The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

School District Examination Report:

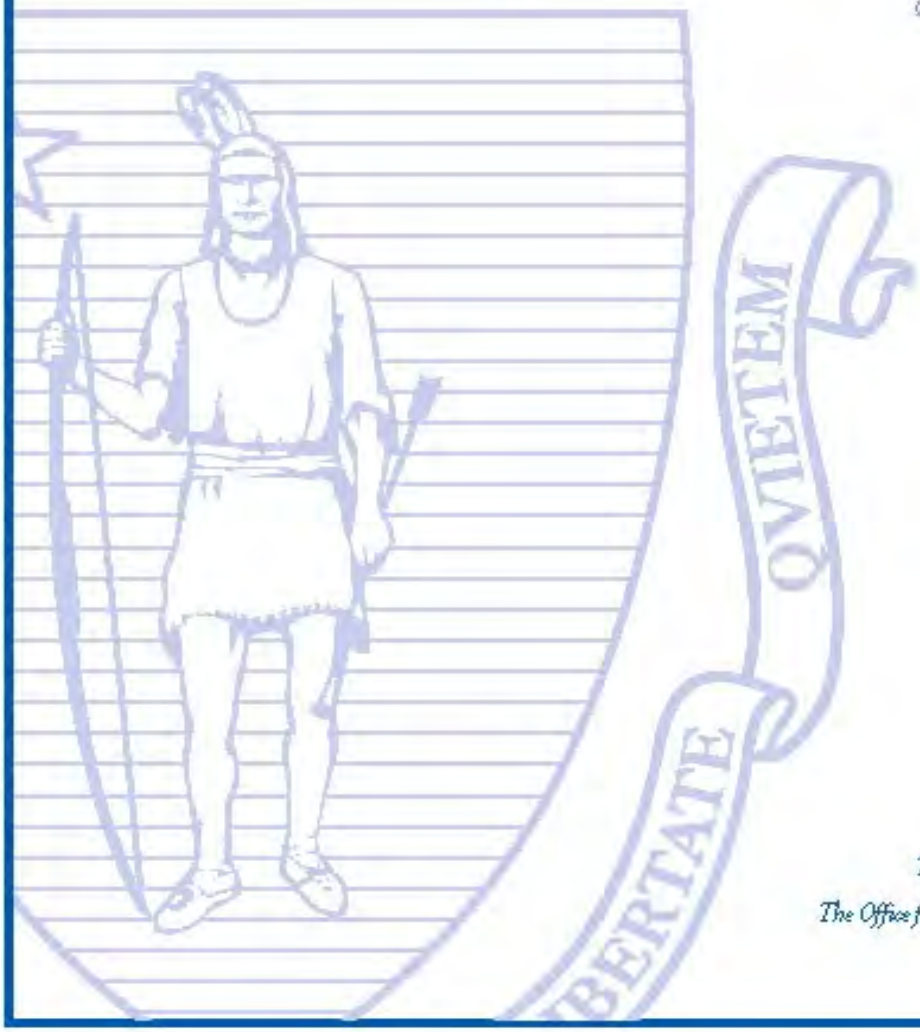
Franklin County Vocational Technical School District

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

John Roper, Coordinating Examiner
Fred Savoie, Senior Examiner
Charles Valera, Examiner
Kim Denney, Examiner
Stratos Dukakis, Examiner
William Contreras, 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 Franklin County Vocational Technical School District, Richard Lane; the school department staff of the Franklin County Vocational Technical School District; and the town officials in Bernardston, Buckland, Colrain, Conway, Deerfield, Erving, Gill, Greenfield, Heath, Leyden, Montague, New Salem, Northfield, Orange, Shelburne, Sunderland, Warwick, Wendell, and Whately.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA) examined the Franklin County Vocational Technical School District in June 2007. With an average proficiency index of 81 proficiency index (PI) points in 2006 (84 PI points in English language arts and 79 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 for vocational school districts. Nearly three-fifths of Franklin County's students scored at or above the proficiency standard on the 2006 administration of the MCAS tests.

District Overview

The Franklin County Vocational Technical School District operates one school, the Franklin County Technical School, which serves grades 9 through 12 and also provides post-secondary vocational programs. The school is located in Turners Falls, one of five picturesque villages comprising the town of Montague, which lies on the Mohawk Trail, along the Route 2 corridor west of Springfield and approaching the Vermont border to the north. The district has 19 member communities: Bernardston, Buckland, Colrain, Conway, Deerfield, Erving, Gill, Greenfield, Heath, Leyden, Montague, New Salem, Northfield, Orange, Shelburne, Sunderland, Warwick, Wendell, and Whately. The member towns vary in size, economic characteristics, and form of government. Several colleges are within the area. The largest sources of employment within the communities are educational, health, and social services, except in Orange and Warwick, where the largest source is manufacturing.

According to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR), among the district's member towns the median family income in 1999 ranged from a low of $43,194 in Montague (rank 336) to a high of $66,488 in Whately (rank 147), compared to the statewide median family income of $63,706. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the towns had a combined total population of 64,124 with 12,423 school-age children, or 19 percent of the total. Among the member towns, Warwick was the smallest, with a total population of 750, including 143 school-age children or 19 percent of the total; and Greenfield was the largest, with a total population of 18,168, including 3,261 school-age children or 18 percent of the total. Of the total households in the member towns, 31 percent were households with children under 18 years of age, and 25 percent

were households with individuals age 65 years or older. Twenty-seven percent of the population age 25 years or older in the member communities held a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 33 percent statewide; this proportion ranged from 12 to 51 percent among the member towns.

According to the Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE), in 2005-2006 the Franklin County Technical School had a total enrollment of 543. The demographic composition in the school was: 95.2 percent White, 1.8 percent African-American, 1.5 percent Hispanic, 1.1 percent Asian, 0.4 percent Native American, 0.0 percent multi-race, non-Hispanic; 0.0 percent limited English proficient (LEP), 26.2 percent low income, and 26.0 percent special education. Ninety percent of school-age children in the district's member towns (excluding Orange, for which data were not available) attended public schools. The district does not offer school choice, although 48 students from non-member school districts attended Franklin County Technical School in 2005-2006. Franklin County's administrative team consists of a superintendent, principal, director of curriculum and instruction, dean of students, coordinator of pupil personnel services/special education/Title I, and business manager. The district has a 24-member school committee.

In FY 2006, Franklin County Vocational Technical School District's per pupil expenditure, based on appropriations from all funds, was $17,508, compared to $11,211 statewide, ranking it 13 out of the 328 school districts reporting data. The district exceeded the state net school spending requirement in each year of the review period. From FY 2004 to FY 2006, net school spending increased from $5,831,923 to $6,991,954; Chapter 70 aid increased from $1,925,246 to $2,670,649; the required local contribution increased from $2,908,214 to $2,938,885; and the foundation enrollment increased from 484 to 495. Chapter 70 aid as a percentage of actual net school spending increased from 33 to 38 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 62 to 59 percent.

Context

During the review period, the small size of the Franklin County Technical School provided both benefits and challenges to the administration. The district was characterized by a spirit of mutual trust, but also inconsistent leadership. The staff was collaborative, and the district had many

informal systems of communication, planning, assessment, and supervision. Accountability was at times lacking. District leaders had trouble finding a balance between fostering collegiality and maintaining high standards for performance.

The informal atmosphere impeded efficiency and effectiveness. The curriculum was largely teacher based and controlled. The principal planned professional development activities with little input from staff members and student achievement results. Few programs were evaluated for effectiveness. Staff supervision was not systematized and consistently applied. Supervision of teachers was based on informal and frequent individual discussion between administrators and teachers. Classroom observations were informative but not instructive and did not promote professional growth.

EQA examiners visited the school district during the final days of the academic cycle of the school year. Students had finished MCAS testing, and most were completing work on portfolios or shop projects. As a result, examiners' observations of instructional practice may not have accurately reflected instructional practices in place for the majority of the school year.

Although the district's MCAS performance improved substantially during the review period, the district struggled with curriculum alignment, program evaluation, performance evaluations, student academic support services, dropout and attendance rates, safety plans, and facilities. The picture that emerged to the EQA of Franklin County Technical School was that of a content but complacent district, one that needed to refocus its mission and increase its efforts to improve student performance. Its students as well as its staff would benefit from such a change.

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 June 4-7, 2007, the EQA conducted an independent examination of the Franklin County Vocational Technical School District for the period 2004-2006, with a primary focus on 2006. This examination was based on the EQA's six major standards of inquiry that address the quality of educational management, which are: 1) Leadership, Governance, and Communication; 2) Curriculum and Instruction; 3) Assessment and Program Evaluation; 4) Human Resource Management and Professional Development; 5) Access, Participation, and Student Academic Support; and 6) Financial and Asset Management Effectiveness and Efficiency. The report is based on the source documents, correspondence sent prior to the on-site visit, interviews with the representatives from the school committee, the district leadership team, school administrators, and teachers, and additional documents submitted while in the district. The report does not consider documents, revised data, or comments that may have surfaced after the onsite visit.

For the period under examination, 2004-2006, this report finds Franklin County Vocational Technical School District to be a 'High' performing school district with an average proficiency index of 81 proficiency index (PI) points in 2006, marked by student achievement that was 'High' in English language arts (ELA) and 'Moderate' in math on the 2006 MCAS tests. Over this period, student performance improved by four PI points in ELA and by eight PI points in math, which closed the district's average proficiency gap by 25 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 and math, eligible students in Franklin County participated at levels that met or exceeded the state's 95 percent requirement.

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

On average, nearly three-fifths of all students in Franklin County attained proficiency on the 2006 MCAS tests, 10 percentage points less than the grade 10 statewide average but seven percentage points more than the statewide vocational school district average. Three-fifths of Franklin County students attained proficiency in English language arts (ELA), and nearly three-

fifths of Franklin County students attained proficiency in math. Ninety-nine percent of the Class of 2006 attained a Competency Determination.

- Franklin County's average proficiency index (API) on the MCAS tests in 2006 was 81 proficiency index (PI) points, four PI points lower than that of grade 10 students statewide and three PI points higher than that of vocational school districts statewide. Franklin County's average proficiency gap, the difference between its API and the target of 100, in 2006 was 19 PI points.
- In 2006, Franklin County's proficiency gap in ELA was 17 PI points, three PI points wider than the state's average proficiency gap in grade 10 ELA and four PI points narrower than the gap for vocational school districts statewide. This gap would require an average improvement in performance of two PI points annually to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP).
- Franklin County's proficiency gap in math was 21 PI points in 2006, four PI points wider than the state's average proficiency gap in grade 10 math and two PI points narrower than the gap for vocational school districts statewide. This gap would require an average improvement of less than three PI points per year to achieve AYP.

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

Between 2003 and 2006, Franklin County's MCAS performance showed considerable improvement overall, in ELA, and in math, with especially strong gains between 2005 and 2006.

- The percentage of students scoring in the 'Advanced' and 'Proficient' categories rose by 20 percentage points between 2003 and 2006, while the percentage of students in the 'Warning/Failing' category decreased by six percentage points. The average proficiency gap in Franklin County narrowed from 30 PI points in 2003 to 19 PI points in 2006. This resulted in an improvement rate, or a closing of the proficiency gap, of 37 percent.
- Over the three-year period 2003-2006, Franklin County showed improvement in ELA, improving by 11 PI points, or an average of three and two-thirds PI points annually. This resulted in an improvement rate of 40 percent, a rate higher than that required to meet AYP.

- Math performance in Franklin County likewise showed improvement during this period, also improving by 11 PI points, or an average of nearly three and three-fourths PI points annually. This resulted in an improvement rate of 35 percent, also a rate higher than that required to meet AYP.

Do MCAS test results vary among subgroups of students?

MCAS performance in 2006 varied substantially among subgroups of Franklin County students. Of the six measurable subgroups in Franklin County in 2006, the gap in performance between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups was 26 PI points in ELA (female students, students with disabilities, respectively) and 26 PI points in math (regular education students, students with disabilities, respectively).

- The proficiency gaps in Franklin County in 2006 in both ELA and math were wider than the district average for students with disabilities and male students. Less than one-third of students with disabilities attained proficiency, and less than three-fifths of male students did so.

- The proficiency gaps in ELA and math were narrower than the district average for regular education students and female students. Two-thirds or more of the students in each subgroup attained proficiency.

- The proficiency gap for low-income students (those participating in the free or reduced-cost lunch program) was wider than the district average in ELA but narrower in math, while the proficiency gap for non low-income students was the same as the district average in ELA but wider in math. Approximately three-fifths 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 Franklin County, the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in ELA widened from 16 PI points in 2003 to 25 PI points in 2006, and the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in math widened from 12 PI points in 2003 to 26 PI points in 2006.

- Regular education students and non low-income students in Franklin County had improved performance in ELA between 2003 and 2006. The more improved subgroup in ELA was regular education students.
- All student subgroups with the exception of students with disabilities in Franklin County had improved performance in math between 2003 and 2006. The most improved subgroup in math was low-income students.

Standard Summaries

Leadership, Governance, and Communication

The EQA examiners gave the Franklin County Vocational Technical School District an overall rating of 'Needs Improvement' on this standard. They rated the district as 'Satisfactory' on two, 'Needs Improvement' on eight, 'Unsatisfactory' on two, and not applicable on one of the thirteen performance indicators in this standard.

The school committee was aware of its responsibilities under the Education Reform Act of 1993. Subcommittees primarily focused on policies and finances. Knowledge of student achievement and other relevant data was exhibited by the school committee and utilized in members' decision-making. Representative city and town financial officials described an environment of support and collaboration between member communities and the district. The superintendent, business manager, and school committee communicated transparent information that engendered confidence and trust in the district. Visible community service projects and the skills of the graduates were seen as positive attributes by the region's member city and towns.

A district/school environment of support and teamwork existed between the administration and faculty in working toward improvement of student achievement. Administrators and faculty expressed the availability of information and the presence of fair treatment as major contributors to the collaborative culture. Although administrators and staff described some faculty resistance to the full implementation of improvement initiatives, an overall sense was conveyed that concerns and issues could be addressed. The superintendent delegated the educational and operational leadership of the school to the principal and administrators with the authority and responsibility to carry out the major administrative functions of the school. However, overlap in the lines of responsibility for administrative functions existed between the superintendent and

administrators due to a lack of clarity in policy and practice, as well as the small size of the district.

District and school leaders considered the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and the weekly administrative meetings as the driving force for improvement of programs and services. Improvement priorities were not standards based, in that the attainment of goals was not measured in terms of student achievement data. The attainment of school improvement goals and student achievement data were not a basis of the administrator evaluation process. No formal selection, gathering, or use of these data was employed in the decision-making process. The generation and collection of data to measure student achievement relied on limited sources, and the district conducted minimal analysis and interpretation of the data. A summary was provided of the previous year's improvement plan goal attainment; progress was measured in terms of anecdotal data rather than quantifiable student achievement data.

The district provided competency-based and individualized vocational instruction. No requirement existed to collect, analyze, and interpret student competency assessment data to improve vocational instruction. Vocational competencies were currently being aligned with the 2005 Vocational Technical Education Frameworks.

Curriculum and Instruction

The EQA examiners gave the Franklin County Vocational Technical School District an overall rating of 'Unsatisfactory' on this standard. They rated the district as 'Satisfactory' on one, 'Needs Improvement' on three, and 'Unsatisfactory' on six of the ten performance indicators in this standard.

The Franklin County Technical School did not have a consistently aligned curriculum in either the core academic areas or the vocational areas. The district had three different directors of curriculum during the review period, each with his or her own initiatives. In its most recent approach to curriculum development and review, the district paid stipends to teachers to write their own curricula. The district reported that it had a formal, schoolwide template addressing the components of a curriculum. On examination of curriculum samples, however, no consistent format was found, nor was there any professional development in this area, nor a formal system or structure for disseminating and evaluating the curriculum. A document review uncovered

samples of curricula in social studies and math that included all components of a clearly aligned curriculum; however, these components were not widely shared nor adopted throughout the building. It was unclear as to how widely the curriculum was disseminated. Administrators were unable to provide details about the development or use of the samples reviewed. Although the district adopted new math textbooks prior to the review period, not every teacher used the materials, nor was there a system or structure in place to monitor implementation.

EQA examiners observed effective instructional practices at Franklin County Technical School in both the shops and the academic classrooms during the site visit. However, the district had no formal policies or practices to support research-based, effective instruction. Rather, classroom and shop instructional practices were teacher dependent, inconsistent, and relied on informal sharing and ad hoc discussions. Interviews with faculty and administrators revealed an inconsistent focus on effective instructional practice and a lack of shared understanding of research-based instruction. A review of documents and interviews with faculty and administration did not reveal a system or structure to evaluate or refine instructional practice on either a departmental or schoolwide basis. The School Improvement Plans did not provide evidence of a focus in instructional practice on student achievement results. A review of teacher evaluations revealed a lack of connection between analysis of student achievement data and teacher evaluation. Furthermore, the policy manual did not clearly articulate high expectations for effective instruction as measured by student achievement data.

Assessment and Program Evaluation

The EQA examiners gave the Franklin County Vocational Technical School District an overall rating of 'Needs Improvement' on this standard. They rated the district as 'Satisfactory' on one, 'Needs Improvement' on six, and 'Unsatisfactory' on one of the eight performance indicators in this standard.

Between school year 2003-2004 and the EQA visit in 2006-2007, the district used several methods of student assessment. For most of the review period, the district regularly used the Accuplacer Computerized Placement Test. All grade 9 students took the test, and the results were used to place students into the most appropriate levels of math, ELA, and reading instruction.

The results were also used to identify students who would benefit from additional support through the Title I program.

The district replaced the Accuplacer with the Basic Achievement Skills Inventory (BASI) at the beginning of school year 2006-2007 in an effort to improve the accuracy of placement decisions. The district also planned to use the BASI at the beginning of grades 10 and 11 to track student progress. The MCAS results were analyzed in the aggregate and item analyses were conducted to inform changes in curriculum and, to a lesser extent, instructional practice. Other forms of assessment were in use, generally for individual student evaluation or counseling purposes.

In addition to the MCAS and BASI tests, teacher-generated assessments were offered on a class by class basis. EQA examiners found little evidence of cooperation among teachers in developing group assessments, or in using common assessments for equivalent courses. The district had neither midterm nor final examinations in universal use, although some teachers reported using them independently. The district had no benchmarks or formal formative assessments in place to allow teachers to measure progress, although there was evidence that some teachers might be using them independently as well. One teacher reported the use of single concept in-class quizzes that functioned for him as benchmark assessments, but it was not clear whether similar practices were in use elsewhere. Teachers reported few departmental meetings at which best practices could be shared and disseminated, but the size and collegiality of the faculty allowed informal mechanisms of communication to develop naturally.

The district reported few structures for academic program evaluation in place during the review period. The district had no formal cycle for curriculum review and revision, resulting in little opportunity to formally assess program results. Programs such as Title I and special education were formally evaluated according to legislative requirements, and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) accredited the school. In addition, third party industry groups such as the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation and the National Institute for Metalworking Skills, among others, accredited several of the vocational programs for effective curriculum and instructional practices. All vocational programs evaluated students for competency attainment in order to provide competency report cards in grade 12 as a part of the

student portfolio, but EQA examiners saw little evidence of the vocational programs conducting formal self-evaluations other than as a part of third party accreditations.

Human Resource Management and Professional Development

The EQA examiners gave the Franklin County Vocational Technical School District an overall rating of 'Needs Improvement' on this standard. They rated the district as 'Satisfactory' on four, 'Needs Improvement' on six, and 'Unsatisfactory' on three of the thirteen performance indicators in this standard.

District hiring practices focused on the local geographic area and consisted of internal postings and advertisements in the local newspaper, as well as routine postings on the Department of Education website. Interviewees were comfortable with the process, but some wondered if broader geographical advertising might yield other qualified candidates. The process was routinely consensual among administrators, and the superintendent made salary placement determinations. An ad hoc committee of the school committee comprised exclusively of school committee members filled the superintendent's vacancy that occurred during the review period.

New teachers received trained mentors during their first year in the district. All but three of the teachers held certification in their assigned area of instruction, and none taught out of field. Teachers without certification held appropriate DOE waivers; those individuals were vocational teachers from the areas of culinary arts, plumbing trades, and cosmetology, and they met frequently and at the end of the year with the principal to review and document their progress toward certification. All core academic teachers were identified as 'highly qualified' on the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Report Card.

Informal conversations influenced the professional development program, and the administrative team considered suggestions during its weekly meetings. In-service professional development activities took place at monthly two-hour delayed openings. The district made $1,200 available individually for reimbursement for participation in professional development activities to all district personnel including teachers, secretaries, paraprofessionals, and maintenance personnel. Other than as mandated by grant programs, program evaluation did not take place during the review period. Two staff members took part in four-day training in the 2006-2007 school year on the process of tracking and using data to improve student achievement as part of a DOE pilot

Using Data Project, of which data warehousing was a part. They were to function as data coaches and train the rest of the staff. Professional development accompanied programmatic changes in two of four instances during the review period.

The school committee evaluated the superintendent annually, placing the documents in the superintendent evaluation subcommittee's file rather than superintendents' personnel files. All district staff also annually evaluated the superintendent on a voluntary and anonymous basis. The chairperson of the superintendent evaluation subcommittee compiled the ratings and comments and presented them to the superintendent along with the committee's evaluation. EQA examiners received a blank copy of the evaluation form and copies of school committee members' comments regarding the incumbent superintendent and the superintendent who served in 2003, but did not receive the actual school committee evaluations of the superintendent.

Administrator evaluation practices did not comply with statute. Contracts and evaluations failed to produce evidence that the superintendent and principal specifically linked improved student performance to district administrators' compensation. The former superintendent, at the direction of the school committee, modified the administrator evaluation instrument to reflect the administrators' job descriptions. Unlike the previous instrument, this one did not contain the components of education reform. Administrators perceived administrative evaluation as frequent, informal observation over time that lacked specific goal setting.

Effective systems of supervision were not in place to implement programs and goals for improving student achievement. The district implemented supervision through weekly administrative meetings and frequent, informal, and individual dialogue among and between administrators and teachers. Evaluation practices for teachers did not comply with statute in that the four-year evaluation cycle did not prescribe formal evaluation for professional status teachers in the third year of the cycle (observation phase). In that year, the teacher would select three peers to observe him or her for that school year. The supervisor received the written observations, summarized them, and used that summary as the evaluation for the year. Twenty-eight of 34 randomly reviewed evaluations were found to be timely.

Access, Participation, and Student Academic Support

The EQA examiners gave the Franklin County Vocational Technical School District an overall rating of 'Needs Improvement' on this standard. They rated the district as 'Needs Improvement' on six, 'Unsatisfactory' on three, and not applicable on one of the ten performance indicators in this standard.

Between 2003 and 2006, the vocational shops operated at Franklin County Technical School included automotive technology, carpentry, cosmetology, culinary arts, electrical, health assisting, HVAC/heating technology, information technology, landscaping/horticulture, machine technology, office technology, pre-employment program, plumbing, and welding/metal fabrication. The guidance department provided academic support services along with the coordinator of pupil personnel services, school nurse, special education teachers, and Title I reading and mathematics teachers.

