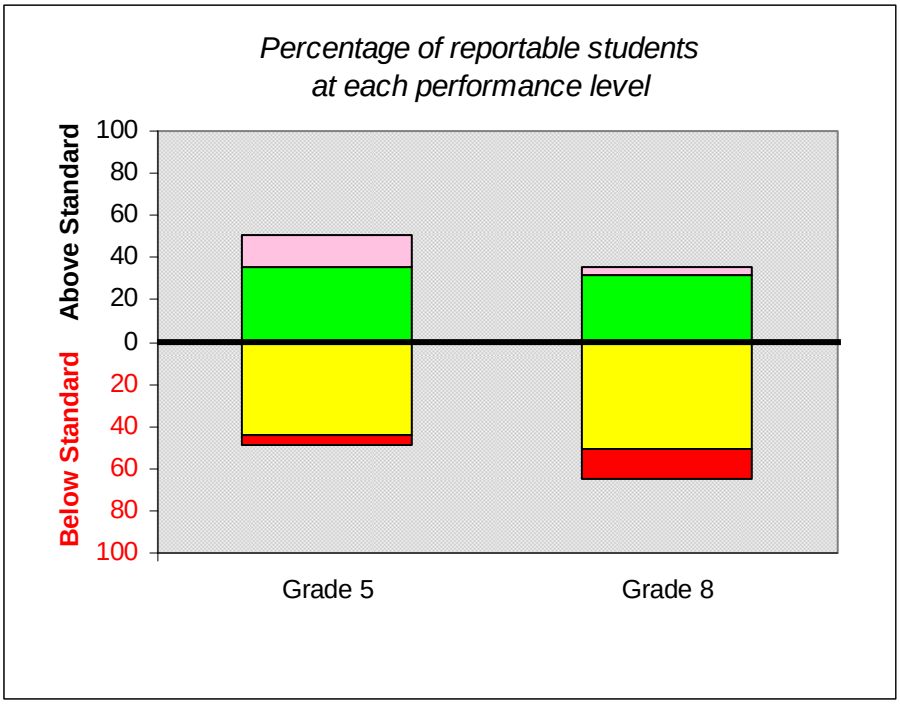
Figure/Table 4: Student MCAS Math Test Performance, by Grade, 2006



	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 10
Advanced	10	23	27	19	18	15	51
Proficient	62	35	32	40	32	34	30
Needs Improvement	22	35	28	28	27	36	15
Warning/Failing	7	7	13	13	22	15	4
Percent Attaining Proficiency	72	58	59	59	50	49	81

The percentage of Falmouth students attaining proficiency in 2006 in math also varied by grade level, ranging from a low of 49 percent of grade 8 students to a high of 81 percent of grade 10 students.

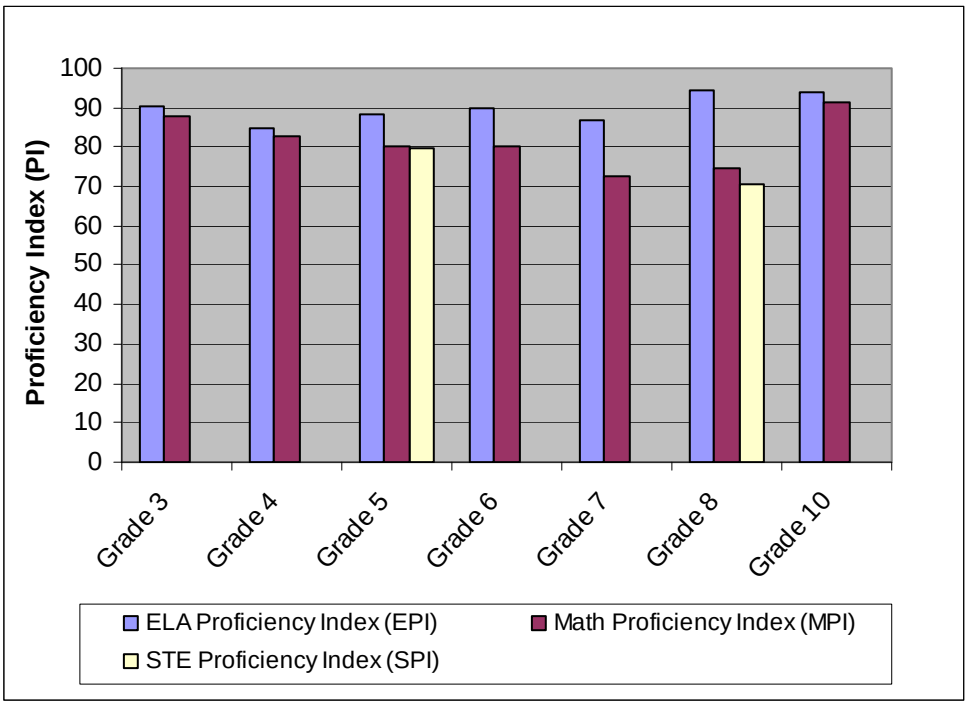
Figure/Table 5: Student MCAS Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) Test Performance, by Grade, 2006



	Grade 5	Grade 8
Advanced	15	3
Proficient	36	32
Needs Improvement	44	50
Warning/Failing	6	15
Percent Attaining Proficiency	51	35

In Falmouth in 2006, 51 percent of grade 5 students attained proficiency in STE, and 35 percent of grade 8 students did so.

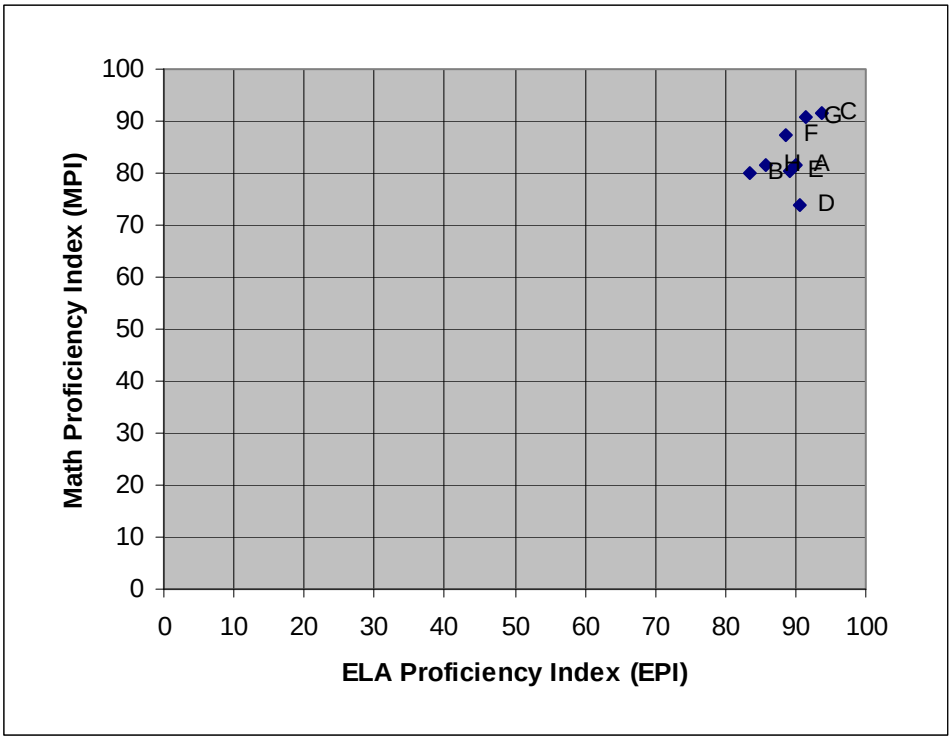
Figure/Table 6: Student MCAS Proficiency Indices, by Grade and Subject, 2006



	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 10
ELA Proficiency Index (EPI)	90.3	84.9	88.4	89.9	86.8	94.2	93.7
Math Proficiency Index (MPI)	88.0	82.8	80.3	80.4	72.7	74.7	91.6
STE Proficiency Index (SPI)			79.8			70.4	

By grade, Falmouth's ELA proficiency gap in 2006 ranged from a low of six PI points at grade 8 and grade 10 to a high of 15 PI points at grade 4. Falmouth's math proficiency gap ranged from a low of eight PI points at grade 10 to a high of 27 PI points at grade 7. Falmouth's STE proficiency gap was 20 PI points at grade 5 and 30 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	Falmouth	89.9	81.4	4,390
B	East Falmouth Elementary	83.4	79.9	215
C	Falmouth High School	93.7	91.6	646
D	Lawrence Middle School	90.7	73.8	1,296
E	Morse Pond Elem School	89.2	80.4	1,297
F	Mullen-Hall Elem School	88.6	87.3	399
G	North Falmouth Elem	91.4	90.6	289
H	Teaticket Elem School	85.7	81.7	248

Falmouth's ELA proficiency gap in 2006 ranged from a low of six PI points at Falmouth High School to a high of 17 PI points at East Falmouth Elementary School. Falmouth's math proficiency gap ranged from a low of eight PI points at Falmouth High School to a high of 26 PI points at Lawrence Middle School.

Equity of Achievement

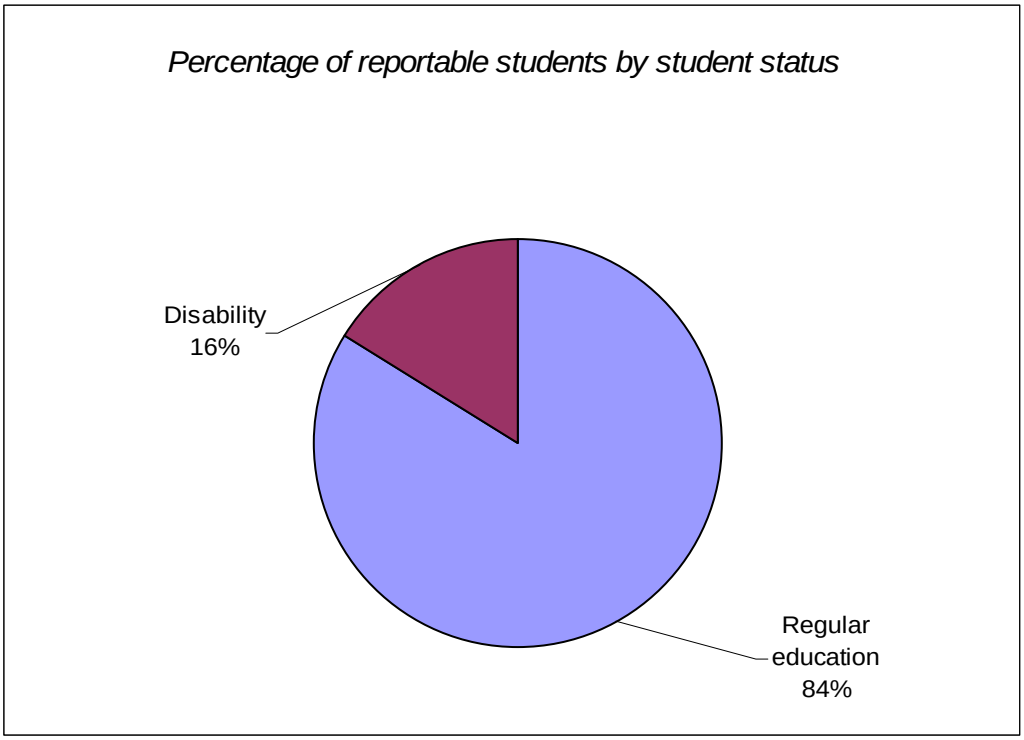
Do MCAS test results vary among subgroups of students?

Findings:

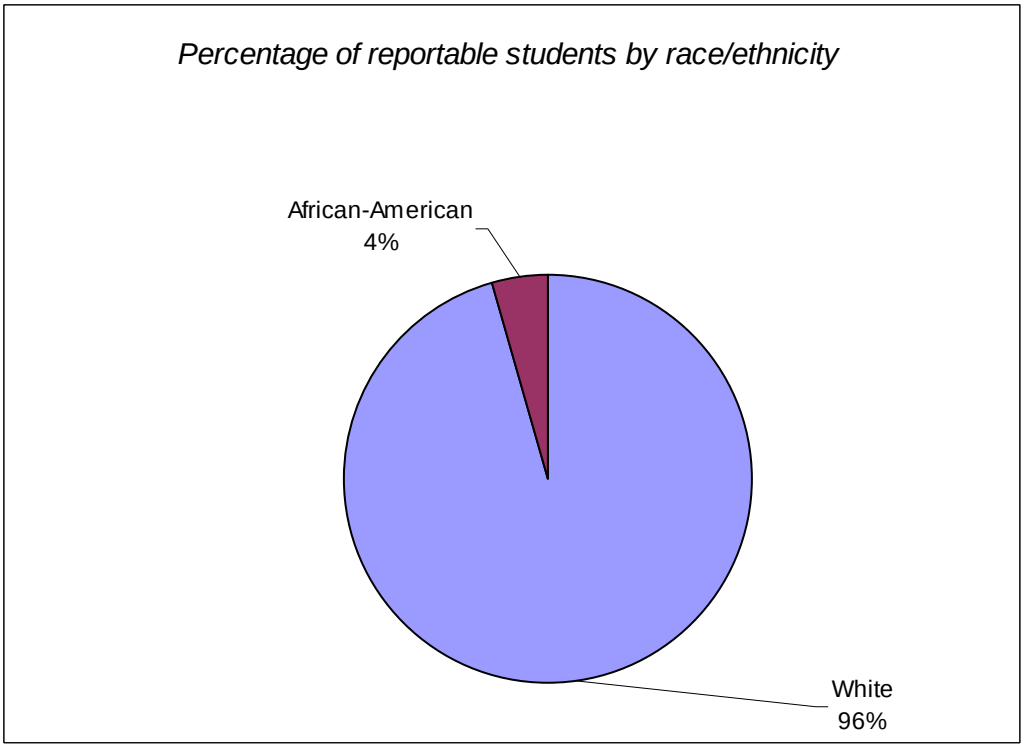
- Of the eight measurable subgroups in Falmouth in 2006, the gap in performance between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups was 20 PI points in ELA and 29 PI points in math (regular education students, students with disabilities, respectively).
- The proficiency gaps in Falmouth in 2006 in both 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 half the students in these subgroups 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, nearly three-quarters 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. Roughly two-thirds of the students in both subgroups attained proficiency.

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

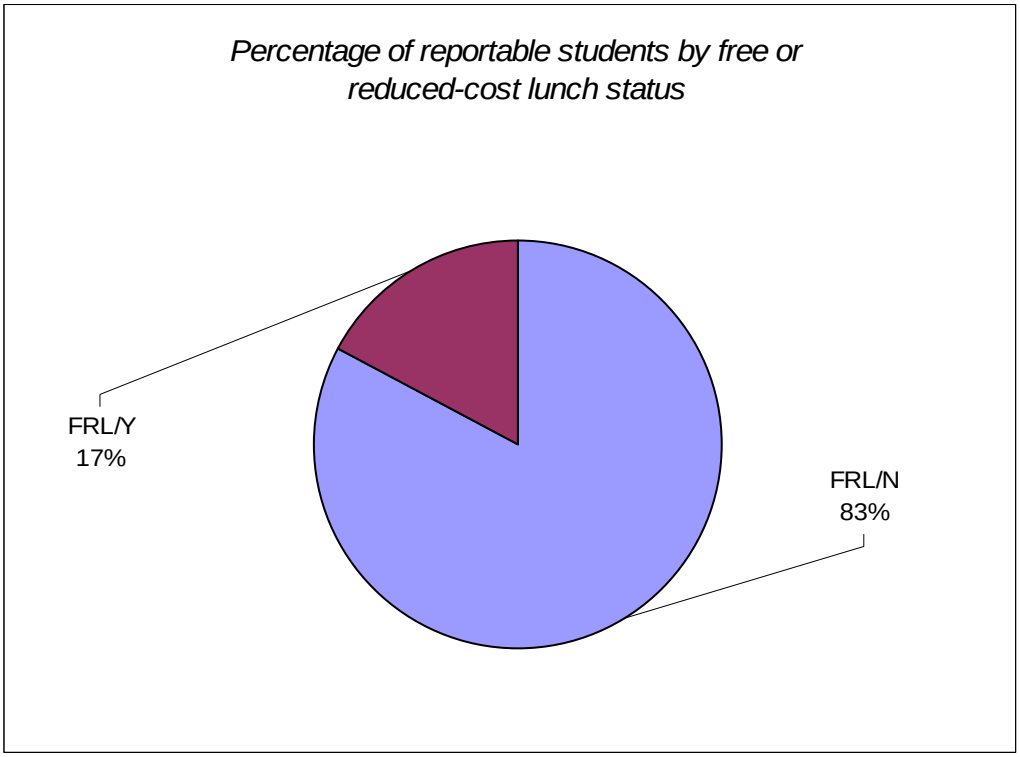
A.



B.



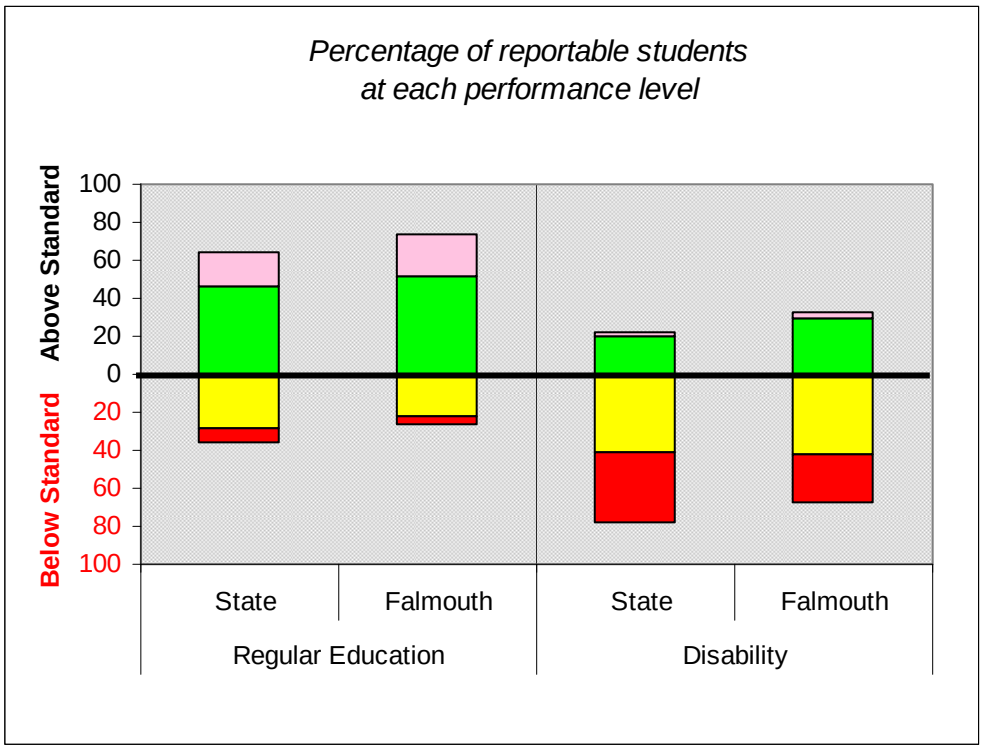
C.



	Subgroup	Number of Students
Student status	Regular education	1,856
	Disability	360
Race/ethnicity	White	2,000
	African-American	92
Free or reduced-cost lunch status	FRL/N	1,845
	FRL/Y	384

In Falmouth in 2006, 16 percent of the students were students with disabilities, four percent were African-American students, and 17 percent were students participating in the free or reduced-cost lunch program.

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

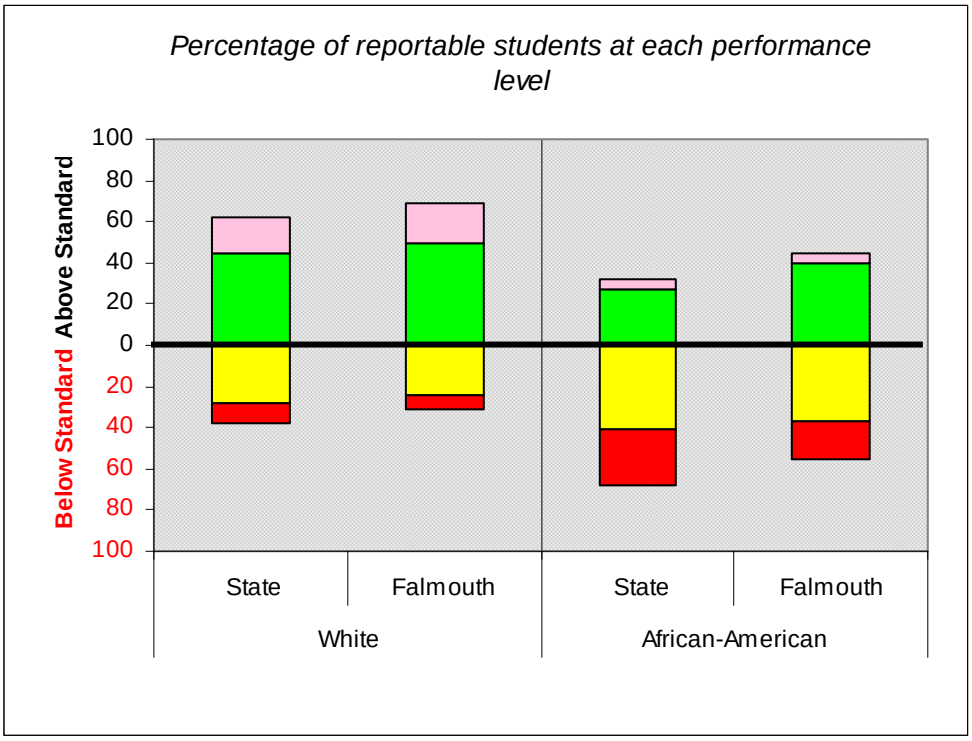


	Regular Education		Disability	
	State	Falmouth	State	Falmouth
Advanced	18	22	2	3
Proficient	46	52	20	29
Needs Improvement	28	22	41	42
Warning/Failing	8	4	36	26
Percent Attaining Proficiency	64	74	22	32
Average Proficiency Index (API)	84.0	89.4	55.9	65.1

In Falmouth in 2006, the proficiency rate of regular education students was more than two times greater than that of students with disabilities. Seventy-four percent of regular education students and 32 percent of students with disabilities attained overall proficiency on the MCAS tests.

Falmouth's average proficiency gap in 2006 was 11 PI points for regular education students and 35 PI points for students with disabilities. The average performance gap between regular education students and students with disabilities was 24 PI points.

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

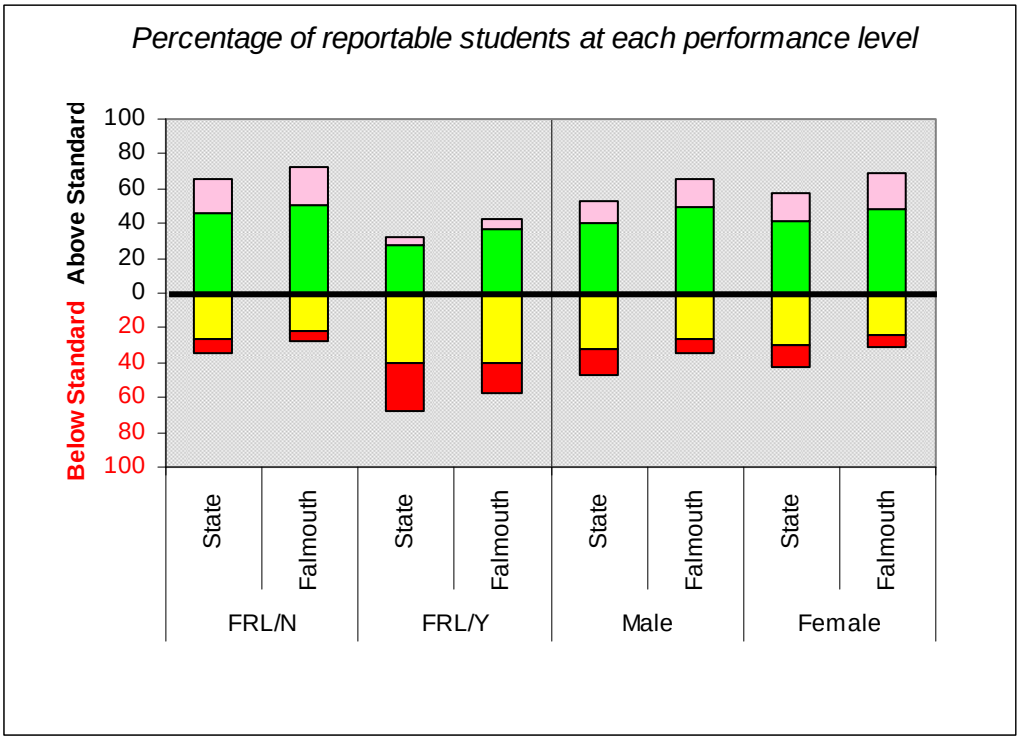


	White		African-American	
	State	Falmouth	State	Falmouth
Advanced	17	20	4	4
Proficient	45	50	27	40
Needs Improvement	29	24	40	37
Warning/Failing	9	6	28	19
Percent Attaining Proficiency	62	70	31	44
Average Proficiency Index (API)	82.9	86.7	63.2	72.8

In Falmouth in 2006, performance on the MCAS tests varied by race/ethnicity, as 70 percent of White students and 44 percent of African-American students attained overall proficiency.

Falmouth's average proficiency gap in 2006 was 13 PI points for White students and 27 PI points for African-American students. The average performance gap between White and African-American students was 14 PI points.

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

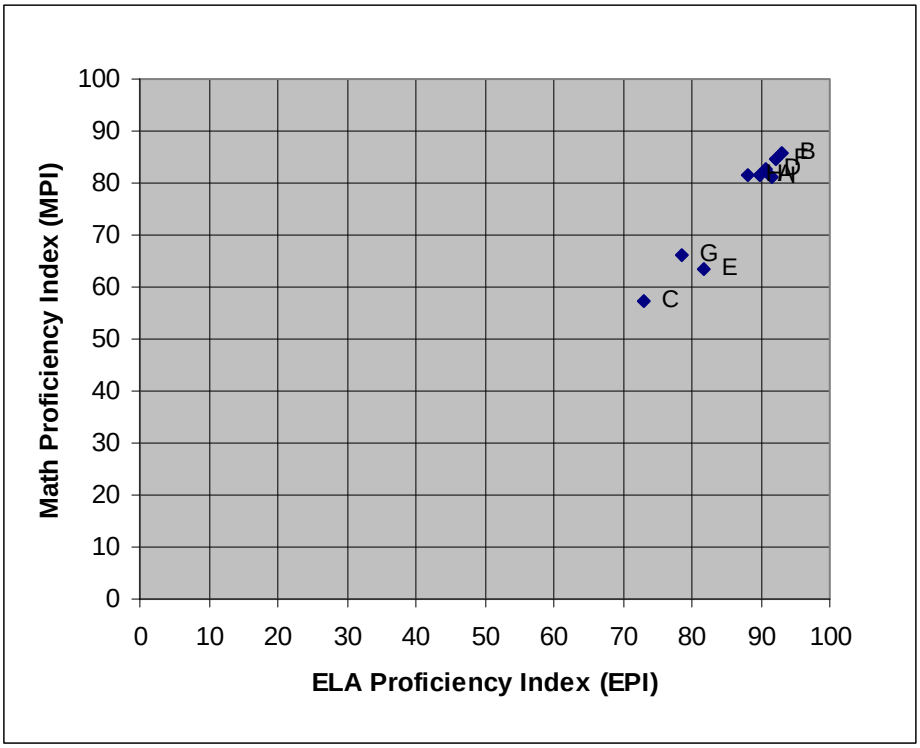


	FRL/N		FRL/Y		Male		Female	
	State	Falmouth	State	Falmouth	State	Falmouth	State	Falmouth
Advanced	19	22	5	6	13	16	17	21
Proficient	46	51	27	37	40	49	41	48
Needs Improvement	27	22	40	40	32	27	29	24
Warning/Failing	8	5	27	17	15	8	13	7
Percent Attaining Proficiency	65	73	32	43	53	65	58	69
Average Proficiency Index (API)	84.5	88.4	63.5	72.4	77.1	84.9	79.6	86.4

In Falmouth in 2006, 43 percent of low-income (FRL/Y) students attained overall proficiency on the MCAS tests, compared to 73 percent of non low-income (FRL/N) students. The average proficiency gap was 28 PI points for low-income students and 12 PI points for non low-income students, and the average performance gap between the two subgroups was 16 PI points.

Performance on the 2006 MCAS tests was comparable for male and female students in Falmouth, with 69 percent of female students and 65 percent of male students attaining overall proficiency. The average proficiency gap was 15 PI points for male students and 14 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

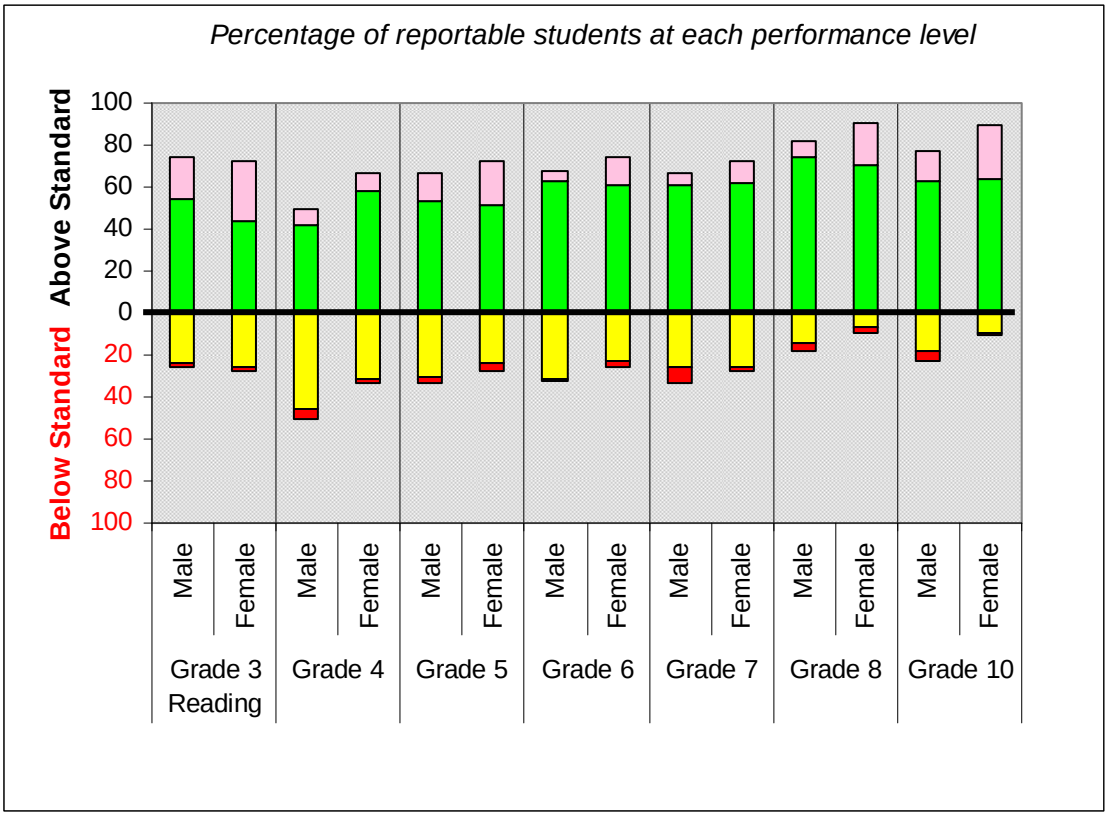


		ELA PI	Math PI	Number of Tests
A	Falmouth	89.9	81.4	4,390
B	Regular Education	93.0	85.8	3,704
C	Disability	73.0	57.2	660
D	White	90.8	82.6	3,941
E	African-American	81.7	63.6	178
F	FRL/N	92.2	84.5	3,652
G	FRL/Y	78.6	66.2	738
H	Male	88.1	81.6	2,158
I	Female	91.6	81.2	2,232

Of the eight measurable subgroups in Falmouth in 2006, the gap in performance between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups was 20 PI points in ELA (regular education students, students with disabilities, respectively) and 29 PI points in math (regular education students, students with disabilities, respectively).

The proficiency gaps in Falmouth 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.

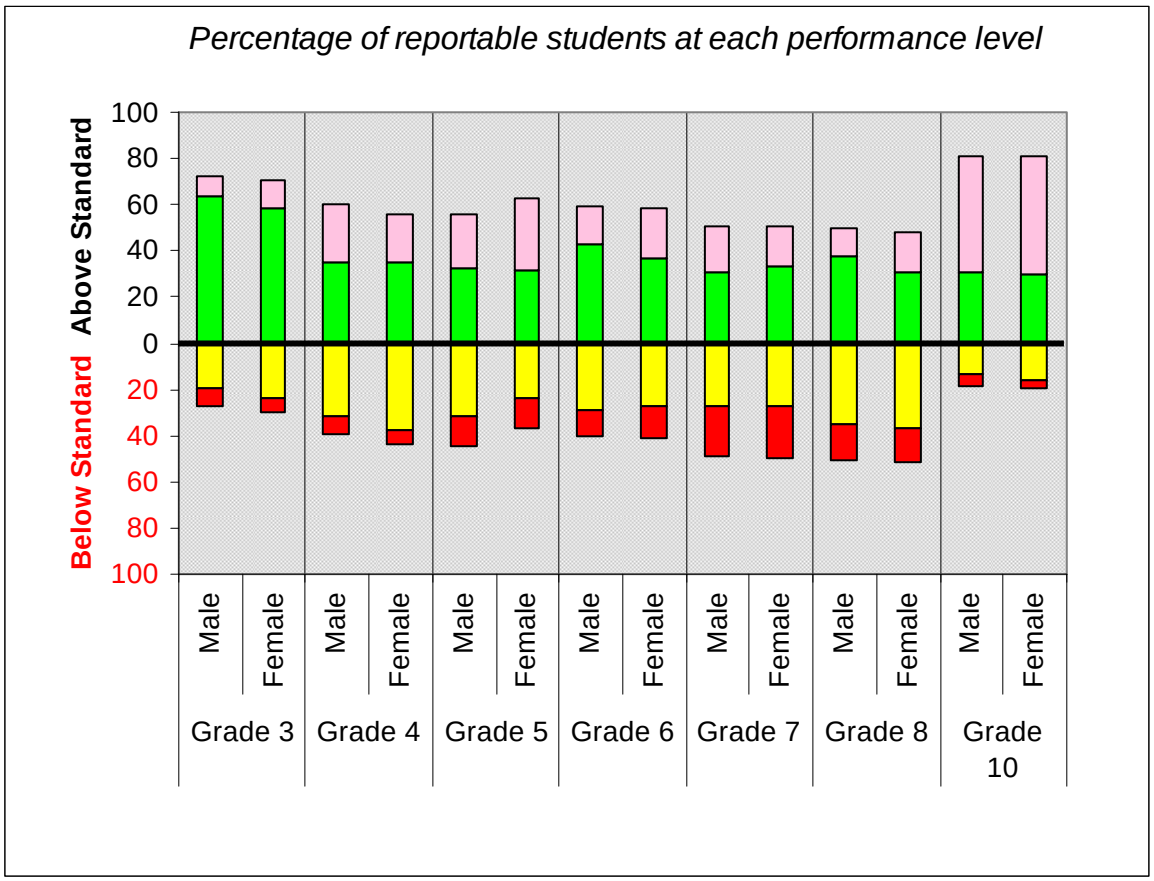
Figure/Table 13: Student MCAS English Language Arts (ELA) Test Performance, by Grade and Gender, 2006



	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	20	28	8	8	13	22	5	13	5	10	8	20	15	26
Proficient	54	44	42	58	54	51	63	61	61	62	74	71	63	64
Needs Improvement	24	26	46	31	30	24	32	23	26	25	14	7	18	9
Warning/ Failing	2	2	5	2	3	3	1	3	8	2	4	2	5	1
Percent Attaining Proficiency	74	72	50	66	67	73	68	74	66	72	82	91	78	90

In Falmouth in 2006, female students outperformed male students on all grade-level ELA tests except at grade 3.

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	9	11	25	21	23	32	17	22	20	17	12	17	50	51
Proficient	64	59	35	35	32	32	43	37	31	33	38	31	31	30
Needs Improvement	20	24	32	38	32	24	29	27	27	27	35	37	13	16
Warning/ Failing	7	6	8	6	13	13	11	14	22	22	15	15	6	3
Percent Attaining Proficiency	73	70	60	56	55	64	60	59	51	50	50	48	81	81

On the 2006 MCAS tests in math, male students outperformed female students at grades 3, 4, 6, 7, and 8. Female students outperformed male students at grade 5, and the two subgroups performed at the same level at grade 10.

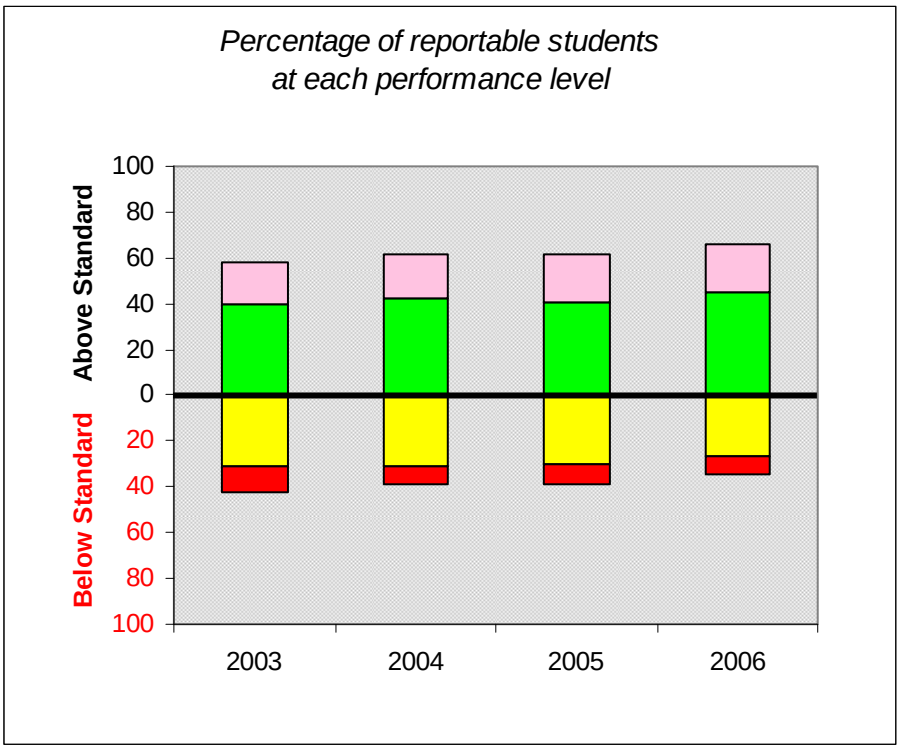
Improvement

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

Findings:

- Between 2003 and 2006, Falmouth's MCAS performance showed slight improvement overall, little improvement in ELA and STE, and some improvement in math.
- The percentage of students scoring in the 'Advanced' and 'Proficient' categories rose by eight percentage points between 2003 and 2006, while the percentage of students in the 'Warning/Failing' category decreased by four percentage points. The average proficiency gap in Falmouth narrowed from 19 PI points in 2003 to 15 PI points in 2006. This resulted in an improvement rate, or a closing of the proficiency gap, of 23 percent.
- Over the three-year period 2003-2006, ELA performance in Falmouth showed little improvement, at an average of more than one-half PI point annually. This resulted in an improvement rate of 14 percent, a rate lower than that required to meet AYP.
- Math performance in Falmouth showed more improvement, at an average of more than two PI points annually. This resulted in an improvement rate of 27 percent, also a rate lower than that required to meet AYP.
- Between 2004 and 2006, Falmouth had little improvement in STE performance, increasing by one PI point over the two-year period. This resulted in an improvement rate of four percent.

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



A.

	2003	2004	2005	2006
Advanced	18	19	21	21
Proficient	40	42	40	45
Needs Improvement	31	31	30	27
Warning/Failing	11	8	9	7
Percent Attaining Proficiency	58	61	61	66
Average Proficiency Index (API)	80.5	83.1	82.5	85.0

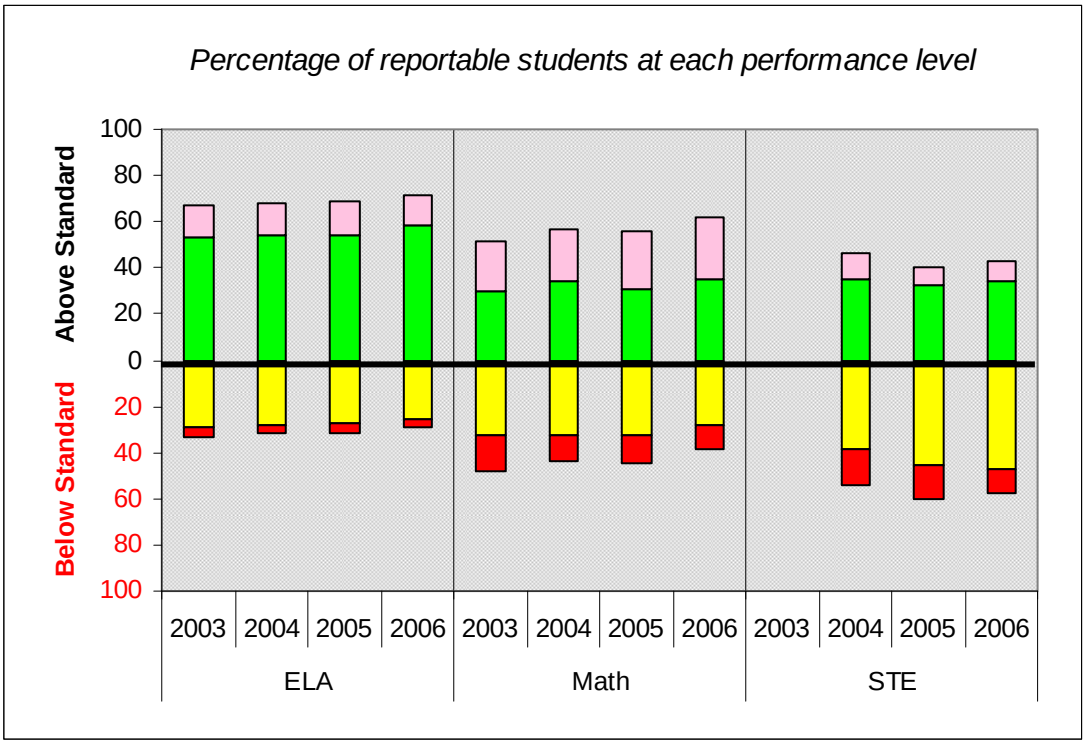
B. n-values

	2003	2004	2005	2006
Advanced	462	445	474	453
Proficient	1,004	1,007	924	970
Needs Improvement	786	730	685	583
Warning/Failing	277	188	203	158
Total	2,529	2,370	2,286	2,164

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 Falmouth students attaining overall proficiency on the MCAS tests increased from 58 percent in 2003 to 66 percent in 2006. The percentage of students in the 'Warning/Failing' category decreased from 11 percent in 2003 to seven percent in 2006. The average proficiency gap in Falmouth narrowed from 19 PI points in 2003 to 15 PI points in 2006, resulting in an improvement rate of 23 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	14	14	15	13	22	22	25	27		11	7	9
Proficient	53	54	54	59	30	34	31	35		35	33	34
Needs Improvement	29	28	27	25	32	33	32	28		38	46	47
Warning/ Failing	4	4	4	4	16	11	12	10		16	14	10
Percent Attaining Proficiency	67	68	69	72	52	56	56	62		46	40	43
Proficiency Index (PI)	86.8	88.0	87.8	88.7	75.9	79.6	78.6	82.3		74.0	72.1	75.0

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 Falmouth students attaining proficiency in ELA increased from 67 percent in 2003 to 72 percent in 2006. The proficiency gap in ELA narrowed from 13 PI points in 2003 to 11 PI points in 2006, resulting in an improvement rate of 14 percent, a rate lower than that required to meet AYP.

The percentage of Falmouth students attaining proficiency in math increased from 52 percent in 2003 to 62 percent in 2006. The proficiency gap in math narrowed from 24 PI points in 2003 to 18 PI points in 2006, resulting in an improvement rate of 27 percent, also a rate lower than that required to meet AYP.

Although the percentage of Falmouth students attaining proficiency in STE decreased from 46 percent in 2004 to 43 percent in 2006, the proficiency gap in STE narrowed from 26 PI points in 2004 to 25 PI points in 2006, resulting in an improvement rate of four percent.

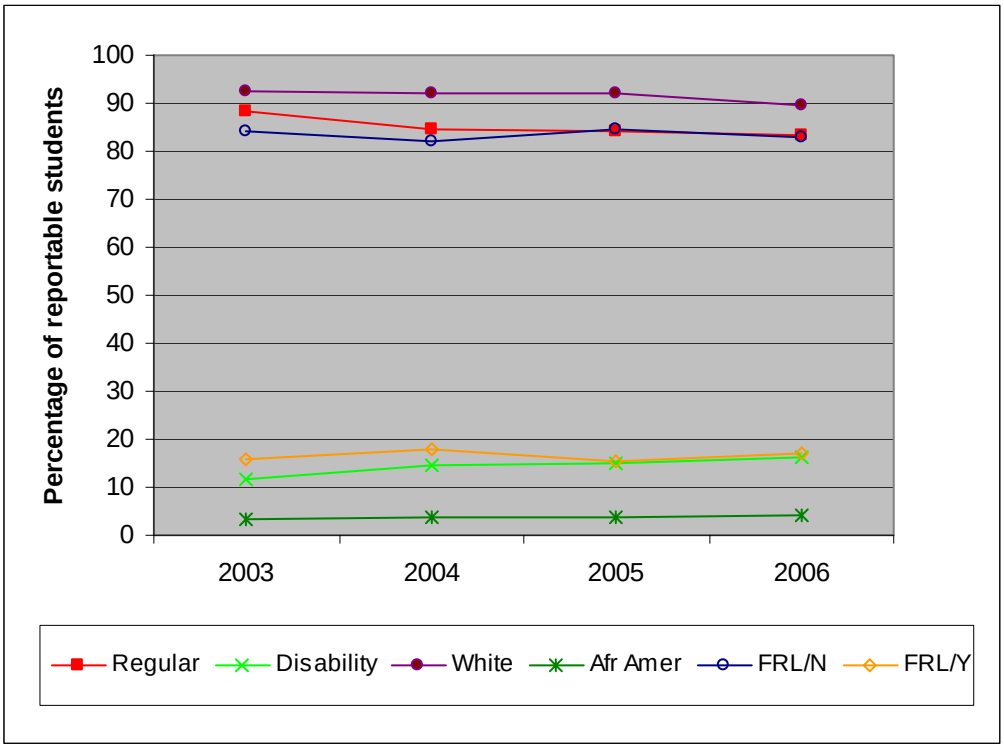
Equity of Improvement

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

Findings:

- In Falmouth, all student subgroups had improved performance in ELA between 2003 and 2006, although for most subgroups the improvement was slight. The most improved subgroup in ELA was African-American students.
- In math, all subgroups in Falmouth also showed improved performance between 2003 and 2006. The most improved subgroup in math was students with disabilities.
- The performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in ELA narrowed from 23 PI points in 2003 to 22 PI points in 2006, and the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in math narrowed from 33 to 27 PI points during this period.

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



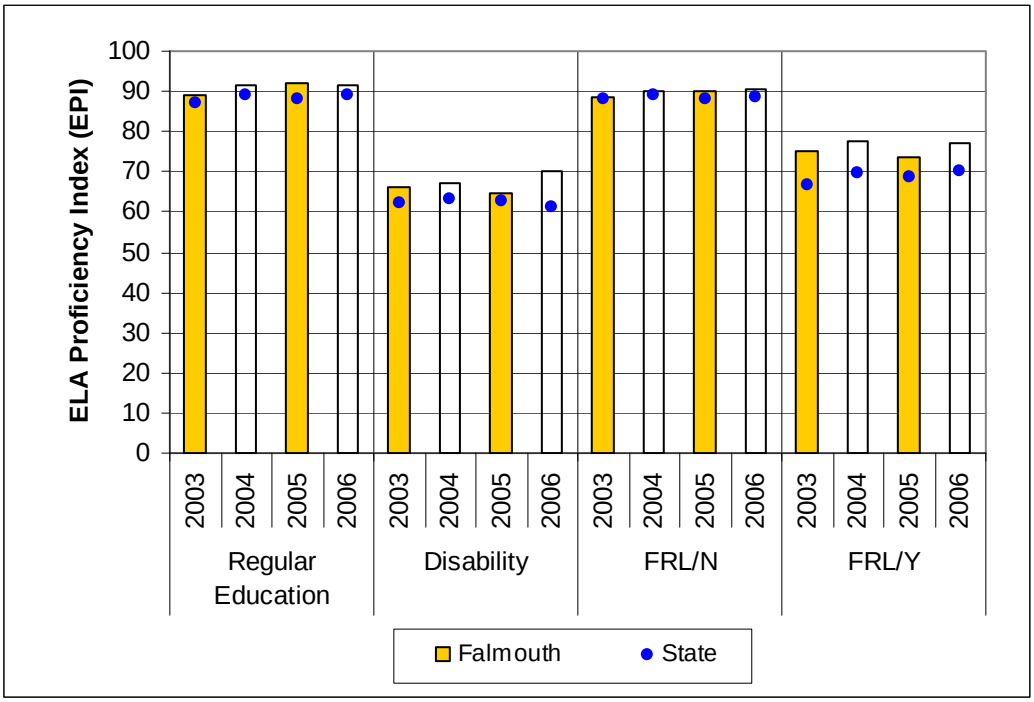
	Number of Students				Percentage of students			
	2003	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**
Falmouth	1,798	2,015	1,915	2,229	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Regular	1,589	1,704	1,613	1,856	88.4	84.6	84.2	83.3
Disability	209	297	291	360	11.6	14.7	15.2	16.2
White	1,664	1,859	1,766	2,000	92.5	92.3	92.2	89.7
Afr Amer	59	72	69	92	3.3	3.6	3.6	4.1
FRL/N	1,517	1,657	1,616	1,845	84.4	82.2	84.4	82.8
FRL/Y	281	358	299	384	15.6	17.8	15.6	17.2

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.

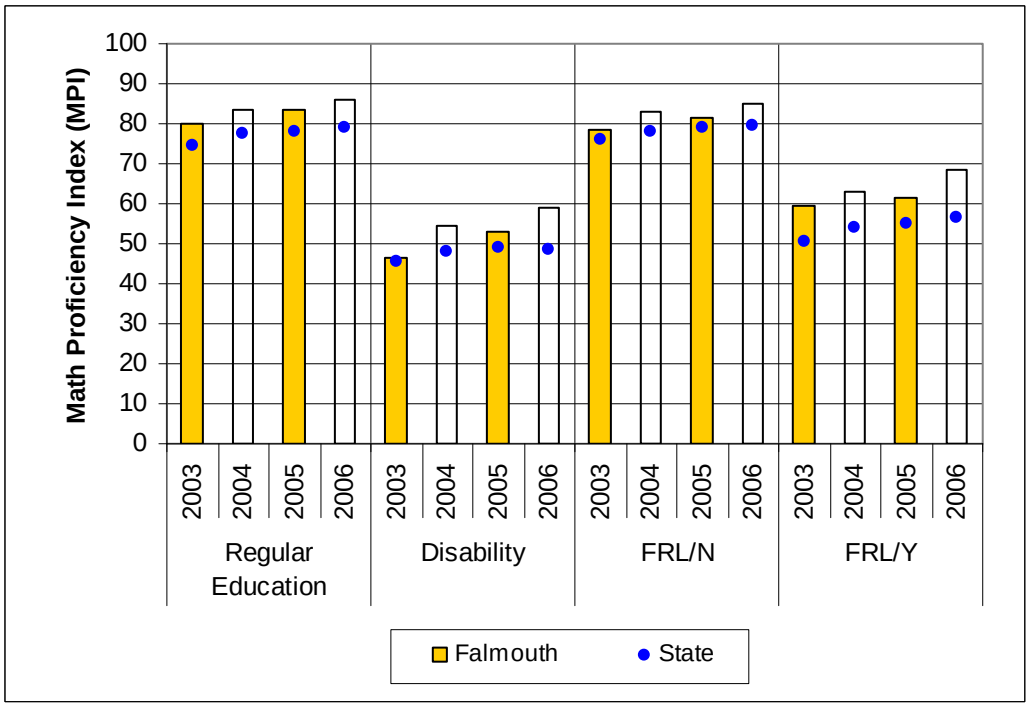
In Falmouth between 2003 and 2006, the proportion of students with disabilities increased by nearly five percentage points, the proportion of non-White students increased by nearly three percentage points, and the proportion of low-income (FRL/Y) students increased by nearly two percentage points.