Guidance academic support services staff advised students on class schedules, academic issues, and post-graduation plans, managed remediation and tutoring support, provided counseling for personal issues and family crises, provided/adjusted special education accommodations offered under section 504, provided Title I services, provided health services, and made initial parent contacts about student absences.

Special education students were included in all classrooms and shops, although no instructional aides were used except in a substantially separate pre-employment program. Low-income students had access to all courses and shops. Data were not analyzed to increase the numbers of subgroup students in higher level programs. During the period reviewed, school staff reviewed assessment data but did not use a systematic approach to gather, analyze, and act upon benchmark and summative data in order to increase subgroup participation in higher level programs.

The district was below statewide averages in student and staff attendance rates. The district's dropout rates were below the state averages. The rate of student chronic absenteeism was 19.8 percent in 2003-2004, 22.1 percent in 2004-2005, and 17.9 percent in 2005-2006. The rate was over 28 percent for the senior class in 2005-2006, according to Department of Education

statistics. During the review period, the district had no programs in place to recover dropouts and retain the maximum participation of students through graduation.

The dean of students administered student discipline. Administrators handled teacher referrals of students to the office, assigned students to after-school detentions, and suspended students. If the student behavior needed mediation, the guidance staff supervised peer mediators in the mediation process.

Financial and Asset Management Effectiveness and Efficiency

The EQA examiners gave the Franklin County Vocational Technical School District an overall rating of 'Satisfactory' on this standard. They rated the district as 'Satisfactory' on seven, 'Needs Improvement' on two, 'Unsatisfactory' on three, and not applicable on one of the thirteen performance indicators in this standard.

The budget process commenced annually in November with budget requests submitted by the faculty. The business manager collated the results of the requests into a budget workbook document, which the superintendent, director of curriculum and instruction, and the principal received. In December or January, the administration met to reduce the requests to an acceptable level that could be supported by the anticipated revenue sources. The district relied on its excess and deficiency (E&D) account, tuition, and other miscellaneous revenue sources to reduce the assessment to a level that the member municipalities would accept. The school improvement council and the vocational-technical advisory committees did not participate in the development of the budget. The budget workbook included information from other fund sources, such as state and federal grants, revolving accounts, Medicaid, and other revenue sources. The school committee finance subcommittee reviewed the proposed budget at several meetings followed by a recommendation to the full school committee. A public hearing was held, followed by the final approval of the budget and assessments. The superintendent and business manager attended both municipal finance committee and town meetings. During the review period, the member city and towns had been supportive by approving the district's assessment. The district used student achievement data to modify curriculum and programs, although there was not a connection between budget development and student achievement data. Formal evaluation of programs and

practices did not occur to determine cost effectiveness. Enrollment data had been used to review vocational-technical, academic, and special education programs.

The superintendent stated that the budget and assessments had been based on the educational needs of the students for providing quality education using available resources. Interviews with administrators, teachers, school committee members, and town officials confirmed the adequacy of the budget approved by the communities, which provided the necessary support to ensure educationally sound programs. The district exceeded the required net school spending (NSS) for the period under review. The FY 2006 per pupil cost was $17,508, which ranked the district sixth out 26 regional vocational-technical districts. The budget was $6,647,589 in FY 2004, $7,187,225 in FY 2005, and $7,830,300 in FY 2006, an 18 percent increase for the period. Analysis of the municipal revenue growth factor (MRGF) showed compatible increase with the municipality assessments. The assessments had been held to an acceptable increase by the use of E&D, tuition, and other revenue sources. Discussions with the superintendent, faculty, and town officials indicated the adequacy of the individual department budgets.

The school facility, which opened in 1976, had not had substantial improvement or renovation. This resulted in the required increase in the maintenance budget for the HVAC and other systems. The school had carpeting throughout the building that required replacement. A walk-through of the building by the EQA examiners noted a need to improve the maintenance and cleanliness of the facilities. The outside grounds and courtyard had been determined to need attention. The current energy plan had been developed on a computer running a DOS operating system and had not been updated to current standards. The district did not have a formal written preventive maintenance program to prolong the life of the building. The district had a feasibility study conducted in August 2002 that outlined the facility’s condition and areas in need of renovation and improvement. No substantial action had been taken during the review period to improve the condition of the facilities, in part because of a statewide moratorium on state funding for building and renovation projects. The school committee voted to allocate $100,000 annually toward capital projects or equipment as part of the budget.

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 Franklin County Vocational Technical School District 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 Franklin County; and comparative analyses of districtwide, subject-area, grade, school, and subgroup achievement in relation to that of students statewide, in relation to the district averages, and in relation to other subject areas, grades, and subgroups.

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

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

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

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

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

Achievement

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

Findings:

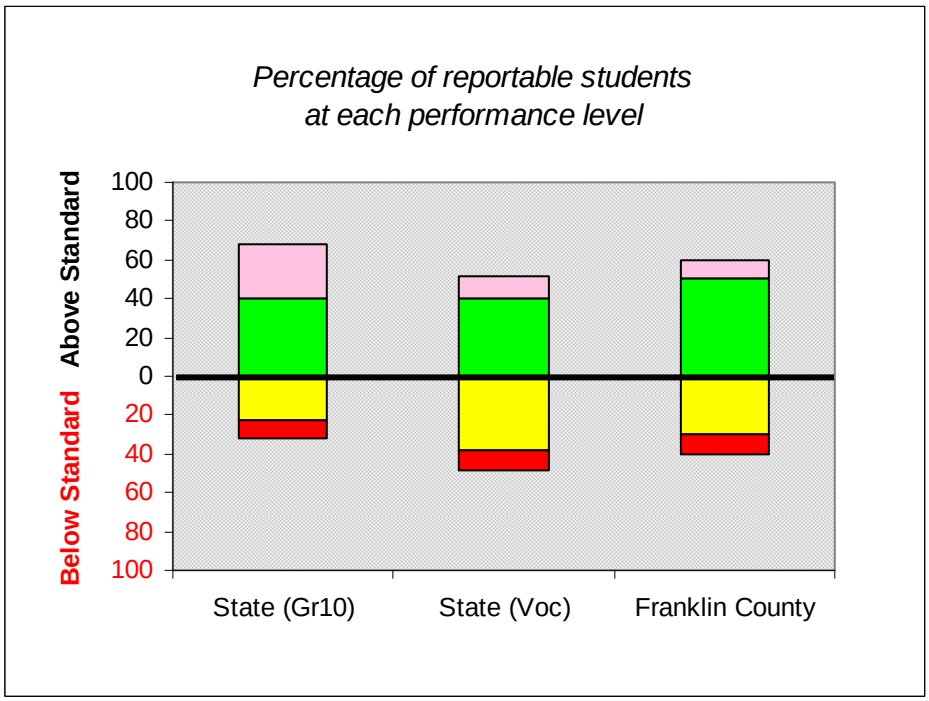
- On average, nearly three-fifths of all students in Franklin County attained proficiency on the 2006 MCAS tests, 10 percentage points less than the grade 10 statewide average but seven percentage points more than the statewide vocational school district average. Three-fifths of Franklin County students attained proficiency in English language arts (ELA), and nearly three-fifths of Franklin County students attained proficiency in math. Ninety-nine percent of the Class of 2006 attained a Competency Determination.

- Franklin County's average proficiency index (API) on the MCAS tests in 2006 was 81 proficiency index (PI) points, four PI points lower than that of grade 10 students statewide and three PI points higher than that of vocational school districts statewide. Franklin County's average proficiency gap, the difference between its API and the target of 100, in 2006 was 19 PI points.

- In 2006, Franklin County's proficiency gap in ELA was 17 PI points, three PI points wider than the state's average proficiency gap in grade 10 ELA and four PI points narrower than the gap for vocational school districts statewide. This gap would require an average improvement in performance of two PI points annually to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP).

- Franklin County's proficiency gap in math was 21 PI points in 2006, four PI points wider than the state's average proficiency gap in grade 10 math and two PI points narrower than the gap for vocational school districts statewide. This gap would require an average improvement of less than three PI points per year to achieve AYP.

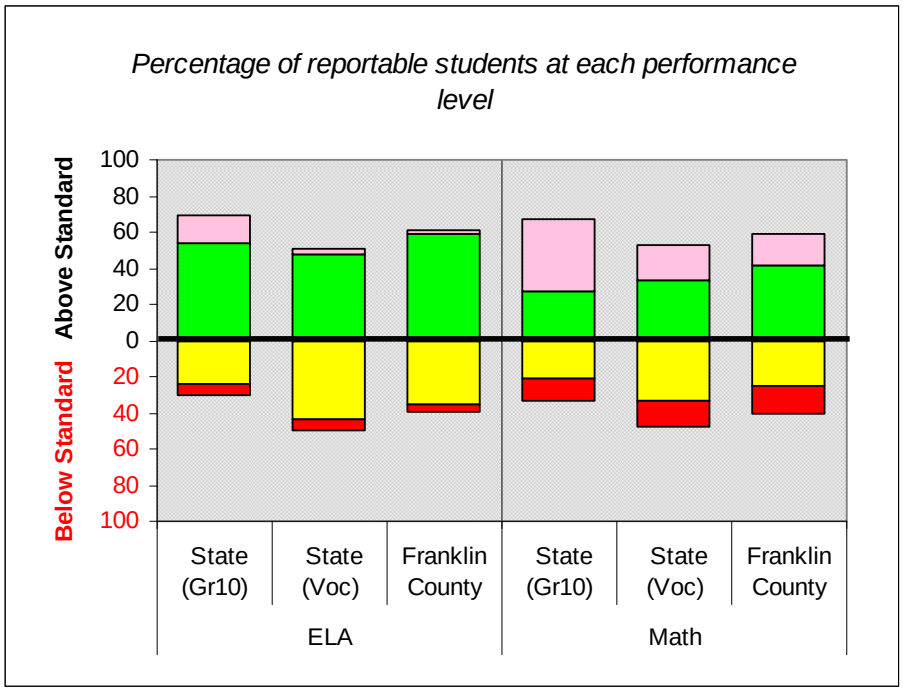
Figure/Table 1: Student MCAS Test Performance, All Students, 2006



	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Franklin County
Advanced	28	11	9
Proficient	41	41	50
Needs Improvement	23	39	30
Warning/Failing	9	10	10
Percent Attaining Proficiency	69	52	59
Average Proficiency Index (API)	85.0	78.3	81.1

In 2006, 59 percent of Franklin County students attained overall proficiency on the MCAS tests, 10 percentage points less than the grade 10 statewide average of 69 percent, and seven percentage points more than the statewide vocational district average of 52 percent. Ten percent of Franklin County students scored in the 'Warning/Failing' category, one percentage point more than that of grade 10 students statewide and the same as that of vocational districts statewide. Franklin County's average proficiency index (API) on the MCAS tests in 2006 was 81 proficiency index (PI) points, four PI points lower than that of grade 10 students statewide and three PI points higher than that of vocational districts statewide. Franklin County's average proficiency gap in 2006 was 19 PI points.

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



	ELA			Math		
	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Franklin County	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Franklin County
Advanced	16	2	1	40	19	17
Proficient	54	48	59	27	33	42
Needs Improvement	25	44	35	21	33	25
Warning/Failing	6	6	4	11	14	16
Percent Attaining Proficiency	70	50	60	67	52	59
Proficiency Index (PI)	86.8	79.9	83.5	83.2	76.7	78.8

In 2006, achievement in grade 10 English language arts (ELA) and math in Franklin County was lower than the grade 10 statewide average but higher than the statewide vocational district average. In ELA, 60 percent of Franklin County students attained proficiency, compared to 70 percent statewide and 50 percent in vocational districts. In math, 59 percent of Franklin County students attained proficiency, compared to 67 percent statewide and 52 percent in vocational districts.

Franklin County students had stronger performance on the 2006 MCAS tests in ELA than in math. The proficiency index for Franklin County students in ELA was 84 PI points, and in math it was 79 PI points. These figures compare to 87 PI points in ELA and 83 PI points in math for grade 10 students statewide, and 80 PI points in ELA and 77 PI points in math for vocational districts statewide.

The proficiency gap for Franklin County students in 2006 was 16 PI points in ELA and 21 PI points in math. These figures compare to 13 PI points in ELA and 17 PI points in math for grade 10 students statewide, and 20 PI points in ELA and 23 PI points in math for vocational districts statewide. Franklin County's proficiency gaps would require an average annual improvement of two PI points in ELA and less than three PI points in math to meet AYP.

Equity of Achievement

Do MCAS test results vary among subgroups of students?

Findings:

- MCAS performance in 2006 varied substantially among subgroups of Franklin County students. Of the six measurable subgroups in Franklin County in 2006, the gap in performance between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups was 26 PI points in ELA (female students, students with disabilities, respectively) and 26 PI points in math (regular education students, students with disabilities, respectively).

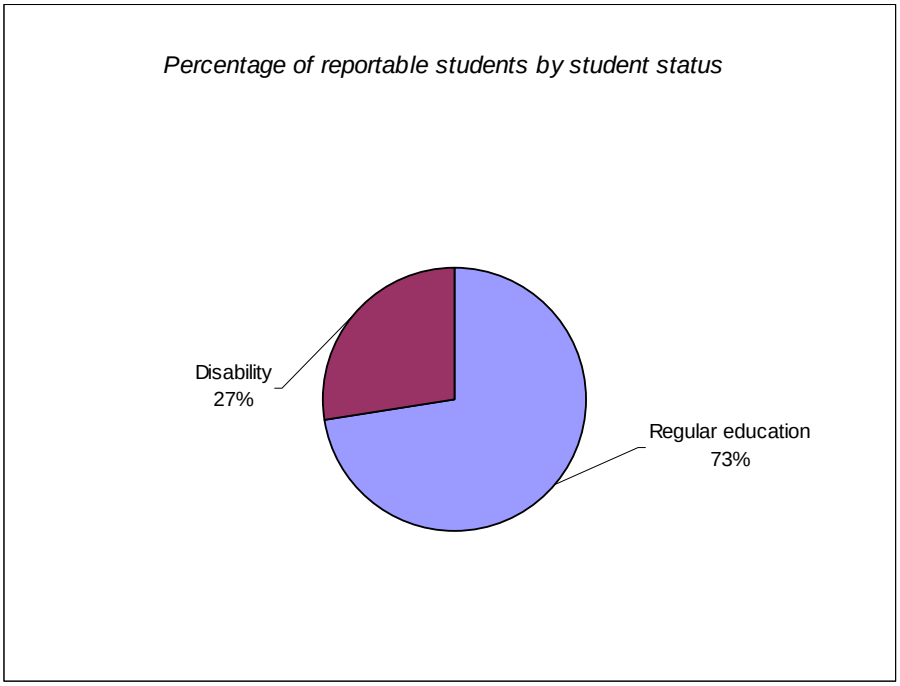
- The proficiency gaps in Franklin County in 2006 in both ELA and math were wider than the district average for students with disabilities and male students. Less than one-third of students with disabilities attained proficiency, and less than three-fifths of male students did so.

- The proficiency gaps in ELA and math were narrower than the district average for regular education students and female students. Two-thirds or more of the students in each subgroup attained proficiency.

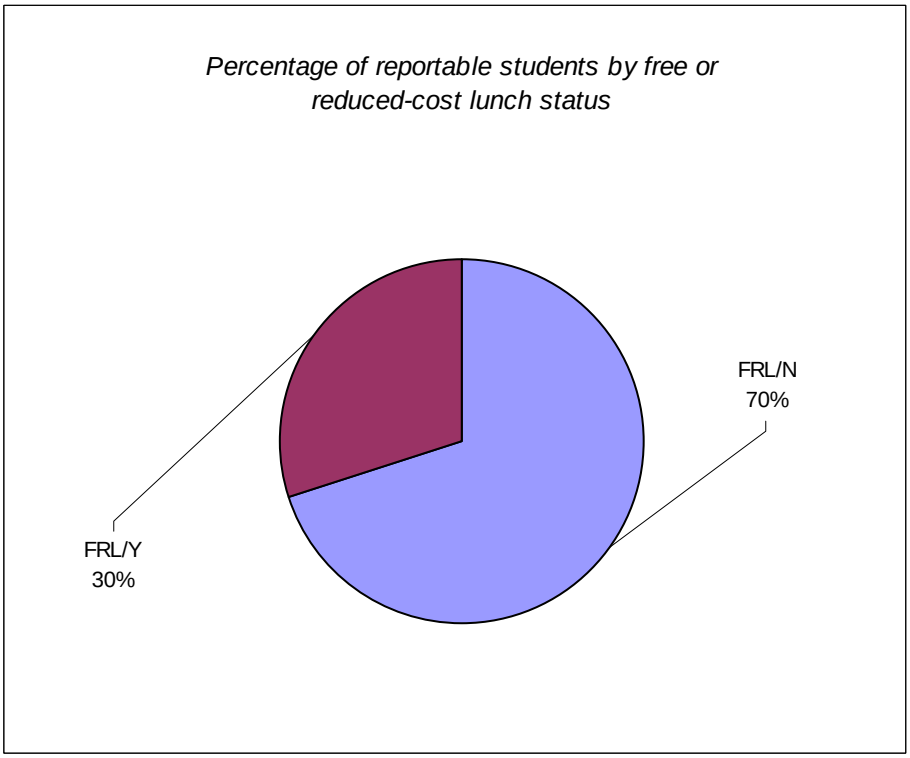
- The proficiency gap for low-income students (those participating in the free or reduced-cost lunch program) was wider than the district average in ELA but narrower in math, while the proficiency gap for non low-income students was the same as the district average in ELA but wider in math. Approximately three-fifths of the students in both subgroups attained proficiency.

Figures 3 A-B/Table 3: Student Population by Reportable Subgroups, 2006

A.



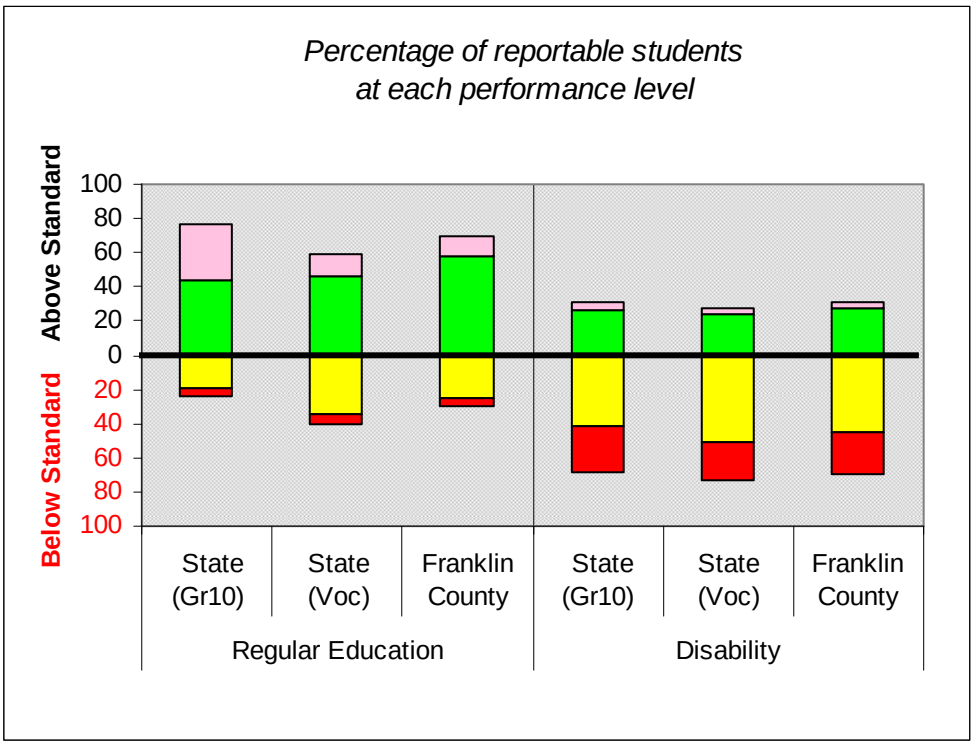
B.



	Subgroup	Number of Students
Student status	Regular education	106
	Disability	40
Free or reduced-cost lunch status	FRL/N	102
	FRL/Y	44

In Franklin County in 2006, 27 percent of the grade 10 students were students with disabilities and 30 percent were low-income students (those participating in the free or reduced-cost lunch program).

Figure/Table 4: Student MCAS Test Performance, by Student Status Subgroup, 2006

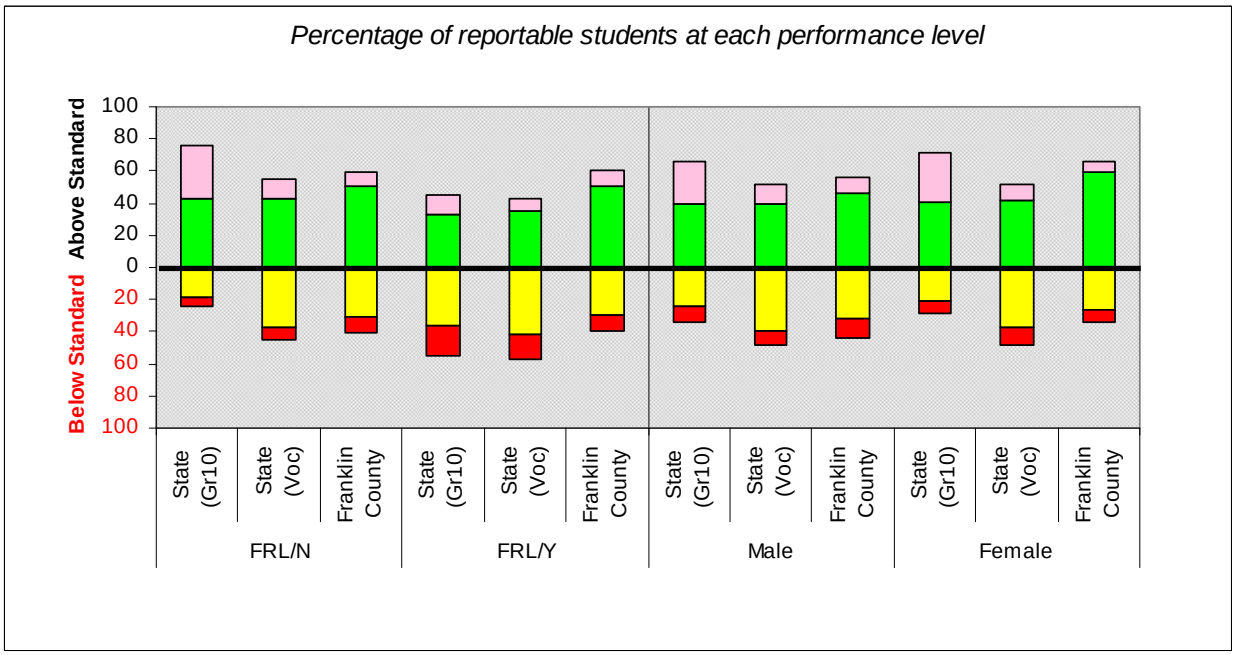


	Regular Education			Disability		
	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Franklin County	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Franklin County
Advanced	33	13	12	6	4	3
Proficient	44	47	58	26	24	28
Needs Improvement	19	35	25	41	51	45
Warning/Failing	4	6	5	27	22	24
Percent Attaining Proficiency	77	60	70	32	28	31
Average Proficiency Index (API)	90.0	83.4	87.8	62.7	63.5	62.4

In 2006, the proficiency rate of regular education students at Franklin County was more than two times greater than that of students with disabilities. Seventy percent of regular education students and 31 percent of students with disabilities attained overall proficiency on the MCAS tests. These figures compare to 77 and 32 percent, respectively, statewide, and 60 and 28 percent, respectively, for vocational school districts statewide.