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

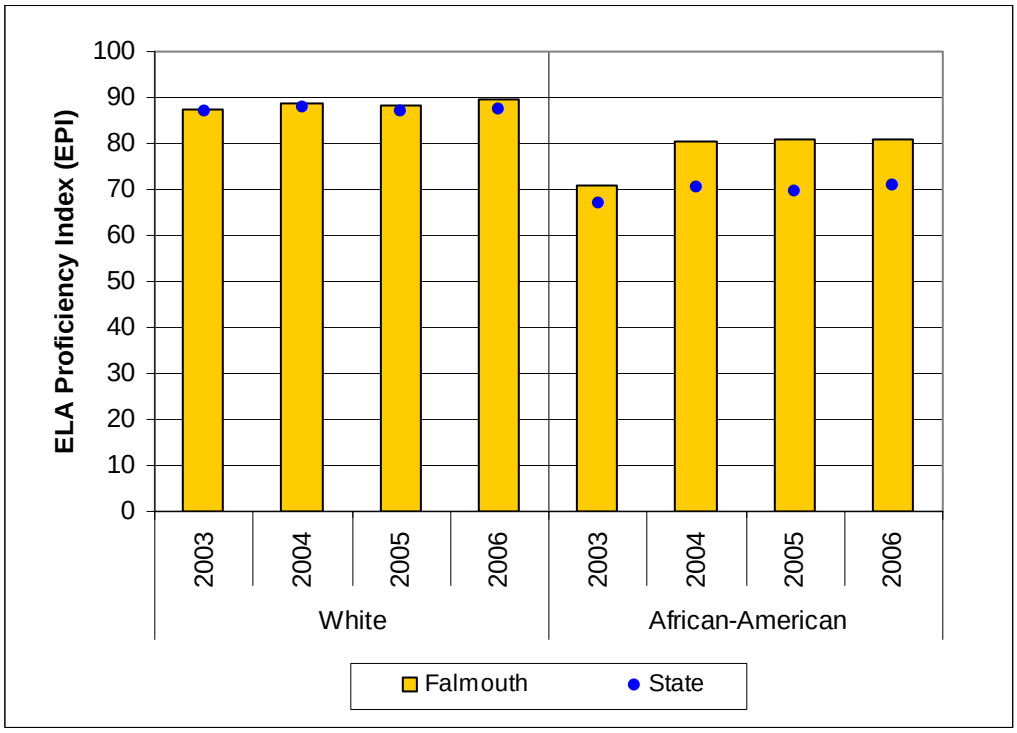
A. ELA Proficiency Index (EPI) by Student Status and Free or Reduced-Cost Lunch Subgroups



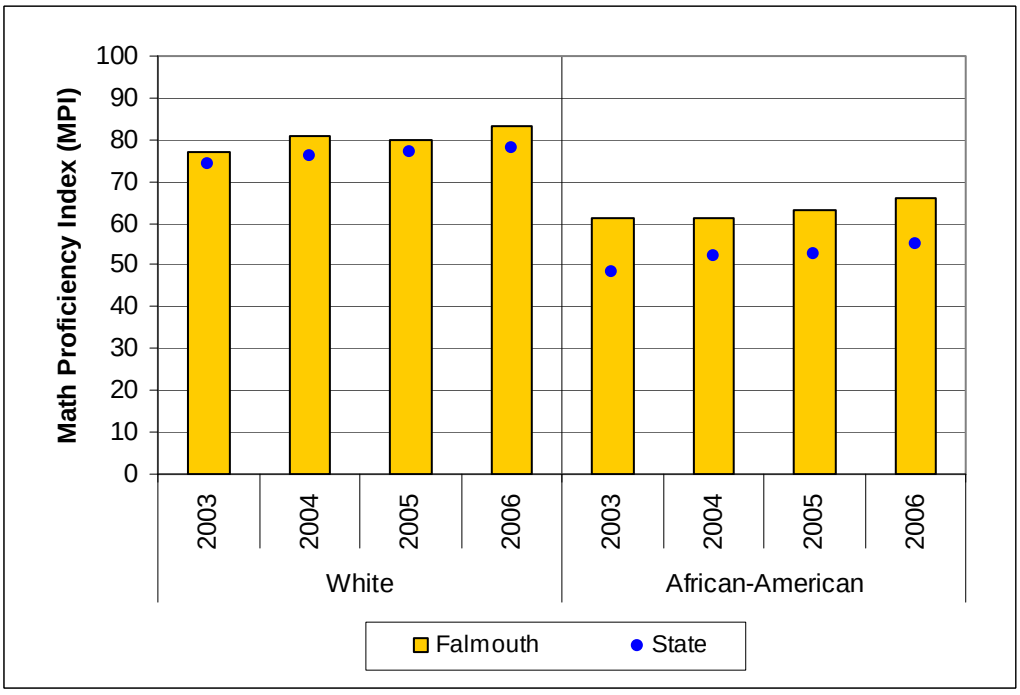
B. Math Proficiency Index (MPI) by Student Status and Free or Reduced-Cost Lunch Subgroups



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



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

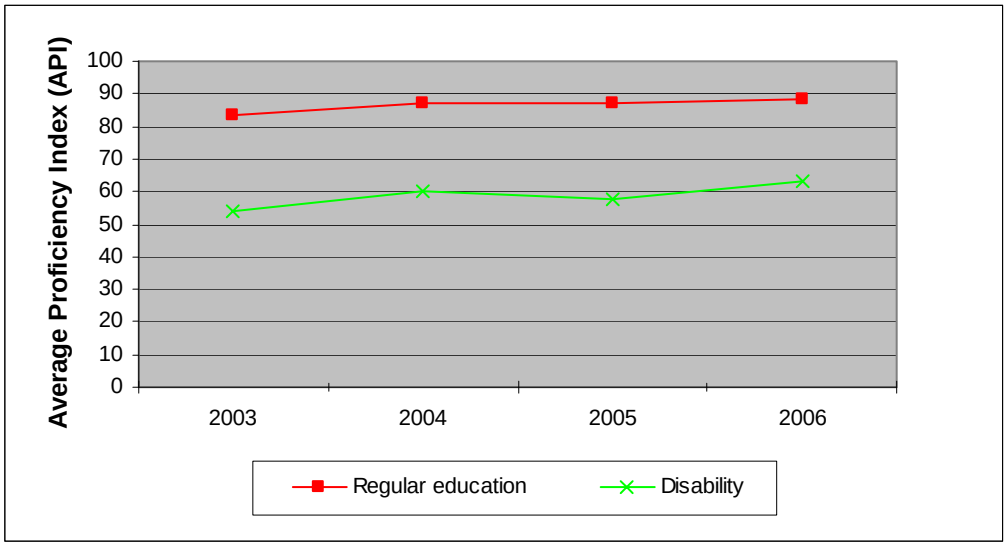


State				Falmouth			
Subgroup	**Year**	**EPI**	**MPI**	**Subgroup**	**Year**	**EPI**	**MPI**
Regular Education	2003	87.3	74.7	Regular Education	2003	89.0	79.8
	2004	89.2	77.4		2004	91.5	83.5
	2005	88.3	78.2		2005	91.8	83.4
	2006	89.0	78.9		2006	91.6	86.2
Disability	2003	62.1	45.3	Disability	2003	66.2	46.6
	2004	63.3	47.9		2004	67.2	54.5
	2005	62.9	49.0		2005	64.7	52.9
	2006	61.2	48.4		2006	70.0	58.9
FRL/N	2003	87.9	75.9	FRL/N	2003	88.6	78.6
	2004	88.9	78.1		2004	90.1	82.8
	2005	88.3	79.0		2005	90.0	81.3
	2006	88.6	79.7		2006	90.7	84.9
FRL/Y	2003	66.6	50.7	FRL/Y	2003	75.2	59.4
	2004	69.7	53.9		2004	77.8	63.2
	2005	68.8	55.0		2005	73.5	61.7
	2006	70.0	56.3		2006	77.3	68.4
White	2003	86.9	74.4	White	2003	87.6	76.9
	2004	87.7	76.2		2004	88.8	80.7
	2005	87.1	77.2		2005	88.4	79.7
	2006	87.4	77.8		2006	89.4	83.3
African-American	2003	67.1	48.4	African-American	2003	70.7	61.1
	2004	70.5	52.3		2004	80.5	61.3
	2005	69.4	52.8		2005	80.9	63.0
	2006	70.9	55.2		2006	80.9	66.1

In Falmouth, all student subgroups had improved performance in ELA between 2003 and 2006. The most improved subgroup in ELA was African-American students. In math, all subgroups in Falmouth also showed improved performance between 2003 and 2006. The most improved subgroup in math was students with disabilities.

The performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in ELA narrowed from 23 PI points in 2003 to 22 PI points in 2006, and the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in math narrowed from 33 to 27 PI points during this period.

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

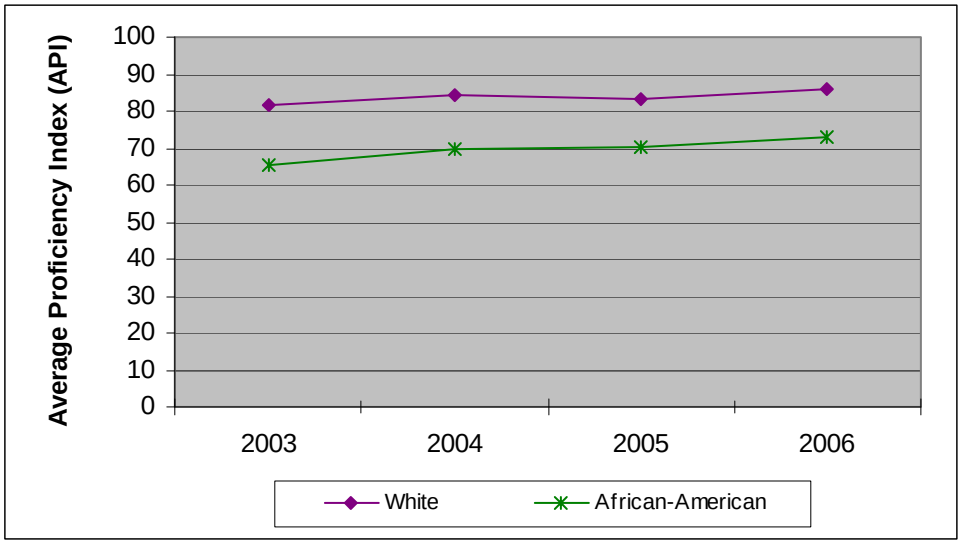


		API	EPI	MPI	Percent Attaining Proficiency ELA	Percent Attaining Proficiency Math
Regular education	2003	83.7	89.0	79.8	71	56
	2004	86.8	91.5	83.5	75	62
	2005	87.0	91.8	83.4	76	62
	2006	88.5	91.6	86.2	77	68
Disability	2003	54.1	66.2	46.6	30	16
	2004	59.8	67.2	54.5	30	21
	2005	57.8	64.7	52.9	25	19
	2006	63.4	70.0	58.9	33	27

Both regular education students and students with disabilities in Falmouth had improved overall performance on the MCAS tests between 2003 and 2006. The average proficiency gap for Falmouth's regular education students narrowed from 16 to 11 PI points; for students with disabilities, it narrowed from 46 to 37 PI points. These gains resulted in improvement rates of 29 percent for regular education students and 20 percent for students with disabilities.

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

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

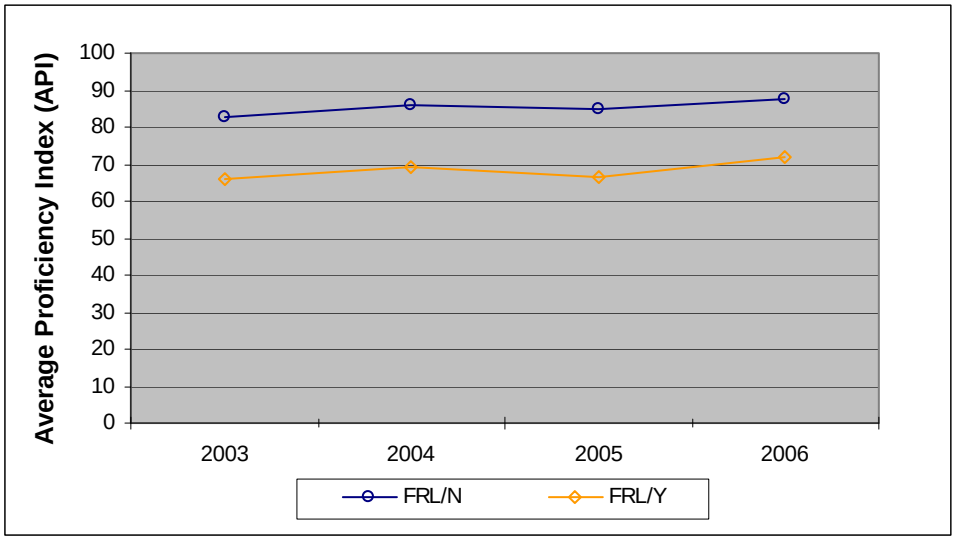


		API	EPI	MPI	Percent Attaining Proficiency ELA	Percent Attaining Proficiency Math
White	2003	81.4	87.6	76.9	68	53
	2004	84.1	88.8	80.7	70	58
	2005	83.4	88.4	79.7	70	57
	2006	85.8	89.4	83.3	73	64
African-American	2003	65.3	70.7	61.1	40	29
	2004	69.8	80.5	61.3	50	28
	2005	70.4	80.9	63.0	53	31
	2006	72.9	80.9	66.1	55	33

Both White and African-American students in Falmouth had improved overall performance on the MCAS tests between 2003 and 2006. The average proficiency gap for White students narrowed from 19 to 14 PI points; and for African-American students, it narrowed from 35 to 27 PI points. These gains resulted in improvement rates of 24 percent for White students and 22 percent for African-American students.

Between 2003 and 2006, the average performance gap between White students and African-American students narrowed by three PI points.

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

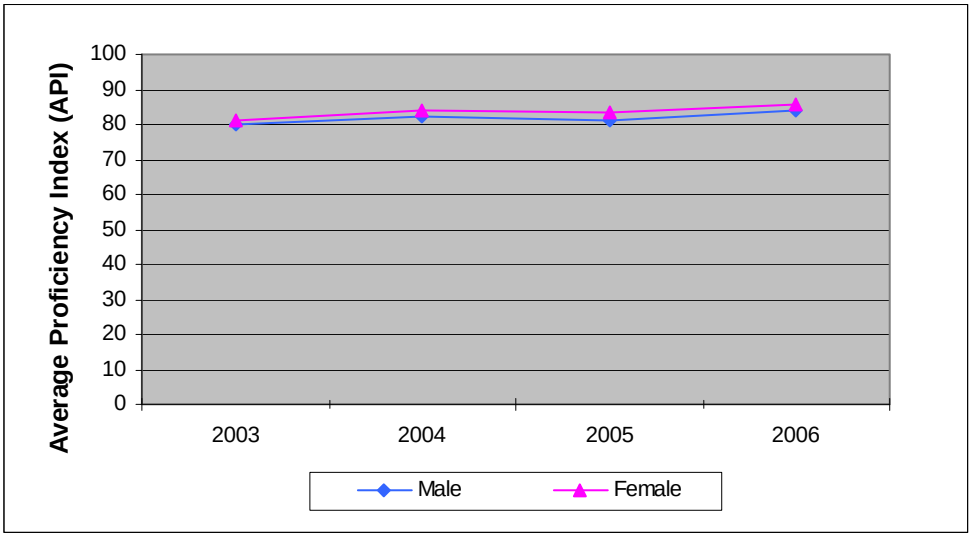


		API	EPI	MPI	Percent Attaining Proficiency ELA	Percent Attaining Proficiency Math
FRL/N	2003	82.8	88.6	78.6	70	56
	2004	85.8	90.1	82.8	73	61
	2005	85.0	90.0	81.3	73	60
	2006	87.4	90.7	84.9	76	66
FRL/Y	2003	66.0	75.2	59.4	46	26
	2004	69.5	77.8	63.2	45	31
	2005	66.6	73.5	61.7	38	28
	2006	72.0	77.3	68.4	46	41

Both the low-income (FRL/Y) and non low-income (FRL/N) subgroups in Falmouth had improved overall performance on the MCAS tests between 2003 and 2006. The average proficiency gap for non low-income students narrowed from 17 to 13 PI points, and for low-income students it narrowed from 34 to 28 PI points. These gains resulted in improvement rates of 27 percent for non low-income students and 18 percent for low-income students.

Between 2003 and 2006, the average performance gap between low-income students and non low-income students narrowed by two PI points.

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	79.8	84.9	76.1	62	54
	2004	82.3	86.0	79.7	64	57
	2005	81.4	84.8	78.8	62	57
	2006	83.9	85.8	82.5	65	63
Female	2003	81.1	88.5	75.7	71	49
	2004	83.9	89.8	79.5	71	56
	2005	83.5	90.8	78.3	75	54
	2006	86.0	91.3	82.1	77	61

Both male and female students in Falmouth had improved performance between 2003 and 2006 on the MCAS tests. The average proficiency gap for male students narrowed from 20 to 16 PI points, and for female students it narrowed from 19 to 14 PI points. These gains resulted in improvement rates of 20 percent for male students and 26 percent for female students.

Between 2003 and 2006, the average performance gap between male and female students widened by one PI point.

Participation

Are all eligible students participating in required state assessments?

Finding:

- On the 2006 MCAS tests in ELA, math, and STE, eligible students in Falmouth 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
Falmouth	ALL LEVELS	**2,198**	**2,192**	**661**
	Advanced	318	514	59
	Proficient	1,298	826	224
	Needs Improvement	514	596	311
	Warning/Failing	68	256	67
Regular Education	Advanced	309	498	58
	Proficient	1,172	751	208
	Needs Improvement	351	473	250
	Warning/Failing	21	129	35
Disability	Advanced	8	14	1
	Proficient	121	71	16
	Needs Improvement	158	118	61
	Warning/Failing	45	125	31
Limited English Proficient	Advanced	1	2	0
	Proficient	5	4	0
	Needs Improvement	5	5	0
	Warning/Failing	2	2	1
White	Advanced	299	481	55
	Proficient	1,190	762	215
	Needs Improvement	434	520	279
	Warning/Failing	50	205	56
Hispanic	Advanced	4	10	0
	Proficient	26	16	1
	Needs Improvement	24	20	9
	Warning/Failing	6	14	4
African-American	Advanced	4	4	0
	Proficient	45	26	5
	Needs Improvement	35	31	14
	Warning/Failing	6	27	4
Asian	Advanced	9	16	4
	Proficient	21	13	1
	Needs Improvement	12	11	5
	Warning/Failing	1	3	2
Free or Reduced-Cost Lunch/No	Advanced	304	485	58
	Proficient	1,133	719	207
	Needs Improvement	354	458	240
	Warning/Failing	37	162	45
Free or Reduced-Cost Lunch/Yes	Advanced	14	29	1
	Proficient	165	107	17
	Needs Improvement	160	138	71
	Warning/Failing	31	94	22
Male	Advanced	115	238	29
	Proficient	636	423	119
	Needs Improvement	288	289	155
	Warning/Failing	43	126	34
Female	Advanced	203	276	30
	Proficient	662	403	105
	Needs Improvement	226	307	156
	Warning/Failing	25	130	33

n-Values by Grade and Year, 2003-2006

Grade	Year	ELA	Math	STE
Grade 3	2003	323	0	0
	2004	329	0	0
	2005	277	0	0
	2006	301	302	0
Grade 4	2003	336	339	0
	2004	324	325	0
	2005	326	326	0
	2006	274	274	0
Grade 5	2003	0	0	0
	2004	0	0	336
	2005	0	0	322
	2006	324	325	325
Grade 6	2003	0	386	0
	2004	0	361	0
	2005	0	337	0
	2006	324	324	0
Grade 7	2003	386	0	0
	2004	355	0	0
	2005	342	0	0
	2006	311	311	0
Grade 8	2003	0	393	0
	2004	0	389	389
	2005	0	349	349
	2006	339	335	336
Grade 10	2003	345	344	0
	2004	308	308	0
	2005	304	302	0
	2006	325	321	0
All Grades	2003	1,390	1,462	0
	2004	1,316	1,383	725
	2005	1,249	1,314	671
	2006	2,198	2,192	661

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	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓		**8**
Needs Improvement			✓	✓				✓		✓			✓	**5**
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 Falmouth Public Schools had a strategic plan or District Improvement Plan (DIP) in place for the entire period under review, as well as a School Improvement Plan (SIP) for each school. These documents aligned in the areas of improvement of student achievement and the resolution of student conflicts.
- In 2006-2007, the district made a number of changes to administrative staffing and was engaged in districtwide restructuring using the 21st Century Schools initiative Partners in Learning. In addition, the district received a grant from the Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy for restructuring of administrative and labor management systems at the high school.
- The entire school district analyzed various student data to aid in the development and revision of some programs. However, it did not disaggregate the data by subgroup population, use the data programmatically, or look at data systematically across grades K-12.

Regular administrative meetings did include time for the review of available data to inform decision making.

- The administrative personnel files contained the evaluations of the superintendent and the five principals who served during the 2005-2006 school year. The EQA team found no evaluations for any other district administrators for the prior five years.
- The superintendent of schools, the chief of police, and the fire chief reviewed the district safety/crisis plan annually. However, doors in the district's schools were not locked, and lockdown drills did not occur on a regular basis.
- The regularly updated district website contained a great deal of information about the district and each school, and included the e-mail address of the superintendent to encourage parents and community members to ask questions and/or make suggestions.
- The school committee and the superintendent worked very closely with town officials to ensure the community met the educational needs of all students.

Summary

The district's administrative team experienced many changes during the period under review, including a new superintendent, an interim director of curriculum and instruction, and three new principals. By the time of the onsite visit in March 2007, the district also had a new director of curriculum, a new director of pupil personnel, and an interim principal. In addition, the town elected two new members of the school committee to join the seven veteran members. While the committee did not have a formal mentoring program, according to school committee interviewees, veteran members were readily available to offer any needed support for new members.

The superintendent and members of central administration met with newly elected school committee members prior to their first meeting to review school committee operations and its role as a policymaking board and an advocacy group for students. The school committee had subcommittees in the areas of budget, curriculum, grants, negotiations, and policy, and members also participated on ad hoc boards and committees. While there was evidence the school committee had reviewed, updated, and added several policies, some of the policies in the handbook had effective dates in the 1970s and 1980s. The committee has engaged the services

of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) to update the manual, and it expected to approve the new manual in June 2008.

Overall, the EQA team documented many changes that were evident in the district during the period under review , school year 2003-2004 to school year 2005-2006. By the date of the EQA visit in March 2007, the EQA examiners could trace and document changes in leadership throughout the district that positively impacted the organizational structure of the district. The examiners also found updated organizational systems within the district, resulting in positive changes in curriculum and instruction.

The school committee, new superintendent, and town officials focused on building a collaborative culture to ensure the needs of all students were met throughout the year. The school committee, finance committee, and selectmen met to review the budget needs both of the community and of the schools prior to the adoption of the final budget. The community was invested in the 21st Century Schools initiative Partners in Learning, which encouraged all members of the educational community to focus on qualities associated with schools in which students are academically successful, motivated, and emotionally secure. During the summer of 2006, a two-day school/community meeting, which enabled approximately 50 people to explore the nine qualities associated with the initiative, and a two-day administrators' meeting were held for people to share their insights for district improvement.

The superintendent delegated the leadership of schools and programs to the respective principals and directors. Central office administrators met in alternating weeks as a team and met individually on a weekly basis with the superintendent. In addition, the full administrative team met once per month, and the superintendent created agendas for these meetings with input from administrators. The district maintained an up to date website that provided much information about the school district and increased communication with the public It also encouraged members of the community to ask questions and share their ideas with the superintendent via e-mail.

The district had a strategic plan covering the years 2004-2007 that included nine goals. It also had an annual tactical plan focusing on specific activities, timelines, and expected outcomes. The plan included both the district's vision and the mission statements, which were evident in

school buildings and student handbooks and on the district website. The school committee formally adopted the plan and discussed it at least three times during the year. Each school had a three-year School Improvement Plan (SIP), which was normally voted on by the school committee and reviewed on an annual basis, that included accomplishments as well as areas still in need of improvement. Beginning in 2005-2006, the district placed greater emphasis on the full alignment of the district strategic plan and the SIPs.

The district analyzed MCAS data on a regular basis to determine trends and patterns and individual needs of students. The administration provided the school committee and the community at large with regular reports on the MCAS test results outlining the achievements and areas of weakness across the school district. Additional data collected consisted of those from local common assessments, quarterly assessments, SATs, and district-created Open-Response Questions (ORQs) to detect noted weaknesses across the district.

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

The district had a strategic plan covering the years 2004-2007, approved by the school committee, that contained nine goals addressing curriculum and instruction; student assessment; environment for learning; support programs and services; professional development; leadership, governance, and organization; program evaluation; and business and financial management. A number of strategies supported each goal, addressing the use of data and the development, implementation, and modification of educational programs.

In addition to the strategic plan, the district established an annual tactical plan focusing on each goal that included action steps, completion dates, and observable outcomes with a rating to determine the degree of completion. The school committee reviewed each tactical plan three to four times per year to monitor the progress made and to address areas of both strength and

weakness. The plan included measurable strategies such as identifying action steps in each SIP that could assist each school in attaining adequate yearly progress (AYP).

During the 2005-2006 school year, the newly appointed superintendent worked with the administrative council and members of the community to create a District Improvement Plan (DIP) to accompany and expand upon the district's strategic and tactical plans. The areas of focus in this plan included leadership and governance, curriculum and instruction, and academic support services. Interviewees stated that all plans flowed together, with the ultimate goal of improving student achievement and escalating expectations to ensure that all students will have the needed skills to attend college. In addition to the above plans, the school committee adopted in February 2007 included the mission statement and three core belief statements that focused on continuous improvement, enthusiasm for teaching and learning, and collaboration in teaching and learning.

In 2006-2007, the district started a new initiative, the Building 21st Century Schools, that encouraged all members of the educational community to focus on nine qualities considered present in schools where students are academically successful, motivated, and emotionally secure. The initiative called for a framework for raising expectations and increasing skill levels for a more highly educated population. The planning initiative began with two community seminars to solicit input. During the summer of 2006, meetings to discuss the nine qualities were held with approximately 50 people from the community and all administrators, so they could give their input regarding the direction of the district. The published results have given the school committee and the administration additional direction relative to high expectations, the need for high standards, and the importance of parent/community involvement. In the 2006 "back-to-school letter" which was sent home to all parents, the superintendent expanded upon the nine qualities of the initiative and encouraged parents to visit the district's web page devoted to the progress of this initiative.

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 nine-member school committee had little turnover during the period under review. The chairperson of the committee had nine years of service, and others ranged from less than one year to eight years of service. All school committee members participated in the mandatory Massachusetts Association of School Committee (MASC) training and in local and state conferences. All members interviewed stated they understood the committee's role as a policymaking board and an advocate for students. School committee members sometimes served on school councils but school committee members did not see this as a conflict of interest. The school committee had permanent subcommittees in the areas of budget, curriculum, grants, negotiations, and policy. Members also had assignments to other entities, such as the sick leave committee and school building committees, and served in such roles as legislative representative and school council/PAC liaison.

Although school committee members stated that they did not have a formal mentoring program, they also said that veteran members were always available to work with new members and communication among the membership was ongoing. All new members met with the superintendent prior to their first meeting when they were given an overview of school committee operations. During this meeting the discussion focused on school committee roles, interpretation of policy and legal issues, curriculum and instruction, personnel and contract issues, finance and facilities, student services, and strategic and tactical plans. School committee interviewees all agreed that newly elected members received ample information to perform their duties and felt well prepared for the first meeting they attended. School committee members and administrators stated that communication between the committee and the superintendent was ongoing via e-mail, memos, telephone conversations, and face-to-face meetings. Central office administrators attended each school committee meeting and on a rotating basis presented information on a variety of programs relative to budget, curriculum, instruction, and student achievement. Principals attended meetings as needed and reviewed information pertinent to their respective buildings. In 2005-2006, almost every school committee meeting (14) was in a school so the PTO and school council could meet with the school committee and each school could feature its programs. Principals attended each meeting.

The school committee policy manual provided to the EQA team showed that some revisions of established policies and adoptions of new policies had occurred during the period under review, and other policies from the 1970s and 1980s were still in effect. Interviewees stated that the committee was in the process of updating the entire policy manual in association with the MASC, and the new manual would be ready for adoption in June 2008. Interviewees told the EQA that they began the process in 2005-2006, when they also reviewed and revised all preK-8 student handbooks. The high school handbook was reviewed and revised during 2006-2007.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The EQA team in its review of documents found information on both the gathering and use of data, and interviewees consistently stated the district had procedures and practices in place directly associated with gathering and using data. During 2004-2005, the district primarily looked for trends and patterns and used item analysis to track the progress of students. During 2005-2006 and 2006-2007, the district regularly analyzed a great deal of MCAS data and shared all the results with the school committee and the community.