Franklin County's average proficiency gap in 2006 was 12 PI points for regular education students, and 38 PI points for students with disabilities. The average performance gap between regular education students and students with disabilities was 26 PI points. This compares to 27 PI points statewide and 20 PI points for vocational districts statewide.

Figure/Table 5: Student MCAS Test Performance, by Socioeconomic Status and Gender Subgroups, 2006

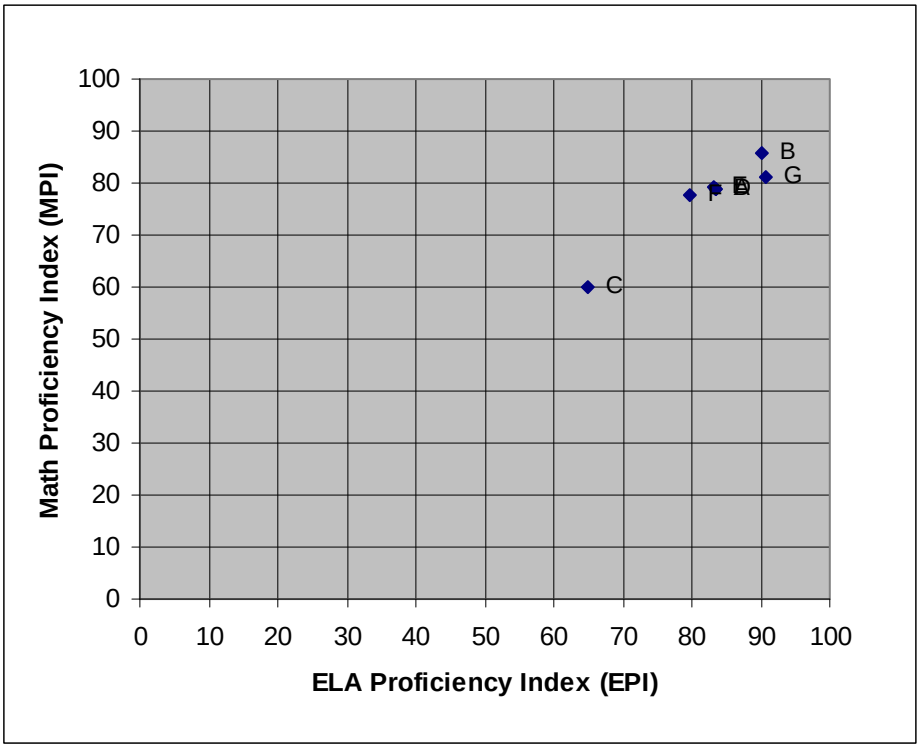


	FRL/N			FRL/Y			Male			Female		
	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Franklin County	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Franklin County	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Franklin County	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Franklin County
Advanced	33	12	9	12	8	9	26	11	11	30	10	7
Proficient	43	43	50	33	35	51	40	40	46	41	42	59
Needs Improvement	19	37	30	36	42	29	25	39	32	21	38	27
Warning/Failing	5	8	10	19	15	11	10	10	12	7	11	7
Percent Attaining Proficiency	76	55	59	45	43	60	66	51	57	71	52	66
Average Proficiency Index (API)	89.2	80.7	81.1	71.7	72.8	81.2	83.7	78.4	78.6	86.5	78.1	86.0

In Franklin County in 2006, 60 percent of low-income (FRL/Y) students attained overall proficiency on the MCAS tests, compared to 59 percent of non low-income (FRL/N) students. The average proficiency gap was approximately 19 PI points for both low-income students and non low-income students.

Sixty-six percent of female students attained overall proficiency on the MCAS tests, compared to 57 percent of male students. The average proficiency gap was 14 PI points for female students and 21 PI points for male students, and the average performance gap between the two subgroups was seven PI points.

Figure/Table 6: Student MCAS ELA Proficiency Index vs. Math Proficiency Index, by Subgroup, 2006

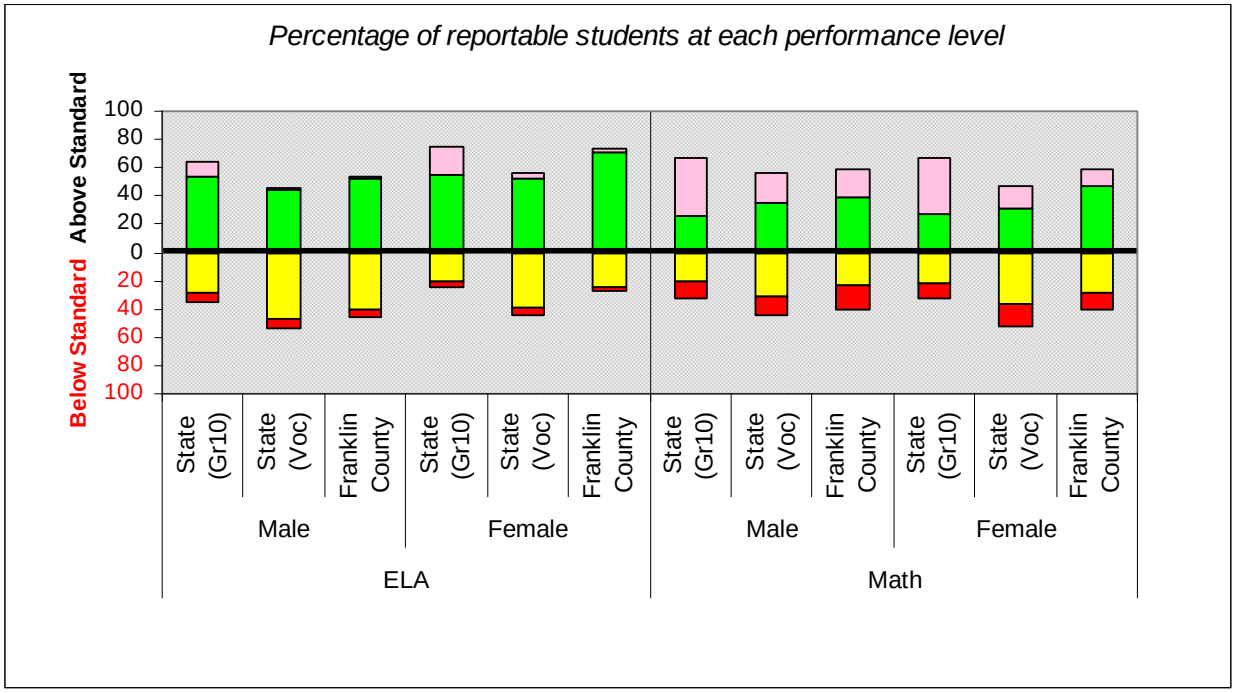


		ELA PI	Math PI	Number of Tests
A	Franklin County	83.5	78.8	286
B	Regular Education	90.0	85.6	211
C	Disability	64.9	59.9	75
D	FRL/N	83.5	78.7	201
E	FRL/Y	83.3	79.1	85
F	Male	79.6	77.6	188
G	Female	90.8	81.1	98

Of the six measurable subgroups in Franklin County in 2006, the gap in performance between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups was 26 PI points in ELA (female students, students with disabilities, respectively) and 26 PI points in math (regular education students, students with disabilities, respectively).

The proficiency gaps in Franklin County in 2006 in both ELA and math were wider than the district average for students with disabilities and male students. The proficiency gaps in ELA and math were narrower than the district average for regular education students and female students. The proficiency gap for low-income students was wider than the district average in ELA but narrower in math, while the proficiency gap for non low-income students was the same as the district average in ELA but wider in math.

Figure/Table 7: Student MCAS ELA and Math Test Performance, by Gender Subgroup, 2006



	ELA						Math					
	Male			Female			Male			Female		
	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Franklin County	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Franklin County	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Franklin County	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Franklin County
Advanced	11	1	1	20	4	2	41	21	20	40	16	12
Proficient	54	45	53	55	53	71	26	35	39	28	31	47
Needs Improvement	28	47	41	21	39	24	21	31	23	22	36	29
Warning/Failing	7	6	5	4	5	2	12	13	18	11	16	12
Percent Attaining Proficiency	65	46	54	75	57	73	67	56	59	68	47	59
Proficiency Index (PI)	84.4	78.1	79.6	89.3	82.4	90.8	82.9	78.7	77.6	83.6	73.9	81.1

On the 2006 grade 10 MCAS tests in both ELA and math, female students outperformed male students in Franklin County. The proficiency gaps for Franklin County's male students were 20 PI points in ELA and 22 PI points in math, and for female students they were nine PI points in ELA and 19 PI points in math.

Female students' performance was higher than that of all female grade 10 students statewide in ELA and lower in math, while male students' performance was lower than that of all male grade 10 students statewide in both ELA and math. Female students' performance was higher than that of their counterparts in vocational districts statewide in both ELA and math, and male students' performance was slightly lower than that of male students in vocational districts statewide in math but higher in ELA.

Improvement

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

Findings:

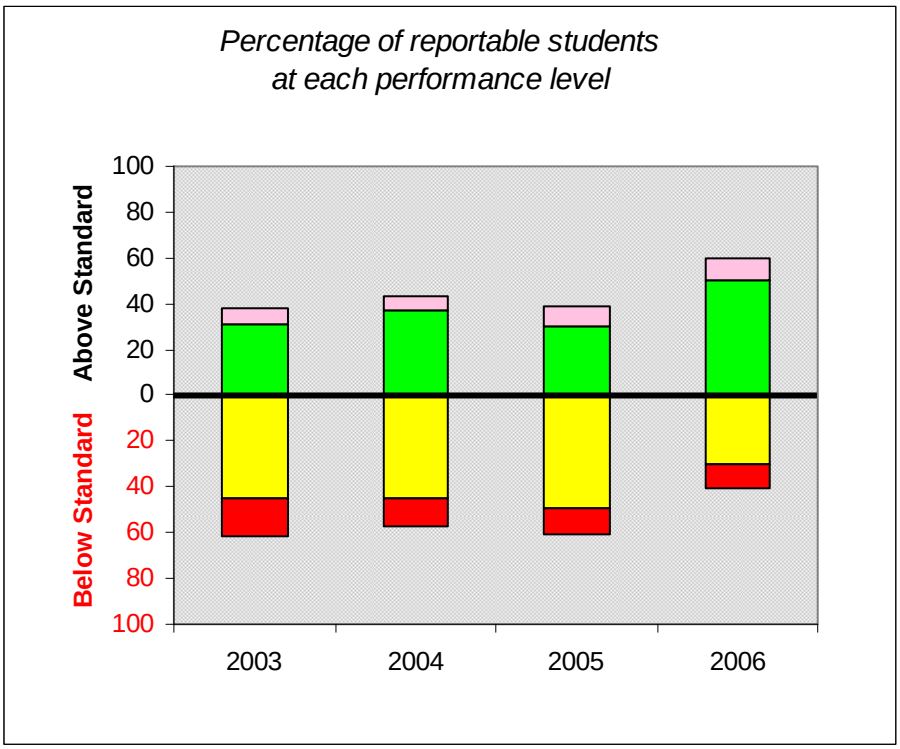
- Between 2003 and 2006, Franklin County's MCAS performance showed considerable improvement overall, in ELA, and in math, with especially strong gains between 2005 and 2006.

- The percentage of students scoring in the 'Advanced' and 'Proficient' categories rose by 20 percentage points between 2003 and 2006, while the percentage of students in the 'Warning/Failing' category decreased by six percentage points. The average proficiency gap in Franklin County narrowed from 30 PI points in 2003 to 19 PI points in 2006. This resulted in an improvement rate, or a closing of the proficiency gap, of 37 percent.

- Over the three-year period 2003-2006, Franklin County showed improvement in ELA, improving by 11 PI points, or an average of three and two-thirds PI points annually. This resulted in an improvement rate of 40 percent, a rate higher than that required to meet AYP.

- Math performance in Franklin County likewise showed improvement during this period, also improving by 11 PI points, or an average of nearly three and three-fourths PI points annually. This resulted in an improvement rate of 35 percent, also a rate higher than that required to meet AYP.

Figure 8/Tables 8 A-B: Student MCAS Test Performance, All Students, 2003-2006



A.

	2003	2004	2005	2006
Advanced	8	6	9	9
Proficient	31	37	30	50
Needs Improvement	45	45	49	30
Warning/Failing	16	12	12	10
Percent Attaining Proficiency	39	43	39	59
Average Proficiency Index (API)	70.1	74.9	72.0	81.1

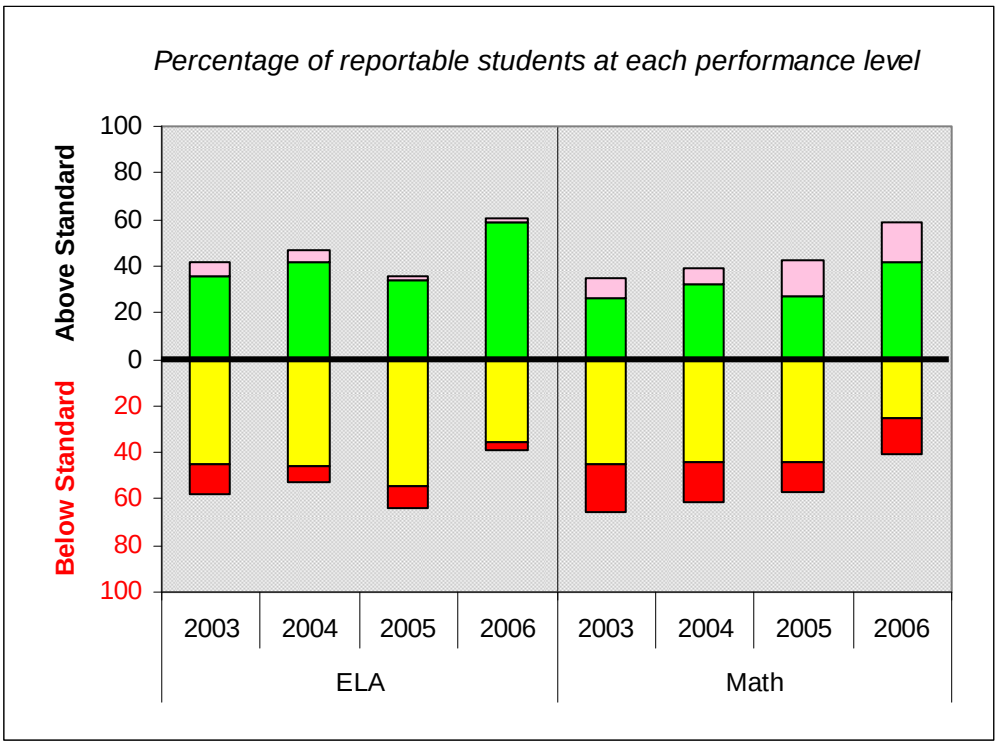
B. n-values

	2003	2004	2005	2006
Advanced	18	16	23	27
Proficient	73	99	79	144
Needs Improvement	108	121	128	86
Warning/Failing	39	32	30	29
Total	238	268	260	286

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 Franklin County students attaining overall proficiency on the MCAS tests increased from 39 percent in 2003 to 59 percent in 2006. The percentage of students in the 'Warning/Failing' category decreased from 16 percent in 2003 to 10 percent in 2006. The average proficiency gap in Franklin County narrowed from 30 PI points in 2003 to 19 PI points in 2006, resulting in an improvement rate of 37 percent.

Figure/Table 9: Student MCAS Test Performance, by Subject, 2003-2006



	ELA				Math			
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2003	2004	2005	2006
Advanced	7	5	2	1	8	7	16	17
Proficient	35	42	34	59	26	32	27	42
Needs Improvement	45	46	54	35	45	44	44	25
Warning/ Failing	13	7	10	4	20	17	13	16
Percent Attaining Proficiency	42	47	36	60	34	39	43	59
Proficiency Index (PI)	72.5	79.3	73.3	83.5	67.6	70.5	70.7	78.8

The percentage of Franklin County students attaining proficiency in ELA increased from 42 percent in 2003 to 60 percent in 2006. The proficiency gap in ELA narrowed from 27 PI points in 2003 to 16 PI points in 2006, resulting in an improvement rate of 40 percent, a rate higher than that required to meet AYP.

The percentage of Franklin County students attaining proficiency in math increased from 34 percent in 2003 to 59 percent in 2006. The proficiency gap in math narrowed from 32 PI points in 2003 to 21 PI points in 2006, resulting in an improvement rate of 35 percent, also a rate higher than that required to meet AYP.

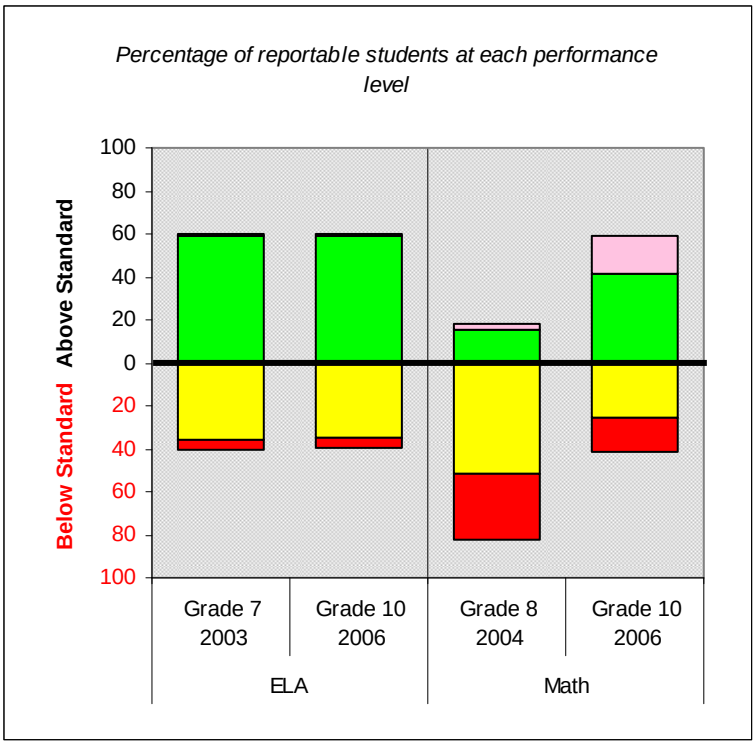
Table 10: MCAS Proficiency Indices by Vocational Technical District, 2003-2006

District	2003			2004			2005			2006		
	ELA PI	Math PI	API	ELA PI	Math PI	API	ELA PI	Math PI	API	ELA PI	Math PI	API
Norfolk County Agr	89.5	76.8	83.2	88.1	83.7	85.9	92.8	88.8	90.8	95.0	91.0	93.0
Bristol County Agr	85.5	79.4	82.5	87.7	88.9	88.3	89.6	87.4	88.5	88.1	88.8	88.5
Blackstone Valley	77.0	69.6	73.3	84.5	79.9	82.2	83.0	82.7	82.9	87.9	86.5	87.2
Whittier	64.0	47.6	55.8	72.3	64.9	68.6	75.7	72.8	74.3	82.6	90.4	86.5
Cape Cod	72.6	54.7	63.7	74.7	67.8	71.3	83.0	79.9	81.5	86.3	86.4	86.4
Tri-County	75.2	64.9	70.1	72.9	63.9	68.4	80.9	73.9	77.4	85.1	86.3	85.7
Shawsheen Valley	85.2	73.0	79.1	82.2	76.4	79.3	84.6	79.2	81.9	89.1	81.4	85.3
Essex Agr	72.3	53.2	62.8	71.7	52.8	62.3	81.8	60.4	71.1	89.5	79.0	84.3
Blue Hills	72.6	59.4	66.0	75.8	65.6	70.7	77.4	76.4	76.9	84.4	82.4	83.4
Bristol-Plymouth	75.8	59.4	67.6	72.9	67.6	70.2	80.6	74.0	77.3	85.4	79.6	82.5
Montachusett	70.5	61.7	66.1	75.4	64.4	69.9	79.1	74.7	76.9	82.1	82.4	82.3
South Shore	76.1	68.3	72.2	80.0	75.7	77.9	83.0	78.1	80.6	81.4	82.6	82.0
Upper Cape Cod	74.5	56.0	65.3	79.7	68.0	73.8	83.0	72.8	77.9	83.7	79.7	81.7
Minuteman	75.9	70.3	73.1	76.2	75.3	75.7	77.8	76.5	77.2	85.4	77.9	81.7
North Shore	71.7	63.5	67.6	73.9	69.4	71.6	85.4	77.2	81.3	82.6	80.4	81.5
Franklin County	*72.5*	*67.6*	*70.1*	*79.3*	*70.5*	*74.9*	*74.4*	*70.7*	*72.6*	*83.7*	*79.1*	*81.4*
Southern Worcester	70.3	59.3	62.8	72.7	66.9	69.8	79.0	75.6	77.3	80.9	81.0	81.0
Assabet Valley	67.9	52.9	60.4	70.9	63.7	67.3	79.0	74.6	76.8	78.7	81.3	80.0
State Average Voc	***71.0***	***60.4***	***65.6***	***73.6***	***66.6***	***70.1***	***78.4***	***72.3***	***75.3***	***80.9***	***78.0***	***79.5***
Nashoba Valley	63.4	59.3	61.4	68.5	70.0	69.2	75.9	67.5	71.7	77.5	79.8	78.7
Northern Berkshire	75.0	62.3	68.7	81.2	72.9	77.1	76.4	67.0	71.7	80.3	76.6	78.5
Greater Fall River	69.5	57.9	63.7	69.2	54.2	61.7	77.6	64.0	70.8	78.1	76.4	77.3
Greater New Bedford	65.8	48.3	57.1	69.8	59.6	64.7	75.7	64.6	70.2	80.2	73.4	76.8
Old Colony	69.2	60.8	65.0	71.9	69.7	70.8	79.4	79.6	79.5	76.9	75.9	76.4
Northeast Metro	65.7	63.8	64.8	65.0	61.8	63.4	70.8	69.8	70.3	71.5	74.1	72.8
Pathfinder	65.0	60.4	62.7	73.4	63.1	68.2	77.8	74.7	76.3	77.0	68.1	72.6
Greater Lowell	64.5	55.1	59.8	64.8	58.7	61.7	69.5	62.2	65.9	74.7	68.1	71.4
Northampton-Smith	60.7	57.7	59.2	63.8	59.7	61.8	72.4	68.6	70.5	72.9	67.4	70.2
Southeastern	65.5	49.1	57.3	70.8	61.5	66.1	75.3	62.9	69.1	71.2	67.1	69.2
So Middlesex (Keefe)	61.0	53.3	57.2	60.5	50.6	55.6	68.1	60.4	64.3	68.5	60.0	64.3
Greater Lawrence	54.5	46.5	50.5	59.1	50.1	54.6	61.8	52.4	57.1	67.4	57.6	62.5

Note: The API reported here is the average of the ELA PI and the Math PI. Elsewhere in this report, the API is a weighted average of the ELA PI and Math PI, and therefore slight discrepancies may result. Also, the data reported here include students who took the MCAS-ALT assessment, who are not included in the data found elsewhere in this report, and therefore slight discrepancies may result.

Performance in Franklin County on the MCAS tests was above the average for vocational districts statewide in 2003, 2004, and 2006, but was below the average in 2005. The average performance gap between Franklin County and vocational districts statewide narrowed from five PI points in 2003 to two PI points in 2006 in favor of Franklin County. The performance gap in ELA between Franklin County and vocational districts statewide widened from two PI points in 2003 to three PI points in 2006 in favor of Franklin County, and in math it narrowed from seven PI points in 2003 to one PI point in 2006 in favor of Franklin County.

Figure 11/Tables 11 A-B: Change in Students' MCAS Test Performance, by Subject, from 2003/04 to 2006



A.

	ELA		Math	
	Grade 7 2003	**Grade 10 2006**	**Grade 8 2004**	**Grade 10 2006**
Advanced	1	2	2	17
Proficient	59	59	16	41
Needs Improvement	36	35	52	26
Warning/Failing	5	5	30	16
Percent Attaining Proficiency	60	61	18	58
Proficiency Index (PI)	84.1	83	56.2	78.8

B. n-values

	ELA		Math	
	Grade 7 2003	**Grade 10 2006**	**Grade 8 2004**	**Grade 10 2006**
Adv	1	2	3	23
Prof	78	77	21	55
NI	47	46	69	34
W/F	6	6	40	21
Total	***132***	***131***	***133***	***133***

Note: The above data include students whose 2006 grade 10 MCAS results could be linked with their results from 2003 for ELA and from 2004 for math based on the student identifier (SASID).

Sixty-one percent of the grade 10 students in Franklin County attained proficiency on the ELA test in 2006; as grade 7 students in 2003, 60 percent had attained proficiency on the ELA test, an increase of one percentage point. Fifty-eight percent of the grade 10 students attained proficiency on the math test in 2006; as grade 8 students in 2004, 18 percent had attained proficiency on the math test, an increase of 40 percentage points. The proficiency gap of grade 10 students in 2006 in ELA was 17 PI points; in 2003 the proficiency gap for those students in grade 7 in ELA had been 16 PI points. The proficiency gap of grade 10 students in 2006 in math was 21 PI points; in 2004 the proficiency gap of those same students in grade 8 in math had been 44 PI points.

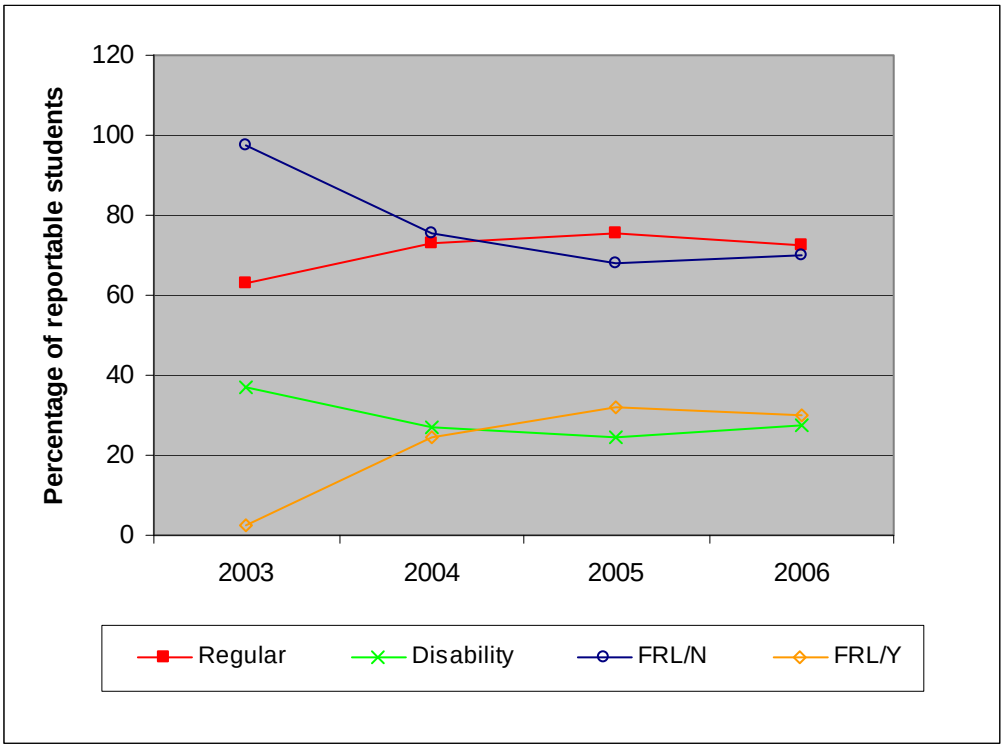
Equity of Improvement

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

Findings:

- Regular education students and non low-income students in Franklin County had improved performance in ELA between 2003 and 2006. The more improved subgroup in ELA was regular education students.
- All student subgroups with the exception of students with disabilities in Franklin County had improved performance in math between 2003 and 2006. The most improved subgroup in math was low-income students.
- The performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in ELA widened from 16 PI points in 2003 to 25 PI points in 2006, and the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in math widened from 12 PI points in 2003 to 26 PI points in 2006.

Figure/Table 12: Student Population by Reportable Subgroups, 2003-2006



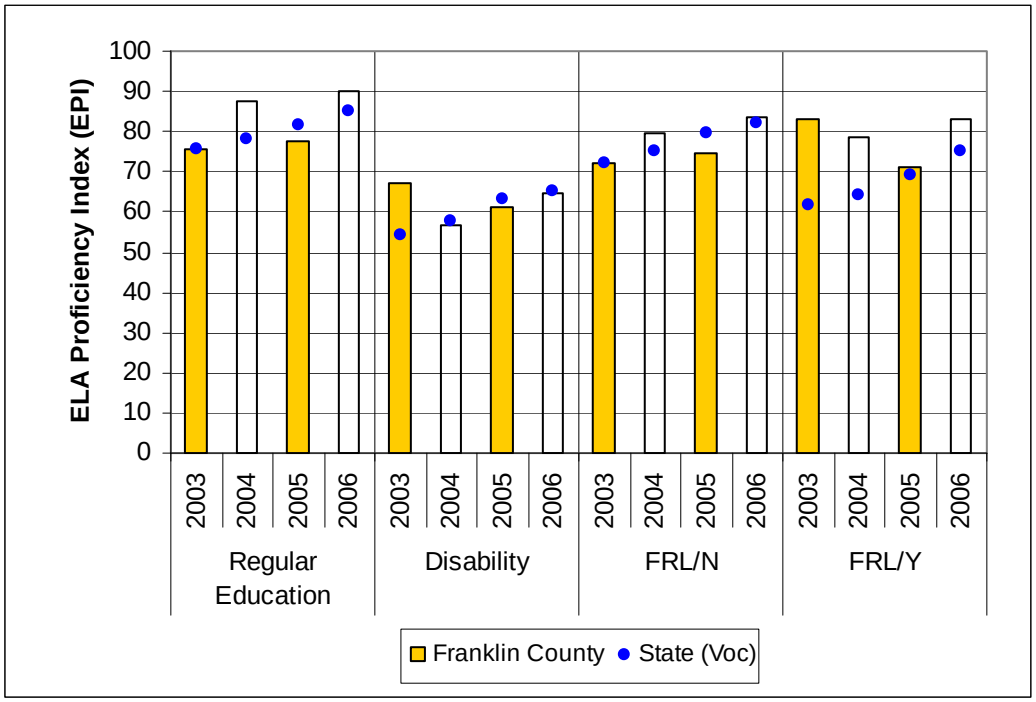
	Number of Students				Percentage of students			
	2003	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**
Franklin County	119	134	140	146	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Regular	75	98	106	106	63.0	73.1	75.7	72.6
Disability	44	36	34	40	37.0	26.9	24.3	27.4
FRL/N	116	101	95	102	97.5	75.4	67.9	69.9
FRL/Y	3	33	45	44	2.5	24.6	32.1	30.1

Note: The 2006 percentages of students reported here may differ from those reported in Figure 3; the percentages shown here are based on the total number of students in the district, whereas the percentages shown in Figure 3 are based on the number of students in reportable subgroups.

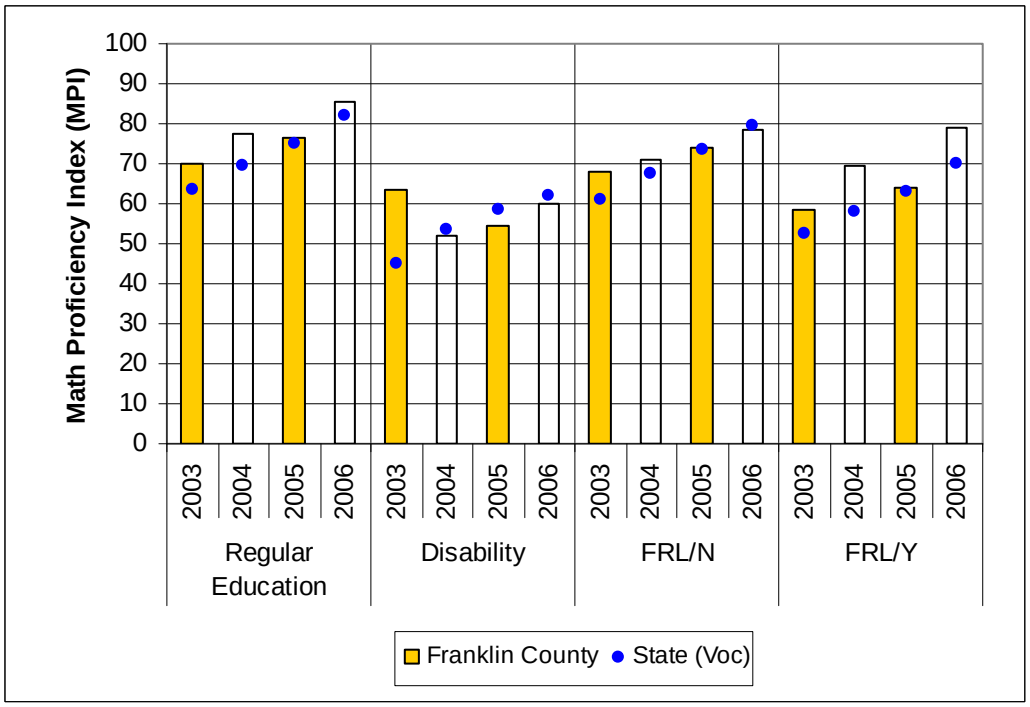
Between 2003 and 2006 in Franklin County, the proportion of grade 10 students with disabilities decreased by 10 percentage points, while that of low-income (FRL/Y) students increased by nearly 28 percentage points.

Figures 13 A-B/Table 13: 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

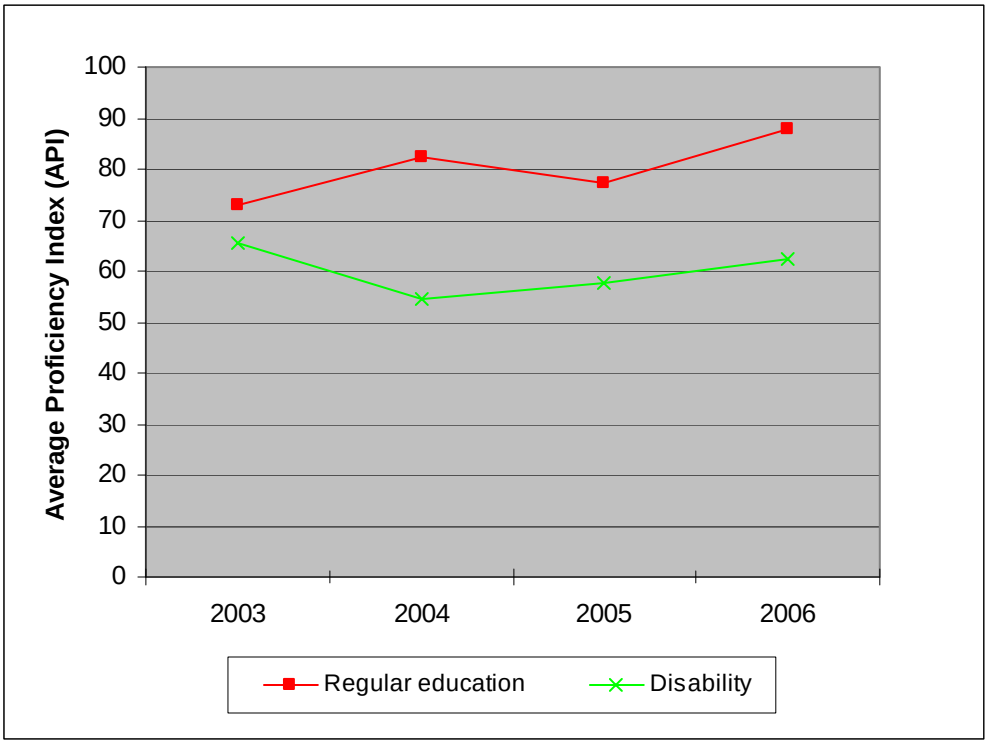


State (Voc)				Franklin County			
Subgroup	**Year**	**EPI**	**MPI**	**Subgroup**	**Year**	**EPI**	**MPI**
Regular Education	2003	75.8	63.7	Regular Education	2003	75.7	70.0
	2004	78.0	69.3		2004	87.5	77.3
	2005	81.8	75.0		2005	77.6	76.6
	2006	85.0	81.8		2006	90.0	85.6
Disability	2003	54.2	44.8	Disability	2003	67.0	63.6
	2004	57.9	53.6		2004	56.9	52.1
	2005	63.2	58.7		2005	61.0	54.4
	2006	65.1	61.9		2006	64.9	59.9
FRL/N	2003	72.3	60.8	FRL/N	2003	72.2	67.9
	2004	75.2	67.4		2004	79.5	70.8
	2005	79.6	73.7		2005	74.4	74.1
	2006	81.9	79.5		2006	83.5	78.7
FRL/Y	2003	61.9	52.5	FRL/Y	2003	83.3	58.3
	2004	64.3	57.8		2004	78.8	69.7
	2005	69.4	62.8		2005	71.0	64.2
	2006	75.3	70.2		2006	83.3	79.1

Regular education students and non low-income (FRL/N) students in Franklin County had improved performance in ELA between 2003 and 2006. The more improved subgroup in ELA was regular education students. All student subgroups, with the exception of students with disabilities, in Franklin County had improved performance in math between 2003 and 2006. The most improved subgroup in math was low-income (FRL/Y) students.

The performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in ELA widened from 16 PI points in 2003 to 25 PI points in 2006, and the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in math widened from 12 PI points in 2003 to 26 PI points in 2006.

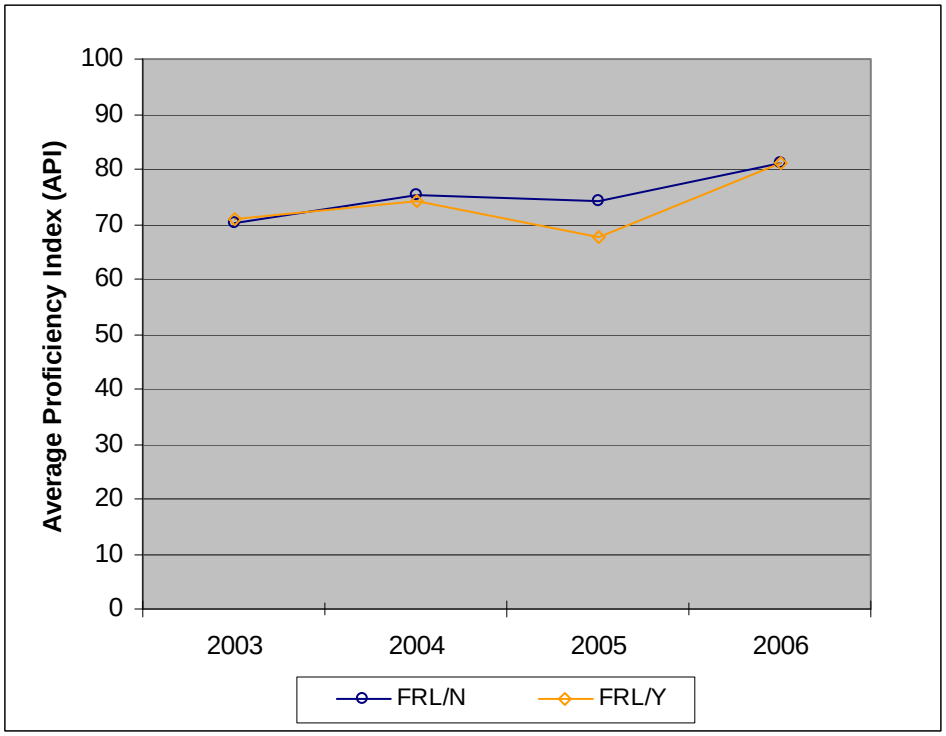
Figure/Table 14: Student MCAS Test Performance, by Student Status Subgroup, 2003-2006



		API	EPI	MPI	Percent Attaining Proficiency ELA	Percent Attaining Proficiency Math
Regular education	2003	72.9	75.7	70.0	44	42
	2004	82.4	87.5	77.3	51	49
	2005	77.1	77.6	76.6	51	46
	2006	87.8	90.0	85.6	53	43
Disability	2003	65.3	67.0	63.6	30	26
	2004	54.5	56.9	52.1	29	23
	2005	57.7	61.0	54.4	29	25
	2006	62.4	64.9	59.9	31	24

Regular education students in Franklin County had improved overall performance on the MCAS tests between 2003 and 2006, while that of students with disabilities declined during this period. The average proficiency gap for Franklin County's regular education students narrowed from 27 to 12 PI points, resulting in an improvement rate of 55 percent. The average proficiency gap for students with disabilities widened from 35 to 38 PI points. The average performance gap between regular education students and students with disabilities widened by 18 PI points during this period.

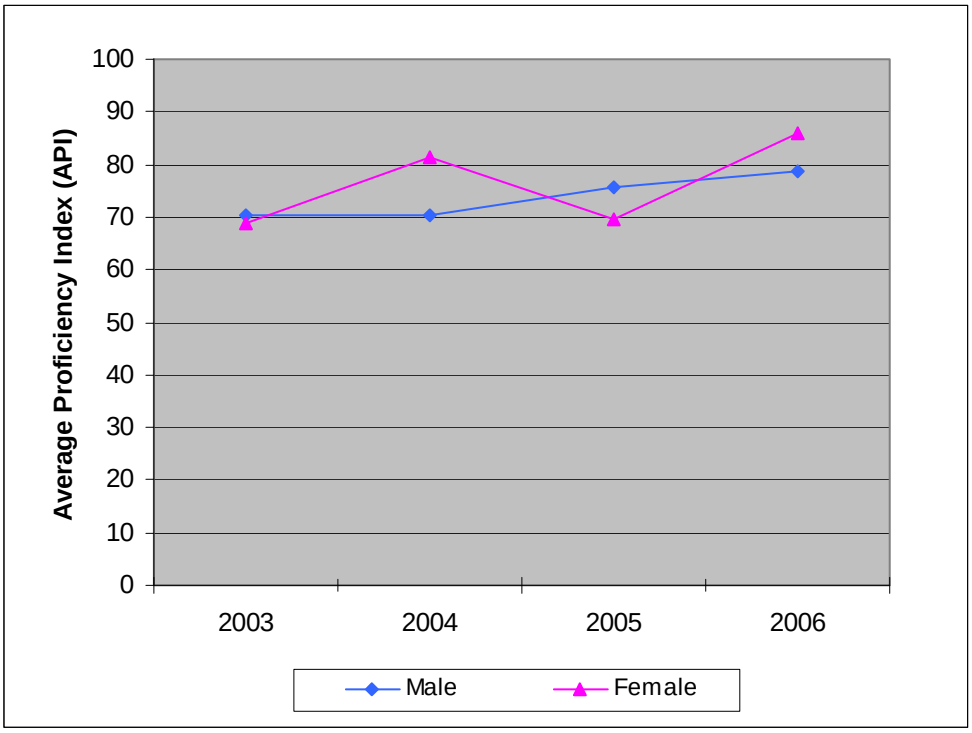
Figure/Table 15: Student MCAS Test Performance, by Socioeconomic Status Subgroup, 2003-2006



		API	EPI	MPI	Percent Attaining Proficiency ELA	Percent Attaining Proficiency Math
FRL/N	2003	70.1	72.2	67.9	41	34
	2004	75.2	79.5	70.8	48	39
	2005	74.3	74.4	74.1	36	47
	2006	81.1	83.5	78.7	61	58
FRL/Y	2003	70.8	83.3	58.3	2	2
	2004	74.3	78.8	69.7	26	23
	2005	67.6	71.0	64.2	32	29
	2006	81.2	83.3	79.1	31	26

Both the low-income (FRL/Y) and non low-income (FRL/N) subgroups in Franklin County had improved overall performance on the MCAS tests between 2003 and 2006. The average proficiency gap for non low-income students narrowed from 30 to 19 PI points, and for low-income students it narrowed from 29 to 19 PI points. These gains resulted in improvement rates of 37 percent for non low-income students and 36 percent for low-income students. Between 2003 and 2006, the average performance gap between low-income students and non low-income students narrowed by one PI point.

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



		API	EPI	MPI	Percent Attaining Proficiency ELA	Percent Attaining Proficiency Math
Male	2003	70.5	70.6	70.3	38	40
	2004	70.2	74.4	66.0	37	31
	2005	75.6	74.7	76.5	36	53
	2006	78.6	79.6	77.6	54	59
Female	2003	69.0	77.3	60.6	25	26
	2004	81.5	86.2	76.8	37	34
	2005	69.7	76.8	62.5	32	33
	2006	86.0	90.8	81.1	34	30

Both gender subgroups in Franklin County had improved overall performance between 2003 and 2006 on the MCAS tests. The average proficiency gap for male students narrowed from 29 to 21 PI points, and for female students it narrowed from 31 to 14 PI points. These gains resulted in improvement rates of 27 percent for male students and 55 percent for female students. During this period, the average performance gap between male and female students changed from two PI points in favor of male students to seven PI points in favor of female students.

Participation

Are all eligible students participating in required state assessments?