The superintendent and the directors of curriculum and pupil personnel services reviewed the MCAS test results as soon as the information arrived and promptly sent individual school results to each respective principal. Curriculum specialists and classroom teachers then reviewed and analyzed the results by grade level and department. During the first part of the period under review, only one member of the administrative staff had training in TestWiz and the district primarily looked at aggregate data to make decisions. During 2005-2006, the district trained all administrators and a number of other staff members to use TestWiz, thus allowing the district ample opportunity to generate a variety of reports to share with all members of the staff.

The high school had access to a Scantron machine, which helped staff analyze assessment data in a quick and efficient manner. The district planned to purchase PowerSchool by the end of 2006-2007, which will provide easy access to student data and provide a student information system

that can help make it easier to analyze data from both the MCAS tests and local common assessments.

The district looked at the data provided by a number of programs such as MCAS tests, local assessments, quarterly assessments, the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), running records, Reading Recovery , and open-response questions. According to interviewees, by analyzing the available data, the district was able to make a number of modifications, such as the reorganization of the team structure in place at the Morse Pond School and the implementation of a house structure for all grade 9 students to provide a safety net for them. When asked about data, interviewees also cited their use in creating 17 full-day kindergarten classes since 2003. Interviewees also told the EQA that administrators and principals were starting to use disaggregated data to decide whether they needed additional staff and new textbooks, and when planning and implementing new programs and/or services was justified.

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: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The EQA team reviewed School Improvement Plans for each school covering all of the years under review. Each SIP covered a three-year span, ranging from 2003-2006, 2004-2007, 2005-2008, and 2006-2009. The plans shared consistent formatting and each plan included improvement strategies/activities, person(s) responsible for implementation, resources, funding, timeline, evaluation, and status. Some of the plans included measurable goals such as "the school will raise MCAS test scores by a defined percentage"; other plans, especially at the high school level, did not include any measurable goals. All of the plans referenced the goals of the strategic plan and informed the tactical plan for each year. Additionally, each of these plans referenced student achievement even if it did not target a specific increase in achievement.

EQA examiners noted that because plans covered various three-year periods, the goals and objectives did not always align with the current strategic plan/DIP in place. School councils were in place in all schools and participated in the development and review of their respective three-year plans. In 2004-2005, the principal of each school presented the SIP to the school

committee, which formally adopted each plan. Interviewees stated that these school committee meetings generally spurred a good deal of discussion and on occasion led to changes to the plan. Interviewees also told the EQA that schools gave annual status reports on SIP accomplishments to the school committee. Interviewees stated that the current administration has placed more emphasis on the development and implementation of SIPs. In 2005-2006, the superintendent approved each SIP.

5. 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.

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

Interviewees in administrative and budget sessions stated that the superintendent and the assistant superintendent of finance and personnel worked hand in hand and sought information from members of the administrative team, principals, and members of the staff during the development of the budget. They made budget allocations on a per pupil basis to cover the costs of classroom supplies and materials. Central office determined the budgets for utilities, staffing, and all other areas, and utilized previous budget data for each cost center. Special education always received the amount of money deemed necessary, and in most cases the amount of money allocated for additional staff and textbooks covered the needs of the classroom teacher and the district as a whole. Budget allocations took into account the differing needs of each school and program, and principals interviewed stated they could advocate for additional resources such as personnel and textbooks provided they had supporting data to back up their requests.

All administrators stated they were kept informed throughout the entire budget process. Members of the school committee stated that they voted to redistrict at the elementary level two years ago to ensure smaller class sizes in the schools that had not attained AYP and that had not met the expectations of the district for student achievement. The superintendent told the EQA examiners that the redistricting was needed to fix overcrowding in some schools. The district cited the implementation of full-day kindergarten, small class size, and the fact that there were

no fees associated with student activities (with the exception of high school parking-permit fees) as examples of considering all student populations when establishing the annual budget.

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

Interviewees in all budget sessions indicated that the budget process began in early September when administrators and principals outlined the needs of their respective programs and schools. At the beginning of the school year, principals solicited the needs of staff members, examined trends relative to class size, and reviewed upcoming textbook needs. If they projected a need for additional staffing, data were required to justify the request of the program and/or school. The business manager prepared booklets by program and school and distributed the information to the budget subcommittee of the school committee and to all administrators for review. During the budget season, school officials worked with town officials to determine town revenues. The budget subcommittee met three to five times during the building of the budget and kept other members of the school committee informed and up to date. During this period, members of the administrative council discussed the needs of the district and worked together to prepare an educationally sound budget. The administration presented the final document for approval to the full school committee in December, and public hearings were held to seek community input. The town approved the FY 2008 budget at the town meeting held in early April 2007, during the EQA site visit.

Interviewees stated that a solid working relationship existed between the school committee and other town officials, and the school committee had a finance committee liaison who met with members of the finance committee on a regular basis. In addition, there were joint meetings between the school committee members, finance committee members, and the selectmen. The superintendent met with the town administrator, members of the finance committee, and the selectmen on a regular basis during budget season and on occasion at other times during the school year.

The school committee advocated for students in meetings with town officials and regularly met with members of school councils and parents' organizations and encouraged parents to participate in town meeting. A review of budget information showed that net school spending increasingly exceeded the minimum requirement, in spite of the fact that the district had a declining enrollment, and the district increased its local contribution by 81 percent between FY 2004 and FY 2007. Per pupil spending for education in Falmouth was at the state average.

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 superintendent annually presented the strategic plan, and the DIP in 2005-2006, to the school committee in the spring for review and discussion. They discussed the status of goal attainment and areas of strength and weakness. The superintendent also presented the tactical plan to the school committee, which included specific results of student achievement on the MCAS tests and the SAT. During 2006-2007, the district also adopted a mission statement and statements of beliefs that included three core values with respect to improvement, enthusiasm, and collaboration. Interviewees also told the EQA that a committee had begun to update the current strategic plan.

Each principal presented his/her SIP to the school committee during the fall of each year. Principals discussed the rationale behind each goal and objective and answered questions posed by the school committee members. Included in the discussion was the attainment of goals in the previous plan and how student achievement would be monitored. While no longer mandated, the school committee formally voted on each SIP, as reflected in minutes of school committee meetings. In addition, the school committee responded, in memorandum form, to each principal and school council regarding the status of their respective SIP, and in some cases provided suggestions as to how to attain certain goals needing funding that would not be available due to financial constraints.

The local cable television station broadcast all school committee meetings so that members of the community would be aware of the plans, and they were invited to e-mail the superintendent or principal with any suggestions or input. The local newspapers reported on the results of each meeting, thus providing another avenue for parents and members of the community to understand the goals within the strategic plan and the SIPs.

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: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The process of analyzing MCAS test data was under the purview of the director of curriculum, curriculum leaders, building principals, and department heads/coordinators. Members of the staff discussed and reviewed the data gathered by the district and the schools twice monthly at after-school meetings. Staff members analyzed aggregated data and had just begun to analyze disaggregated data, for example the Advanced Placement (AP) scores to determine achievement by gender and ethnicity. Interviewees stated that the analysis of MCAS test data occurred on a regular basis during the period under review. Interviewees stated and documents revealed that the district had done some work in disaggregating the data for subgroup populations such as special education students and economically disadvantaged students.

Interviewees told the EQA team that principals met with staff members on a regular basis and developed strategies to improve instruction in each building and at each grade level. At the Lawrence School and at the high school, department heads held the responsibility of meeting with all staff members assigned to their departments. Interviewees also stated that staff members met by grade level and they met with staff from other grade levels to review data from the present and past years. They stated that this enabled the district to look for trends and patterns and to make appropriate curricular changes.

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

Interviewees expressed the importance of having explicit goals in the strategic plan, the tactical plans, and the SIPs with respect to student achievement in ELA and mathematics. They continually directed personnel to search out better methods of assessing student achievement, as reflected in the agendas of faculty and administrator meetings. Central office administrators, department heads, and principals consistently monitored student achievement and classroom data on a regular basis. The documents reviewed included MCAS test data that showed progress made as well as information regarding various subgroup populations. All of the reports were shared with the school committee and the community at large. School committee members stated that they thoroughly discussed the reports, and the committee considered the recommendations of administrators regarding needed changes in curriculum and for additional resources. The specific actions taken to increase the performance of subgroup populations, based on these data, was not evident. The district posted all of the information on its website by district and school.

The monitoring of student achievement, which increased under the present superintendent, provided Falmouth the opportunity to modify and/or implement programs as deemed necessary. The curriculum documents showed that the science curriculum was not well developed. The district did have K-12 committees and was just starting to look at the K-4 level. The district purchased a number of science kits for all grades that some teachers used in 2006-2007. During the period under review, the district instituted the practice of classroom review of previous MCAS test questions, increased the amount of time spent on open-response questions, and changed the sequencing of material in some courses and programs to ensure that students were introduced to potential test questions and that the district focused on the assessment of all students and programs. The district offered full-day and half-day professional development programs to all staff in addition to the after-school meetings held twice monthly. Examples of

offerings included Peace Builders training, integrating technology, and reading in the content areas.

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: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Many administrative personnel changes took place in the district during the period under review. The personnel file of the current superintendent, who has served since July 2005, contained a school committee evaluation from the 2005-2006 school year that was noted in the minutes of the July 25, 2006 school committee meeting. All school committee members evaluated the superintendent in accordance with its August 2000 policy that called for an annual evaluation during the spring of each year. The chairperson of the school committee compiled individual members' ratings and comments into one document. The final document contained averaged numerical scores as well as a compilation of individual comments consisting of both commendations and recommendations. The superintendent's evaluation was timely, included the components of education reform, was informative and instructive, and promoted growth and overall effectiveness. On the other hand, neither party signed or dated the final evaluation. The personnel file of the previous superintendent did not include any evaluations, even though members of the school committee stated they had completed performance evaluations annually for all of the years under review.

The EQA team reviewed 11 administrator personnel files and found six completed evaluations for the 2005-2006 school year, authored by the current superintendent. While all of the completed evaluations contained components of education reform, including the six standards of administrative leadership, and all were informative, they were not instructive, did not promote growth and overall effectiveness, and did not include any individualized comments. In addition, the files contained mutually agreed upon goals set at the beginning of the school year which were reviewed throughout the school year. Each administrator received a numerical rating on 27 indicators and a one-word rating, ranging from excellent to needs improvement, for each of the

six standards and for each of the individual goals. The files did not provide any written information regarding accountability, although some administrators stated that they received comments either written or verbal from the superintendent.

The personnel file of the current assistant superintendent of finance and personnel showed that his most recent evaluation occurred during the 2000-2001 school year. The remaining four files the examiners reviewed included administrators who had left the district during the period under review, and they did not contain any additional evaluation documents. All administrators serving in the district in 2006-2007 had appropriate and updated certification.

11. 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.

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The superintendent, the assistant superintendent of finance and personnel, the director of pupil personnel services, and the director of curriculum, as the administrative council, met as a group (Instructional Leadership Team) every two weeks to review and discuss all issues that had surfaced in the district. The superintendent also met individually with each of these administrators weekly. The administrative council met with all building principals twice monthly and cooperatively established agendas. Interviewees all stated that they discussed district, program, and building issues, and the open communication afforded them a great deal of information and allowed them to make sound decisions regarding program and school initiatives. Sample agendas reviewed included items dealing with the strategic and tactical plans, the DIP, budgets, student data, and other administrative issues.

Administrative interviewees all stated that the superintendent delegated the leadership of each school and program to each respective administrator. According to interviewees, the district established committees consisting of teachers, parents, and members of school councils when new teachers were to be hired, and they recommended their choice to the principal, who made the final decision and submitted his/her choice for the position to the office of the superintendent.

While the contracts issued to principals and other administrators did not have specific language regarding student achievement as part of the hiring or re-hiring process, the attainment of mutually agreed upon goals was connected to the strategic plan (DIP) and SIPs, and each of these documents made reference to student achievement. Interviewees stated that the superintendent shared "critical leadership behaviors" with all administrators who understood that he would regularly look for evidence of these behaviors. Under the current administration, principals received set raises. They were also eligible for extra compensation reflecting the degree of attainment achieved in their respective annual goals.

The superintendent made many administrative changes in the district from fall 2005 to spring 2007, and the district has a substantial number of newly appointed and/or re-assigned administrators. According to interviewees, the district continues to utilize interim administrators when deemed in the best interest of the district.

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

School committee members, the administrative staff, and town officials cited the ability of all parties working together as a great strength starting in the 2004-2005 school year.. Interwoven throughout the strategic plan and the newly created core beliefs was the importance of meaningful parent/community involvement and collaboration. The ability of the school department to produce realistic budgets, provide monthly financial reports, and communicate with the community via cable television and newspaper all added to the credence of the school district. The school committee regularly communicated the needs of the student body and its desire to share information during the regularly scheduled meetings with the finance committee and the selectmen.

The district provided evidence of signed teacher contracts for 2005 to 2008. One of the contracts covered all professional staff members, nurses, paraprofessionals, and unit B personnel.

Interviewees stated that contracts were settled in a timely fashion, and the issue of student achievement or any form of merit pay had not been discussed as a bargaining tool.

Members of the teachers' union and the superintendent stated there has always been open communication via e-mail, telephone conversations, and regularly scheduled meetings and that the union normally filed three to nine grievances annually. Interviewees stated that over half of the grievances reached the superintendent and two had reached the school committee so far during the 2006-2007 school year. In 2005-2006, no grievances came to the school committee and only one reached that level in the preceding year. All interviewees stated that the administration addressed issues professionally and cooperatively attained solutions. The superintendent and president of the teachers' union met on a weekly basis. The superintendent also met with a representative group of approximately 20 to 25 union members on a monthly basis. Interviewees stated that the superintendent was open to receiving direct e-mail from members of the staff to discuss issues.

The district applied to and was chosen by the Rennie Center for Education Policy and Research to participate in a labor-management review of the high school program, while at the same time undergoing a facilities upgrade. The project was adopted by the administration, community, staff members, and the teachers' association to work together to enhance the learning opportunities for all students.

13. <u>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.</u>

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the entire period under review, the district had a comprehensive safety plan manual in place for all school buildings and the central administration office, which housed .the Mass Family Networks play groups.. The superintendent of schools, the police chief, and the fire chief annually reviewed the plan and updated it if needed. The office at each school maintained the manual and the schools prominently posted evacuation routes in each classroom. According to the superintendent, members of the local emergency planning committee reviewed the safety and

security protocol. The principals reviewed the plans with all members of the staff prior to the start of each school year. Principal and teacher interviews revealed that there was no specific protocol in place to ensure that substitute teachers knew what their role was in the case of an emergency and that school plans were not uniform across the district. The crisis manual addressed potential incidents including bomb threats, chemical accidents, child abduction, explosive protocol, intrusion, suicide intervention, terrorism threats, and winter storm emergency protocols.

Bus evacuation and fire drills took place each year but principals stated that lockdown drills occurred sporadically, if at all. In visits to each school, the EQA team found some methods of security, such as the use of a sign-in sheet and the practice of wearing ID badges, in place only in some schools.

The Teaticket School also had cameras and safety procedures in place that were much more thorough compared to the safety procedures of other schools in the district. The EQA team found that most buildings were very easy to enter undetected, doors were not locked, and there were no installed buzzer systems so that doors could be locked and still accessible to members of the school during the school day. The EQA examiners also noted that the location of the school office did not allow direct line-of-sight view of the entrances to members of the office staff, so that they could monitor people who were entering the school building while school was in session.

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

- During the period under review, the district had begun to document its curricula in all tested content areas and to align them horizontally and vertically at all grade levels with the state frameworks. However, this curriculum work was inconsistent and incomplete across all tested content areas.
- In 2005-2006, the district had hired an interim director of curriculum and instruction to oversee all curriculum development, documentation, assessment, and the selection of instructional materials for grades preK-12, and she established curriculum committees in the tested content areas as well as in technology.
- In 2005-2006, the district began establishing a collaborative culture with distributed leadership, leading to increased support for effective instructional strategies, techniques, and methods grounded in research, and focused on achievement for all. This development was not consistent across the district and all curriculum areas.
- Prior to 2006, the district core curricula were in formative stages; in 2006-2007 the district embarked on a systematic cycle of curriculum revision. The district had analyzed student data and increased instructional time for core content areas for students in need of extra assistance.

- The availability of educational technology was inequitable throughout the district, according to classroom observations.
- In 2005-2006, the district had begun to monitor teachers' instruction for evidence of best practices that reflected high expectations for students' work by doing walk-through visits, holding curriculum meetings, and scheduling professional development. Ultimately, levels of student achievement were not yet linked to teacher or administrator evaluations.

Summary

In 2005-2006 and 2006-2007, the Falmouth Public Schools had begun to make significant strides toward developing its curricula, although it had not yet completed this across all subjects and grades. The math curriculum was the most developed and the science curriculum was the least developed. In 2005-2006, the superintendent hired an interim director of curriculum who established preK-12 curriculum committees for all tested subjects and for technology integration. The interim director organized completed curricula, assessments, and resources and began to organize them into K-12 curriculum and assessment systems that were aligned with the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks. In 2006-2007, the superintendent hired a new director of curriculum and instruction to complete the remaining work. In this process, all stakeholders shared in the curriculum development, and at the high school a current employee was put into a position dedicated to increased attention to curriculum and instruction, especially at grade 9.

The district held department, team, and professional development meetings and began horizontal alignment across classes and schools. It organized curriculum meetings with representatives of all levels to begin vertical alignment across grade levels, in order to ensure coherence and avoid gaps and redundancies. Although the district had written curricula in ELA and math, they did not contain the following components: written objectives, resources, instructional strategies, timelines/pacing guides, measurable outcomes, and benchmark assessments. The district had some local assessments, such as the ORQs, but lacked an overall assessment system that would efficiently make the best use of these data and the analysis of them. The district had also not yet fully begun to analyze student subgroup data for use in monitoring programmatic strengths and weaknesses or in assessing the effectiveness of programs.

Through a distributed leadership model, district and school administrators, teacher-leaders, and teachers at each school began to work collaboratively in order to introduce best practices such as differentiated instruction and to raise the expectation for accountability in order to ensure effective instruction. The district had embarked on working toward the goal of raising the level of integration of technology into classroom instruction by creating technology committees. Based on documentation and classroom visits, the district still had a way to go to assure equitable distribution of technology, more consistent use of technology, and alignment of all available software to curricula.

According to interviewees, administrators monitored effective instruction by the use of informal walk-throughs. They conducted formal observations and evaluations twice per year. With respect to professional status teachers, using alternative teacher evaluation options in the district could result in one full formal evaluation every eight years. This would occur with professional status teachers when in year two a formal evaluation was performed, an alternative "focus" or project evaluation was performed two years later, a "formal walk-through" performed another two years later, and another two years passed until a formal evaluation was performed based on actual classroom observation. The "focus" evaluation and "formal walk-through" evaluations were not considered to be aligned with the requirements of the Education Reform Act.

When classroom observations were done, the Skillful Teacher model was used. Administrators and principals told the examiners that they were all familiar with the language of this model but did not consider themselves to be proficient.

During the period under review, the district emphasized accountability by instituting some common exams in some subject areas. In 2005-2006, the district began to analyze the results of these exams for strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum or in teaching and learning. According to interviewees, the majority of teachers did not yet feel sufficiently trained to analyze and use data to their fullest potential in order to drive instruction. The district primarily relied on central office personnel or school-based leaders to analyze the student achievement data.

Interviewees did not regard themselves as knowledgeable in ways of disaggregating MCAS results to improve student achievement, especially for subgroup populations. They stated that they were just beginning to look for trends of strengths and weaknesses in responding to test

items. According to MCAS data, the percentage of Falmouth students who attained overall proficiency on the MCAS tests was 58 percent in 2003, 61 percent in both 2004 and 2005, and 67 percent in 2006.

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

Evidence from a review of curricula and interviews with administrators and teachers revealed that throughout the period under review, the district worked on documenting and monitoring its curricula in all tested areas for grades preK-12. Prior to the arrival of the current superintendent in 2005-2006, the curricula lacked documentation and consistency in all areas. The former superintendent had written a strategic plan for 2004-2007 that prioritized goals for curriculum, assessment, and instruction. The tactical plan for 2005-2006, also from the former superintendent, listed goals for instruction and assessment. The current superintendent echoed these goals in his brief District Improvement Plan (DIP) for the 2006-2007 school year. The individual School Improvement Plans (SIPs) aligned with the DIP's goals and objectives and articulated curricular goals and objectives.

Math had the most developed curriculum and included for every grade/course "what students should know and be able to do," general instructional strategies, and generic assessments. Interviewees indicated to the EQA examiners that while the math curriculum had progressed further than either the ELA or STE curriculum, it still needed specific information, such as the pace of instruction, resources for instruction, common exams, and suggested instructional strategies. In grades K-6, the schools used the Everyday Math program, which they perceived to align with the state curriculum framework. In grades 7-8, the interviewees told the EQA that they believed the curriculum, which was textbook based, was already aligned with the framework and that the district was planning on offering algebra to all grade 8 students.

Interviewees also believed the textbook-based high school geometry and algebra courses aligned with the state curriculum framework.

In ELA, the curriculum was not as well developed and defined as it was in math. The ELA curriculum listed goals and strands for preK-12, as well as textbooks and writing series, composition exemplars, cross references to the framework, and general knowledge and skills from the textbooks. In ELA, all elementary schools once had used the Harcourt Brace literacy series, but since receiving grants from Lesley College, one school began using the Literacy Collaborative model. According to interviewees and information in the SIPs, other schools were moving toward a balanced literacy model as well. The district used the First Steps Writing series and in grades 9 and 10 and used the Prentice Hall textbook series that it perceived to align with the state curriculum framework.

The science and technology/engineering curriculum was most developed at the secondary level for which goals and strands were listed in guides. There were also charts that listed frameworks, learning outcomes, instructional strategies, and general assessments for each course. At the elementary level, the staff was still developing the curriculum. It had purchased a few "hands-on kits" such as an energy kit for grade 3. The district had reorganized the order of science courses seven years ago. As the framework has changed since then, the district science curriculum has moved into a state of transition. Students in grade 9 would take biology in 2007-2008 so that they could take the high school MCAS test at the end of the year. Interviewees stated that at the time of the review there was no technology component to the science curriculum.

District leaders acknowledged that they had much to accomplish in order to create a consistent, systematic, and comprehensive set of curriculum documents in all the tested areas. In the mean time, the district had produced colorful brochures for the parents and public, outlining the basic content and skills taught at each grade level. In 2005-2006, the district made strides in putting into place both staff and committees to address curricular needs. The district also created new preK-12 literacy, math, science, social studies, and technology transition committees, representing all schools, as well as curriculum leaders and coordinators.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The priority for the district was writing down an articulated curriculum aligned to the state frameworks that contained pacing guides, teaching strategies, common assessments, resources to be used, and content and skills to be taught, as learned in interviews with staff and through a review of documents. The district had not yet achieved this level of thoroughness at the time of the EQA review. It had just begun to put the personnel in place to lead these efforts and had made a good start since the arrival of the new superintendent and the director of curriculum and instruction. As the district compiled these curricula for all tested areas, it had just begun to align them horizontally across all schools and vertically across all grades to avoid gaps and redundancies.

Across all grades, the district provided time to work on curriculum. According to interviewees, the teachers at the K-4 level used the two full professional days and seven half days to work on curriculum and to simultaneously align it both horizontally and vertically. Interviewees stated that at grades 5-8 they had four half days and two full days for professional development and that they used this time to write curriculum as well as to align it horizontally and vertically.

Teachers of grades K-6 also had grade level common planning time to ensure consistent, horizontal coverage. Teachers of grades 5 and 6 had common planning time two times during a six-day cycle, while teachers of grades 7 and 8 had common planning time every other day to ensure horizontal alignment. Teachers of grades 7-12 had grade-level and department meetings to ensure horizontal and vertical alignment. In addition, there were transition teams, created in 2005-2006, made up of staff members from grades 4 and 5, 6 and 7, and 8 and 9 who met three times per year to discuss the curriculum at each grade level in order to vertically align it. At the middle and high school levels, the principals met with department chairs every other week to discuss curriculum.

During common planning time, the interviewees told examiners, they had begun to put curriculum into a tangible form as well as to align it within and across grade levels. They also began to compile common assessments and instructional strategies and analyze data to help in the process of attaining alignment and consistency. When asked to describe how these committees were useful, interviewees cited an example from 2006-2007 in the area of math at

the elementary level where two methods had been taught to solve multiplication problems – the traditional method at three elementary schools and the lattice method at Morse Pond. Teachers found that while the lattice method helped students learn to multiply quickly, it hindered them from doing more difficult computations in the upper grades. Largely though, according to interviewees and review of the curriculum documents, math instruction was consistent across the K-4 elementary schools.

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: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district had hired a new director of curriculum and instruction in 2006-2007 to replace the interim director to coordinate efforts and to oversee the development and monitoring of the curriculum. The EQA examiners found that curriculum leadership was distributed throughout the district, with responsibilities shared by district leaders, principals, department chairs, lead teachers, and classroom teachers, based on evidence from interviews and documentation. In 2006-2007, the district established curriculum, instruction, and assessment committees with a wide representation of staff from across the district. For example, there were preK-12 literacy, math, science, and history/social studies committees as well as a technology action plan/instructional tech (TAP-IT) committee to plan the use of technology in the curriculum. There was also an instructional development committee to plan instructional strategies to support the various curricula, and a technology advisory committee to come up with long-range technology plans for the district. Each elementary building had a lead teacher who represented a specific grade at district meetings, and both the middle and high schools had department chairs to oversee curriculum development. The high school also had someone at grade 9 who was currently responsible for revising the curriculum to better meet the needs of all students.

Interviewees reported that all levels began the process of examining and modifying curriculum and instruction when the district received the MCAS test data. The elementary principals and lead teachers and the secondary principals and department chairs reviewed the data. In 2005-

2006, they had mandatory training in TestWiz to enhance their analysis skills. The lead teachers presented the analyses at faculty, grade-level, and department meetings and led small groups in looking for patterns and trends of strengths and weaknesses. They also looked at individual student scores.

In addition to the MCAS tests, the staff developed various local assessments such as the Falmouth (FCAT) for Falmouth High School, Lawrence (LCAT) for Lawrence Middle School, and Open-Response Questions (ORQs) for each department that helped students practice for the MCAS tests. They were analyzed in different ways at each level. Although interviewees could articulate how they used the data gathered to identify students who were falling behind, there was little evidence presented as to how they used the data to improve instruction, to improve individual achievement, or to improve overall achievement of those students in a specific program or from a subgroup population.

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

Through the creation of preK-12 committees, the district increased its capacity for curriculum leadership at all schools, directed from central office, and implemented through grade leaders and department chairs. Despite this, there were still noticeable differences in standards achievement by the end of grade 4, when the students from the four elementary schools entered grade 5 at the same school.

During the period under review, the district had begun to prioritize support for effective instructional strategies grounded in research to improve teaching and learning. According to interviewees, the district did not use consistent strategies across the district to improve achievement for all students. They stated that elementary schools all used different programs, materials, and assessments. For example, according to the SIPs and interviews, East Falmouth was using Trophies, balanced literacy, and ORQs for ELA strategies, and pacing charts, common assessments, and computation games for math strategies. North Falmouth was using a balance

literacy approach and common assessments in ELA and math, as well as using technology to foster better writing. The Mullen-Hall used a balanced literacy approach, Year of the Reader initiatives, and ORQs, as well as consultants for literature and the Everyday Math program. Teaticket, in collaboration with the Lesley Literacy Collaborative from Lesley University, was phasing out the use of the Harcourt Brace & Johvanovich Signatures reading series and the First Steps Writing program; it too was using Everyday Math, ORQs, and common assessments.