Finding:

- On the 2006 MCAS tests in ELA and math, eligible students in Franklin County 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
Franklin County	ALL LEVELS	**142**	**144**
	Advanced	2	25
	Proficient	84	60
	Needs Improvement	50	36
	Warning/Failing	6	23
Regular Education	Advanced	2	23
	Proficient	74	49
	Needs Improvement	28	24
	Warning/Failing	1	10
Disability	Advanced	0	2
	Proficient	10	11
	Needs Improvement	22	12
	Warning/Failing	5	13
Limited English Proficient	Advanced	0	0
	Proficient	0	0
	Needs Improvement	0	0
	Warning/Failing	0	0
White	Advanced	2	25
	Proficient	82	58
	Needs Improvement	46	33
	Warning/Failing	6	22
Hispanic	Advanced	0	0
	Proficient	0	0
	Needs Improvement	0	0
	Warning/Failing	0	0
African-American	Advanced	0	0
	Proficient	1	0
	Needs Improvement	2	2
	Warning/Failing	0	1
Asian	Advanced	0	0
	Proficient	1	2
	Needs Improvement	1	0
	Warning/Failing	0	0
Free or Reduced-Cost Lunch/No	Advanced	0	19
	Proficient	61	40
	Needs Improvement	35	26
	Warning/Failing	4	16
Free or Reduced-Cost Lunch/Yes	Advanced	2	6
	Proficient	23	20
	Needs Improvement	15	10
	Warning/Failing	2	7
Male	Advanced	1	19
	Proficient	49	37
	Needs Improvement	38	22
	Warning/Failing	5	17
Female	Advanced	1	6
	Proficient	35	23

	Needs Improvement	12	14
	Warning/Failing	1	6

Notes

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		✓		**N/A**								✓		**2**
Needs Improvement	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓			**8**
Unsatisfactory										✓			✓	**2**

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: Needs Improvement

Findings:

- District and school improvement priorities were not standards based, as the attainment of goals was not measured in terms of student achievement data. Although the district had data available, it had no comprehensive system-wide data management structure to drive district/school improvement decision-making.
- Systemic ongoing monitoring of student achievement data was not performed; however, an annual review of the School Improvement Plan (SIP) was conducted.
- The attainment of school improvement goals and student achievement data were not a basis of administrators' evaluation.
- The superintendent delegated the educational and operational leadership of the school, despite an overlap in the lines of responsibility for administrative functions.
- A culture of cooperation, respect, and trust existed within the district/school community and with the regional member communities.

Summary

The school committee was aware of its responsibilities under the Education Reform Act of 1993. Subcommittees primarily focused on policies and finances. Knowledge of student achievement and other relevant data was exhibited by the school committee and utilized in members' decision-making. Representative city and town financial officials described an environment of support and collaboration between member communities and the district. The superintendent, business manager, and school committee communicated transparent information that engendered confidence and trust in the district. Visible community service projects and the skills of the graduates were seen as positive attributes by the region's member city and towns.

A district/school environment of support and teamwork existed between the administration and faculty in working toward improvement of student achievement. Administrators and faculty expressed the availability of information and the presence of fair treatment as major contributors to the collaborative culture. Although administrators and staff described some faculty resistance to the full implementation of improvement initiatives, an overall sense was conveyed that concerns and issues could be addressed. The superintendent delegated the educational and operational leadership of the school to the principal and administrators with the authority and responsibility to carry out the major administrative functions of the school. However, overlap in the lines of responsibility for administrative functions existed between the superintendent and administrators due to a lack of clarity in policy and practice, as well as the small size of the district.

District and school leaders considered the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and the weekly administrative meetings as the driving force for improvement of programs and services. Improvement priorities were not standards based, in that the attainment of goals was not measured in terms of student achievement data. The attainment of school improvement goals and student achievement data were not a basis of the administrator evaluation process. No formal selection, gathering, or use of these data was employed in the decision-making process. The generation and collection of data to measure student achievement relied on limited sources, and the district conducted minimal analysis and interpretation of the data. A summary was provided of the previous year's improvement plan goal attainment; progress was measured in terms of anecdotal data rather than quantifiable student achievement data.

The district provided competency-based and individualized vocational instruction. No requirement existed to collect, analyze, and interpret student competency assessment data to improve vocational instruction. Vocational competencies were currently being aligned with the 2005 Vocational Technical Education Frameworks.

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: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The district and school leaders exhibited an understanding of the district's institutional philosophy. Statements of goals, mission, and vision were not used to guide district or school improvement, however. The priorities established in the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 School Improvement Plans (SIPs) were relevant to the district's philosophy, although they were not standards based in that the attainment of goals was not measured in terms of student achievement data.

The district/school philosophy was found to be published in the SIPs, student and staff handbooks, and on the district's website. Both the philosophy and statement of goals were found in the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) report dated November 2004 and posted in the high school's front lobby. The superintendent stated that NEASC cited the fact that the philosophy content and goals were not given sufficient attention. The SIP was viewed as indirectly reflective of the district/school philosophy.

District and school leaders considered the SIP and the weekly administrative meetings as the driving force for improvement of programs and services. Program changes reported in the 2005-2006 SIP included the additional requirement for a presentation of the senior project to a faculty panel and the implementation of required biology courses at grades 9 and 10. The alignment of current vocational competencies to the new state vocational-technical frameworks had begun, and the improvement of school spirit through the initiation of a variety of student activities was

cited as a school improvement directed by the SIP. Anecdotal information rather than quantifiable student achievement data was cited as the basis for determination of goal attainment.

A review of documents from weekly administrative meetings during the review period disclosed that meetings were agenda driven with recorded minutes beginning in January 2007. A review of 2007 meeting minutes revealed a review and discussion of vocational program enrollment following the exploratory cycle and the future allocation of personnel and resources. Examiners reviewed a faculty meeting agenda, which included the presentation of Basic Achievement Skills Inventory (BASI) norm-referenced achievement test data and statewide student assessment data. Plans to redesign the library/media center were also presented at the weekly administrative meeting with implications for resource allocation.

A review of the School Improvement Plans and interviews with district and school leaders revealed that the attainment of goals was not measured in terms of student achievement data. Goal attainment was described in terms of "method," or activities to be accomplished. Persons or groups responsible for the attainment of goals or activities, timelines, obstructions, and the evaluation of attainment were not components of the SIP. Resources to support goal attainment were not identified. A "Progress Update on Goals" was provided in the previous year goals; however, progress was not measured in terms of student achievement data. The degree of success of implementation of activities and initiatives identified at administrative meetings was also determined primarily by anecdotal information rather than quantifiable student achievement data.

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

Representative members of the school committee demonstrated knowledge of their duties and responsibilities under the Education Reform Act. An awareness of student achievement and other relevant data was exhibited, and use of these data in the decision-making process was demonstrated.

Seven representatives of the 24-member school committee were interviewed. Members demonstrated knowledge regarding their responsibilities under the Education Reform Act, including policymaking and the employment of the superintendent. Also, budget approval was indicated as a fundamental responsibility. Members cited the value of training for new members. However, none of the members present had received formal training, and the committee had not been a member of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) for several years due to financial reasons.

A review of the school committee structure revealed 12 permanent and ad hoc subcommittees. Discussions were conducted with school committee members and district/school administrators regarding the purpose of several subcommittees. These included building and grounds, curriculum, and discipline. It was disclosed that these subcommittees focused on policy and finances and did not serve to overextend the school committee's duties and responsibilities under education reform.

Interviews with district/school administrative leaders and school committee members revealed that student achievement and other relevant data were provided to the school committee. Members demonstrated their knowledge of these data and discussed the practice of using these data in their decision-making process. They were aware of the average performance of the district in relation to all districts in the state and the significant increase in performance between 2005 and 2006. Some committee members were also aware of the district's decline in MCAS performance relative to that of other vocational-technical districts during the review period, from the top third tier to the middle tier. Math curriculum and textbook changes made several years ago were cited as addressing low MCAS math scores. The Child Care Program was closed because of data indicating low enrollment. Significant student participation and success in student organizations, such as Future Farmers of America (FFA) and SkillsUSA, led to the establishment of a permanent budget line item for student clubs.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The district had data sources; however, no comprehensive system-wide data generation or collection structure was used to drive district/school improvement decision-making. Data sources were not selected to allow for continuous evaluation of and improvement in policies, procedures, and instructional practices. The effectiveness of district/school improvement was not typically measured through the analysis and interpretation of student achievement or other relevant data.

The district policy manual required the school committee to evaluate the effectiveness of its policies and their implementation. Also, the policy manual required the superintendent, staff, and faculty to collect, organize and analyze data and information to formulate options. The results would be used to consider changing and improving district/school goals and objectives. No formal systemic data analysis was used to appraise and improve policies. The school committee, administrators, and faculty acknowledged the receipt of reports on a wide range of student achievement data and activities from the superintendent, principal, administrators, staff, and students. Interviewees stated that school committee members had an awareness of student achievement and other relevant data. However, no formal selection, gathering, or use of these data was employed in the decision-making process.

District and school leaders considered the SIP and the weekly administrative meetings as the driving force for improvement of programs and services. A review of the SIP goals and methods to attain those goals revealed that attainment was not measured by the analysis of student performance data. Examples of improvement efforts included the added requirement of a senior project consisting of a presentation before a faculty panel, and the implementation of required biology courses at grades 9 and 10. Also, the district began alignment of vocational competencies to the 2005 state vocational-technical education curriculum frameworks, and students' school spirit improved through the initiation of a variety of student activities. The effectiveness of these efforts was not measured using student achievement results. Plans to redesign the library/media center were also presented at the weekly administrative meeting with implications for needed resources. No data were selected to enable an evaluation of the effectiveness of this change. A review and discussion of vocational program enrollment data did follow the student exploratory cycle; future allocation of personnel and resources was determined by this data analysis.

From administrator interviews and a review of documents, the district's generation and use of data to measure student achievement relied on limited sources, and the district conducted minimal analysis and interpretation. The primary data source was the statewide MCAS student testing program. AYP data provided an aggregate overview of performance and improvement for all students as well as of the performance and improvement of the major subgroups in the district, including special education and low income. These data were not analyzed or interpreted to provide continuous evaluation of policies, procedures, or practices. The principal provided aggregated information using TestWiz to the superintendent and pupil personnel services director. The principal provided item and curriculum analysis for administrator and faculty response. The identification of a weakness in answering open-response questions led to training in Writing Across the Curriculum. Adjustments to curriculum and instruction made by individual teachers and the student portfolio requirement provided opportunities for addressing this weakness. There were no common, internal, formative or summative assessments to provide information on curriculum and instructional practice. District/school leaders expressed the intent to use the BASI norm-referenced achievement test, implemented in 2006, at the beginning of grades 9-11 to measure academic improvement.

The district has been a member of the Department of Education's data warehouse project for two years. The district hoped that this project would provide grades K-8 student achievement data for all of its students. Two teachers began training in 2006-2007 as data coaches to eventually train teachers on the use of data to improve instruction.

The district annually generated the following statistical data for the DOE: directory information, student enrollment, teacher data, financial comparisons, and student participation summary statistics. The district also generated student graduation and placement information. Interviews with administrators and document review indicated that the district did not have a policy for a systematic process to analyze and interpret these or other data to continuously evaluate and improve policies, procedures, and instructional practices. Student achievement data and statistical information were not linked in any fashion to the decision-making process.

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: N/A

Evidence

The district consists of one school, and therefore the School Improvement Plan is the District Improvement Plan.

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: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The district leadership did not explicitly focus or differentiate the use of resources to balance opportunities for segments of the student population. However, the school utilized funds to address identified student support initiatives and capital facilities.

No specific segment of the student population was identified for targeted funding; however, the district leadership cited the 2006 implementation of required biology labs and courses at grades 9 and 10.

No capital plan for facilities existed in the district during the review period. District leadership revealed the neglect of technology and the need for updating it over a two-year period, FY 2006 and FY 2007. Budget appropriations for FY 2008 included $100,000 for this purpose, and this was confirmed in administrator interviews and budget document review.

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: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The annual recommended and approved district budget exceeded the state-established minimum local contribution for the regional district. The district leadership, school administration, and faculty attested to the adequacy of the operating budget. However, no analysis of student achievement data was used as a basis for developing an educationally sound budget.

During interviews, the school committee, administrators, and faculty expressed that the annual budget was sufficient to meet the educational needs of the district/school. The documented budgets during the review period exceeded the required net school spending as follows: FY 2004, by $998,463 (20.7 percent); FY 2005, by $791,087 (14.8 percent); and FY 2006, by $1,382,420 (24.6 percent).

Interviews were conducted with representatives from two of the 19 towns in which the largest number of Franklin County Technical School students resided. The interviews included two members of the City of Greenfield's ways and means committee and four members of the Town of Montague's finance committee. Town officials, school committee members, and district administrators described annual budget advocacy as an informational process with little dissension from member communities. Town officials and school committee members expressed confidence and trust in the superintendent and business manager to communicate information and to present a reasonable budget request.

A review of budget preparation documentation and interviews with the district leadership revealed that no analysis of student achievement data was used as a basis for developing an educationally sound budget. The district's budget was driven by the bottom line established by the superintendent, business manager, and school committee to meet an acceptable assessment to the regional member communities. Offsets from the student tuition receipts and excess and deficiency revolving accounts were consistently used to reduce the assessment to member communities.

7. <u>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.</u>

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The district/school leadership provided annual reporting on activities and the attainment of improvement plan goals to the school committee, staff, and community. Student achievement information was presented to stakeholders; however, improvement was not typically measured through the analysis and interpretation of student achievement or other relevant data.

The district policy manual required the school committee to keep the local citizens informed about the school and to keep itself and the school staff informed about the needs and wishes of the public. The extent to which SIP goals were attained, particularly regarding student achievement, was not reported to the general public.

The School Improvement Plans for 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 contained a narrative entitled "Progress Update on Goals" for the previous school year. The SIPs were not standards based in that the attainment of goals was not measured in terms of student achievement data. The "Progress Update on Goals" described the extent to which each goal was attained; however, no analysis and interpretation of student achievement or other relevant data were conducted.

The district/school website provided operational information, information on school activities, MCAS results, and AYP reports. Also, links to the DOE curriculum frameworks, district staff, and parent portal access were provided. The School Improvement Plan was not provided on the website.

The district policy manual required the superintendent, with the approval of the school committee, to submit an annual report to each member municipality. The report was to contain financial, operational, and maintenance information. Also, MGL Chapter 72, Section 4, requires an annual report of the school committee to the towns. A report was written by the superintendent containing student enrollment and placement statistics, aggregate AYP attainment, community involvement, and general operational information. A review of the document revealed no student achievement data or direct reference to improvement plans. District/school leaders described the two parent representatives on the school council as community members who received School Improvement Plan updates. The district/school provided no community newsletter or periodical. Numerous newspaper articles regarding the

school were displayed; however, none presented information on improvement plan goal attainment.

The school committee, administrators, and faculty acknowledged the receipt of reports on a wide range of student achievement data and activities from the superintendent, principal, administrators, staff, and students. School committee members and district/school administrators explained that these reports indirectly referenced the attainment of improvement plan goals.

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 district had no policy or practice that required all staff to regularly use student assessment data to improve instructional programs and services; however, aggregated and disaggregated student assessment data were provided to staff to improve academic instruction. There was limited evidence that data on student vocational competency attainment were used to improve vocational program instruction.

Administrator interviews and a review of documents indicated that the district's generation and collection of data to measure student achievement relied on limited sources, and the district conducted minimal analysis and interpretation. The primary data source was the statewide MCAS tests. Data aggregated using TestWiz were provided by the principal to the superintendent and pupil personnel services director. The principal provided item and curriculum analysis for administrator and faculty response. The identification of a weakness in open-response questions led to training in Writing Across the Curriculum. Curriculum and instruction adjustments made by individual teachers and the student portfolio requirement provided opportunities for addressing this weakness. The district/school had no common internal formative or summative assessments for instructional improvement.

The district has been a member of the DOE's data warehouse project for two years. The district hoped that this project would provide K-8 student achievement data for all of its students. Two

teachers began training in 2006-2007 as data coaches to train teachers on using data to improve instruction.

A review of documentation and interviews with administrators and teachers revealed no requirement for vocational teachers to regularly use aggregated and disaggregated student assessment data to improve instructional programs and services. Vocational competencies were being aligned with the 2005 vocational-technical education curriculum frameworks. Vocational competency attainment data were not used to improve instruction.

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: Needs Improvement

Evidence

District/school leaders did not perform systemic ongoing monitoring of student achievement data that promoted district/school improvement as identified in the School Improvement Plan during the entire year. An annual review of the School Improvement Plan was performed; however, it was not based on student achievement data.

The district policy manual required the school committee to establish goals and policies for the administration and continuous improvement of school programs. Also, the policy manual required the superintendent, staff, and faculty to collect, organize, and analyze data and information in order to formulate options. The results would be used to consider changing and improving district/school goals and objectives. The job description of the superintendent required leadership in the development of continuous evaluation. However, no systemic periodic monitoring of SIP goals was established. Administrators, in interviews, noted that no common internal formative or summative assessments existed to provide periodic information on curriculum and instructional practice.

A review of the School Improvement Plans and interviews with district and school leaders revealed that the attainment of goals was not measured in terms of student achievement data. Goal attainment was described by “method” or activities to be accomplished. A “Progress

Update on Goals" was provided annually on the previous year goals; however, progress was not measured in terms of student achievement data. Program changes did occur as a result of the 2005-2006 SIP. Additional requirements for a presentation of the senior project to a faculty panel and the implementation of required biology courses at grades 9 and 10 were among program improvements. Also, the alignment of current vocational competencies to the new state vocational-technical frameworks had begun as a result of school improvements directed by the SIP.

The modification of district/school programs was seen as a result of the School Improvement Plan. However, no systemic, ongoing monitoring of student achievement data was performed to enable periodic changes. An annual review of the goals was performed, although it was not based on student achievement results.

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: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

The superintendent, principal, and administrators were evaluated on an annual basis. MCAS results, other student achievement data, and the attainment of SIP goals were not a basis of the evaluation.

The superintendent's contract stipulates that the evaluation procedure be mutually agreed to with the school committee. No evaluation procedure was cited in the principal's or other administrator contracts. An annual performance evaluation was specified in the job description of all administrators except the superintendent, principal, and coordinator of pupil personnel services. The district policy manual required the annual evaluation of the superintendent, an agreed upon set of evaluation criteria, data from other sources, and the "probable more appropriate" conduct of the evaluation in executive session. Administrator job descriptions referred to the district policy manual on administrative evaluation. The district policy was primarily a presentation of the state evaluation regulations. The policy defined basic terms including performance standards

to meet the Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership adopted by the Massachusetts Board of Education.

EQA examiners conducted a review of all nine administrator personnel folders, including those of the current and previous superintendents. No evaluations were found in the folders of the superintendents. Superintendent evaluations were subsequently provided for the three most recent superintendents. These evaluations were contained in the file of the school committee's subcommittee on superintendent evaluation.

A review of personnel files and interviews with administrators and school committee members revealed that evaluations were not based on MCAS results, other student achievement data, or SIP goal attainment. Earlier principal evaluations performed by the superintendent and other administrator evaluations performed by the principal were aligned with the Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership. The most recent evaluations were aligned with individual job descriptions. A telephone interview conducted with the previous superintendent clarified, and school committee interviews confirmed, that the change in evaluation practices reflected the opinion of the school committee. Evaluations provided information regarding administrator performance; however, no feedback was given to promote growth or overall effectiveness. The superintendent and the principal stated that frequent contact with and observations of administrators were afforded by the relatively small size of the district/school. They suggested that direct verbal feedback on performance was provided to individuals.

The superintendent evaluation instrument completed by school committee members, and the similar instrument used for staff and faculty response, aligned with the Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership. The compilation of the current superintendent's evaluation consisted of a numerical total of the number of positive and negative comments. Also included was a list of the actual comments from school committee members and those made by staff. No ratings of performance indicators were provided. The comments were viewed as informative regarding the superintendent's performance; however, no instruction was given to promote growth or overall effectiveness. The evaluation of previous superintendents followed a similar process, with a report on the evaluation summary taking place at a school committee meeting. Neither a representative of the committee nor the superintendent signed any documents.

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: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The superintendent delegated the educational and operational leadership of the school to the principal. However, overlap in the lines of responsibility for administrative functions existed. Student achievement data were not used to formally assess the performance of the principal and other administrators.

The district organizational chart dated October 14, 2004 clearly indicated that the principal and school administrators held responsibility for the major administrative functions of the school. Interviews with the superintendent, principal, and faculty revealed that the principal and school administrators had the authority to carry out their responsibilities.

A review of all administrative personnel job descriptions revealed inconsistent reporting authority between the job descriptions and the organizational chart. The discrepancies existed for the positions of the director of curriculum and instruction, the coordinator of pupil services/special education/Title I, and the technology coordinator. Interviews with the school committee and administrators revealed conflicting opinions on the reporting lines and evaluation responsibility for the business manager. Dual reporting to both the superintendent and the assistant superintendent/principal were established in the job description of the coordinator of pupil services/special education/Title I, and operationally for the technology coordinator. Interviews with administrators revealed some overlap in the involvement of the superintendent and the assistant superintendent/principal in the administrative functions of purchasing, professional development, buildings and grounds, and food services. Efforts were made to divide the district functions of budget development and community relations from school operations. District/school administrators identified duplication of authority as a product of small district/school size and expressed the need for clarification.

Leadership delegation by the superintendent was based on long-term association and mutual respect for school administrators. The economy of district/school size was described and

observed as an opportunity for daily face-to-face individual communications. District and school leadership saw the weekly meeting of all administrators as paramount to providing and receiving information and effective administrative performance. Student achievement data were included in this communication process, and the administration identified this as an informal indicator of leadership success.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The superintendent and school committee have created a culture of cooperation, respect, and trust within the district/school community and with the regional member city and towns. An environment of collaboration was established to promote improved student achievement.

The district policy manual required the school committee to inform the local citizenry about the school and to keep itself and school staff informed about the needs and wishes of the public. Representative city and town financial officials described an environment of support and collaboration that existed between member communities and the district. They viewed the reason for confidence and trust in the district/school to be the transparent information that was communicated by the superintendent, business manager, and the appointed school committee member. In addition, citizens and officials of the region's city and towns viewed community service projects and the skills of the graduates as visible positive attributes.

A district/school environment of support and teamwork did exist between the administration and faculty in working toward improvement of student achievement. Administrators and faculty expressed the availability of information and the presence of fair treatment as major contributors to the collaborative culture. Some administrators and staff members identified some faculty resistance to the full implementation of the student portfolio initiative and the alignment of the vocational-technical curriculum to the state frameworks. There was an overall sense that concerns and issues could be addressed.

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

Rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

A district/school safety plan was distributed that addressed limited individual student and schoolwide crisis procedures. A crisis response team protocol was included in the 2006-2007 faculty and staff handbook. Emergency situations included individual trauma and death, bomb threats, fire, odors, and hazardous material release. Public safety officials annually reviewed building evacuation. An evacuation drill was conducted during the EQA examination. The procedure between district/school administrators and safety officials to account for all students was considered uncoordinated.

The superintendent provided a building invasion protocol dated April 1, 2007. Interviewees anticipated imminent review with local safety officials, distribution, and implementation of this plan. While the development stages for a district/school safety plan have been completed, little was actually accomplished during the review period.

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

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: Unsatisfactory

Findings:

- The district had inconsistent curriculum guides in both academic and vocational areas. Several were only course outlines and were not clearly aligned with the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks.
- The curriculum did not uniformly address objectives, resources, instructional strategies, timelines, articulation maps, or measurable outcomes in either the academic or vocational areas.
- The curriculum in the core academic areas did not have consistent horizontal or vertical alignment, nor a regular review cycle.
- Technology was widely available and used across the content areas.
- Data analysis that occurred, especially as part of a curriculum revision process, was informal and teacher driven. The district did not have a formal policy or procedure to use student achievement data to make changes in the curriculum.
- The district did not have a policy or structure for modeling, evaluating, and refining research-based instructional practices. Rather, instructional practices were teacher driven and varied widely across the content areas and throughout the vocational shops.

- The district did not require teachers to use assessment information in the planning of instruction.

Summary

The Franklin County Technical School did not have a consistently aligned curriculum in either the core academic areas or the vocational areas. The district had three different directors of curriculum during the review period, each with his or her own initiatives. In its most recent approach to curriculum development and review, the district paid stipends to teachers to write their own curricula. The district reported that it had a formal, schoolwide template addressing the components of a curriculum. On examination of curriculum samples, however, no consistent format was found, nor was there any professional development in this area, nor a formal system or structure for disseminating and evaluating the curriculum. A document review uncovered samples of curricula in social studies and math that included all components of a clearly aligned curriculum; however, these components were not widely shared nor adopted throughout the building. It was unclear as to how widely the curriculum was disseminated. Administrators were unable to provide details about the development or use of the samples reviewed. Although the district adopted new math textbooks prior to the review period, not every teacher used the materials, nor was there a system or structure in place to monitor implementation.

EQA examiners observed effective instructional practices at Franklin County Technical School in both the shops and the academic classrooms during the site visit. However, the district had no formal policies or practices to support research-based, effective instruction. Rather, classroom and shop instructional practices were teacher dependent, inconsistent, and relied on informal sharing and ad hoc discussions. Interviews with faculty and administrators revealed an inconsistent focus on effective instructional practice and a lack of shared understanding of research-based instruction. A review of documents and interviews with faculty and administration did not reveal a system or structure to evaluate or refine instructional practice on either a departmental or schoolwide basis. The School Improvement Plans did not provide evidence of a focus in instructional practice on student achievement results. A review of teacher evaluations revealed a lack of connection between analysis of student achievement data and teacher evaluation. Furthermore, the policy manual did not clearly articulate high expectations for effective instruction as measured by student achievement data.

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: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

During the review period, the district did not have a written curriculum for all content areas clearly aligned with the state curriculum frameworks. There were components of a curriculum guide in math and ELA. Classroom observations and teacher interviews revealed that the curriculum guides lacked uniform implementation. Teachers used different textbooks and implemented different scope and sequence models for the same course. Administrators confirmed this during interviews. There was limited evidence of measurable benchmarks for student competencies in any of the core content areas.

A review of the documents provided revealed that the science and history curricula were compilations of course syllabi. Further investigation by EQA examiners on the school's teacher share file revealed preliminary curriculum documents in U.S. history that did contain the components of a full curriculum. The documents were for U.S. History I, but they were not widely shared and did not contain summative evaluations for student outcomes.

A review of the documentation revealed that the district had curriculum guides for all 13 of its vocational shop programs. These guides were inconsistent in form and structure and varied widely in content. Interviews with administrators revealed that written curricula of this nature had been available throughout the period under examination, and that they were a work in progress. Observations and conversations with the shop instructors revealed that local advisory boards and competencies drove curriculum and instruction in the vocational areas.

Interviews with teachers and classroom visits revealed that teachers had copies of the state frameworks and an administrative directive to follow them. A number of vocational teachers explained that their curriculum was developed in-house and not aligned with any particular set of

standards. Instead, the curriculum was based on knowledge of the industry and input from their program advisory committees.

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

Rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

For the review period, the district provided little evidence of a formal system or structure for implementing either horizontally or vertically aligned schoolwide curricula. There were skeletons of curriculum guides in math and ELA, but they did not contain all the components of a good curriculum, and they lacked uniform implementation. Interviews with teachers and administrators revealed the district lacked a clear accountability system to ensure that the documented curriculum was implemented.

The district used stipends to encourage teachers to create their own curriculum for their content areas. A second-year teacher received a stipend to coordinate teacher-created curriculum guides. Interviews with administrators and teachers did not indicate any districtwide professional development in curriculum creation. A review of the documents did not reveal any formal direction provided to staff on developing curriculum or what components should be included. There was no consistent format in the documents that were developed. Administrative interviews revealed that several teachers were sent to a conference on curriculum mapping, but there was no directive on what to do with the knowledge and no follow up.

During the review period, there were no regularly scheduled department meetings in the core academic areas. The math and ELA departments did meet occasionally, but these were not consistent and lacked a focus on curriculum alignment. Administrative interviews revealed that the development of science and social studies curricula was dependent upon the relationship of two faculty members in each department.

The district did not have a schedule for the review of each content area curriculum. According to current administrators, there was no formal accountability system to ensure the written curriculum was fully implemented nor was there a structure in place to ensure that the guides were consistent across grade levels, aligned horizontally and vertically, and fully aligned with

the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks. A previous superintendent noted that the principal was responsible for ensuring alignment and effective implementation of the curriculum in the academic content areas and stated that the evaluation process was used to provide instructional feedback to teachers. A review of the personnel files revealed that less than 10 percent of the teacher files contained instructive feedback.

According to all personnel interviewed, the role of monitoring the adequacy of the curriculum, as well as its alignment to the frameworks, fell upon the individual teachers. The lack of department heads, regularly scheduled department meetings, and formal accountability systems contributed to a scattered approach to curriculum implementation. Administrative interviews cited a geometry course as an example; two teachers used completely different texts and followed different scopes and sequences for what the district's guide listed as a single course.

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: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

During the review period, Franklin County Technical School employed three different curriculum coordinators. Each offered a different perspective on the roles and responsibilities of the position, and the turnover contributed to the stagnation in and lack of coordination of curriculum development. This single position was responsible for four core content areas, 13 vocational shops, music, art, Spanish, and physical education. None of the coordinators was in place long enough to ensure the curriculum was aligned within content areas and across grade levels. There was no formal system or structure to evaluate or measure the effectiveness of the curriculum in any of the core academic areas other than a general grade-level or content-area MCAS data analysis. During the review period, Franklin County Technical School declined in rank among vocational schools statewide based on the MCAS test results.

Interviews with faculty and administration, a review of documents on site, and classroom observations revealed a caring learning community that focused on the improvement of individual students as measured by a variety of formal and informal instruments. However,

during the review period, the district did not have a formal system or structure in place to evaluate the impact of curriculum delivery on student achievement in any of the content areas. Nor did the district have a system to evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum in fostering the improvement of student achievement.

An example of the lack of alignment in curriculum and instructional delivery was given during administrative interviews in the math department. The district had spent over $100,000 on new math texts and materials for all students. Yet, the district did not have a formal system to ensure fidelity of implementation of the new math curriculum or to evaluate the effectiveness of the new expensive materials. The administration pointed to an increase in MCAS test scores, but during the review period the district had also implemented MCAS tutoring and extra support. There was no structure to evaluate the impact of the change in math materials on student achievement. Interviews with both faculty and administrators revealed a selection process driven by individual preferences and based on experience in Franklin County Technical School. Similarly, the evaluation was not based on research or a quantitative analysis of student achievement, but rather on faculty opinion of the materials.

According to all personnel interviewed, the role of monitoring the adequacy of the curriculum, as well as its alignment to the frameworks, fell upon the individual teachers either alone or in concert with colleagues. During the review period, there were no regularly scheduled faculty meetings for any of the departments. Franklin County Technical School also lacked department heads. There were no clear lines of accountability for student achievement. Rather, the district informally analyzed MCAS results, BASI test scores, and Accuplacer scores. Different faculty members attributed the results to a wide variety of external factors including home and community influences, and diverse practices and curricula at the sending schools. There was no formal structure to model, evaluate, or reflect on the effectiveness of instructional practices at Franklin County Technical School using student achievement data.

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: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

During the review period, the district did not offer consistent, structured, or formal leadership for effective instructional techniques. A review of documents and interviews with both faculty and administrators revealed an informal, qualitative approach to evaluating effective instructional practice. The culture of the school district supported an ad hoc system of sharing best practices but lacked a widely shared, research-based focus on the relationship between effective instructional practice and student achievement.

A review of documents including the professional development plan and the School Improvement Plan and interviews with faculty and administration did not reveal any formal policies or procedures in place to support, evaluate, and refine instructional practice based on research. A review of performance evaluations of 31 faculty members detailed a lack of connection between the evaluations of faculty performance and research-based, effective instructional practices. Ninety-one percent of the teacher evaluations did not contain instruction for improvement. These files also revealed a lack of connection between faculty evaluation and student achievement.

During the EQA examination, administrators shared that they were looking into using a walk-through tool to more closely monitor effective instructional practice and fidelity of curriculum implementation. This was in the emerging stages and had not been part of recent contract negotiations, nor was a specific tool identified. When questioned about specific documents labeled as curricula that were simply a listing of topics covered in a class, administrators acknowledged that they were listings of topics rather than curriculum documents or even course syllabi. There was no plan to document the curriculum; rather, one administrator revealed that he simply counseled some students not to take particular classes.

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: Unsatisfactory

During the review period, the district did not have a consistent, structured, and formal process for developing the curriculum based on timely research and that was tied to analysis of the MCAS

results or other student achievement data, nor did the district have a policy, procedure, or process that focused on improvement for all student subgroups. Interviews with faculty and administrators revealed a lack of focus on subgroup student achievement. As one interviewee stated, “We look at all our kids and then we look at individuals. That’s really all we do.”

Further interviews revealed that one administrator had primary responsibility for disseminating the MCAS results to faculty and staff annually in faculty meetings. There was some evidence of department-based item analyses with resulting curriculum changes. The science department cited a change in the biology course based on aggregate item analysis, but this was not consistent across departments.

A review of documents as well as interviews with administration and school committee members did not reveal any formal or routine sharing of annual student achievement results with the community. Faculty received information about MCAS data from the principal, and all reported easy access to the information from the guidance department. However, these data were not used for formal review and revision of curriculum.

A review of the policy manual as well as personnel files did not reveal any consistent expressions of high expectations for teachers in using student achievement data to inform delivery of the curriculum. The district had no formal systems in place to analyze MCAS data in a longitudinal manner or to conduct subgroup analysis time. There was no system for presenting the information other than the state-mandated school report card. Teachers reported visiting the guidance office on their own to request MCAS results. Few staff members had any training in TestWiz. There was no connection between teacher evaluations and student achievement.

The district did not require teachers to use student assessment information in the planning of instruction. While some administrators told some teachers to use data, this was a suggested practice. There were no formal meetings or districtwide professional development in using student achievement data to reflect upon and modify curriculum and instructional practice.

A notable exception in using student achievement data to evaluate and modify instructional practice occurred in the vocational shops. All teachers demonstrated a wide repertoire of differentiated instructional practices based on student competencies. There were clearly

articulated and established routines of instruction based on student competencies. The electrical and cosmetology shops offered multiple opportunities for students to practice skills to ensure mastery; one example was the wash, set, and blow-dry requirement for all students every day they were in the salon shop. As the instructor noted, by the time they graduated, students were proficient in the basic skills. This approach to mastery learning may explain the school's 100 percent success rate on the state Board of Cosmetology examination.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The district annually collected and analyzed student achievement data. The principal provided a summary of the data to the faculty, and item analyses occurred by grade level and content area. However, the district had no formal system or structure in place to analyze subgroup achievement. The district focused on improvement for all students within the building, based on the content areas.

Franklin County Technical School did not have a formal system or structure to evaluate student assessment data in content areas or by subgroups. MCAS data revealed flat performance among special education students during the review period, in which fully 70 to 75 percent of the special education students failed to attain proficiency in math and ELA. The district reduced the special education staff from eight teachers to six in 2007-2008, citing decreased need based on review of IEPs.

Interviews and a review of the documentation did not reveal a formal system or structure to use student achievement data from the MCAS tests, the BASI and Accuplacer assessments, or even teacher-created benchmarks to allocate instructional time. Administrators reported that when the MCAS tests first began, the district reallocated math instructional time to ensure that grade 9 and 10 students spent more time on learning.

The district analyzed data of and focused on students who had not achieved a Competency Determination on their MCAS tests. When the district identified a student as at risk, it offered a

range of support services, including extra classes and tutoring. Administrators and faculty stated in interviews that the focus of the district's efforts was on supporting all students to reach the minimum proficiency.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

In both the vocational shops and the academic areas, Franklin County Technical School provided a wide range of technology for students and faculty. This included computers, E-beams, vocational shop machinery, wireless laptop carts, and graphing calculators.

Observations and faculty interviews revealed that technology was an integral part of most classrooms. During the EQA visit, the last week of the school year, an entire ELA class was working on revising students' Shakespeare responses using laptop computers, a math class was using graphing calculators, and many students were finishing portfolio pieces using the district's computers.

There was no formal professional development or clear, structured expectation for effectively using technology. Rather, an informal culture of support and education among peers drove the wide implementation of the technology. The vocational shop teachers entered all student competencies online, used the I-Pass system for attendance and grading, and preferred e-mail as the means of communication between faculty and administration.

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

Rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

District and school leaders inconsistently monitored teachers' instructional practices for evidence of high expectations for students' work and mastery. Document review and interviews revealed limited evidence of a formal system to monitor and evaluate delivery of curriculum; instructional practices that reflected high expectations were not observed to be widespread. A review of the

curriculum guides did not reveal district-based, clear, formative or summative assessments that were consistent across or even within content areas; one science teacher understood that it was against policy to give final exams, and another teacher was giving a final exam during the week of the EQA visit.

Classroom observations showed that 62 percent of the classrooms observed reflected high expectations for student work, but the displayed student work demonstrated inconsistent expectations. Some were low-level and consisted primarily of student-colored posters. While the district had a formal mentoring program, the relationship focused on the routine of teaching in the particular school and not on supporting high expectations for student achievement.

A review of the policy manual, the School Improvement Plan, and teacher evaluations did not reveal a system for ensuring high expectations for students in all of their coursework. Observations of faculty, staff, and the building revealed an informal culture lacking a system of clear, high expectations for all. Expectations were teacher dependent and inconsistent within and across content areas.

A review of personnel files and the professional development plan did not reveal a focus on high expectations or a system of holding teachers consistently accountable for high expectations for themselves and their students. The lack of formality was pervasive.

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

While Franklin County Technical School administrators collected both formative and summative student achievement results, they did not use these data to monitor the effectiveness of instruction, to provide resources or professional development, or to support or maintain high levels of instructional quality. Rather, the faculty used student achievement data to focus on

remediation. The district's professional development plan focused on faculty interest and administrative need rather than a formal, quantitative analysis of student achievement data.

A review of the budget and interviews with faculty revealed that the district had more than adequate resources for professional development. The district had no standing committee to determine professional development needs or align them to the School Improvement Plan. Planning and implementation of professional development was informal, ad hoc, and not formally connected to either teacher performance or student achievement as measured by assessment data.

The use of formative assessments was teacher driven and informally shared with some colleagues. Interviews with faculty and administrators as well as a review of documents revealed that this practice varied widely across the building. Some teachers used formative assessments daily and effectively modified curriculum and instructional practices based on demonstrated student competency. Other faculty members only used summative assessments and moved on to "get through the frameworks."

The district collected and reviewed the annual MCAS results. The principal had primary responsibility for the analysis and dissemination of the data. Interviews did not reveal a focus on subgroup analysis. Data analysis identified students who were in need of remediation to provide necessary support services to ensure all students attained a Competency Determination.

A review of faculty evaluations and interviews with faculty and administration provided limited evidence that the district used assessment data to drive instructional quality. Rather, the perception of instructional quality was dependent upon interpersonal relationships and the perceived value of individuals to the needs of the administration. One administrator stated, "I don't spend time in classrooms where I know things are going well." When asked what measures he used to evaluate "going well," the response was classroom management and student reports. There was limited evidence of the use of quantifiable student achievement data to measure instructional effectiveness.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the site visit, the EQA examiners observed a total of 21 randomly selected classrooms and recorded the presence or absence of 26 attributes reflected in the Principles of Effective Teaching. The attributes were grouped into five categories: classroom management, instructional practice, expectations, student activity and behavior, and climate. The EQA examiners checked the attributes that they observed in each of the five categories during their time spent in the classroom. In total, the EQA examiners observed six ELA classrooms, three math classrooms, and 12 classrooms of other subjects. It should be noted that these visits took place during the last week of academic classes of the year.

Classroom management refers to the maintenance of order and structure within the classroom. Positive indicators of classroom management were evident in 85 percent of the classrooms observed.

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 68 percent of the classrooms observed.

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 62 percent of the classrooms observed.

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 62 percent of the classrooms.

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

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
Franklin County Tech	6	3	12	21	13.5	0.0	83	69	4.1

	Classroom Management	Instructional Practice	Expectations	Student Activity & Behavior	Climate
Total observations	71	128	52	78	52
Maximum possible	84	189	84	126	63
Avg. percent of observations	85	68	62	62	83

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

III. Assessment and Program Evaluation

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

Standard Rating: Needs Improvement

Findings:

- The district collected data from the MCAS tests and the Basic Achievement Skills Inventory and analyzed them to determine aggregate student achievement.
- The district did not disaggregate student achievement data to inform efforts to improve subgroup performance or provide extra support to those groups.
- All students were encouraged to participate in all required assessments.
- The district made substantial efforts to report student achievement to parents and staff through multiple mailings and the effective use of technology.
- The district did not use local benchmarks or other assessment information to determine ongoing student progress.
- Other than required outside program audits and the NEASC accreditation, the district provided few external or internal reviews of program effectiveness in the academic areas. In the vocational areas, several programs met industry standards for effective curriculum and instructional practices.

Summary

Between school year 2003-2004 and the EQA visit in 2006-2007, the district used several methods of student assessment. For most of the review period, the district regularly used the Accuplacer Computerized Placement Test. All grade 9 students took the test, and the results were used to place students into the most appropriate levels of math, ELA, and reading instruction. The results were also used to identify students who would benefit from additional support through the Title I program.

The district replaced the Accuplacer with the Basic Achievement Skills Inventory (BASI) at the beginning of school year 2006-2007 in an effort to improve the accuracy of placement decisions. The district also planned to use the BASI at the beginning of grades 10 and 11 to track student progress. The MCAS results were analyzed in the aggregate and item analyses were conducted to inform changes in curriculum and, to a lesser extent, instructional practice. Other forms of assessment were in use, generally for individual student evaluation or counseling purposes.

In addition to the MCAS and BASI tests, teacher-generated assessments were offered on a class by class basis. EQA examiners found little evidence of cooperation among teachers in developing group assessments, or in using common assessments for equivalent courses. The district had neither midterm nor final examinations in universal use, although some teachers reported using them independently. The district had no benchmarks or formal formative assessments in place to allow teachers to measure progress, although there was evidence that some teachers might be using them independently as well. One teacher reported the use of single concept in-class quizzes that functioned for him as benchmark assessments, but it was not clear whether similar practices were in use elsewhere. Teachers reported few departmental meetings at which best practices could be shared and disseminated, but the size and collegiality of the faculty allowed informal mechanisms of communication to develop naturally.

The district reported few structures for academic program evaluation in place during the review period. The district had no formal cycle for curriculum review and revision, resulting in little opportunity to formally assess program results. Programs such as Title I and special education were formally evaluated according to legislative requirements, and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) accredited the school. In addition, third party industry groups

such as the National Automotive Technicians Education Foundation and the National Institute for Metalworking Skills, among others, accredited several of the vocational programs for effective curriculum and instructional practices. All vocational programs evaluated students for competency attainment in order to provide competency report cards in grade 12 as a part of the student portfolio, but EQA examiners saw little evidence of the vocational programs conducting formal self-evaluations other than as a part of third party accreditations.

Indicators

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

District assessment practices and policies for the continuous collection, analysis, and use of student results needed modification. Data collection was limited, and their use was both undocumented and dependent on the data analysis skills of the individual teachers. The choice of assessment instruments had recently been changed, and the comparison of the two instruments had not yet been completed.

Prior to 2006, incoming grade 9 students were administered the Accuplacer assessment, an online placement test. The results of the assessment were combined with recommendations from middle school teachers to guide placement decisions for academic courses that would be challenging yet manageable for the students. Staff members, however, stated that the Accuplacer was "not particularly effective for placement," describing equally effective or superior placement decisions arrived at using the recommendations alone. As a result, the district began using the Basic Achievement Skills Inventory, Comprehensive, Level 4, Form A as a replacement beginning in August 2006. The assessment was given to all students in grades 9-11. Data from the BASI were used to inform placement decisions both in course selection and in Title I services. District staff indicated that in the future they would use the results to chart students' progress in both reading and math achievement over time.

District staff members also collected and analyzed MCAS test results. Once posted on the DOE website, the student achievement results were downloaded into TestWiz by staff in the

superintendent's office. They were then analyzed on a schoolwide basis to identify and address gaps in the school program. Examples of changes cited by the district were changes in math textbooks, although those were made prior to the review period, change in sequence of instruction in math and science courses, the development of materials for social studies, and the redesign of the biology course into two expanded offerings. In addition to using TestWiz, the district has participated for two years in the Using Data Project sponsored by the Department of Education, which included a data warehousing component. The intent of the data warehouse was to serve as a vehicle for the collection and analysis of student information over the students' entire educational career. Two teachers were selected and sent to the DOE sponsored training, and data were shared with the warehousing project, although, according to administrators, they had not received "anything useful out of the warehouse yet."

Through the spring of 2006, Accuplacer was also used to identify students for the Title I program. That use was terminated in the fall of 2006 and replaced by the BASI. In addition, the district reported that some students took the PSAT in grade 11 and the SAT in grade 12, although no internal use was made of results from those tests. Some students also took the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB). Once again, although the scores were kept on file by the district and used for individual counseling purposes, the district reported no particular use of the aggregate data from the ASVAB, PSAT, or SAT.

The district reported that analysis of data resulted in a change in the assignment of Title I staff members. All grade 9 students participated in a course called Technical Reading Skills taught by the Title I reading instructor. In addition, the Title I math instructor provided additional math instruction to reinforce shop instruction in geometry, which had been identified as an area of weakness based on the MCAS test results.

Although teachers were provided with both aggregate MCAS results and an item analysis of the test results as soon as they became available, there was limited evidence that teachers were sufficiently trained to make use of those, or other, data. One teacher reported using a Microsoft Excel file to monitor individual student progress, but this practice did not appear to be widespread based upon reactions of other interviewees.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the review period, participation on the MCAS tests was above state guidelines for all subgroups each year. According to Department of Education data, during 2004, 97 percent of grade 10 students participated in the MCAS tests. In 2005, the level of participation rose to 98 percent, and in 2006 it rose once again to 99 percent. In both 2004 and 2005, special education students participated at the level of 100 percent, and in 2006 their participation rate was 98 percent.