At Morse Pond School (grades 5 and 6), teachers had put an emphasis on teaching to various learning styles. The Lawrence Middle School (grades 7 and 8) had common assessments, a Proficiency Improvement Plan for underperforming subgroups, and practice MCAS tests known as LCAT. Falmouth High School had common assessments, writing portfolios, and the local FCAT tests to familiarize students with taking the MCAS exams.

Interviewees stated that all curriculum leaders had received training in using differentiated instructional strategies and that at the time of the review teachers received training within the district from a consultant hired by the district. As a result, K-4 teachers told the EQA that they had incorporated auditory and tactile elements into their lessons along with cooperative and group work. However, as a district interviewees stated that not enough staff members had received training in using differentiated instructional strategies, and they did not feel very adept at using them yet. Curriculum leaders said that at the high school level, honors and Advanced Placement (AP) students did more analysis in their classes, while other groups worked at "more literal approaches" to the curriculum.

The elementary schools offered a wide array of supplemental services. They offered Title I services for those who qualified. Elementary schools had 0.5 Reading Recovery teachers. Grades 1 and 2 used the Wilson Reading program and had piloted Wilson Fundations. The schools used the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) to test and analyze strengths and weaknesses of teaching and learning. They had not yet done any longitudinal studies of student achievement to look for increased achievement, and interviewees stated that it was something that they needed to do.

According to interviewees, the focus for the district for 2006-2007 had been at the elementary level. The district had established rubrics during the last three years at this level. Extensive

MCAS data analysis at all the elementary schools led to remediation and change in methodology, according to interviewees. For those needing extra help, there was before- and after-school tutoring with the use of Study Island, a software computer program that was accessible from school and home. Individual Student Success Plans (ISSPs) were created to outline specific services for students failing the MCAS tests. The elementary schools also implemented the use of Learning Logs by teachers, which outlined the strengths and weaknesses of grade 4 students across the district. There were also plans to implement this at grade 3.

At the middle school, the district provided a whole year of English Plus to remediate ELA and Math Plus to remediate math. Certified teachers taught both of these courses. Students took these courses in lieu of foreign language.

For students requiring enrichment, there was a gifted and talented program starting at grades 3 and 4. Teachers recommended students for this program, based on high MCAS scores and classroom performance. Students left class to work on project-based math and science activities. According to interviewees, because of a unique collaboration with the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, the district put on science fairs at all levels, which scientists from the institute judged. In addition, it conducted various collaborative projects and had some students attend a six-week summer camp.

The elementary, middle, and high schools offered common assessments, and although interviewees stated that analysis of the test results and discussions took place, there was little documented evidence that this information informed changes in either instructional practice or curriculum during the period under review. The district was also involved in the programmatic change of moving more students into taking algebra at grade 8. Since making this change, more students had the opportunity to take algebra at grade 8, and the MCAS math scores increased.

5. <u>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.</u>

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Interviews with teachers and various administrators revealed that the district had not had in the past a well documented review and revision of curricula that was based on valid research, analysis of MCAS test results, and focused on improved achievement for all subgroups, since the curricula that were in place were limited. However, a cycle for the revision of the curricula was established in 2006-2007.

Under the new superintendent, the district placed a new emphasis on curriculum development and planned to begin a regular cycle of revision. In the last two years the district established curriculum committees, analyzed MCAS data, and created common assessments. The new mandate was to not review all curricula in a single year but rather to rotate the reviews. Faculty stated that they had not reached this stage yet and that the process was in a state of "flux." The math curriculum was the most developed, according to documents reviewed and statements of interviewees. The ELA curriculum was the next best document; it emphasized non-fiction reading in science and social studies. The science curriculum was the least well developed curriculum document.

Once the district establishes all curricula it can commence a regular cycle of review and revision. The district stressed "ownership" of all students by all staff, and to this end had established preK-12 curriculum committees comprised of all the stakeholders. The newly hired director of curriculum and instruction had the responsibility to oversee the work of all these committees. The district felt that this framework would allow for more consistency of curriculum across grades, courses, and buildings, and would lead to better horizontal and vertical alignment to avoid gaps and redundancies. The focus on the whole curriculum for grades preK-12 included curriculum and instruction, data to allow teachers to make curricular decisions, professional development, common assessments, and various interventions to assure that all students would become proficient.

6. <u>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.</u>

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Through interviews and documents, examiners learned that little mandatory training in data analysis took place until the 2005-2006 school year. In September 2006, the district offered a half-day workshop for all administrators devoted to TestWiz training. According to interviewees, several staff members had received previous training at Bridgewater State College and returned to train others in the district. Prior to 2005-2006, only the director of curriculum and instruction had had any training in MCAS item analysis. The principals, department heads, and curriculum leaders had analyzed these data for strengths and weaknesses in order to make instructional changes. However, the district leaders reported that the use of data had been not been consistent across all schools.

The district reported that it allocated instructional time in the tested core content areas that focused on improved rates of proficiency for all students. However, in its document review the EQA team found that the district did not meet the requirements for time on learning at the high school. The high school placed students in "directed learning periods" in which students primarily did their homework. Depending upon the number of such periods, some students had less than the required 990 hours. The high school had been restructured into academies to allow more instructional time. The middle and elementary schools had the required hours of instructional time.

At the elementary level, there was tutoring before and after school for those who scored low on the MCAS tests and each student had an Individual Student Success Plan (ISSP). The morning sessions focused more on needs identified by the ISSP, while the afternoon sessions focused more on homework. During the 2006-2007 school year, the elementary schools were piloting Skills Tutor software for remedial instruction during tutoring sessions. At the Morse Pond and Lawrence schools, Study Island, a web-based tutorial, was used at school and home for those doing poorly on the MCAS tests or those needing acceleration and enrichment. This was also used in grades 5 and 6 at Morse Pond. Students in grade 7 with poor MCAS scores took ELA Plus instead of foreign language and those in grade 8 took Math Plus instead of foreign language. These extra periods were staffed by certified teachers who were not the students' regular teachers in the core subject areas. According to interviewees, the high school provided in-school tutoring

during directed learning time to struggling students, as well as before- and after-school tutoring, which it funded from Medicaid funds, according to interviewees.

Students in the special education and low-income subgroups tended to do the poorest on the MCAS tests. As a result, the elementary schools offered a summer enrichment program tied to the students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). For those students in middle school, there were pullout classes with certified teachers, as well as a summer enrichment program lasting three hours per day for five weeks. The district limited the program to small numbers in 2005-2006, but increased its size in 2006-2007.

In January 2007, all the elementary schools worked together to create Learning Logs, or diaries, to note strengths and weaknesses of grade 4 students. There was discussion about doing the same for grade 3 as well. Teachers and administrators analyzed why special education students did better at one school than at another, and analyzed which accommodations seemed to work better. At Lawrence Middle School, they had printed out old MCAS tests from 2002 to present to review the vocabulary used in the math questions. Teachers made plans to use this consistent vocabulary in math classes, and the math department assembled a binder of math words, definitions, and questions common to MCAS. The EQA examiners reviewed the draft form of this binder; it still needed to be typed and distributed to all staff. At grades 5 and 6, teachers used TestWiz to group students by needs, and aligned instruction for remediation in 2006-2007.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

According to interviews with administrators and staff, the integration of technology was a goal for the district. Technology was inconsistently available and used across the district during the period under review. The district was just beginning to align its technology framework to the suggested framework from the DOE. The district established two new committees in 2006-2007 to ensure that technology became an integral part of the instructional process. However, the committees have not aligned all software in use with the framework. One of the committees, the Technology Advisory Committee, had developed a district technology plan. The other

committee, the preK-12 Technology Action Plan – Instructional Tech (TAP-IT) Committee, worked at aligning and integrating technology into curriculum.

At Mullen-Hall, there were two computers in each classroom, and the school had a computer lab with 25 computers and a teacher assistant to monitor. The other elementary schools had labs and teaching assistants as well. One of the elementary principals monitored the teaching assistants, and there was a district technology director. In 2006-2007, Lexia was piloted across the district, ,Skills Tutor was implemented at grades K-4 and Study Island was implemented at grades 5-8. Depending upon the school, there were different technologies available. At some schools there were SmartBoards and portable labs. Some staff had professional development on using the Kurzweil Educational System.

At the middle school, each teacher had his or her own computer. They also had mortgage calculators. The school had two computer labs that teachers scheduled to use once every five days. Besides Study Island, students used the Great Integer Race software. The high school had computer labs and course work in computer science. The computer science staff and the library media specialists assisted students with using technology to do research. Students also used graphing calculators at this level.

In classroom observations in 46 randomly selected classrooms, the EQA examiners found that the overall student to computer ratio was 17.5 students per computer. However, at the elementary level the ratio was 11.0 students per computer, at the middle school level the ratio was 28.1 students per computer, and at the high school level the ratio was 179.0 students per computer in the classrooms observed.. According to interviewees, assistive technology was also available for students in need of it as specified in their IEPs.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

District and school leaders set a tone for higher expectations for both teachers' instruction and student achievement in 2005-2006, based on interviews and a review of documents. However,

expectations did not always match practice at the school and classroom levels. For example, the elementary and middle school goals were broad based and did not specify the amount of improvement expected on an annual basis. The high school goals were not measurable. The district was just developing a comprehensive curriculum with a thoughtful and thorough renewal process. According to teacher interviewees, planning and support for professional development and in-service programs did not always benefit all participants. The interviewees did stress that more and more of professional development was districtwide, and consultants came into the district rather than staff seeking it elsewhere. According to teacher interviewees, all new staff received a copy of Jon Saphier's book *The Skillful Teacher*. According to the superintendent, all new teachers received a book during the first days of school as well as another book on cooperative discipline.

Interviews with administrators revealed that school leaders actively monitored teachers' instruction through formal walk-throughs, using Saphier's Skillful Leader model. Principals told the EQA examiners that they did not use a common form to write up comments or to give written feedback to teachers. Various principals stated that they handled feedback from the walk-throughs in various ways, such as notes and discussions with the teacher about what they had observed. The principals told the EQA that they went through all classrooms two to three times per week. They also said that they stayed long enough to know what was going on and tried to have a positive comment to share.

High expectations refers to the teacher modeling and expecting good routines and work habits from students, having high quality student work displayed, class time focused on challenging academic tasks, and the teacher communicating expectations of high quality work from students. When they observed a random sample of 46 classrooms, the EQA examiners noted high expectations in 83 percent of classrooms in the elementary schools, 82 percent in the middle school, and 35 percent in the high school. Effective instructional practice refers to the use of questioning techniques that encourage elaboration, thought, and broad involvement, using time effectively, maintaining student attention, pacing instruction to keep students engaged, having multiple tasks and a variety of instructional techniques, instruction aligned with the state frameworks, and having clear directions and objectives. The EQA examiners noted effective

instructional practice in 81 percent of observed elementary school classrooms, 66 percent at the middle school, and 56 percent at the high school.

When EQA examiners asked what they could expect to see in a classroom, principals stated that they expected to see the use of differentiated instruction, problem solving, mental math, group work, use of some manipulatives, student-centered as opposed to teacher-centered activity, higher order thinking, use of open-ended questions, use of MCAS questions, and multiple activities. The principals stated that they often looked at whole sets of papers as well as Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) and Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI) reports. They stated that they looked at the latter reports three times per year. They also monitored responses to MCAS questions to find the trends and patterns of wrong answers.

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

The district told the EQA that it used multiple formative and summative assessments to monitor students' achievement, but this practice was not consistent throughout the district. Assessment data were not used to monitor or evaluate the effectiveness of teachers' instructional practice. Principals claimed in interviews that they did know where instructional strengths and weaknesses existed in their buildings, and told the EQA that they provided resources and professional development to support improvement of instruction. However, this practice was not evidenced in written teacher evaluations.

During the last two years, the district had begun to formulate and discuss data. Administrators acknowledged that they were at the incipient stages in this process but had a better focus now. They told the EQA that they were still in a state of "flux" but felt that they were on the right track. At all levels, they had started to use common assessments but had yet to fully analyze the data. They admitted that it would take them a few years to fully implement this process. They were still writing curriculum to add resources such as instructional methodology and pacing

guides. Once this was completed, there could be changes made to curriculum and instruction. As cited, the area for which this was most complete was math. The ELA curriculum was not consistently complete throughout the district, and schools were making site-based changes to the literacy programs. Interviewees stated that they used MCAS results to target and place students into remediation or enrichment classes.

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 46 randomly selected classrooms and recorded the presence or absence of 26 attributes reflected in the Principles of Effective Teaching in five categories: classroom management, instructional practice, expectations, student activity and behavior, and climate. The EQA examiners checked the attributes observed in each of the five categories during their classroom observations. They conducted observations at the district's seven schools as follows: 23 at the elementary school level, 11 at the middle school level, and 12 at the high school level. In total, the EQA examiners observed 22 ELA classrooms, 18 math classrooms, and six 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 88 percent of the classrooms observed districtwide, with 98 percent at the elementary level, 84 percent at the middle school level, and 73 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 71 percent of the classrooms observed districtwide, with 81 percent at the elementary level, 66 percent at the middle school level, and 56 percent at the high school level.

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 70 percent of the classrooms observed districtwide, with 83 percent at the elementary level, 82 percent at the middle school level, and 35 percent at the high school level.

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 73 percent of the classrooms districtwide, with 80 percent at the elementary level, 74 percent at the middle school level, and 60 percent at the high school level.

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 70 percent of the classrooms observed districtwide, with 87 percent at the elementary school level, 82 percent at the middle school level, and 25 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	8	2	23	17.2	0.3	49	36	11.0
Middle	4	5	2	11	17.9	0.3	14	7	28.1
High	5	5	2	12	14.9	0.1	7	1	179.0
Total	22	18	6	46	16.8	0.3	70	44	17.5

	Classroom Management	Instructional Practice	Expectations	Student Activity & Behavior	Climate
Elementary					
Total observations	90	167	76	110	60
Maximum possible	92	207	92	138	69
Avg. percent of observations	98	81	83	80	87
Middle					
Total observations	37	65	36	49	27
Maximum possible	44	99	44	66	33
Avg. percent of observations	84	66	82	74	82
High					
Total observations	35	60	17	43	9
Maximum possible	48	108	48	72	36
Avg. percent of observations	73	56	35	60	25
Total					
Total observations	162	292	129	202	96
Maximum possible	184	414	184	276	138
Avg. percent of observations	88	71	70	73	70

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

Findings:

- In 2005-2006, the district used the 21st Century Schools initiative Partners in Learning, which was, a unified, collective vision for 21st century learning, as a structure for reform and for the development of a new district mission statement.
- In 2005-2006, the district eliminated thematic committees and created preK-12 curriculum committees in each subject area, as well as committees for information technology, standards-based report cards, and transitions from school to school, in order to improve curriculum articulation and student achievement.
- The district created a system of local formative assessments at each grade level to inform instruction and had begun to implement better tools, such as technology to make data more accessible, at the classroom level.
- In 2005-2006, the district was in the process of restructuring at both the lower grades, with horizontal alignment across K-4 schools, and the upper grades, by restructuring the facility, personnel, and programs at the high school.
- The district curriculum in science/technology was the least well defined, and this curriculum area had the lowest in rate of improvement in MCAS scores, yet the district had a large proportion of parents employed in the field of scientific research at Woods Hole.

- High rates of absenteeism across the district and high rates of chronic absenteeism at the high school were factors to consider when working with the Rennie Center to evaluate and restructure programs at the high school.

Summary

In 2005-2006, the district began to implement an assessment system for use districtwide. Various schools had piloted or were using a range of assessments at grades K-4, which differed from those in use at grades 5-6 and grades 7-8. When the present superintendent arrived in the fall of 2005, his first priority was to gather information from stakeholders about what the mission of the schools should be and to develop systems to move the district there. In 2005-2006, the new superintendent hired a veteran director of curriculum to work in Falmouth for a year as the interim director of curriculum and instruction to evaluate the status of curriculum development and assessment. The director of curriculum also articulated a long-term plan outlining the necessary steps to create complete preK-12 curricula, with appropriate benchmarks, and a system of assessment. The plan also addressed the kind of technology needed to manage the district's data and the professional training needed for its use. This would enable administrators and teachers to develop proficiency in using data with the hope that their use in making decisions would become a districtwide expectation.

The district presented little evidence that it had routinely used analysis of student achievement or other data for program evaluation prior to the arrival of the present superintendent. At the beginning of the period under review, veteran administrators and lead teachers had not had formal training in using TestWiz to analyze MCAS student achievement data. In contrast, by 2006-2007 the district and school leadership had completed some training, developed a new mission, and developed some updated tools using technology. The district had begun to routinely use the analysis of program evaluations to initiate, modify, or discontinue programs and services that were not contributing to its newly developed mission. At the beginning of the period under review, the district had not yet considered the effects on student achievement, either positive or negative, of such factors as poor attendance, the use of site-based reading programs at each elementary school, the effect of high chronic absenteeism, or sorting students into gifted and talented programs at an early age. By the end of the period under review, administrators had

engaged in considering the potential effect of a wider range of factors on student achievement and were collecting data to study the issues in order to make better decisions.

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: Satisfactory

Evidence

Although the district did not have specific policy on assessment, it did have assessment practices characterized by the continuous collection and analysis of student assessment results by district and school leadership. The district had also developed quarterly assessments at each K-12 grade level.

During the period under review, assessment began in kindergarten with an early screening inventory (ESI) done either at the end of the summer or in the early fall. The packet of testing included assessments such as, but not limited to, name writing, phonemic awareness, a profile baseline in math, Yopp-Singer Phoneme Segmentation Test, and rapid letter naming. In 2003, the majority of kindergartens were half day, but in 2007 the district had 17 full-day kindergartens. Each building had a half-time literacy coordinator/reading recovery teacher who coordinated the assessments, a practice that had been in place for six years.

Literacy analysis of the assessments was not always consistent from one school building to the next, although all schools used a balanced literacy program. For example, the district piloted the use of DIBELS in kindergarten at Mullen-Hall in 2006-2007. Although the literacy teams had different names in respective schools, they essentially played the same role and reported assessment results to the director of curriculum and instruction at central office. They analyzed and compiled Reading Recovery results each year for the district and for submittal to the national Reading Recovery database. At grades 1-3, the district administered the DRA in fall and spring and at additional times in winter to struggling readers. According to interviewees, data from these assessments were shared with grade-level teachers, the literacy coordinator, and the school principal.

According to interviewees, teachers chatted during common planning time and made decisions about what steps to take, based on the data analysis. For example, they used other instructional materials such as Read Naturally with struggling students. Additionally, they might discuss individual student needs at Student Support Teams (SST) or Instructional Student Support Team (ISST) meetings. At grade 4, they used common district assessments with the Qualitative Reading Inventory. At grade 5, the district added self-created common assessments called Open-Response Questions (ORQs), which were based on sample questions from previous MCAS tests. Additionally, at the Morse Pond School (grades 5-6) teachers could also use STAR computerized reading assessment software to supply additional data on comprehension skills, fluency skills, or decoding skills.

According to interviewees, ORQs at each grade level were corrected together at grade-level meetings, without respect to teacher/student assignment. At grades 7-10, additional subject area assessments called LCATs (Lawrence School) and FCATs (Falmouth High School) were added to the administration of the ORQs and administrated two to four times per year. In addition, the English department added long composition simulations at grades 9-12 to predict success on the MCAS tests at grade 10.

In mathematics, the use of the Everyday Mathematics program was well established in the district and correlated with the standards-based report cards. In 2006-2007, math assessments were organized to encourage consistency, and in the fall of 2006 teachers received a binder of collected assessments to be used in the months of December, March, and June. The results were reported to grade-level teams, the math curriculum leaders, and the principal. In 2005-2006, the superintendent restructured districtwide committees to make them preK-12 committees in each core subject area, with wider teacher and administrative representation on each committee. Other grade-level and subject-specific assessments were added at the upper grades such as ORQs, LCATs, and FCATs.

At grades 7-12, teachers were departmentalized, in that instruction was subject specific. They gave common quarterly assessments in each subject area and a common final exam in each core subject area, and analyzed the assessments by core subject area department. In 2006-2007, the district introduced a web-based program called Study Island at Lawrence School as a tool for

remediation, acceleration, or assessment, which students could access from home. At the high school, the use of a Scantron helped to quickly correct and organize student assessment results for timely analysis.

In addition, the district used TestWiz each fall to analyze the MCAS results. In 2005-2006, Bridgewater State College provided widespread training in using TestWiz to analyze MCAS results. The trained staff members returned to the district to train others in using TestWiz. Prior to this training, the use of TestWiz had been restricted to central office administrators, which meant that the analysis of MCAS data was primarily restricted to a central office activity. Interviewees were able to articulate and provide documentation to verify different ways that the district used TestWiz to generate reports including disaggregating data by teacher, gender, special education status, low-income status, and trends over time.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

According to interviewees, teachers, school-based curriculum leaders, and school-based administrators took student participation in local assessments seriously. They used these formative assessment results to make decisions about ongoing instruction. In addition, according to statistics provided by the DOE, participation on the 2006 MCAS tests in ELA, math, and STE met or exceeded the state's 95 percent requirement.

Participation for all students was 99.2 percent in ELA, 99.3 percent in math, and 99.6 percent in STE. Participation for students in regular education was 99.3 percent in ELA, 99.3 percent in math, and 99.6 percent in STE. Participation for special education students was 99.4 percent in ELA, 99.7 percent in math, and 99.2 percent in STE.

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 successfully created reporting instruments to measure progress and the attainment of goals. The district was in the second year of implementing standards-based report cards at grades K-6. The district created corresponding grade-level charts of assessments for use as report card standards for each of the three grading terms. It also developed Individual Math Profile of Progress charts which were checklists of attained skills in grades K-4, and documented results of local assessments such as the FCATs and LCATs. An agenda from a grade 4 Everyday Math in-service meeting documented that discussion was ongoing with respect to math binders, common districtwide assessments, common ORQs, analysis of MCAS data and power standards, clarification of the use of lattice multiplication, assessments for report card standards, feedback of "problem of the day" books, and the use of informal assessments in Everyday Math. Likewise, in ELA the district administered the DRA and in later grades the QRI to assess developmental progress in literacy.

Similar efforts were ongoing at Morse Pond School at grades 5-6 and at Lawrence School at grades 7-8, where the assessments, although common, occurred with quarterly assessments (LCATs) and ORQ development from MCAS questions. Although report card grading was more traditional at grades 7-12, individual departments developed common assessments, which they analyzed at the department level.

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: Satisfactory

Evidence

As described, the district had developed local assessments at all grade levels and had established local benchmarks to measure student progress. The district has used some of these assessments, especially at the lower grades, for six years, and the development of others has continued over time. In 2005-2006, the interim director of curriculum and instruction focused her efforts on organizing the informal and formal assessments into a K-12 system so that teachers and principals could readily access and use assessments in an organized and consistent way. According to interviewees, the district was just beginning to analyze the correlation of informal district assessments to standardized ones and its projected success on MCAS testing.

The district recently purchased PowerSchool software in 2006-2007 to provide the tools to record, sort, and analyze performance on districtwide assessments in relation to MCAS, but had yet to implement it. When the results of these assessments are organized with PowerSchool, the district will be better able to look at performance over time and will be in a better position to analyze the effectiveness of programs for students in the aggregate and in subgroups.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the period under review, the district focused on creating an organized assessment system that would provide consistency across the curriculum. Subsequently, the district had just begun to use student assessment results and other pertinent data to measure the effectiveness of instructional and support programs. In 2006-2007, the new directors of curriculum and instruction and of pupil personnel services began to organize these efforts with teachers and principals.

For example, in January 2007 staff from the four elementary schools met together and created Learning Logs to look at the strengths and weaknesses of instruction at respective buildings. According to interviewees, they looked at student assessment results in special education across the district to investigate why this subgroup of students might do better at one school versus

another. One of the practices they looked at was when and when not to use specific accommodations in instruction.

For mathematics at the Lawrence School, staff members printed out MCAS tests since 2002 and looked at the vocabulary in the math questions. They were in the process of writing definitions of commonly used terms so that teachers across grades would use the same terms for instruction in mathematics, even though the programs used in mathematics were different in grades 7-12. Another example cited in mathematics was the over-reliance on the use of a lattice procedure in Everyday Mathematics to teach multiplication at grades 3-4. Although this method initially allowed low achievers to feel successful right away with multiplication, teachers at the upper levels felt that students did not fully understand the algorithm and place value when they reached the upper grades, and so elementary teachers were asked to change the use of this instructional strategy in the lower grades.

In literacy, an example cited was the lack of consistency in using a writing program. Based on this analysis, the district investigated implementing yearlong units of study in writing at grades K-4. According to interviewees, the district also looked at textbook programs for use as the base or in conjunction with the different guided reading practices in use at the four elementary schools. In 2006-2007, the district worked with an outside consultant on reading, use of rubrics, implementation of standards-based report cards, and the writing process. The district was in the second year of implementing standards-based report cards at grades K-6 that committees of teachers and administrators had developed over time.

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: Excellent

Evidence

The district as a whole, through the efforts of the new superintendent, who was in his second year in 2006-2007, has worked with the community stakeholders and school professional staff to develop a new mission for the school district. With the new mission as policy, the district embarked upon restructuring and data-driven decision-making at multiple levels. Using the

organizational structure of the 21st Century Schools initiative Partners in Learning as a reform model, the superintendent embarked on a restructuring plan at all levels and entry points, to develop the district's capacity to use data-driven decision-making as the driving force in attaining higher student achievement.

While the high school was undergoing physical renovation, the district was restructuring its staff and labor management systems, in collaboration with the Rennie Center for Education Research and Policy. Falmouth High School was one of a handful of schools chosen by the Rennie Center to participate in an internal restructuring. In order to participate, the administration, community, faculty, and teacher association had to commit to work together on the project.

According to the interviewees at Morse Pond, it was obvious that literacy skill development and access to literature differed among incoming grade 5 students from four different elementary schools. As a result, the district then focused on the need to look at keeping the best instructional practices and eliminating others, making the K-4 experience more consistent in a way that would raise student achievement.

From the bottom up, the district engaged the ongoing services of a ELA consultant who, with the newly appointed director of curriculum and director of pupil personnel services, began to look at the commonality of the guided reading systems used across the district, which varied in degree from school to school. For the most part, the prior development of one literacy model over another had been grant specific and dependent. For example, at one site a strict use of the Lesley Literacy Collaborative Model had been implemented with a focus on specific specialized in-service training, whereas at the other three sites variations of this model and/or other balanced literacy practices had developed over time.

At the middle level, the new superintendent appointed new principals to address lackluster student achievement, according to AYP scores for subgroup populations at Morse Pond (in 2005-2006) at grades 5 and 6, and to raise the expectations for achievement and rigor, especially of the math program at Lawrence School (in 2007-2008) at grades 7 and 8.

Additionally, in 2006-2007 the district was engaged in a review of early childhood education, decided to make all kindergartens full day, and was engaged in a National Association for the

Education of Young Children (NAEYC) self study in preparation for attaining accreditation. The district also regularly participated in external DOE mandatory audits such as the Coordinated Program Review (CPR), and in the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) audit at the high school.

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 annually reviewed MCAS test results and periodic local formative assessment data. These assessments included, but were not limited to, DRA, running records, Reading Recovery, Yopp-Singer, reading fluency, monthly data collected in mathematics for the standards-based report card, the QRI, data collected from using technology-based instructional systems such as STAR and Study Island, and local assessments such as LCATs, FCATs, and ORQs.