Staff members reported that special efforts were made to contact parents regarding the importance of the test through individual mailings and postings on the district website. According to interviewees, the only students who took the MCAS Alternative Assessment were those in the substantially separate program.

In addition to MCAS, all students in grades 9-11 took the BASI as well. Once again, parents were informed as to the purpose and the importance of the test and participation in it.

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: Needs Improvement

Evidence

While the district lacked formal assessment systems, it had structures in place to report the attainment of goals, progress, and effectiveness of learning to parents, staff, and community members. Interviewees reported that there were mailings to parents generated by both the principal's office and the guidance office that provided information on the attainment of goals on the MCAS tests as well as the PSAT, the SAT, and other assessments in place.

In addition, the district implemented the Information Management Group's Pupil Administrative Software System (I-Pass) to provide information to parents on students' academic performance. District staff reported that over 200 parents had accessed the system at least once over the period between the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 school years. The district provided information to teachers either through professional development days or through delayed openings designed for that purpose. According to interviewees, the principal conducted those sessions, outlining student achievement results and collecting feedback from instructional staff.

The district had no formal assessment system that included formative and summative data acquisition, analysis, correlation with statewide standards, and feedback loops. The district did report academic and shop grades to parents three times per year, with interspersed progress reports, but the district had no competency reporting system in place for the vocational programs despite the fact that competency attainment data were recorded and provided for inclusion in the student portfolio. Grade reports took the form of a single number to indicate performance level within a course, accompanied by a brief comment. EQA examiners found that the district had developed a standards-based report card in the past, but interviewees neither recognized it nor recalled its use. MCAS data were provided to staff and parents, and a link to the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) School Report Card was readily available on the school home page.

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: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

There was no evidence found or presented by the district that local benchmarks were used to measure student progress. The BASI assessment was administered in the fall of 2006, and the district reported plans to administer it again in the fall of each year to measure student progress and learning attainment, but it had not done so during the review period. Teachers were informed of MCAS results and similar measures of student progress by means of group meetings held during delayed openings, and there were some departmental meetings held in the ELA and mathematics departments. EQA examiners saw limited evidence that there were similar

departmental meetings held in social studies, science, or vocational departments, although the size of the school and the limited number of teachers in those departments allowed informal reporting mechanisms to develop. There were no common, midterm, or final examinations in place. The district reported no structures in place for teachers to share best practices, and professional development offerings were not targeted at training teachers in assessment or analysis of data. The size of the school, and the climate of collegiality and cooperation that existed therein, allowed communication to take place on regular, if informal, bases. Other than those informal practices, however, teachers had to wait for the annual MCAS analysis to determine whether students were making progress in achieving learning goals.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The district reported that it used aggregate student data to measure the effectiveness of instructional programs in math and ELA. There was little evidence, however, of any data that were available to measure the effectiveness of social studies, science, or other programs. Teachers reported that neither final nor midterm examinations were given as a district practice, although individual teachers provided final examinations if they so chose. The district had no examinations administered in common, either by grade level or by course. Thus, there was no way to determine whether there were particular portions of a course taught by multiple teachers that may have been more effectively taught by one teacher than another, nor was there any mechanism to improve instructional techniques through the sharing of such information. In addition, there was no single measurement of the degree of accomplishment of any individual instructional goals of each course. Also, there was no information available to aid in the selection of professional development programs designed to improve instructional skills among teachers.

The district had few support programs in place other than Title I and a summer school program. The BASI was used as an assessment instrument to identify students who would profit from the supporting instruction provided through the Title I program, but even plans to continue annual assessment would provide only annual measures of improvement and would not be conducive to

adjustments in curriculum and instruction during the school year. The summer school program was available to students who failed academic courses. The district made no effort to use the summer school to provide support for either students struggling on the MCAS tests or special education students. There was little evidence that records were kept regarding follow-up performance of students who participated in the summer school program.

Beyond curriculum changes initiated to improve academic scores and individual student success plans designed to improve individual student learning, little use was made of student achievement data to improve the collective performance of subgroups. Interviewees explained that the focus had been on providing services to individual students who failed to pass the MCAS tests rather than groups of students. This was possible due to the small number of students who failed. The district reported that after-school MCAS support programs had been used in the past, but that they had been unsuccessful due to the extensive time students who made use of those programs had to spend returning home using school transportation.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

While the district did participate in required external audits such as the Coordinated Program Review (CPR) conducted by the Department of Education, the occasional voluntary review conducted by the New England Association for Schools and Colleges, and three-year outside audits of the special education program, there were no internal audits conducted on academic courses of study or vocational programs.

The district participated in outside audits of vocational programs in automotive technology, auto body repair, culinary arts, welding/metal fabrication, and machine technology. In addition, students in cosmetology were required to take the state licensure examination following their 18th birthday. During the review period, all had passed, providing some indication of program effectiveness.

The district reported that it conducted internal program reviews at weekly administrative meetings, although there was little evidence that interpretation of student performance data played a substantial role in such discussions, at least on a regular basis. The district did indicate that vocational programs were "assessed both in the light of the frameworks and of student enrollment," but those assessments were informal and conducted on an irregular schedule.

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: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The district made use of MCAS results as well as pertinent data in assigning staff, prioritizing goals, and allocating time and resources. However, it occasionally ignored or misunderstood those results in reaching decisions. Administrators reported that staff members were assigned to grades 9 and 10 classes based upon their ability to impact student scores and teach to instructional goals set by the district. Course assignments were made on the basis of certification and experience in teaching a particular course. Administrators also reported that they then made modifications when appropriate, based upon the teacher's demonstrated ability to motivate student learning as measured by increasing MCAS scores.

In addition, changes to the assignments of Title I teachers were made on the basis of assessment data. Classroom observation results were used to identify programs for which instructional modifications were needed. The introduction of the vocational-technical curriculum frameworks required vocational programs to begin efforts to align curriculum with the new frameworks, and the district provided resources to sponsor curriculum work by teachers during the summer months in 2005 and 2006. In addition, the district reported that it used student assessment results in part "to direct staff development programming."

Although there did not appear to be one annual period of review of MCAS scores that drove decision-making activities within the district, administrators were generally aware of the aggregate results and used that awareness to make decisions when called for. Despite this, decision-making sometimes reverted to choices that were inexplicable based solely on the data.

For example, the district had employed up to eight special education teachers, a number which was reduced to six during school year 2006-2007. An interview with the previous superintendent suggested that the personnel cut resulted from a lessening of the need for services among special education students. Student achievement results, however, indicated that regular education students in Franklin County had improved overall performance on the MCAS tests between 2003 and 2006, but that the performance of students with disabilities declined during this period. The average proficiency gap for Franklin County's regular education students narrowed from 27 proficiency index (PI) points to 12 PI points, resulting in an improvement rate of 55 percent. The average proficiency gap for students with disabilities widened from 35 to 38 PI points. The average performance gap between regular education students and students with disabilities increased by 18 PI points during this period. In addition, the decision in 2004 to offer sending communities a zero-increased assessment appeared to be purely political and did not make use of any form of data that could be identified by EQA examiners.

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

There were changes in program offerings within the district during the review period and, although the changes were generally connected to the review of data, program evaluation data were not the prime source of information. Rather, data such as student assessment results, student course selection data, labor market information, program advisory committee recommendations and reports, and changes in the vocational-technical curriculum frameworks were used for this purpose.

Administrators cited "changes in the industry" as the motivating force in multiple changes in the information technology program. The separation of the childcare and health technologies shop that arose from the new vocational-technical curriculum frameworks, combined with local labor market information and student interest, was accomplished during the review period.

Implementation of the requirements of IEPs and student assessment data resulted in changes of staff to inclusion and remedial classes.

Two new shops were initiated during the review period. Heating, ventilating, air conditioning and refrigeration (HVAC/R) and office technology were the new additions during the review period. An interview with the prior superintendent indicated that the impetus for the creation of these programs was student interest and labor market data, and that it was supported by input from the general advisory committee, a representative group of parents and industry professionals selected from all of the vocational program advisory committees.

The district also cited modification of Title I services, science and history courses being developed, and restructuring and reordering of concepts in ELA and mathematics, and credited these program changes to evaluation data, but EQA examiners did not find evidence of supporting program evaluation results.

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	✓	✓	✓			✓								**4**
Needs Improvement				✓	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓	**6**
Unsatisfactory									✓	✓	✓			**3**

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:

- The district placed a high value on creating promotional opportunities for effective teachers as evidenced by the internal promotions of the last three superintendents, the incumbent principal, director of curriculum and instruction, director of pupil personnel services, dean of students, and technology coordinator.
- The professional development program was not informed by program evaluation, and only two of four new course offerings were accompanied by professional development activities.
- All district staff voluntarily and anonymously evaluated the superintendent on an annual basis, and forwarded copies of the ratings and comments to the chairperson of the school committee's superintendent evaluation subcommittee, for compilation and presentation to the superintendent.
- The district's four-year evaluation cycle for teachers did not comply with state law in that it did not prescribe formal evaluation for each professional status teacher in the third year of the cycle.
- The primary method of teacher supervision included frequent, informal, and individual dialogue between the superintendent and the principal, the principal and the director of curriculum and instruction, and the principal and/or director of curriculum and instruction and the teachers.

Summary

District hiring practices focused on the local geographic area and consisted of internal postings and advertisements in the local newspaper, as well as routine postings on the Department of Education website. Interviewees were comfortable with the process, but some wondered if broader geographical advertising might yield other qualified candidates. The process was routinely consensual among administrators, and the superintendent made salary placement determinations. An ad hoc committee of the school committee comprised exclusively of school committee members filled the superintendent's vacancy that occurred during the review period.

New teachers received trained mentors during their first year in the district. All but three of the teachers held certification in their assigned area of instruction, and none taught out of field. Teachers without certification held appropriate DOE waivers; those individuals were vocational teachers from the areas of culinary arts, plumbing trades, and cosmetology, and they met frequently and at the end of the year with the principal to review and document their progress toward certification. All core academic teachers were identified as 'highly qualified' on the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Report Card.

Informal conversations influenced the professional development program, and the administrative team considered suggestions during its weekly meetings. In-service professional development activities took place at monthly two-hour delayed openings. The district made $1,200 available individually for reimbursement for participation in professional development activities to all district personnel including teachers, secretaries, paraprofessionals, and maintenance personnel. Other than as mandated by grant programs, program evaluation did not take place during the review period. Two staff members took part in four-day training in the 2006-2007 school year on the process of tracking and using data to improve student achievement as part of a DOE pilot Using Data Project, of which data warehousing was a part. They were to function as data coaches and train the rest of the staff. Professional development accompanied programmatic changes in two of four instances during the review period.

The school committee evaluated the superintendent annually, placing the documents in the superintendent evaluation subcommittee's file rather than superintendents' personnel files. All district staff also annually evaluated the superintendent on a voluntary and anonymous basis. The

chairperson of the superintendent evaluation subcommittee compiled the ratings and comments and presented them to the superintendent along with the committee's evaluation. EQA examiners received a blank copy of the evaluation form and copies of school committee members' comments regarding the incumbent superintendent and the superintendent who served in 2003, but did not receive the actual school committee evaluations of the superintendent.

Administrator evaluation practices did not comply with statute. Contracts and evaluations failed to produce evidence that the superintendent and principal specifically linked improved student performance to district administrators' compensation. The former superintendent, at the direction of the school committee, modified the administrator evaluation instrument to reflect the administrators' job descriptions. Unlike the previous instrument, this one did not contain the components of education reform. Administrators perceived administrative evaluation as frequent, informal observation over time that lacked specific goal setting.

Effective systems of supervision were not in place to implement programs and goals for improving student achievement. The district implemented supervision through weekly administrative meetings and frequent, informal, and individual dialogue among and between administrators and teachers. Evaluation practices for teachers did not comply with statute in that the four-year evaluation cycle did not prescribe formal evaluation for professional status teachers in the third year of the cycle (observation phase). In that year, the teacher would select three peers to observe him or her for that school year. The supervisor received the written observations, summarized them, and used that summary as the evaluation for the year. Twenty-eight of 34 randomly reviewed evaluations were found to be timely.

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 in place relative to the employment of professional staff. Policies delineated the hiring and recruitment procedures, creation of positions, and employment of principals.

District documents and interviewees indicated that during the review period, the district experienced a professional staff turnover of 13 teachers and two administrators. Two individuals were non-renewed six retired, one passed away, three relocated out of the area, and one left for family medical reasons. Non-renewals included a computer technology teacher in the vocational area and an art teacher in the academic area. The administrative turnover involved the retirement of the superintendent and the director of curriculum and instruction.

Administrators interviewed indicated that the teacher hiring process began with positions posted internally and advertisements placed in the local newspaper, the Greenfield *Recorder*, and occasionally in *The Boston Globe*. The district also noted that it routinely posted staff vacancies on the Department of Education website. Informal verbal communication and networking among the Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators (MAVA) members were also strategies employed. Interviewees indicated that they were comfortable with the hiring processes, but wondered if there were other good candidates available that the district might have reached if it had geographically broadened its advertising efforts.

The principal, dean of students, director of curriculum and instruction, and teachers invited by the principal conducted screenings and interviews of prospective candidates for teaching positions. The selection process was routinely consensual among the participants. The principal discussed his selection with the superintendent and made a recommendation for salary scale placement. The principal indicated that, lacking any serious concerns regarding the recommended teaching candidate, the superintendent would make the final determination as to the initial salary scale placement. Once determined, the principal made the final offer to the prospective teacher.

Hiring practices for administrators varied with the type of position vacancy. In filling the director of curriculum and instruction and special education/pupil personnel director positions, administrators indicated that the principal had included district administrators whom he

supervised and several district teachers in the selection process. In filling the principal's position, the superintendent selected the appointment following the district practice of both posting and advertising the opening.

Administrator turnover during the review period that resulted in an administrator leaving the district was limited to a superintendent and a director of curriculum and instruction, both of whom had retired. The incumbent superintendent served initially as interim superintendent. An ad hoc committee of the school committee, comprised exclusively of school committee members, conducted the superintendent hiring process. Following posting and advertising, two finalists were selected for interview. The ad hoc committee made its recommendation to the full school committee, which appointed the former interim superintendent.

Administrators stated that they considered the new hires resulting from staff turnover as opportunities to find new staff to meet identified district needs. These opportunities were used to strengthen the staff to enhance the likelihood of improved student achievement. Interviewees further cited the district's meeting AYP and MCAS goals during the review period as indicative of the impact of employment practices on advancing student achievement in the district.

2. All professional staff had appropriate Massachusetts licensure.

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

For the review period, almost all of the professional staff held appropriate Massachusetts licensure. Fifty-two of 55 teachers, or 94.5 percent, held certification in their assigned areas of instruction. No certified teachers taught out of field for one or more periods per day. The three of 55 teachers, or 5.5 percent, without certification were vocational teachers who taught on valid DOE waivers. Those individuals taught in the areas of culinary arts, plumbing trades, and cosmetology.

All 22 teachers in the core academic areas in the 2006-2007 school year were identified as highly qualified on the No Child Left Behind Report Card. All of the district's administrators held certification for their positions. None of the five paraprofessionals met the federal definition of

'highly qualified,' but interviewees indicated that none of the paraprofessionals employed by the district were instructional aides and thus were not required to meet that definition.

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: Satisfactory

Evidence

A review of district documents and interviews indicated that during the review period, the district had four vocational teachers hired on professional waivers. Those four individuals included one teacher of culinary arts; one plumbing instructor; one cosmetology instructor, and one HVAC and information technology instructor. The HVAC instructor had recently completed all requirements for certification, and the other three individuals were making adequate progress toward obtaining certification.

Interviewees informed the EQA team that mentoring, support, and guidance were provided to all individuals on waiver to assist them in meeting the standard of substantial annual progress toward licensure. That support came primarily from the principal, who assumed responsibility for mentoring and monitoring the progress of teachers on waiver. The principal assigned a mentor to individuals and met frequently with the teachers throughout the school year to monitor their progress toward obtaining appropriate certification. Individuals on waiver also received support through the district's contractual professional development reimbursement language that allowed each individual a reimbursement of up to $1,200 each year for participation in professional development activities. At the end of the school year, the principal met with each non-professional status teacher to review and document his or her respective progress relative to obtaining appropriate certification.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Interviewees indicated that the district had provided both teachers and administrators with mentoring throughout and prior to the review period. Mentoring for administrators was informal, frequent, and conducted on an as needed basis with either the new administrator seeking some direction from a veteran administrator, or with the administrator's supervisor perceiving a need and initiating the mentoring. Administrative team meetings were cited by interviewees as a primary source of mentoring for a new administrator. Unlike teacher mentors, administrator mentors did not receive any additional compensation for their services.

Interviewees reported that the teacher mentoring program had been in existence for seven or eight years. The process of teacher mentoring began in the spring when the principal projected the number of mentors required in the upcoming school year. Mentoring positions were posted internally and selections were made from the candidates who had undergone mentor training as provided through DOE trainings. On the teachers' first day at work in the fall, new teachers met their mentors, who facilitated their initial orientation to the school. Examiners were told by interviewees that it was during this orientation time that the new teachers along with the rest of the staff were presented with some student performance data along with some administrative interpretation as to what those data indicated. The district was, at the time of the review, in the process of training two teachers in the DOE's Using Data Project, of which data warehousing was a part. The DOE had selected the district to pilot this project. The data warehouse included four-day training for two staff members on the process of tracking and using data to improve student performance. It was the district's intent, although only at the initial stages of implementation at the time of the review, that these two staff members would act as data coaches and train the rest of the staff.

Mentors were provided to teachers new to the district for one year. Interviewees indicated that a teacher could request an additional year, and that "informal mentors" in the form of teachers in the same department as the new teacher were common. Throughout the school year, mentors met with new teachers after school on many occasions. Interviewees indicated that mentors were to ensure that their mentees had the opportunity to experience an abundance of peer observation time and frequent interaction with their mentors throughout the school year. Classroom visits took place both with the new teacher visiting the mentor's classroom and with the mentor

visiting and scripting for the new teacher. Throughout the school year, administration conducted several meetings for teachers new to the district.

Mentor teachers functioned and were governed under language in the teacher contract that described the purpose of mentoring as to provide guidance, resources, and support for the participating teacher. Contract language clearly identified confidentiality as crucial to building the relationship between the new teacher and the mentor, based on mutual respect and trust. Toward that end, contractual provisions specified that all communications and knowledge gained between the mentee and the mentor must remain confidential. Mentors were "coaches"; as such, they did not and could not discuss the participating teacher's performance with anyone else. This included prohibiting talking to school or district administrators relative to the participating teacher's performance. The contract further specified that mentors were not evaluators and that a mentor's assessment of a participating teacher's performance was not used in the participating teacher's formal administrative evaluation. Mentors in the district received a stipend of $1,200 per year.

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

Interviewees indicated that administrators had shared only aggregate data with the teachers during the review period. The district primarily used TestWiz and Accuplacer reading and math assessments to assist students in passing the MCAS tests. Accuplacer was in place from the 2002-2003 school year through 2005-2006, and it was then replaced with the Basic Achievement Skills Inventory in the 2006-2007 school year. The district's professional development programs during the review period included primarily Excel spreadsheet training and the use of Accuplacer reading and math assessments.

The district encouraged all staff to participate in the Franklin County Professional Development Summer Academies, to attend the Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators conferences, and to attend the annual two-day special education conference held at Greenfield

Community College sponsored by the Western Massachusetts Special Education Directors' Association and the Mary Lyon Foundation. By contract, each teacher annually had $1,200 available for pre-approved coursework, workshops, seminars, conferences, and other professional improvement activities. This benefit was also extended to secretarial, clerical, and maintenance personnel.

The focus of the district's efforts in increasing data analysis skills to improve student achievement shifted in the 2006-2007 school year when two staff members took part in four-day training on the process of tracking and using data to improve student achievement as part of a DOE pilot Using Data Project of which data warehousing was a part. They were to function as data coaches and train the rest of the staff.

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

Interviewees and a review of district documents indicated that the district encouraged continued professional growth. The policy manual contained four policies that encouraged professional development. Policy GCCJ – Professional Development and Educational Improvement for Professional Staff prescribed the procedure that staff would follow to access professional development and reimbursement for activities. Policy GCEA – Orientation of New Personnel directed district supervisors in the manner in which to orient personnel new to the district. Policy GCG – Philosophy of Faculty and Staff Development described various types of professional development activities that the district would offer. In addition, Policy GDDE – Professional Development and Educational Improvement for Support Staff encouraged continued growth of support staff in the same manner as was accorded to professional staff.

The district's professional development plan contained as its first goal "Expanding Educators' Knowledge of Subject Matter." Included in a listing of professional development opportunities were the annual $1,200 available to all teachers for professional development, and the potential for an additional $500 as authorized by the superintendent upon request. Also included was a

statement encouraging all staff to participate in a number of conferences, workshops, and activities.

The district annually promoted the recognition of its staff both formally and informally. Interviewees indicated that formally there were an annual Teacher of the Year award presented as determined by a vote of the staff and a Pride in Teaching award presented as designated by the superintendent. Additionally, interviewees indicated that informal recognitions were made during the year either verbally or in the form of e-mails recognizing performance.

During the review period, the district experienced a professional staff turnover of 13 teachers and two administrators. The teacher turnover resulted from two non-renewals, six retirements, one death, three individuals who had moved out of the area; and one due to family medical issues. Non-renewals included a computer technology teacher in the vocational area and an art teacher in the academic area. Two administrators (a superintendent and a director of curriculum and instruction) retired during the review period.

Interviewees indicated that the district expended considerable effort to retain effective personnel. They cited the annual $1,200 credit available to all staff for professional development, the compression of the teachers' pay scale from 12 to eight steps, and the district's longevity buyout provision of an additional $3,500 per year for three years as incentives for staff to remain in the district. The longevity buyout benefit was available for up to five teachers annually after they had served 15 years in the district. Interviewees also perceived that the district maintained a good "climate" in which to work, one in which "ideas were welcomed" as being effective to retaining personnel. Throughout the review period, the district demonstrated its support and encouragement of professional growth through budgetary, grant funded, and tuition revolving account support of its professional development efforts that included expenditures of $182,290 in the 2003-2004 school year, $134,304 in the 2004-2005 school year, and $96,375 in the 2005-2006 school year.

The district placed high value on creating promotional opportunities for effective teachers. Examples cited by interviewees included internal promotions of the last three superintendents, the incumbent principal, director of curriculum and instruction, director of pupil personnel services, dean of students, and technology coordinator.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Interviewees perceived that the district's professional development program was influenced by informal factors. The process was described as beginning with professional development suggestions arising out of casual conversations that were then brought to the administrative team for discussion. From those discussions, in-service professional development activities emerged. Administrators indicated their belief that the School Improvement Plan and professional development plan were linked and aligned during the review period. Interviewees indicated that the SIP and the goals as listed in the professional development plan primarily drove the district's professional development activities. Teacher involvement in the process included participation on the school improvement council and informal input directly given to the principal. Additionally, professional development activities were determined in part by the use of a DOE staff survey that was disseminated by the technology coordinator in two of the three years of the review period. The survey results were forwarded to the principal who reported them to the administrative team. Excel training was cited as an example of an offering that resulted from the surveys.