Since organizing the formative and summative assessments administered at each grade level in 2005-2006, using the collected data to make better decisions about instruction was the focus of formal and informal meeting times, at grade-level teams, within schools and across schools, as well as within newly organized preK-12 curriculum committees. As cited, the central office staff and committee members looked forward to the implementation of PowerSchool in the future to manage the data to aid in analysis and make them accessible to teachers in classrooms. District leadership at the central office and principals articulated how they had reorganized staff to prioritize goals and allocate time and resources. For example, staff at the Morse Pond School cited the reorganization of the teaming structure from teacher pairs to pods of four teachers, with five classroom spaces and an inclusion teacher. This effort would allow teachers to concentrate on instruction in one content area, yet work together as a team toward meeting the common instructional needs of 80 to 90 students.

An example of prioritizing resources was that Title I services were reallocated so that all three K-4 school sites could provide supplemental services in the form of Reading Recovery at grade 1

and extra literacy support through grade 4. Instead, the Morse Pond at grades 5-6 could offer the support of a reading teacher provided by the district.

At the high school, an example cited was the implementation of the grade 9 house structure with provisions for struggling students (based on poor MCAS or FCAT scores) by providing an option for a "problem-solving" course (study skills) without losing time in the grades 9-12 course sequence. A newly appointed administrator of academic programs provided oversight for the analysis of testing and for curriculum and instruction, and provided support to struggling students. She focused her efforts on implementing a "safety net program" at grade 9 to help prevent students from dropping out of high school before graduation. The district also implemented a half-year math workshop and reading/writing courses, which grade 9 students took in addition to their regular selection of courses, to provide focused support in ELA and math in anticipation of MCAS testing in grade 10.

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

Starting with the new district mission, the district was beginning to use the structure of the 21st Century Schools initiative Partners in Learning to help prioritize what it needed to do to raise academic achievement and prepare students for the 21st century workplace. Partners in Learning provided a unified, collective vision for 21st century learning that could be used to strengthen American education. A two-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education had supported the organization's original work. Its six goals are achievement in core subjects as identified by No Child Left Behind (NCLB); 21st century content (including global awareness, financial, economic, business and entrepreneurial literacy, civic literacy, and health and wellness awareness); learning and thinking skills; literacy in information and communications technology (ICT); life skills (such as leadership, ethics, accountability, adaptability, productivity, self direction, and social responsibility); and the use of authentic 21st century assessments. These goals seek to raise the rigor of academics, embedding technology into instruction at all levels,

and preparing students for post-secondary learning. By the end of 2005-2006, the district and school leadership had organized to routinely use program evaluation results to initiate, modify, or discontinue programs and services that were not contributing to this mission. For example, according to interviewees, the district eliminated thematic committees such as early childhood and social/emotional needs committees and replaced them with preK-12 curriculum committees in each subject area. It also added new committees focused on districtwide goals such as information technology, standards-based report cards, and transitions at grades 4 to 5, 6 to 7, and 8 to 9, in order to improve curriculum articulation and student achievement.

Although the percentage of students attaining proficiency in ELA and math increased from 2003 to 2006, the resulting improvement rate in ELA (14 percent) and in math (27 percent) were both lower than required to meet AYP. Of particular concern was the lackluster math achievement at grades 5-6 and 7-8, especially for subgroup students. In response, the district focused on supplementing Everyday Math at grades 5-6 to provide more time for learning in after-school support programs, and on working to accelerate math instruction at grades 7-8 for all students so that they would have greater access to algebra at grade 8.

The science curriculum in the district was the least well developed in the school district. The percentage of Falmouth students attaining proficiency in STE decreased from 46 percent in 2004 to 43 percent in 2006. The proficiency gap in STE narrowed from 26 proficiency index (PI) points in 2004 to 25 PI points in 2006, resulting in an improvement rate of four percent. The district had purchased science kits for the elementary grades and had begun to develop a well-articulated K-12 curriculum in science.

The district had a well established VIPS program since 1982, established as a way to increase interaction between Falmouth schools and the community. Fundraising efforts of the board of advisors had raised approximately 60 percent of the VIPS budget. According to interviewees, the district provided the other 40 percent of the funding. According to the documentation provided, 1,400 volunteers provided Falmouth with an organized, reliable volunteer corps that supplemented and enriched the curriculum. Volunteers had the opportunity to use their talents, time, and energy in creative and worthwhile ways, connecting parents with needs in the schools.

The district was in a unique position, since it has many parents working in the scientific field at Woods Hole in jobs that were well connected to the fields of math and science. On one hand, they could be very concerned as parents that the district lacked a well defined science curriculum. On the other hand, their expertise as scientists and science practitioners could be harnessed through the VIP program to create an exemplary and exploratory science curriculum that would benefit their own children as well as everyone else's children in Falmouth.

The district had high rates of absenteeism, and when combined with teacher absenteeism could add up to an excessive number of school days without the benefit of having one's own teacher. According to DOE data, aggregate student attendance for the district was 93.1 percent in 2003, 93.4 percent in 2004, and 93.7 percent in 2005. In 2006, the district attendance rate was 93.1 percent, compared to a state average of 94.5 percent.

The district also had unusually high rates of chronic student absenteeism, defined as more than 10 percent of the school year or 18 days in Falmouth's case, in grades K-2. The rate of chronic absenteeism in the district escalated to 22.5 percent in grade 7 to 40.5 percent in grade 12. According to the superintendent, the district had created a committee to analyze the problem and recommend changes in policy and practices to address the problem.

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														
Satisfactory	✓	✓				✓	✓					✓		**5**
Needs Improvement			✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓			**7**
Unsatisfactory													✓	**1**

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: Needs Improvement

Findings:

- District policies and practices for the identification, recruitment, and hiring of professional staff were considered open, fair, and effective. The employment process was free from outside interference with the exception of a school committee member serving on principal search committees.
- The district's professional development program provided an array of offerings to support new knowledge and skills designed for professional growth. Goals of district, school, and individual educators informed the program. The district provided no training in data analysis skills until the 2006-2007 school year.
- Teacher evaluations were informative, although not instructive or used to promote teacher growth and overall effectiveness. Alternative teacher evaluation options could result in one full formal evaluation every eight years.
- Administrator evaluations were informative, although not instructive or used to promote administrative growth and overall effectiveness. The administrator evaluation system did not address the performance of administrators in carrying out their leadership roles to attain measurable improvement in student achievement.

Summary

The district had hiring practices in place during the period under review that resulted in the employment of an effective teaching staff. Principals were responsible for the hiring and firing of teachers, teacher assistants, and other personnel assigned to their respective school, subject to the review and prior approval of the superintendent. Existing outdated policy and procedural documents were largely ignored. The superintendent was responsible for the employment of principals; however, a school committee representative did participate on the interview committee. Administrators and faculty considered the hiring practices to be open, fair, and effective. A review of the professional licensing found all personnel appropriately credentialed with the exception of two high school teachers.

The district provided a broad array of professional opportunities through in-service, graduate courses, curriculum committee participation, mentoring and coaching, professional development providers, and study groups. Goals of district, school, and individual educators informed the program. Required training in data analysis was not provided by the district until the 2006-2007 school year. The use of item analysis and analysis of disaggregated data was limited to that which the curriculum office provided.

A formal teacher mentoring program did not exist in the district until the summer of 2006 under the current superintendent. The first group of mentors received six hours of training. The district has not established formal support for staff hired on waiver. According to interviewees, the district did not have a formal mentoring program for new administrators, although they did have the opportunity to meet periodically with retired administrators, which was helpful.

Administrator and teacher evaluations were informative but not particularly instructive, nor did they promote growth and overall effectiveness. The failure of administrators to provide specific recommendations for professional growth prevented the teacher accountability system from influencing the professional development program. The administrative evaluation system did not address the attainment of measurable improvement in student achievement but did stress improvement, growth, and collegial relationships in conversation and practice. A connection between effective administrator performance and compensation was still under deliberation by the superintendent because of the complexity of the issue.

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

The district had policies and practices for the identification, recruitment, and hiring of an effective professional staff for the improvement of student achievement. However, some inconsistencies existed between district protocol and practices by school principals.

The district policy manual, section 1310.1, Hiring of Professional Personnel, revised 12/13/94, described the school committee's responsibility to select the superintendent and assistant superintendent. The appointment of principals and other districtwide positions was the responsibility of the superintendent. Principals were responsible for the hiring and firing of teachers, teacher assistants, and other personnel assigned to the school, subject to the review and prior approval of the superintendent. The superintendent had responsibility to ensure that all persons employed by the Falmouth Public Schools met the qualifications for the position hired. The policy also prohibited any discrimination in the hiring process, and the district was a member of the Affirmative Action Recruitment Consortium of Eastern Massachusetts. Training in best practices for recruiting and retaining educators of color were presented at all schools during the 2006-2007 school year.

The district policy manual, section 1310.1A, Guidelines for Selecting Teachers, dated 10/20/81, described the composition of the interview committee for elementary and secondary classroom teachers. The policy was out of date in prescribing that the interview results be sent to the superintendent for consideration in making a recommendation to the school committee. The composition of the interview committees consisted of the principal, appropriate curriculum director/coordinator, a parent, and teacher(s) elected by teachers of the same grade level or discipline. The policy stated that a parent and a student serve in an advisory capacity at the secondary level.

Interviews with building principals and faculty confirmed a general compliance to the interview committee composition; however, the principal exclusively made the selection of teacher committee members and they were not elected. Internal candidates requesting transfers were given a 10-day period to apply for openings. The process gave no priority to internal applicants. Principals revealed that the superintendent had virtually unanimously approved their selections during the period of review. The human resources office and the superintendent made a final review of the selected candidate's licensure and salary requirements. Principals and faculty considered the hiring process to be fair and open, and it resulted in the hiring of the most qualified candidate. During interviews with principals and faculty, the EQA team learned that the district followed a similar process and interview committee composition for the hiring of principals. A noted exception was the addition of a representative from the school committee. The superintendent solicited qualities desired in the next principal from faculty, staff members, and students, and a general parent meeting was also held to provide an opportunity for the school community to question the candidates, and the superintendent made the final selection.

The EQA reviewed a district document entitled Checklist for Screening Committee Chairperson that detailed the roles and responsibilities of this person. The document was not dated but human resource personnel described it as "in need of updating." The checklist included recommended screening committee composition, similar to the policy manual, with the addition of the affirmative action officer or a member of the affirmative action committee. Other procedural steps included the approval of the screening committee by the superintendent, review of candidate qualifications, establishment of the interview schedule, and determination of the general topics of the interview questions. Forms were also provided for the committee to report on the interviews to be conducted and the recommended candidates for the position, although when asked principals were unfamiliar with this document.

All hiring protocol complied with the Education Reform Act (c.71, s.37 and s.59B) with the exception of the fact that a representative of the school committee served on the interview committee for principals.

The district welcomed 51 new staff members at the September 12, 2006 school committee meeting. Central office administrators and personnel reported greater than 20 instructional and

administrative personnel vacancies each year for the period of review, primarily due to retirements. Despite some housing issues, principals testified to the availability of suitable candidates from newspaper and website postings, professional associations, and contacts with institutions of higher learning.

2. All professional staff had appropriate Massachusetts licensure.

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

State and local documentation and a random review of personnel files revealed virtually all professional staff had the appropriate licensure.

The district reported on EQA Attachment B for 2006-2007 that of 371 teachers employed, 365 teachers were licensed. Of the 37 administrators employed, 35 administrators were licensed. A review of the DOE district directory information for 2005-2006 indicated the district had 342 teachers, with 96.2 percent licensed in their teaching assignment. Also, 291 teachers taught in core academic areas, with 94.8 percent identified as 'highly qualified' according to NCLB standards.

The EQA examiners reviewed 13 administrator personnel files from 2003-2006. These administrators were licensed for the job they held, with the exception of an individual who retired in June 2005. The EQA examined 40 randomly selected teacher personnel folders. All of these teachers had current licenses.

The Administrative Council 2006-2007 Operating Manual, provided by the district to the EQA, included a section on waivers and certification prepared by the human resources office, dated 8/31/06. A review of this information and interviews with human resource personnel revealed that two high school teachers were without licensure and without waiver. High school administrators confirmed that a math teacher and a science teacher were not licensed at the time of the review. According to interviewees, building principals were responsible for ensuring that their teachers were licensed. The district documented a total of eight teachers and two administrators on waiver in 2006-2007.

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: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The district did obtain waivers for professional staff who it hired without the appropriate licensure with the exception of two high school teachers. Human resource personnel provided oversight of progress toward meeting the requirements for licensure; however, formal support for those on waiver was not part of the newly formalized mentoring program.

The district stated that it was necessary to obtain waivers for six teachers and two administrators in 2006-2007. The EQA examiners found that the district could not provide appropriate waivers for two high school teachers.

The EQA interviewed members of the mentor steering committee and reviewed mentoring program documentation. Although teacher mentoring existed in the district for many years, the program had not begun to address the DOE standards for mentoring until 2006-2007. Teachers on waiver were not part of the formal mentoring program to gain support in meeting continuous progress on the required course work or tests, as defined in the commissioner of education's memo dated April 18, 2006. Interviews with principals indicated that an informal support team existed at the building or department level for others in need.

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: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the period under review, new teachers and administrators to the district or to their respective assignment did not have assigned mentors. The district conducted a general orientation and provided informal assistance. The new employee orientation did not address the assessment and use of student data.

In March 2006, two coordinators, one from grades preK-6 and one from grades 7-12, were hired as mentors to create and implement the teacher mentoring program. With the interim director of curriculum and instruction, they established a steering committee to begin a formal teacher mentoring program that met DOE standards. The district provided the first group of mentors with six hours of training in the summer prior to the 2006-2007 school year, and established three mentor stipend levels at $800 or 40 PDPs, $400 or 20 PDPs, and $200 or 10 PDPs. The highest level was for mentors of new teachers. The second level was for mentors of experienced teachers who were new to the district. The lowest level was for mentors of district teachers who transferred within the district to a different school or job. The district distributed a formal teacher mentor application in a document dated March 20, 2007. Also included in the document were mentor responsibilities, criteria, and requirements. In addition, the district provided documentation of Teachers 21 mentor training to show that mentors had been trained.

Interviews with mentor steering committee members, principals, and a review of the 2006-2007 professional development calendar verified that the district held a new teacher orientation on August 21, 2006. At that time, it also held a meeting of mentors and mentees. Cooperative discipline was presented to all new teachers on August 22-24, 2006. According to 2005-2006 professional development documentation, the district had a mentor induction program consisting of three workshops for beginning teachers. Experienced teachers presented information regarding parent communications, peer problem solving, and educational accommodations. According to interviewees, the district has not formally implemented peer observations and building-based support teams. Also not yet addressed was the importance of the use of student assessment data.

The role of the principal in the selection of mentors remained unclear. Principals stated that they expressed their authority in building-based matters, including the selection of mentors. In a separate interview, teacher union representatives expressed the alternate belief that mentor selection was outside of the principal's authority.

There was no formal mentoring program for new administrators in the district. Interviews with the superintendent and principals verified that the superintendent had assigned a retired principal, from outside the district and trained in Research for Better Teaching (RBT) methods, to work on

a consulting basis with each new principal with meetings held every three weeks. Principals expressed some difficulty in meeting arrangements that resulted in fewer meetings held.

Interviewees stated that the superintendent and the administrative council were sources of support. Principals met together twice each month as an administrative team. The Partnership for the 21st Century Skills initiative was the current means by which the district was developing school leadership, expanding curriculum content areas, developing learning skills, and unifying the district.

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: Needs Improvement

Evidence

As cited, little required and formal training in data analysis was provided by the district until the 2006-2007 school year. The use of item analysis and disaggregated data was limited to what the curriculum office had provided. A document review of the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 professional development programs provided evidence that a one-half day TestWiz workshop for all administrators was held on September 18, 2006. Interviews with administrators and faculty members confirmed that the district had not provided training in data analysis skills until 2006-2007. Several staff members received training at Bridgewater State College in 2005-2006, and returned to provide district training. In prior practice, the director of curriculum and instruction was the only person trained in item and curriculum analysis. These data were provided to principals, department heads, and curriculum leaders for the purpose of error analysis and instructional changes. The early use of these data was reported as sporadic. The high school math department told the EQA that it had used early item analysis and in-house common assessments to identify weaknesses in curriculum and instruction.

During the fall of 2006, TestWiz training was provided to all administrators and teachers in leadership and curriculum positions. The network version of TestWiz provided online capability, greater availability, and easy access to this analytical tool. In the district's 2004-2007 strategic plan, goal 8 described an ongoing strategy to evaluate each school on the AYP

improvement targets set by the district. Administrators and teacher curriculum leaders reported on their ability to identify all students and subgroups who were not meeting school AYP improvement goals. The district has begun to use item analysis and disaggregated data analysis to address student achievement through a coordinated action plan of curricular changes and teaching strategies.

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

Human resource practices and employment contracts encouraged professional growth and established an environment that supported promotional opportunities and the retention of effective professional staff.

The only district policy that addressed the retention of effective professional staff was section 1310.1, Hiring of Professional Personnel, revised December 13, 1994. This policy described the responsibility of the superintendent to ensure that all persons employed by the Falmouth Public Schools met the qualifications for their position.

Opportunities for growth and recognition in the contract agreement between the Falmouth Educators' Association and the Falmouth School Committee included tuition reimbursement for members of Unit A and Unit B. An amount of $32,500 was available for Unit A members and $9,000 for Unit B members, with a $4,500 cap for any recipient. Principal contracts provided $900 for tuition reimbursement. Professional growth opportunities were provided through coordinator, leader, monitor, or supervisory positions in Unit A with supplemental salaries. Department head/director positions in Unit B provided professional growth opportunities with supplemental salaries. The professional development plan provided teachers with hourly compensation for participation in professional development activities during and after school.

According to DOE data, the base salary for Falmouth teachers was slightly above the state average. During interviews, administrators and faculty expressed the cost of housing on the Cape as being detrimental to attracting professional staff.

In 2006-2007, using SMART professional development, the district listed an extensive online list of professional development offerings which included in-service workshops, graduate courses, and training study groups that provided professional growth opportunities. Faculty members also cited a two-and-a-half year master's in reading program offered in Falmouth through Bridgewater State College from 2004 to 2006. Interviews with administrators and faculty revealed many examples of public and private recognition of professional staff. Principals indicated that they sent staff accomplishments as monthly "good news" to the superintendent, who informed the school committee. Administrators and faculty also attributed staff retention to a collegial and professional environment.

During the period of review, the district had filled principal job openings in two elementary schools, the intermediate school, and the middle school with outside candidates. Two district-level directorship openings were filled by outside candidates. The superintendent and the school committee expressed awareness of this trend.

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: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district's professional development program was informed by district goals, school goals, and individual educator goals. The responsible team or committee identified these goals through professional development research, examination of professional development plans from other districts, review of student achievement data, and consideration of teacher skill areas.

The 2004-2007 professional development plan contained a developmental process that sought to provide professional opportunities through in-service, graduate courses, curriculum committees,

mentoring/coaching, professional development providers, and study groups. The stated intent of the plan was to develop growth in teams, departments, and buildings; provide individual professional growth and licensure; and improve student learning. The district's 2004-2007 strategic plan was in the appendices to the 2004-2007 professional development plan. The strategic plan provided several specific ongoing strategies that informed the professional development plan. For example, goal 6 in the strategic plan required the professional development plan to support improvement in assessment, curriculum, and instruction. This goal also required individual professional development plans to be consistent with the DIP and SIPs. Likewise, goal 3 encouraged the faculty to test researched-based instructional skills in the classroom.

Interviews were conducted with members of the 2005-2006 preK-12 professional development committee and the 2006-2007 instructional development committee. The interim director of curriculum and instruction led the committees in 2005-2006 and the superintendent led them in 2006-2007. Committee members were administrators and teachers representing all grade levels and all school buildings who expressed their direct knowledge of curriculum needs. Crossover membership and direct input from other district committees, such as the curriculum committee, provided a check and balance on informants to the professional development plan. Committee members, administrators, and faculty gave recognition to the professional development program and its broad range of offerings that addressed multiple needs. Graduate courses in differentiated instruction and presentations on cooperative discipline and effective inclusion addressed student and individual teacher needs. The Observing and Analyzing Teaching (OAT) course presented by the in-service provider Research for Better Teaching was identified for department heads and new administrators.

In 2006-2007, schools with subgroups not meeting their AYP goal were provided professional development training to implement tutoring through the use of Skills Tutor software at the elementary level and Study Island at the middle level. Item analysis of MCAS test results identified those students who struggled with open-response questions. This need was addressed by providing writing workshop training, Lesley Literacy Training, and Strategies That Work. Examples of building-based professional development programs included Autistic Programs and Understanding Autism. According to interviewees, teachers conducted classroom-based

research as part of a specific graduate course and then modeled the instructional skills in the classroom. The district provided common assessment training for grade K-2 teachers in using the DRA and for grade 3-6 teachers in using the QRI. Using balanced literacy training was cited as an example of a School Improvement Plan goal linked to the professional development plan. Professional development for broad-based initiatives was seen with Peace Builders and Integrating Technology training. The identified deficiency of TestWiz skills was initially addressed by providing a two-day Massachusetts Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (MASCD) session in 2005-2006 for administrators and department heads and then at Bridgewater in the fall of 2006.

A random review of staff evaluations found few instructive comments that were considered to promote growth and overall effectiveness since they contained few suggestions, directives, or recommendations for improvement. The staff evaluative process did not necessarily inform the professional development plan.

The EQA examiners reviewed the January 2006 staff professional development online survey. Surveyed were detailed professional needs for 2006-2007, preferred professional development models, format of presentations, and structure to meet learning style. The professional development calendar days were chosen for districtwide and building-based programs. Grades K-6 required eight early release days and grades K-12 required six days. Examples of identified course content included using running records in 2005-2006 and using guided writing in 2006-2007.

The district produced a staff development booklet annually and distributed it to all personnel. The district had also implemented a web-based professional development accounting system in 2006-2007, using SMART professional development software. Online registration provided convenient access and attendance accountability. A wide variety of knowledge and skills offerings was provided for professional growth.

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

Changes in programs and practices were supported by new knowledge and skills provided in the district's professional development offerings designed for professional growth. The extent to which individual professional development plans (IPDPs) supported change was a matter of individual choice. The supervisory and staff evaluative process only informally monitored and supported change.

The professional development program was simultaneously expected to sustain change and provide fundamental growth for the recent influx of new faculty who were replacing retirees. Interviewed administrators and faculty recognized the professional development program for its broad range of offerings, which addressed the basic needs of new personnel while supporting change in programs and practices. The district clearly demonstrated its ability to introduce change through its professional development offerings. Graduate courses were offered in differentiated instruction, and presentations on cooperative discipline and effective inclusion were planned to address change in pedagogy and classroom management. In 2006-2007, tutorial and remedial instruction methods were introduced through professional development training in using Skills Tutor and Study Island. As cited, the district provided common assessment training for teachers in grades K-2 in DRA and teachers in grades 3-6 in QRI. Further, broad-based initiatives such as Peace Builders and Integrating Technology were introduced for implementation. One training recently provided was on using TestWiz skills to broaden the school-based population capable of disaggregating MCAS data by subgroup in an effort to address school AYP.

Interviews with administrators and faculty revealed that approval process of the teacher individual professional development plans was lacking in the district. The DOE guidelines for IPDPs required a teacher to obtain principal approval for IPDPs in alternating years, since the IPDP was supposed to be 80 percent aligned with district and school goals. In Falmouth, this was interpreted by the teacher. Any support for change found in an IPDP occurred by the individual's choice.

A review of randomly selected staff evaluations found few instructive comments that promoted growth or support for change in programs or practice. Principals cited the formal performance

observations required for each formal performance evaluation as an effective way to see what was happening in the classroom. Observation documents were not placed in the central office personnel file, but kept in the school personnel files. Principals and teachers stated that the content of these documents was discussed with teachers. Several of these documents were reviewed at a school where the principal kept them. These documents provided a narrative of the classroom visits, and were informational but not instructional. According to interviewees, formal walk-throughs were piloted in 2002-2003; informal walk-throughs were also identified as supervisory opportunities. Although the EQA examiners did not view the "walk-through process" as instructive, principals and teachers voiced their belief in the effectiveness of this process to support change in programs and practice.

Professional status teachers with satisfactory performance could select an alternative "focus" performance evaluation periodically. According to the collective bargain contract, the intent of this evaluation process was to stimulate classroom research, innovative risk-taking, and individual growth. The review of randomly selected staff evaluations found 12.5 percent to be informative but not instructive in the support of change in programs or practice.

9. 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.

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The administrator's performance evaluation procedure was partially aligned with the requirements of the Education Reform Act, Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 38. The Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership (603 CMR 35.06) were the basis of the administrative evaluation. The evaluations were not timely or signed. They were informative but not instructive and were not used to promote administrator growth and overall effectiveness. Student improvement data or other school data were not used as a measurement of effectiveness that determined compensation or continued employment.

The EQA team conducted a review of personnel files of all 12 administrators, of whom seven were employed during the period of review. Six evaluations had been conducted during the 2004-2005 or 2005-2006 school years. The administrative procedure was found to be informative regarding the effectiveness of job performance. The evaluative process was not instructive in recommending actions to be taken to improve the functioning of individuals in their roles and in carrying out their responsibilities.

Individual contracts for central office administrators and principals required an annual written evaluation performed by the superintendent. The performance was to be based on the duties and responsibilities contained in the individual's job description. The basis of the principals' evaluation was M.G.L. Chapter 71, policies and directives of the superintendent, and mutually agreed upon goals. No reference was made to student improvement data or other school data used as a measurement of effectiveness that determined compensation or continued employment. The administrator evaluations viewed by the EQA examiners during interviews were different than those seen in personnel folders. Copies of the evaluations held by administrators contained goals and the signatures of the administrator and superintendent.

The Unit B administrators' contract required an annual evaluation for provisional administrators and biannual evaluations for administrators with professional status. The superintendent was to designate one evaluator for each administrator. The summative evaluation form aligned with the Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership. The job description was also to be a factor in evaluating performance. An alternative "focus" performance evaluation could be selected periodically by professional status administrators with satisfactory performance. According to the collective bargaining contract, this evaluation process was based on goals related to local performance standards. This evaluation process was meant to stimulate action research, innovative risk-taking, and individual growth. The evaluation process would be suspended in the final year of service prior to retirement. Contract language (Article XXVII) did allow the superintendent to grant a bonus of two to three percent per year to Unit B members who made significant contributions beyond normal expectations.

The superintendent indicated that he evaluated all principals during 2005-2006. He cited effective administrative leadership standards and annual goals as the basis of the evaluations. He

stressed improvement, growth, and collegial relationships. According to the superintendent, the connection between effective performance and compensation was as yet undecided because of the complexity of the issue.

Principals described their annual evaluation by the superintendent as consisting of goal setting and a summative evaluation using the Principals of Effective Leadership. Goals were expected to go beyond day to day duties but they were both directly connected to student achievement. Schools were expected to have all subgroups and all students meet AYP. According to interviewees, the prior superintendent had focused more on daily responsibilities, and in his final year performed verbal evaluations. The focus of the evaluation was viewed as an improvement. The superintendent did not provide instructive actions to take to improve the functioning of individuals in their roles and in carrying out their responsibilities. Principals were not consistent in the belief that their compensation reflected goal attainment. Principals expressed the feeling that they were active members of the leadership team. Two of the four elementary school principals had less than two years in the district. Both the intermediate and middle school principals had similar tenure.

Unit B administrators were evaluated by their principals. The evaluative procedure was similar to the teacher process. Compensation was determined by step levels, and the performance bonus provision in the Unit B contract did not appear to be a familiar opportunity to administrators when discussed in the EQA interviews.

10. <u>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.</u>

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The teacher's performance evaluation procedure partially aligned with the requirements of the Education Reform Act, Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 38. Principles of Effective Teaching (603 CMR 35.06) were the basis of the formal teacher evaluation, but were

not the basis of alternative "focus" forms of evaluations. The evaluations were timely and signed. They were informative but not considered to be instructive or used to promote teacher growth and overall effectiveness. The district provided opportunities for professional development and support for struggling teachers. Instances of action against low-performing non-professional status teachers were cited.

A review of 40 randomly selected teacher personnel folders found that 55 percent of the evaluations were based on the Principles of Effective Teaching. In the sample examined, 85 percent of the evaluations were completed in a timely manner. Both the teacher and administrator conducting the evaluation signed 92 percent of the documents. Evaluations were found to be informative regarding the effectiveness of job performance in 78 percent of the cases. Instructive comments that promoted growth and overall effectiveness were found in 15 percent of the evaluations. These were primarily seen in the alternative "focus" evaluations.

The teacher contract agreement, 2005-2008, required an annual evaluation for provisional teachers, supported by at least three classroom observations. Teachers with professional status required biannual evaluations supported by at least two observations. The evaluation steps began with a pre-conference to review the process and standards. Information was collected through observations, monitoring, and visits. A post-conference was required to review performance standards that were not met. Principals and assistant principals performed evaluations. Department heads also performed evaluations, particularly at the secondary level. The principal was required to perform at least one observation per year for provisional teachers.

Professional status teachers with satisfactory performance could select the alternative "focus" performance evaluation on alternate evaluation cycles. The area of concentration must be mutually selected. The focus has tended to be in pedagogy and curriculum content. The review of randomly selected staff folders found 20 percent of the evaluations to be focused evaluations. They were found to be informative but not instructive regarding the effectiveness of job performance. Focus evaluations were found to promote growth and overall effectiveness in 75 percent of the randomly selected personnel folders. Formal walk-throughs, piloted in and continued since 2002-2003, provided an alternative to the focus evaluation. This evaluation was intended to confirm a substantially strong teacher performance. Four to five visits were required

that included a verbal exchange and a brief written record. RBT-trained principals could perform the "walk-through" visits. The review of randomly selected staff folders found 12.5 percent of the evaluations to be inclusive of "walk-through" visits. They were informative but not instructive regarding the effectiveness of job performance or growth.

Principals cited the formal performance observations required for each formal performance evaluation as an effective way to see what was happening in the classroom. They did not place the observation documents in the central office personnel file, but kept them in the school personnel files. The EQA team discussed the content of these documents with principals and teachers and reviewed several at a school. The document provided a narrative of the visit, and were informational but not instructional. Interviewees also identified formal and informal walk-throughs as supervisory opportunities to support struggling teachers. Limited walk-through documentation did not support the contention that the process was instructive, but principals and teachers voiced their belief in the effectiveness of this process.

Interviewed administrators cited cases in which the contract of ineffective non-professional status teachers was not renewed. The district had no cases of teachers with professional status not being rehired for ineffective job performance during the period under review.

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

The ineffective use of the administrative accountability system diminished the implementation of district and school programs and the attainment of goals for improving student achievement. The ineffective use of the teacher accountability system adversely affected staff opportunities for professional development to address strengths and weaknesses.

The district's strategic and tactical planning system delineated programs and goals to attain the mission of continuous improvement in all aspects of teaching and learning. The plan clearly identified the administrative leaders responsible for program implementation and goal

attainment. The district's 2004-2007 strategic plan, goal 8, described the system of program and school evaluation to review and improve programs and practices. The priority strategy was to evaluate each school on the AYP improvement targets set by the district. The district's 2005-2006 tactical plan, area 8, listed the superintendent, principals, and other subordinates to provide the leadership to meet this goal. It also identified action steps, completion dates, observable products, and rating on the degree of completion. Systems of comprehensive planning and measurable evaluation were established to determine the effectiveness of programs implemented to improve student achievement. Yet the administrative evaluation system did not address the performance of administrators in carrying out their leadership role to attain measurable improvement in student achievement. Principals described their annual evaluation by the superintendent as consisting of goal setting and a summative evaluation using the Principals of Effective Leadership. Goals were expected to go beyond day to day duties; however, they did not explicitly state school improvement goals to meet AYP targets for subgroups and all students.

The superintendent did provide an Outline of Principal's Performance Indicators to the EQA examiners which stated that principals were expected to provide evidence to support school performance in the following areas: MCAS scores, Performance Improvement Mapping, instruction, effective communication, review of the professional development plans, least restrictive environment (LRE), individual student success Plan (ISSP), effective management of school facilities, crisis management plan, and attendance. The degree to which all factors were considered was not evident from principal interviews. For example, when reading the evaluations of principals and other administrators, the superintendent did not provide instructive actions to improve the functioning of individuals in their roles and in carrying out their responsibilities. The AYP district goals were reflected in school goals. The attainment of school and subgroup AYP goals was discussed and the degree of completion rated at administrative council meetings (April 6, 2006). However, principals objected to being held directly accountable for student achievement. In addition, compensation and continued employment were not clearly linked to the implementation of programs and the attainment of goals. As cited, the connection between effective performance and compensation was uncertain to the superintendent because of the complexity of the issue.

The district's professional development program provided an array of offerings to support new knowledge and skills designed for professional growth. District, school, and individual educator goals informed the program. In a random review of staff evaluations, EQA examiners found few instructive comments that promoted growth and overall effectiveness. The failure of administrators to provide specific recommendations for professional growth prevented the teacher accountability system from influencing the professional development program. This ineffective use of the teacher accountability system limited an important feedback mechanism to the professional development plan.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The employment and supervision of professional personnel staff was a unified process. The district's professional development process was connected to supervisors through the curriculum office. Adequate funding was provided for these processes.

The district had policies and practices for the identification, recruitment, and hiring of an effective professional staff. Principals revealed that the employment process was free from outside interference. According to interviewees, the superintendent has virtually unanimously approved candidate selections during the period of review.

EQA conducted interviews with members of the 2005-2006 preK-12 professional development committee and the 2006-2007 instructional development committee. The director of curriculum and instruction led the committees. Committee members included administrators and teachers from all grade levels and all school buildings. The curriculum and instruction director was a member of the administrative council that discussed professional development matters.

In interviews, administrators and faculty expressed satisfaction with the adequacy of resources for the professional development program. Interviewees cited restrictions from conference attendance during 2003 and 2004. Although the School Improvement Plans discussed professional development goals, they did not allocate funding for them. District financial

documents indicated the following expenditures for professional development: FY 2004, $491,620; FY 2005, $505,112; and FY 2006, $468,218. The district 2004-2007 strategic plan, goal 9, identified an ongoing strategy to maintain human resource management systems that met legal requirements and facilitated orderly and accurate processing of all personnel information.

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: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

The district developed a document with the assistance of a specialist. The emergency protocol booklet, dated August 11, 2004, contained procedures in the event of incidents involving intrusion, threats, accidents, weather, and other emergencies. The district did not provide training or practice drills.

The assistant superintendent of finance and personnel was identified as the person responsible for crisis management protocol. Interviews with administrators and faculty confirmed that no districtwide training had occurred. Initial meetings had begun with the town regarding a town-wide emergency drill. An emergency notification system was cited to be budgeted for next year.

Principals received copies of school crisis plans modeled on the district protocol. School crisis teams had been established, although the district provided no uniformity or oversight. The administration reviewed the plans with staff annually without training or practice. No schools were performing staff or student practice drills except one elementary school that had experienced an actual lockdown. Substitute teachers and volunteers had no training in the safety protocols. Principals expected the emergency protocol to be contained in the substitute plan, left by the regular classroom teacher. Counselors and nurses had attended a workshop at Falmouth Hospital regarding burn scene disasters.

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

- The Falmouth Public Schools had assessments and programs in place to support literacy in the elementary classrooms.
- The district used common assessment and MCAS results to adjust and modify curriculum, as well as to accommodate students who might be at risk. The District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) and special education programs provided specific remedies to increase student achievement, serving students in the special education, low-income, minority, transient, and homeless categories.
- The district had grade-level as well as building transition programs to help students make the necessary adjustments both academically and emotionally.
- The district had system-wide policies on discipline, retentions, suspensions, exclusions, and dropouts, which attempted to minimize these occurrences and provide student support services.
- Student chronic absenteeism exceeded the state average. The district had not yet addressed this issue during the period under review but appeared to be examining attendance issues in 2006-2007.

- The district did not view staff absenteeism as a problem, despite the fact that it exceeded state averages, according to district data.
- The district used the inclusion model at grades K-6 and teaming at grades 7-9 to provide a safe and stimulating environment for all students.

Summary

The Falmouth school district offered a variety of human and instructional resources to provide quality programs characterized by rigor and accessibility. The administration assigned school psychologists and school adjustment counselors to all buildings in the school system. The district housed math and literacy specialists at each building for grades K-6, while grades 7-12 had department chairs for each of the tested content areas.

The district utilized summative and formative assessments to identify students in need of services and to adjust or modify the K-12 curriculum for them. Assessments dealing with literacy at grades K-4 included the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) and the Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI). At the middle school, common assessments in the content areas and the MCAS tests provided formative and summative assessment data, which staff could use to make adjustments and accommodate students' needs. At the high school, the district used common assessments, the MCAS tests, Advanced Placement (AP) exams, and SATs to provide information on student achievement.

Each school had a referral process to enroll students into support programs, combined with an Instructional Support Team (IST) that thoroughly evaluated each request. Specific programs such as Reading Recovery at the primary level, MCAS support at the middle school level, and teaming at grade 9 provided support and direction for many students and enabled the district to identify students who might be at risk academically or emotionally. The district looked at data of low-performing students and closely monitored subgroup participation and achievement on the MCAS tests and provided support services for students who might be in danger of failing. A host of psychological services for testing and emotional diagnosis, along with SRTs at each building, provided the infrastructure for subgroups participation The district attempted to teach all students using an inclusive model with identified special education personnel.

A gifted and talented program existed at grades 3-6 that provided additional rigor for those students who had completed the general curriculum. At the middle school, within the team concept, accelerated classes in ELA and math enabled the district to raise the bar for those students who desired a more academically challenging curriculum. The high school offered advanced and college prep classes at each level. In addition, a problem-solving team in the sophomore year enabled students who might be in danger of failing the MCAS tests to get the required support in a small team format, with special education personnel assigned.

According to DOE data, the district experienced above average student chronic absenteeism. Interviewees explained to EQA examiners that there were a variety of causes for this absenteeism, but also admitted that the district needed to take a closer look at this problem. According to data on teacher absences submitted to the EQA by the district, the EQA examiners found that staff absenteeism also exceeded state averages. High numbers of absences of students and staff, when considered together, impacts the number of days that students are taught by their regular classroom teacher. When asked about staff absences, interviewees did not feel that staff absenteeism represented a problem in the district. The district viewed days absent in excess of the contractual sick and personal days (18 days) as being a potential problem, but stated in interviews that teachers rarely exceeded that limit, with the exception of teachers on maternity leave or with long-term illness. The district had a system-wide policy for discipline procedures at each school and included the discipline codes in student handbooks. The policy clearly spelled out consequences for the violation of school rules, including detention, suspension, and exclusion. The district required that teachers verbally explain these rules during the first days of school in the fall. The district had a process for in-school and out-of-school suspensions including parental conferences, letters sent home, and an appeal process.

According to interviewees, the district worked hard to prevent grade-level retentions and student dropouts. A. variety of support systems existed at each building to prevent retentions, while the high school had a series of support programs to prevent dropouts. If a student did drop out of school, the system provided the student and his or her parent/guardian with a list of alternatives that would enable the child to receive a General Educational Development (GED) certificate, at a minimum.

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

The district utilized a variety of assessments to identify at-risk students and to adjust curriculum and instruction, as well as to provide additional support programs to assist all students.

All schools had a school psychologist and school adjustment counselor. The elementary schools had math and literacy specialists, while the middle and high schools had department chairs. In 2004-2005, the director of pupil personnel oversaw the populations of special education, English language learner (ELL), and homeless and transient students. The district's professional development program reflected the its initiative to offer support programs and adjust curriculum and instruction.

Assessments given at various grades at K-4 included the MCAS tests, the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), and the Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI). District-based common assessments in ELA and math were administered at grades K-4, as did skill-based models such as the use of locally-made Open-Response Questions (ORQs).

The Teaticket and East Falmouth schools (and Morse Pond prior to 2006-2007) had Title I assistance that benefited all students at these schools. The district had a District Accommodation Plan (DCAP) in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 37Q½, which ensured that the district had made all efforts to meet the diverse needs of students and to prevent unnecessary referrals to special education. The DCAP included a thorough process for the identification of regular education students in need of services. The district embedded the DCAP into the strategic plan, School Improvement Plans, district curriculum guides and materials, Title I services, and programs of study. Programs at the elementary level included individual tutorials, before- and after-school assistance, gifted and talented programs, differentiated instruction, MCAS proficiency teams, Individual Student Success Plans (ISSPs), 504 accommodation plans,

and specific programs in literacy such as Reading Recovery and balanced literacy instruction. Each school had a reading teacher and literacy specialist.

The district had programs for students identified as being in the special education program including an integrated early childhood program for preschool children, an integrated kindergarten program, inclusion programs, resource rooms, and a therapeutic intervention program for students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). The district assigned a school psychologist and school adjustment counselor to each school. Children in the special education population as well as the general population benefited from their services.

At the Morse Pond School (grades 5 and 6), assessments included the MCAS tests and the QRI, as well as common assessment in tested core content areas and skill-based instruction dealing with local ORQs. The district offered special education services there, similar to those in the elementary schools. The Morse Pond School also had a gifted and talented program with two full-time teachers assigned. The additional staff enabled gifted and talented teachers to also serve the general population of the school through enrichment programs. The Morse Pond School divided itself into grade-level learning pods with an inclusion teacher added to each pod.

According to interviewees, 97 percent of the school population belonged to the full inclusion pods. The school offered help before and after school for students in need of additional services. .Interviewees described support services, which were substantiated by the DCAP, such as a balanced literacy model, Title I reading and math support, differentiated instruction model, homework club, and an academic summer school program. The district utilized the software program Study Island, which simulated MCAS questions, at the Morse Pond School as well as at the Lawrence Middle School

At the Lawrence Middle School, the district administered a variety of assessments including the MCAS tests, the LCATs (Lawrence School version of the MCAS tests), common assessments in the core tested areas, and writing skills-based tests such as ORQs. The district provided special education support comparable to the elementary and Morse Pond schools. The Lawrence School had academic teams with an inclusion specialist assigned to each team. Students who performed above grade level could enroll in gifted sections within the team structure. According to

interviewees, a typical teacher might teach three regular sections of his/her discipline and two advanced sections.

For the at-risk students in the areas of math and ELA, the district offered an English Plus and Math Plus sequence of courses, in addition to the regular grade-level ELA and math classes. The school also offered assistance before and after school, homework club, and building-based cultural enrichment activities.

The high school administered the MCAS tests, the FCATs (the local high school version of the MCAS tests), common assessment in the core tested areas, Advanced Placement tests, and skills-based tests such as ORQs. Special education services continued at the high school with guidance counselors, school psychologists, school adjustment counselors, and special education teachers administering the multifaceted programs designed for special education students and students at risk. The high school instituted teams at grade 9 to ease the transition from the middle school. The teams consisted of the content areas of English, science, and social studies. Students took various math courses because of the grade 8 curriculum in which some students took regular math and others took Algebra I. Each team had a special education specialist assigned. The school placed students into advanced and regular sections within the team structure. The school provided students in need of additional help in math and ELA with extra help during team time or in programs before and after school. All grade 9 students enrolled in the Freshman Strategies for Success Program, which helped students prioritize activities and made them aware of support services at the high school. At grade 10, the district assigned students who were in danger of failing the MCAS tests into a Problem-Solving Team. This group of 35 to 40 students took all their classes together in a team format, which benefited them with additional tutorials and extra help that supplemented the program. The district reported that the passing rate on the MCAS tests for students enrolled in this program exceeded 90 percent.

According to the DCAP, the high school also offered MCAS programs at night and during the summer, in addition to MCAS prep courses offered during the sophomore year. The high school had preventive programs for students in danger of dropping out and alternative programs for students who did drop out. According to interviewees, the school focused on graduating as many students as possible and instituted intervention programs at the beginning of the junior year for

students who did not have the requisite number of credits to graduate. The district allowed these students to take correspondence courses or courses at Cape Cod Community College in order to gain additional credits.

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: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district used a variety of formative and summative data across grades K-12 to identify programmatic as well as individual student weaknesses, although student achievement on the MCAS tests remained relatively flat during the period under review. At grades K-4, the district utilized Early Screening Inventory (ESI) at the kindergarten level and the DRA at grades 1-2 to identify students not performing at grade level. At grades 3-4, the district used the QRI and the MCAS math and ELA tests. At grades 1-4, the district used ORQs and common assessment in math and ELA because of the need to modify curriculum and instruction based on MCAS test results.

At grades 5-6 in the Morse Pond School, the district continued use of the QRI and MCAS data to modify curriculum and instruction. The school continued the elementary practice of common assessments in the tested core content areas. In an interview with teachers, they revealed that students came to the Morse Pond School with very different levels of preparedness in ELA. Interviewees further stated that math preparedness was consistent among the four elementary sending schools because of the Everyday Math Program. Modifications to curriculum and instruction resulted from these assessments, and the continued practice of quarterly ORQs remained a constant at the Morse Pond School. The half team structure enabled teachers to meet more often and plan curriculum and instruction modifications. Software programs became an integral part of math and ELA instruction, such as Study Island, which simulated the MCAS tests.

At the Lawrence Middle School, students in grades 7-8 took the MCAS tests in math, ELA, and STE. In addition, students took the LCAT (middle school version of the MCAS tests) in ELA on a quarterly basis. The school required quarterly ORQs in each tested area and common midyear assessments in ELA and math. Teachers and administrators used the data collected and analyzed to make modifications to the curriculum. The middle school staff had common planning time three times during a six-day cycle. The district offered before- and after-school support to focus on MCAS-type questions. The school also had an MCAS prep class one week before the actual exam. The district used standards-based report cards at grades K-8 to better inform students and their parents about their relative progress.

Falmouth High School administered the FCAT (local version of the MCAS tests) at grades 9-10 to measure the strengths and weaknesses among students and programs. All students took the MCAS tests, which the school used to address individual student needs as well as program needs. The high school required the administration of ORQs two times during the academic year in the tested content areas. It also created common final exams to measure student comprehension and assess program weaknesses.

The high school offered tutoring before and after school for students in need of support. The district also instituted a problem-solving team at grade 10 for students who the district had identified as in danger of not passing the MCAS tests. This team met as a cohort for all courses throughout the year and had a full-time special education teacher on it. Students had the opportunity to take the Advanced Placement exam in the AP courses, yet only about 45 percent of students enrolled actually took the test, and according to interviewees the school did not use the results to modify curriculum or instruction.

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

According to MCAS results, during the 2005-2006 academic year, grade 3 students in the district attained a 72 percent proficiency level, while at grade 4 the proficiency level declined to 56

percent. Interviewees maintained that students had difficulty with the vocabulary used on the tests and that they needed to align the curriculum more at grade 4. Interviewees further stated the same problem existed for students in grade 4 mathematics, who also had a 56 percent proficiency level.

Interviewees stated that the district used a battery of formative and summative assessments to ensure that students could read at grade level by grade 4. The district administered the Early Screening Inventory to students entering kindergarten. At grades K-2, the district administered the Developmental Reading Assessment three times per year to identify students not reaching grade-level reading benchmarks. At grades 1-2, the district used running records to monitor reading progress. At grades 3-4, the district used the Qualitative Reading Inventory two times per year to assess reading level and fluency and to identify struggling readers. The district also administered the QRI to struggling readers three times per year at grades 3-4. The district used the grade 3 ELA MCAS exam dealing with reading and the grade 4 MCAS exam dealing with language, literature, and long composition to evaluate whether students met the state standards. The district piloted the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) at the Mullen-Hall School in kindergarten, and teachers told the EQA examiners that they wanted to administer the DIBELS at all the elementary schools in the future. The district also used common assessments in math in grades 1-4 and common assessments in phonics at grades 1-2 and in ELA at grades 3-4

In an interview with the director of pupil personnel, she revealed that each school had literacy specialists who teachers consulted regarding student progress. In addition, two of the four elementary schools had Title I status and students received Title I math and reading support. Additionally, the director stated that early intervention assessments targeted students who would be eligible for ISSPs and a variety of special education services. The director also stated that the district offered programs before and after school to help struggling students.

The district used the results of formative and summative assessments to modify the curriculum. Interviewees indicated that the grade 3 and 4 MCAS ELA results reflected the need for the district curriculum to better align with the state frameworks and that they needed to modify the curriculum to help students achieve proficiency. Interviewees further stated that supplemental

support programs would begin immediately after identifying a child with specific weakness in reading skills. Reading recovery, for example, was offered to all at-risk students at grade 1, even if the school was not identified as a Title I school. Interviewees stated that the professional development program enabled teachers to be better providers of services. By 2006-2007, 35 elementary teachers and 35 secondary teachers had been trained in appropriate strategies to use with ELL students, in order to better the needs of the second language learners.

The DCAP listed additional supports for the regular education population including library/media specialists who would consult with teachers regarding resources, MCAS proficiency teams, and ISSPs for students scoring below 220 on the MCAS tests. The district also utilized a series of psychological services including consultations with the five school psychologists and seven school adjustment counselors.

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

According to interviewees, the district had a process in place for vertical transitions between grade levels, as well as transitions from one school to another. At the elementary level K-4, the district provided collaborative time for teachers and special educational personnel to specifically discuss students with IEPs. The district divided regular education students heterogeneously and allocated time for the sending and receiving teachers to discuss specific issues regarding scholarship and behavior. The transition from grade 4 to 5 and from grade 6 to7 for students with IEPs simulated the process used at the elementary level.

In addition, the principal or designee would visit the sending school and meet with the students in an effort to ease the transitions. The district also provided time for students to visit the receiving school during the academic year and planned a half-day orientation at that school. Principals organized parent nights at each receiving school, and the Lawrence Middle School also provided parents an opportunity to meet with their child's team at the beginning of the academic year. The transition from grade 8 to 9 was similar to the middle school process with

respect to students with IEPs. The high school grouped students according to ability, which resulted in students taking final exams in grade 8 in the areas of math, ELA, and science to determine placement in grade 9. The district placed all students in grade 9 on teams to help ease the transition from the middle school. Within the team structure, the school offered accelerated and college prep classes.

In the spring, parents of students in grade 8 attended a curriculum night at the high school to meet teachers and familiarize themselves with the requirements and rigor of the various course offerings. In the fall of the child's first year, parents attended another orientation that dealt with discipline procedures, parent teacher organization (PTO) activities, and support programs offered at the high school.

According to interviewees, students visited the high school while in grade 8. At the beginning of grade 9, students also attended an in-school orientation that familiarized them with clubs and other extracurricular activities as well as support programs. According to interviewees, students met with their guidance counselor within the first month of school.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

In the district policy manual, items 1420 and 1421 referred to system-wide discipline regulations. The policy included instruction for teachers so that they could clearly communicate classroom and school rules contained in the school student handbooks. The teachers discussed the rationale for school rules and the consequences for aberrant behavior. If a problem persisted, the policy called for a series of steps including teacher-student conference, teacher-parent conference, teacher-administrator contact, and administrator-parent contact. If the specific plans outlined in the various conferences did not attain the desired outcomes, a second level of action, namely suspension, would ensue.

The district policy manual defined suspensions as a temporary termination of enrollment until certain conditions were met. Each school delineated in its respective student handbook

violations of school rules that would result in suspension. In all suspension procedures, the district provided students with due process and an opportunity to give the student side of the story. If the district upheld the suspension, the central office would immediately notify parents in person or by phone and follow up with a written notification within one day of suspension or within three days of an appeal.

The DOE reported that the district had in-school suspension rates of 1.0 percent in 2003, 1.2 percent in 2004, 0.8 percent in 2005, and 0.9 percent in 2006. Falmouth High School did not have an in-school suspension program. Out-of-school suspension rates during the period under review were 10.4 percent in 2003, 9.2 percent in 2004, 9.0 percent in 2005, and 8.7 percent in 2006.

School administrators did not feel that the suspension rate for the district was out of line with the state average and indicated that the district favored more in-school suspensions, but that supervision and crowded classrooms prevented them from achieving this goal. The middle school did institute a time-out room during the period under review to prevent potential suspensions.

The district discipline manual clearly stated the violations for expulsion from the district, which included carrying a hand weapon, assaulting a staff member, possession of narcotics, and extended suspensions lasting for more than 10 days. The manual indicated that expulsion represented a last resort and that the district would attempt to prevent this occurrence. A thorough process characterized by due process and collaboration reflected the district's expulsion policy.

The DOE reported that the district averaged 0.9 percent retentions in 2004, 0.4 percent retentions in 2005, and 0.7 percent retentions in 2006, compared to the state averages of 2.5, 2.6, and 2.6 percent, respectively. The district had a system-wide retention policy that included consultation with a Building Based Support Team (BBST) in all schools, parent conferences, and input from previous teachers and the current guidance counselor. At Falmouth High School, the district reported that retentions peaked in grade 11. Guidance personnel revealed in an interview that the district would place students lacking sufficient credits after their junior year in a junior homeroom, although they would take senior courses.

Guidance counselors further indicated that they examined each student's transcript at the end of the first semester of the junior year. The district would then place each student on an Instructional Support Team (IST) and develop an action plan to help the student accumulate credits.

Interviewees told the EQA examiners that the district offered students alternatives such as attending evening school or taking courses through the American School (a correspondence school) in order to accumulate enough credits to graduate. Guidance counselors also indicated that they examined each student's transcript at the end of the first semester of the junior year. The district would then place each student on an Instructional Support team (IST) and develop an action plan to help the student accumulate needed credits for graduation.

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

According to data provided by the Department Of Education, the dropout rate for the Falmouth school district improved from 3.8 percent in 2003 to 2.1 percent in 2006. The average dropout rate across the state was 3.7 percent in 2006.

In 2005-2006, the district dropout rate of 2.1 percent included 26 students out of 1,232 students enrolled at Falmouth High School. The district reported that nine special education students represented 34.6 percent of the dropouts. Six economically disadvantaged students represented 23 percent of the dropouts. Three minority students represented 11.5 percent of the dropouts.

Interviewees stated that 63 percent of the students who dropped out had passed the MCAS tests in ELA and math. Interviewees further stated that a lack of credits and issues unrelated to the school resulted in the students dropping out of school. Interviewees added that the decline in the number of dropouts during the period under review was the result of proactive measures taken by the district, especially at the high school.

The guidance department examined every junior's transcript midway through grade 10 and identified students at risk of dropping out or being retained due to a lack of credits. The

guidance department assigned students in these categories to an Instructional Support Team and collaboratively provided the student with an action plan for success. Options included night school or summer school to make up missing or lost credits.

The director of pupil personnel further stated that the district began in 2006-2007 to critically look at students before they arrived at Falmouth High School, in order to identify and minimize potential issues with students identified as potential dropouts.

If a student decided to drop out, the guidance department would meet with the student and his or her parent or guardian to outline a series of alternatives. For example, four neighboring communities and Cape Cod Community College offered GED programs for a high school equivalency diploma. Wareham Night School had a two-semester program leading to a diploma. The night school accepted credits from Falmouth High School, and students received a Wareham High School diploma upon completion of the necessary courses. The district offered home schooling as an option, as well as vocational programs at Cape Cod Regional Technical High School in Harwich and at Upper Cape Regional Technical School in Bourne.

The Cape and Islands Alternative Education Consortium consisting of business and educational professionals offered an array of academic as well as vocational courses in 12 Cape Cod communities. In most instances, a resident of one of these 12 communities could attend offerings in any of the other towns, free of charge.

7. <u>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.</u>

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The system policy manual section JFABD outlined the district's procedure for homeless students. Homeless students will be provided district services for which they are eligible, including Head Start and comparable preschool programs, Title I, similar state programs, special education, bilingual education, vocational and technical education, gifted and talented programs, and school nutrition programs. In addition, the district provided students with transportation and acted as liaisons in the coordination of social services and availability of family shelters and food

pantries. The policy manual also stated that the superintendent designated the director of pupil personnel services as the district's liaison for homeless students and their families.

The director of pupil personnel revealed in an interview that the district complied with the McKinney-Vento Act that provided guidelines for homeless and transient students and their families. The director of pupil personnel services further stated that only a few students annually fell into this category, and that the district complied with all federal and state mandates regarding the homeless population.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

According to DOE data, the district attendance rates during the period under review across grades K-12 were 93.4 percent in 2004, 93.7 percent in 2005, 93.1 percent in 2006 compared to the state averages of 94.2 in 2004, 94.4 percent in 2005, and 94.5 percent in 2006. The EQA examiners further learned during interviews and document reviews that in 2006 the rate of chronic absenteeism at grades 7-8 averaged 22.5 percent, while at Falmouth High School chronic absenteeism ranged from 23.9 percent at grade 9 to 37.7 percent at grade 11 and peaked at 40.5 percent at grade 12. Chronic absenteeism is defined by the Massachusetts Department of Education as 10 percent of the school year, or 18 or more days. The district developed a districtwide attendance procedure during the period under review, which stated that after three consecutive days of being absent or six days of being tardy, the principal/designee would call the home. After five days of being absent or 10 days of being tardy, the principal/designee would either call or send a letter home informing the parent/guardian that the child was approaching the legal limit and outlined potential consequences. After 10 absences or 20 days of being tardy, the principal/designees sent a letter home informing the parent/guardian that the child had exceeded the legal limit and requested a formal meeting to collaborate on solutions to the problem and give the parent/guardian an opportunity to defend their child's tardiness or absenteeism from school.

At 15 days of absence or 25 days of being tardy, a team meeting would be held to decide the measures to be taken, with notification in writing to the parent/guardian, such as the filing of a

Child in Need of Services (CHINS) petition and/or a special education evaluation. The policy also stated that the superintendent would also write a letter to the parent/guardian expressing concern and explaining potential further consequences including the filing of a 51A. At 20 days of absence or 27 days of tardiness, a CHINS petition could be filed with verbal or written notification to the parent/guardian, while at 30 days of absence or 35 days of tardiness a second CHINS petition could be filed.

In addition to the districtwide policy, each school student handbook emphasized the importance of good attendance and steps that the parent/guardian would be required to take, including a doctor's note. At Falmouth High School, students lost credit for a four-credit course with either 10 absences each semester or 20 absences for the full academic year.

The EQA examiners inquired during interviews about the effectiveness of the policy. Respondents indicated that chronic absenteeism represented a problem in the district. Reasons cited included parents taking their children out of school for extended vacations. Interviewees claimed this was especially an issue among the scientific community employed at Woods Hole. Additional reasons given for the high rate of chronic absenteeism included transient students whose housing would run out in May and force them to leave the community, or chronic illness, which would drive up the average number of days absent. Interviewees claimed that a study team had worked from 2003 to 2006 to examine the situation. The district had formed a K-12 attendance committee in 2006-2007, which will attempt to address the issue in more detail.

9. <u>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.</u>

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Data submitted by the district documented teacher absenteeism during the 2005-2006 academic year, as follows. Teachers at the East Falmouth Elementary School missed an average of 17.2 days including professional development days and 15.5 days not including professional development days. Teachers at Mullen-Hall Elementary School missed an average of 10 days including professional development days and 8.0 days not including professional development.

Teachers at Teaticket Elementary School missed an average of 15.1 days including professional development and 12.2 days not including professional development. Teachers at North Falmouth Elementary School missed an average of 10.95 days including professional development and 9.13 days not including professional development. Teachers at the Morse Pond School missed an average of 15.4 days including professional development and 12.8 days not including professional development. Teachers at the Lawrence Middle School missed an average of 12 days including professional development and 10.3 days not including professional development. Teachers at Falmouth Night School missed an average of 11.38 days including professional development and 9.66 days not including professional development.

The EQA examiners asked interviewees if they felt a problem existed with respect to teacher absences. The EQA considered teacher absence in light of the fact that students do not have their regularly assigned teacher when absent from school. Interviewees stated that long-term illness accounted for the high averages, although upon closer examination the EQA examiners discovered that long-term illness was only a factor at the East Falmouth Elementary School (5.8 days) and at Teaticket (5.12 days.). Interviewees explained that the majority of female staff at all schools were of child bearing age and many missed school because of medical issues associated with pregnancy. Interviewees also indicated that the collective bargaining agreement provided staff members with 15 sick days and three personal days per year, and it did not draw a distinction between provision and entitlement on an annual basis.

When asked if the district had a policy for dealing with excessive absenteeism among the teaching staff, interviewees indicated that it was handled on a building by building basis. Interviewees also indicated that the district did not discuss excessive absenteeism in a teacher's evaluation because of the perceived impact that it would have on the collective bargaining agreement. The EQA examiners discovered in reading the collective bargaining agreement that the policy on teacher attendance did not prevent administrators from mentioning absenteeism in a teacher's evaluation.

Interviewees told the EQA examiners that in an effort to collect better data, in 2006-2007 the district had piloted a software package, Subs-on-Line, that could track teacher attendance by school and show any patterns, such as Monday and Friday absenteeism or extended vacations

and holidays. Teachers indicated in interviews that their evaluations did not reflect absenteeism with respect to measuring the continuity of instruction and/or the impact on student achievement.

10. 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.

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

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

At grades 3-6, the district offered a gifted and talented program at the four elementary schools and the Morse Pond School. Interviewees indicated that admission to the gifted and talented program in grades 3 and 4 was the result of teacher recommendation and in some instances parental request. The programs at this level focused on the content areas of ELA and math and included a Math League for students in grades 3 and 4 and an advanced writing group for students in grade 3. The district assigned part-time and full-time staff to this program, although interviewees could not explain the difference in focus at each elementary school between the roles of full-time versus part-time employees assigned to the program.

Interviewees stated that at grades 5 and 6, admission to the gifted and talented program reflected teacher recommendation and the ability to miss, without negative consequences, the regular education classes in ELA that focused on MCAS preparation. Interviewees stated that these students could easily handle the requirements of the MCAS tests and found additional needed stimulation in the classes, such as the writing of the school newspaper, drama, and poetry. Two full-time teachers for the gifted and talented program worked at the Morse Pond School. Interviewees stated that although the district paid the teachers' salaries, the teachers had to do fundraising to provide resources for this program. The two teachers sought out in kind contributions from local businesses, applied for small grants, and sought local donations of materials. If money was donated, it was placed in the student activities account of the school and expended by the teachers, as needed, with the approval of the principal.

At the Lawrence School, the district offered advanced classes within the team structure. A teacher might teach three regular classes of ELA and two advanced classes of ELA. The same structure existed in math. Criteria for admission to the advanced classes was teacher recommendation and in some instances parental request.

At the Falmouth High School, students could enroll in honors and AP courses. Admission, according to interviewees, rested with the department chair and teacher recommendation. When asked if a parent could overrule a department chair's recommendation, interviewees stated that it could happen but seldom did.

A review of data supplied by the College Board revealed that the high school enrolled 242 students, 115 males and 127 females, in Advanced Placement courses. The College Board reported 109 tests taken at Falmouth High School, representing less than 50 percent of students enrolled in the course, even when factoring in that some students took multiple tests. Of the 242 students enrolled in AP courses, only two minority students and one low-income student were enrolled. Data did not reveal if these three students had taken the AP exam. When asked what the district did to encourage students in subgroups to enroll in advanced courses, interviewees felt that the district needed to be more inclusive and find ways to motivate and attract students in subgroup populations.

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	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		**11**
Needs Improvement		✓												**1**
Unsatisfactory													✓	**1**

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:

- During the period under review, the school committee's operational budget requests presented to the annual town meeting were in agreement with the recommendation of the finance committee and the board of selectmen, and the town meeting approved the budget requested.
- The town voted down a school committee request at the 2005 annual town meeting to place a $750,000 operational override on the ballot for the purchase of additional textbooks, technology, and full-day kindergarten.
- The district's budget development process included all stakeholders, and the final document provided clear and comprehensive information regarding the district's financial position and budgetary needs.
- The district, although it made efforts to have protocol manuals, procedures, and some practices in place to address student safety and security, did not have security systems such as cameras, monitors, and entrance buzzer systems in place, and in some schools sight lines to the main entrances were lacking.

- It was evident in interviews with school and town administrators and officials that by 2006-2007 a culture of cooperation existed in the community, and all parties shared the goal of providing students with a quality education in well maintained facilities.

Summary

The district's well documented budget process included a definitive timeline and preparation procedures as well as clear directions for all participants. The process involved the participation of school committee members, administrators, teaching staff, parents, and town officials throughout the entire budget period. Principals developed their budgets online and submitted them electronically to central administration. School and municipal administrators and officials met often during the budget preparation period to review and estimate available revenues. After the school committee approved budgets and the finance committee and board of selectmen reviewed them, the school administration made them widely available by placing copies in public places such as libraries and mailing copies to all town meeting members. The completed budget document contained a detailed narrative, prepared by the administration, which included the financial condition of the school and community, budget history covering the prior eight years, and sources of state aid and revenues to the school district.

With the exception of 2004-2005, during the period under review the school committee's operational budget requests presented to the annual town meeting were in agreement with the recommendation of the finance committee and the board of selectmen. The town approved the budget at the town meeting, as requested; however, the town voted down a school committee request at the 2006 annual town meeting to place a $750,000 operational override on the ballot for the purchase of additional textbooks, technology, and full-day kindergarten.

The school district had experienced reductions and level funding in Chapter 70 aid and reductions in state and federal grant receipts in 2004-2005 and 2005-2006. It began to receive increases in Chapter 70 aid in fiscal years 2006 and 2007. From FY 2003 to FY 2007, the school committee's operating budget experienced an average annual increase of 3.1 percent. According to the district's End of Year Pupil and Financial Reports, expenditures were relatively level for professional development, textbooks and related media, and general educational supplies during the period under review. Student enrollment in the district, according to Department of

Education October 1 data, decreased from 4,578 students in 2003 to 4,144 students in 2006, a reduction of 434 students.

Falmouth High School was undergoing a major renovation project during the period under review. The construction project occurred while school was in session and the district had 16 portable classrooms in place to accommodate students. In the district's facilities inventory the district had self rated every school as being in 'good condition.' Except for the high school and one elementary school, all schools had been renovated between 1988 and 2003. The Massachusetts School Building Authority in its 2006 building needs survey rated the schools in the first category: "Building is in good condition with few or no building systems needing attention."

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

The district developed its budget through an open, participatory process. Examiners reviewed a development flow chart of the district budget for 2006, which stated that the budget process began in early October when the school committee approved the budget timeline, adopted budget guidelines, and reviewed School Improvement Plans. Members of the school committee stated in interviews that they began to look at the budget development in the late fall, concentrating on programs and facilities.

The superintendent told the EQA that central administrators frequently met with the board of selectmen and the finance committee, including at the beginning of the budget preparation, to discuss the town's projected financial revenues for the fiscal year. Examiners reviewed minutes of a September 27, 2005 school committee meeting in which the superintendent reported that he had met with the town finance committee to discuss the prospective budget. The minutes also recorded the fact that the superintendent had reported to the school committee on his plan to have

parent representatives attend budget meetings, in an effort to become conduits of information to the schools.

Later in the same month, the budget booklets, which were the templates used for budget preparation, were sent to school administrators. The school committee and central administration gave principals guidelines and priorities that they had jointly developed to use in their preparation of the budgets. Principals then met with their staffs and school councils to gather information so they could prepare their budget requests. Teachers verified in interviews that they were involved in the budget process. Principals told the EQA that their budgets were developed online at each school. They also said that they discussed new textbook initiatives, building maintenance, and technology needs with central administration staff. The ELA, math, science, and social studies curriculum coordinators worked with principals to develop their budgetary needs. Principals submitted their budget requests to the central administration in November and met with the central administration in November and December to discuss their requests. Central administrators also met with the budget subcommittee of the school committee during this period.

In mid-December, the superintendent presented the budget to the full school committee, which deliberated on it until the middle of January. The public hearing, the school committee vote on the budget, and the finance committee review were all held in February. The town voted on the budget at the annual town meeting in April.

The budget document was clear, complete, and understandable. It contained a budget narrative relative to the financial condition of the town, a description of new programs, and a report of progress in the school district during the previous four years. The budget contained financial history for the previous eight years, including expenditures and state aid. It also contained a budget request and budget history for each school, staffing statistics, enrollments, and grant information.

Budget information was made available to stakeholders through televised meetings and was distributed to libraries and town meeting members. Examiners reviewed a comprehensive budget document prepared for distribution at the public hearing. Examiners interviewed municipals officials, including the town administrator, treasurer, accountant, a selectman, and a

member of the finance committee. Interviewees told the EQA that there was very good collaboration and exchange of information between municipal and school officials.

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: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The budget was developed and resources allocated based on the analysis of student assessment data, with the exception that administrators did not introduce the analysis of disaggregated student assessment data into the budget process until late in the 2006-2007 school year.

Members of the school committee, in interviews, stated that they considered data such as enrollments, class sizes, staffing, AYP data, and actual budget expenditures when reviewing the school budget request. Administrators said that they first piloted and then evaluated prospective new textbook series with respect to how they met state standards. District administrators also indicated that they analyzed MCAS and other student assessment data, and that they used data in decision-making during budget meetings. This was verified by the district's strategic plan (2004-2007), goal 9 regarding Business and Financial Management, which stated that the strategy was to "Make budget decisions with appropriate participation by the school committee, administration, teachers, parents, and members of the community focused on district goals." School Improvement Plans contained information as to the source of funding that would be utilized to address each goal.

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's budget and supplemental funding were adequate to provide for effective instructional practices and adequate operational resources during the period under review, although the superintendent stated in his 2006 budget narrative, "The Falmouth School System is at a serious fork on the financial road in terms of supporting quality education that this town expects and deserves." In his 2008 budget narrative the superintendent stated, "The Town of Falmouth continues to face the issues of uncertain state funding levels. Although there have been improvements during the period under review, thanks to the hard work of our legislators, Falmouth continues to be under-funded by the state for education, as compared to other towns throughout the state."

During the period under review, the district's operating budget, as voted at the annual town meeting, increased annually. From FY 2002 to FY 2003, it increased by 3.7 percent. From FY 2003 to FY 2004, it increased by 1.0 percent. From FY 2004 to FY 2005, it increased by 4.1 percent. From FY 2005 to FY 2006, it increased by 2.8 percent. Finally, from FY 2006 to FY 2007, it increased by 4.3 percent.

During the same period, Chapter 70 state aid was level funded from FY 2002 to FY 2003 at $5,288,752, decreased by 20 percent from FY 2003 to FY 2004, and was level funded from FY 2004 to FY 2005. From FY 2005 to FY 2006, Chapter 70 aid increased by 4.9 percent, and from FY 2006 to FY 2007, it increased by 4.75 percent.

The amount of funds from grants declined each year during the period under review. A review of DOE financial information indicated that the district received in federal, state, and trust funds $3,113,235 in FY 2004, $2,769,372 in FY 2005, and $2,300,326 in FY 2006.

Student enrollment during the period under review declined from 4,578 students in 2003 to 4,144 students in 2006, according to a DOE report. District administrators stated that a major cause of the decline in enrollment was the fact that Mashpee had constructed a new high school, and Mashpee students who had been attending Falmouth High School by agreement now enrolled in that new high school. According to a DOE report, the expenditure per regular day pupil in FY 2003 for Falmouth students was $6,901, compared to the state average of $6,779. In FY 2004, the regular day per pupil expenditure for Falmouth students was $7,362, compared to the state

average of $7,009. In FY 2005, the regular day per pupil expenditure for Falmouth students was $8,246, compared to the state average of $7,241.

In interviews, district administrators stated that opportunities for professional development and resources were adequate, although in 2003-2004 there had been a freeze on professional development funding due to a reduction in state revenues. The teacher's contract required that $32,000 be budgeted annually for Unit A course reimbursement and $10,000 to $15,000 for administrators' course reimbursement. Principals were entitled to $900 per year for course tuition.

The district hired 51 new staff members in September 2006, and interviewees reported that more than 20 instructional and administrative personnel vacancies occurred each year for the period under review. This was primarily due to retirements. The retirement of senior personnel and the replacement hiring of less tenured staff resulted in the availability of additional funding for the current budget.

The district's End of Year Pupil and Financial Report indicated that professional development expenditures for fiscal 2004 were $491,620, for fiscal 2005 were $505,012, and for fiscal 2006 were $468,218. Textbooks and related media expenditures for fiscal 2004 were $105,969, for fiscal 2005 were $151,264, and for 2006 were $162,437. General educational supply expenditures for fiscal 2004 were $276,500, for fiscal 2005 were $253,558, and for fiscal 2006 were $283,020. The only fees required of students were parking fees for their automobiles.

In interviews, middle school teachers stated that teachers felt they were falling behind in technology, although one teacher acknowledged that in her opinion the two computer labs at her school were adequate. Principals in interviews stated that there were adequate instructional supplies. Association representatives stated that, in their opinion, there were not adequate classroom supplies. The community annually provided sufficient financial resources to ensure educationally sound programs. It was reported to examiners that for every year of the period under review, the school committee, finance committee, and board of selectmen had agreed to the requested amount of the school budget. In only one year, FY 2006, did the school committee request that town meeting vote to place an operational override request for $750,000 on the

ballot for the purchase of textbooks, technology, and full-day kindergarten, for a vote by citizens. Subsequently, the town meeting denied that request.

A review of Department of Revenue data indicated that for July 1, 2006, the town had $1,977,283 in certified free cash and a stabilization fund of $1,429,754. The average single-family tax bill for FY 2007 was $2,878, and the average assessed value of a single-family home was $548,225.

The community provided facilities of quality. Except for the high school and one elementary school, all schools had been renovated between 1988 and 2003, and the high school was presently undergoing a major renovation and rehabilitation. The Massachusetts School Building Authority in its 2006 building needs survey of all schools stated that every building was in good condition.

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

The district, as part of its budget development, implemented an evaluation-based review process. A review of minutes of an August 2005 school committee meeting revealed a discussion of a plan, in conjunction with Cape Light Compact, in which funding would be provided to install solar panels in one school. The district likewise installed an energy management system in its schools.

Administrators stated that they constantly reviewed out-of-district placement of students and evaluated whether establishing programs for specific special needs within the district would be more cost and academically effective. The district also evaluated its special education transportation contract methods and planned to restructure its bid documents. Administrators also stated that they purchased materials, supplies, and energy through educational collaborative and state bid contracts in an effort to cut costs.

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

The district and community had appropriate written agreements and memoranda related to 603 CMR 10.0. Examiners reviewed the document, which evidenced that it was properly signed. The allocation method for services was a percentage estimate of actual time spent by municipal employees. Operation, maintenance, and other fixed charges such as insurance were 100 percent of the actual expenses incurred by the school district and its personnel. School administrators told the EQA examiners in interviews that they kept careful tallies on the personnel taking insurance and periodically reviewed the Schedule 19 assessments.

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

The combination of Chapter 70 aid and local revenues exceeded the NSS requirements of the education reform formula for the period under review. For FY 2004, the NSS exceeded requirements by $3,605,546 or 10.5 percent. For FY 2005, the NSS exceeded requirements by $5,012,636 or 14.2 percent. For FY 2006, the NSS exceeded requirements by $5,246,542 or 14.3 percent. The district had exceeded NSS requirements from at least FY 1998 to FY 2006.

The Chapter 70 aid as a percentage of net school spending for the period under review averaged approximately 10.7 percent. From FY 2003 to FY 2004, Chapter 70 aid to the district decreased by 20.0 percent or $1,057,776. From FY 2004 to FY 2005, Chapter 70 aid to the district was level funded at $4,231,106. From FY 2005 to FY 2006, the state increased Chapter 70 aid by $208,600.

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

The district made regular, timely, accurate, and complete financial reports to stakeholders. Examiners reviewed school committee minutes for the period under review and observed that the school committee furnished financial reports on a regular basis. The EQA examiners reviewed a random sample of reports that contained appropriations, expenditures, encumbrances, and balances for selective accounts.

Municipal officials in interviews indicated that they received monthly reports from the school finance office and they believed they were well informed of the financial status of the school budget expenditures. The finance committee had two members specifically assigned to maintain contact with the central administration. The district mailed the annual budget, which contained a sizeable quantity of financial information, to all town meeting members and placed it in all libraries. The EQA examiners reviewed independent audit reports and found them to be accurate, current, and timely.

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 used efficient accounting technology that integrated district level financial information of each school and program. Each school principal could go online to track the expenditures of his or her budget and identify unexpended balances. They were not required to create paper purchase orders. They entered purchase orders electronically at each school for transmittal to central administration for downloading and signature approval.

The district used forecast mechanisms and control procedures to ensure that spending was within fiscal budget limits. The district had a software program that it began to use in the early fall to forecast remaining salary obligations in the budget. They also developed software programs to track expenditures and projections in special education and utilities. When principals received their initial budgets each year, the administration held back 30 percent until it had a clear picture of utility and other variable costs, and then it released the balance, typically in late winter.

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 district had a system in place to pursue, acquire, and monitor grants. The school committee had a policy titled Appropriate Use of Federal Grant Funds that required that funds not be used to supplant operating budget funds. The policy also required principals to have responsibility for grants expended in their buildings. This policy required administrators to review and compare previous grant spending with current grants.

The Coordinated Program Review (CPR) dated 2005 stated with respect to grants, "The Title I program maintains required records and does meet the maintenance of fiscal effort requirements."

The only student fee account was for a parking fee for students who chose to park automobiles in the school parking lot. Interviews with school district and municipal officers indicated that the district operated the student activity fee within regulations and it was audited as required.

A review of DOE financial information indicated that the district received $3,113,235 in federal, state, and trust funds in FY 2004, $2,769,372 in FY 2005, and $2,300,326 in FY 2006.

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 ensure 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 district had a system in place to ensure that staff followed state procurement laws. The town administrator was the chief financial officer and a member of the town staff was MCPPO certified. The school district developed the bid specifications and contract awards and the town handled any mandatory bonding requirements. Examiners reviewed sample bid procurements by the district during the period under review. Municipal officials stated that the town had the same independent auditing firm for about 10 years, but two years ago they did solicit competitive proposals and decided to stay with the same firm.

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's formal five-year building maintenance plan outlined the requirements for each school to maximize and prolong the effective use of each building. The plan addressed known and prospective needs for small and comprehensive projects at each school.

A review of the district's facilities inventory indicated that every school in the district rated itself as in 'good condition.' Except for the high school and one elementary school, all schools had been renovated between 1988 and 2003, with the high school presently undergoing a major renovation. The Massachusetts School Building Authority in its 2006 building needs survey of

all schools rated the schools in the first category, which is "Building is in good condition with few or no building systems needing attention." The district had two modular classrooms at the East Falmouth Elementary School and two modular classrooms at the Teaticket Elementary School. There were also 16 temporary modular classrooms at the high school during the reconstruction. Teachers in high school focus groups told the EQA that the ongoing renovation made it difficult to teach in some areas of the building.

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

Municipal officials told the EQA that that they had a long-term capital plan that included the schools. There were two standing capital planning committees in town, one for the schools and one for the municipality. The town administrator in conjunction with the finance committee reviewed the requests for capital needs and presented them at the annual fall town meeting specifically held to address capital needs.

Examiners reviewed the school district's Building Maintenance Capital Plan, FY 2007-FY 2011, which detailed maintenance projects by school, estimated cost, and planned year of completion. Examiners reviewed minutes of a July 2006 school committee meeting that stated the capital plan was presented to the committee for its consideration.

The town annually had two town meetings. The first meeting, usually held in April, dealt with the annual operating budgets of all departments. The second town meeting, held in the fall, dealt with the capital needs of the municipality and the schools.

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

Rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

Only one elementary school in the district had cameras to monitor entrance into the school. No other schools had security equipment such as cameras, buzzers at locked doors, or exterior security lighting to ensure student safety. Main entrance doors were not secured and examiners were not contested before entering any building. Personnel were not located in positions that provided adequate sight lines to the main entrances. Interviewees told examiners that the rehabilitation of the high school would provide such a security system when the renovation was completed.

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	4,610	1.9	24,783,634	3.3	21,356,955	3,031,080	21.5	24,388,035	3.5	25,280,576	5.7	892,541	3.7
FY98	4,656	1.0	25,555,956	3.1	22,459,803	2,988,529	-1.4	25,448,332	4.3	27,476,044	8.7	2,027,712	8.0
FY99	4,585	-1.5	26,331,419	3.0	23,459,045	3,323,992	11.2	26,783,037	5.2	29,293,728	6.6	2,510,691	9.4
FY00	4,626	0.9	26,604,505	1.0	24,679,431	4,017,892	20.9	28,697,323	7.1	31,479,049	7.5	2,781,726	9.7
FY01	4,585	-0.9	27,630,618	3.9	25,950,019	4,820,267	20.0	30,770,286	7.2	33,548,592	6.6	2,778,306	9.0
FY02	4,619	0.7	29,393,446	6.4	26,690,364	5,288,882	9.7	31,979,246	3.9	36,070,128	7.5	4,090,882	12.8
FY03	4,568	-1.1	30,030,299	2.2	28,836,590	5,288,882	0.0	34,125,472	6.7	37,737,041	4.6	3,611,569	10.6
FY04	4,464	-2.3	30,166,725	0.5	30,202,519	4,231,106	-20.0	34,433,625	0.9	38,039,171	0.8	3,605,546	10.5
FY05	4,358	-2.4	30,452,660	0.9	31,153,507	4,231,106	0.0	35,384,613	2.8	40,397,249	6.2	5,012,637	14.2
FY06	4,172	-4.3	30,137,881	-1.0	32,265,939	4,439,706	4.9	36,705,645	3.7	41,952,187	3.8	5,246,542	14.3

	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	5,376	658	5,484	12.2	98.4	102.0	12.0
FY98	5,489	642	5,901	11.7	99.6	107.5	10.9
FY99	5,743	725	6,389	12.6	101.7	111.3	11.3
FY00	5,751	869	6,805	15.1	107.9	118.3	12.8
FY01	6,026	1,051	7,317	17.4	111.4	121.4	14.4
FY02	6,364	1,145	7,809	18.0	108.8	122.7	14.7
FY03	6,574	1,158	8,261	17.6	113.6	125.7	14.0
FY04	6,758	948	8,521	14.0	114.1	126.1	11.1
FY05	6,988	971	9,270	13.9	116.2	132.7	10.5
FY06	7,224	1,064	10,056	14.7	121.8	139.2	10.6

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.