In-service professional development activities took place during monthly delayed openings. These were days when the school would delay its opening by two hours in order to offer mandatory professional development activities for the staff. Each request submitted by a staff member for additional voluntary professional development had to receive the approval of the director of curriculum and instruction, the principal, and the superintendent in order to qualify for reimbursement.

Interviewees cited a professional development offering of Writing Across the Curriculum as an example of how the district responded to program content and student needs through professional development. Further, interviewees perceived that the School Improvement Plan's

broad goal #1 to "raise standards for student academic and vocational achievement" could be tied by the teacher to his or her individual professional development plan (IPDP). SIP goal #1 cited the following as the content for the monthly delayed opening professional development sessions: the student portfolio requirement, the senior project, Certificates of Occupational Proficiency (COPS), continuing the work of the grading/assessment committee, introduction of a new science curriculum, and the addition of new senior level ELA courses.

During the review period, there were no program evaluations conducted other than the NEASC accreditation and those mandated by grant programs. Interviewees perceived that having annually met the district's AYP target was at least partially an indicator of the effectiveness of the district's professional development program. The principal and director of pupil personnel services presented aggregate MCAS results to departments in a "hard copy" and directed staff to develop strategies to address areas of weakness as indicated by the data discussed in their departmental meetings.

Interviewees indicated that staff evaluations often produced recommendations for professional development. Some were in a written format but more frequently were informally conveyed through conversations with staff members. The principal kept copies of the teachers' IPDPs and informed them of their progress and obligation to maintain currency. This was true for both the academic and vocational teachers. A review of district personnel files indicated that the district had issued PDP certificates for training of less than 10 hours in duration. In interviews, administrators indicated that they sought to "bundle" those certificates under a broader category in order to meet the 10-hour minimum requirement established by the DOE, although this was contrary to regulation. An example cited was to categorize a number of activities broadly under "curriculum development."

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

During the review period, the district made changes in its programmatic offerings that resulted in the elimination of one program and the addition of four new course offerings, two of which were supported by specific professional development offerings. The district eliminated the community services program of child care and added a health technology program. This implementation was not supported by additional professional development offerings. In anticipation of the MCAS science test, an additional science teacher was added to the staff to develop curriculum and teach grades 9-10 biology. Similarly, this implementation was not supported by additional professional development offerings. Interviewees reported some professional development as accompanying the implementation of Writing across the Curriculum and student portfolios. Efforts at monitoring new and revised programs were accomplished through teacher evaluations and informal walk-throughs of classrooms.

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: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

A review of administrator evaluations and contracts failed to produce evidence that the superintendent and principal specifically linked improved student performance to district administrators' compensation. Interviewees and a review of all district administrator performance evaluations completed during the review period confirmed this. They indicated that student achievement was more an informal part of the administrator evaluation process than formal in that student performance was not indicated on the evaluation. Most of the reflection on an administrator's performance and evaluation was informal and conducted through frequent discussions between the supervisor and the supervisee. Progress and input on achieving SIP goals was a topic at the weekly administrative meetings throughout the school year. Interviewees viewed administrative evaluation as frequent, informal observation over time that lacked any specific goal setting.

A review of administrator evaluations indicated that two administrators were in the first year of employment and did not require evaluations at the time of the EQA review. Two evaluations were timely, both the supervisor and the administrator had signed all evaluations, but none contained the components of education reform. Interviewees indicated that, while the district's policy had consistently referenced the Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership, the former superintendent modified the administrators' evaluation instrument at the direction of the school committee to reflect the administrators' job descriptions. As a result, the newly created evaluation instruments no longer contained the components of education reform. Interviewees further indicated that the setting of goals had discontinued under the previous superintendent.

The administrator's evaluation instrument prior to revision by the former superintendent was standardized and comprised of several categories, each rated by a score of from one to five, with one being outstanding and five being unsatisfactory. It also contained a space for comments in each category. The former superintendent individualized the evaluation instruments and modified the categories to incorporate the administrators' job descriptions. All of the administrator evaluations reviewed were somewhat informative, but none were found to be instructive. Evaluators made only a few comments, and those were generally in the form of praise.

A review of the superintendents' personnel files failed to produce any copies of their evaluations. School committee members reported that the committee evaluated its superintendents annually. EQA examiners were informed by committee members that they would seek to provide copies of the evaluations for review. The evaluations of the superintendent were located in the superintendent evaluation subcommittee's file rather than in the superintendent's personnel folder. Further, the district practice was that staff annually evaluated the superintendent on a voluntary and anonymous basis. The staff completed an evaluation sheet and rated the superintendent on a scale of one to five, with one being outstanding and five being unsatisfactory, in a variety of categories. A rating of N/A was allowed for items that were perceived as not applicable or if the staff member was not aware of that item. Written comments were allowed, and the completed evaluation sheets were given to the chair of the superintendent evaluation subcommittee to compile the results. EQA examiners were provided with a copy of a blank superintendent evaluation instrument, a copy of comments made by the staff in April 2003

regarding the superintendent, and a copy of the comments made regarding the superintendent at the time of the review. EQA examiners did not receive the actual evaluation instruments completed by the superintendent evaluation subcommittee. A review of the blank superintendent evaluation instrument indicated that it did not contain the components of education reform. The comments made by staff were informative but not instructive. There were also no suggestions that would promote growth and overall effectiveness. Further, a review of the superintendent's contract and evaluative commentary made by the staff did not reveal a link between his compensation and continued employment to effectiveness or improvement in student performance.

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

Rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

During the review period, the district's evaluation practices for teachers did not comply with statutory requirements, as specified in MGL Chapter 71, Section 38, in that the district's four-year evaluation cycle did not prescribe formal evaluation for each professional status teacher in the third year of the evaluation cycle. District Policy GCJ-1-R – Evaluation of Professional Staff – Teachers prescribed that teachers would be evaluated using the procedures delineated in the Performance Standards and Evaluation Manual for Teachers. This was supported by language contained in Article 8 of the teachers' contract. The Performance Standards and Evaluation Manual for Teachers contained a description of the district's four-year evaluation cycle for teachers with professional status. The first year was the "evaluation phase" and included direct observation by an administrator. Year two was the "collaboration phase" and included mutual agreement between the teacher and his or her supervisor as to a plan of collaboration with a colleague and what the intended outcome of that collaboration would accomplish. Year three was the "observation phase" in which the teacher would select, with the supervisor's consent, three peers to observe him or her for that school year. The observations made would be given to the

teacher's supervisor, who would summarize them and consider that summary as the evaluation for the year. Year four was the "professional growth phase," in which the teacher would meet with a supervisor at the beginning of the year and come to agreement on a year-long plan of professional growth. That plan would be discussed periodically during the year with a determination made at the end of the year as to whether the intended growth had been achieved. Interviewees indicated that in the third year "observation phase," the three peers selected to observe the teacher would submit their observations to the supervisor who, in turn, would summarize them and add his or her own commentary. Interviewees expressed the belief that the addition of a summary as well as commentary by the supervisor fulfilled the requirements of the statute.

The teachers' evaluation instrument contained the performance standards for teachers as established by the district in the following categories: planning and setting goals and expectations; techniques of instruction; classroom management; school community participation; relationship with students, staff, parents, and communities; time management and routine duties; and professional development. A random sampling of 35 teacher personnel files indicated several things. One teacher's file did not contain performance evaluations. Both the administrator and the teacher signed all of the evaluations reviewed. Of the 34 teacher performance evaluations reviewed, 28, or 82.3 percent, were timely; 29, or 85.3 percent, contained the components of education reform; 20, or 58.9 percent, were at least somewhat informative and 14, or 41.1 percent, were uninformative; nine, or 26.5 percent, were perceived as being somewhat instructive and 25, or 73.5 percent, were not instructive; and only three, or 8.8 percent, of the evaluations reviewed contained comments to promote growth and overall effectiveness and 31, or 91.2 percent, either contained no suggestions to promote growth or contained general, praiseworthy comments.

The district had taken action against persistently low-performing teachers. During the review period, interviewees indicated that the district had non-renewed two individuals. Those individuals were a computer technology teacher in the vocational area and an art teacher in the academic area. Interviewees indicated that both of the individuals had opportunities to improve, and were encouraged to participate in additional professional development activities throughout the term of their employment in the district.

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: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

In a review of district documents and in interviews, it was determined that the district did not have in place effective systems of supervision to implement its programs and goals for improving student achievement. The evaluation practices for teachers did not comply with statutory requirements, as specified in MGL Chapter 71, Section 38, in that the district's four-year evaluation cycle did not prescribe formal evaluation for each professional status teacher in the third year of the evaluation cycle. In year three, the "observation phase," the teacher would select, with the supervisor's consent, three peers to observe him or her for that school year. At the end of the school year, the observations would be given to the teacher's supervisor, who would summarize them and consider that summary as constituting the evaluation and supervision of the year.

Interviewees indicated that the primary method of supervision included frequent, informal individual dialogue between the superintendent and the principal, the principal and the director of curriculum and instruction, and the principal/director of curriculum and instruction and the teachers. Classroom walk-throughs were also frequently employed as a supervisory strategy. Interviewees further reported that it was through the informal dialogue and weekly administrative meetings that administrators' supervisory efforts in the district were implemented. Interviewees indicated on several occasions their perception that the relatively small size of the district and its staff made an informal supervisory strategy successful. When EQA examiners reviewed 34 randomly selected teacher evaluations, they learned that only 28, or 82.3 percent, had been completed in a timely manner, and 31, or 91.2 percent, of the evaluations reviewed either did not contain suggestions to promote growth and overall effectiveness or contained only a few generally praiseworthy comments.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Interviewees and a review of district documents indicated that the district's employment, supervision, and professional development processes during the review period were disjointed but supported by adequate levels of funding. The teacher hiring process was reported by interviewees as being conducted primarily on a local geographic basis and began with positions posted internally and advertisements placed in the local newspaper, the Greenfield *Recorder*, and occasionally in *The Boston Globe*. Informal, word-of-mouth communication and networking among the Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators members had also been used to recruit new staff members. Though comfortable with the hiring process, some interviewees said that they wondered if there were other good candidates available that the district's efforts might have reached if it had broadened its geographical advertising efforts.

Supervision in the form of mentoring and the district's evaluation practices was provided to all teachers, with the principal assuming the responsibility for mentoring, oversight, and monitoring the progress of all individuals on waiver. Individuals on waiver also received support through the district's contractual professional development reimbursement language for participation in professional development activities. At the end of the school year, the principal met with each non-professional status teacher to review and document his or her progress relative to obtaining appropriate certification. Interviewees further indicated that most of the new hires in the vocational area needed professional development and that the district provided it. The same was not true in the academic areas as teachers hired were already certified. Professional development for academic area teachers more closely followed the goals identified in the SIP.

A review of the district's professional development plan in place during the review period indicated that it contained as its first goal "Expanding Educators' Knowledge of Subject Matter." Included in a listing of professional development opportunities was the annual $1,200 available to all teachers for professional development, and the potential for an additional $500 as authorized by the superintendent upon request. This opportunity also extended to all

paraprofessionals, secretaries, and custodians in the district. Also included was a statement encouraging all staff to participate in the annual Franklin County Professional Development Summer Academy, a statement encouraging attendance at the MAVA conferences, and authorization for all special education staff to attend an annual two-day special education conference at Greenfield Community College. The Western Massachusetts Special Education Directors' Association and the Mary Lyon Foundation sponsored the special education conference. Interviewees indicated that these activities were encouraged throughout the review period.

Throughout the review period, the district demonstrated its support and encouragement of professional growth through budgetary and grant funding of its professional development efforts that included total professional development expenditures of $182,290 in the 2003-2004 school year, $134,304 in the 2004-2005 school year, and $96,375 in the 2005-2006 school year. Those expenditures were reported in the district's End of Year Pupil and Financial Report and came from a variety of sources. Of the $182,290 expended in the 2003-2004 school year, $145,704 came from the budget, $31,516 from DOE grant funding sources, and $11,612 from the district's tuition revolving account. Of the $134,304 expended in the 2004-2005 school year, $104,412 came from the budget, $20,364 from DOE grant funding sources, and $9,528 from the district's tuition revolving account. Of the $96,375 expended in the 2005-2006 school year, $65,963 came from the budget, $30,412 from DOE grant funding sources, and none came from the district's tuition revolving account.

13. <u>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.</u>

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Interviewees indicated that the district had routinely conducted trainings on both fire and evacuation drills throughout the review period. This was evidenced when the local fire department conducted an unannounced fire drill while the EQA team was in the district. Administrators indicated that the district had revised its drill procedures by requiring students to

assemble outside of the school by homeroom, rather than with the class from which they had exited the school. This change allowed the district to take attendance and account for all of its students. This did not occur during the fire drill conducted when the EQA team was on site. The district had a safety committee chaired by the dean of students. There was no single source document containing all crises and emergency procedures. Procedures for evacuation and fire drills were contained in the faculty handbook. Interviewees confirmed that there were annual, written, signed local agreements with both the fire and police departments located in the superintendent's office relative to evacuations and fire drills.

In the spring of 2007, a "lockdown/shelter in place" procedure was developed and a practice drill took place after school hours and involved only the faculty. The procedure primarily provided directions for secretaries and specified instructions for teachers as to how the drill was to take place. Interviewees indicated that the district scheduled the lockdown procedure to be conducted as an annual drill and intended to include the procedure in the faculty handbook for the 2007-2008 school year.

The district also had in place an internal emergency notification system that operated by dialing the numbers 555 on any phone in the school. When dialed, safety administrators and the school nurse would report to the site of the emergency.

Interviewees indicated that trainings had been provided on fire and evacuation drills for administrators, teachers, and paraprofessionals. Substitutes were not trained but were provided with pertinent information on drills. The district did not have any student teachers or volunteers during the review period.

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

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: Needs Improvement

Findings:

- Franklin County Technical School staff did not use disaggregated student achievement data to determine instructional adjustments and provide additional programs to improve achievement for at-risk populations.
- The district staff did not use benchmark assessments and summative data in a systematic way to identify all students not meeting expectations and deliver remedial services to improve MCAS test proficiency.
- Professional staff absenteeism rates averaged 12.47 days even when long-term illnesses were dropped from the calculation.
- During the review period, no dropout recovery program was in place at Franklin County Technical School.
- Staff did not use a data-driven approach to increase the number of special needs and low-income students represented in advanced programs.

Summary

Between 2003 and 2006, the vocational shops operated at Franklin County Technical School included automotive technology, carpentry, cosmetology, culinary arts, electrical, health

assisting, HVAC/heating technology, information technology, landscaping/horticulture, machine technology, office technology, pre-employment program, plumbing, and welding/metal fabrication. The guidance department provided academic support services along with the coordinator of pupil personnel services, school nurse, special education teachers, and Title I reading and mathematics teachers.

Guidance academic support services staff advised students on class schedules, academic issues, and post-graduation plans, managed remediation and tutoring support, provided counseling for personal issues and family crises, provided/adjusted special education accommodations offered under section 504, provided Title I services, provided health services, and made initial parent contacts about student absences.

Special education students were included in all classrooms and shops, although no instructional aides were used except in a substantially separate pre-employment program. Low-income students had access to all courses and shops. Data were not analyzed to increase the numbers of subgroup students in higher-level programs. During the period reviewed, school staff reviewed assessment data but did not use a systematic approach to gather, analyze, and act upon benchmark and summative data in order to increase subgroup participation in higher level programs.

The district was below statewide averages in student and staff attendance rates. The district's dropout rates were below the state averages. The rate of student chronic absenteeism was 19.8 percent in 2003-2004, 22.1 percent in 2004-2005, and 17.9 percent in 2005-2006. The rate was over 28 percent for the senior class in 2005-2006, according to Department of Education statistics. During the review period, the district had no programs in place to recover dropouts and retain the maximum participation of students through graduation.

The dean of students administered student discipline. Administrators handled teacher referrals of students to the office, assigned students to after-school detentions, and suspended students. If the student behavior needed mediation, the guidance staff supervised peer mediators in the mediation process.

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: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The district did not use a systematic method of analyzing aggregated and disaggregated data to arrive at decisions to adjust instruction for at-risk students. During the review period, Franklin County Technical School teachers and administrators reported, and documentation substantiated, that programs were in place to support at-risk students. School staff gathered student achievement data and used this information to determine the appropriate placement for students, and added programs for at-risk populations based generally on the data. Between 2003 and 2006, guidance staff used sending district attendance and general achievement data and sending district guidance recommendations to admit new students and screen for possible at-risk students. Although the examiners were told in interviews that there were procedures in place for notifying guidance staff of potential problems of students, no evidence was found by or presented to the examiners showing a systematic and documented approach that assured appropriate and timely placement and programs for all students. District/school staff reviewed the MCAS and other assessment data in a general way and did not use a systematic approach to analyze aggregated and disaggregated student achievement data.

The 2005-2006 School Improvement Plan had several goals stressing the importance of student achievement. Goal #1 was to raise standards for student academic and vocational achievement. Methods outlined included the student portfolio; a senior project; attainment of the Certificate of Occupational Proficiency; a review of grading and assessment practices by the faculty; the establishment of a new science curriculum; and a new senior level English course. Examiners were told by administrators that no in-service training had been held for these new courses.

Special education students were served in regular classrooms with an inclusion model of instruction. No instructional aides were in place in the inclusion classes. One-on-one or two-on-

one tutoring assistance was available, and teachers referred students to the learning center through the guidance staff. The district had a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP); however, when administrators and guidance and teaching staff were questioned on its use, they did not recognize it as a tool for instruction. A reading teacher provided Title I technical reading instruction to all grade 9 students.

Freshmen attended the exploratory program in the fall semester, during which students had the opportunity to learn about four of the shops in operation at Franklin Tech. After-school help was offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays for all students, including special education and Title I students. Teachers notified guidance staff when students were struggling in class or in danger of failing as soon as issues arose. A student concern committee of guidance and teacher personnel recommended remediation services to the students referred. Learning center staff provided remediation to students pulled out of classes when they were perceived to be in danger of failing.

The examiners were told by administrators that Franklin County Tech offered a course in Applied Physics for students interested in pre-engineering at Greenfield Community College (GCC). Any student could take that course without prerequisites. Students were also encouraged to take a GCC 101 course in their senior year that was a prerequisite for all students at GCC, according to school staff.

2. <u>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.</u>

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Examiners were told that between 2003 and 2006, staff used guidance and teacher referral data to schedule students and identify students who were not meeting expectations, and provided these students with academic support. The staff reported, however, that they did not use a systematic approach for reviewing achievement data and, at times, missed struggling students. Summative assessment data were district driven and included MCAS test scores and Accuplacer results.

During the review period, guidance staff followed a process of gathering academic information for the placement of new and transfer students. New students coming from one of the grade 8 feeder schools completed an application, which included student information about grades, attendance, conduct, and a counselor recommendation. Guidance staff awarded points for each of the areas. Student services staff obtained MCAS and other test scores and any existing IEPs or 504 plans for all students who were accepted. They used this information to develop an inclusion model schedule for each special needs student. Counselors handled transfer students in a way that was similar to new grade 9 students. Needed vocational program information was also gathered so that appropriate placements could be made.

According to teachers and administrators, there were many support services available to help improve student achievement. All interested students who needed help with their subjects could attend after-school help sessions, which were available on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Vocational teachers used a competency-based approach that supported differentiated instruction for students. In addition to providing individual assistance to students during class, teachers referred students who needed more help to the learning center, which operated during the school day. All qualified students received special education attention with most special education students placed in inclusion classrooms. A reading teacher provided Title I services using a pullout model. There was also a Title I math teacher available. Guidance staff offered support for students whose family or emotional issues affected their academic performance. The school had an effective peer mediation program, with peers receiving training in grade 9 that they could continue until the end of senior year. Guidance staff recommended mediation to settle student disputes.

District/school staff used various summative assessment data for the placement of students into academic and vocational classes. Vocational teachers used competency-based assessments for developing baselines and for ongoing assessment of their students. The EQA examiners did not find and were not presented with evidence of the use of benchmark assessment data to inform academic teacher instruction and to continuously measure student progress. The school used a traditional approach for gathering student performance data in the academic subjects. In some cases guidance staff received data after students were already failing. Although district/school staff used mid-trimester failure lists and progress measures to report on failing students, they did not use a systematic approach in a timely fashion for identifying all students who did not meet

expectations. Guidance staff discovered many of the students needed academic support and made sure that they received supplementary and/or remedial services. At times the staff did not discover struggling students soon enough to prevent failure.

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: N/A

Evidence

Franklin County Technical School serves grades 9-12; thus, this indicator did not apply.

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: Needs Improvement

Evidence

According to teachers, guidance staff, and administrators, the district had several programs and approaches that contributed to smooth, effective transitions for students. The transition from grade 8 feeder schools to Franklin County Technical School provided the school with an opportunity to attract new students. The guidance department was integral in this process. Guidance, teaching, and administrative staff held special education transition meetings, provided programs to support students during their freshman year, and promoted smooth transitions from grade to grade, from school to work, and from Franklin County to work or further education. Teachers and guidance staff shared that they felt most students performed well at Franklin County Tech and that the achievement of many students improved there compared to their middle school performance. Teachers and counselors attributed this perceived improved achievement to the staff's use of "real world, hands-on" experiences, differentiated occupational instruction, and a focus on preparing for work.

During the review period, staff reported that the process of transitioning middle school students to Franklin County Technical School began in the fall of each school year with an informational

tour for all grade 8 students from all feeder schools. Guidance staff went to the feeder schools and provided information to students about the high school's programs. Students who wanted to attend Franklin Tech applied for admission. Admission was based on a point system with the points applied to each of the following areas: grades, attendance, conduct, and counselor recommendation. After students were selected for admission, records were requested, including records for special education and 504 students. Guidance staff reviewed admission applications to determine assignment to grade 9 classes. Based on interviews with staff, guidance personnel developed Title I selection criteria for incoming freshmen during the 2005-2006 school year.

In the fall, all freshmen took an exploratory program during the period reviewed in which students participated in learning activities in four of the shops at Franklin Tech. At the end of the exploratory period, students chose the shop that they would attend for the remainder of their high school experience. The examiners did not find and were not presented with any evidence that the teachers responsible for rating the special needs and low-income students had any systematic knowledge of accommodations needed for these students to succeed in their areas. Administration and staff in interviews stated that the special needs students were represented equally in each occupational area; however, there was no knowledge of equal numbers based upon data collected by the district.

Counselors reviewed the programs for all students and made adjustments for the next school year, as necessary. Vocational teachers and guidance staff provided training and support to students as they transitioned from school to their work experience.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The district in-school suspension rate for 2003-2004 was 25.1 percent, compared to the state average of 3.4 percent, placing the school over seven times the state rate. The out-of-school suspension rate in 2003-2004 was 15.6 percent, compared to the state average of 5.6 percent; in 2004-2005 it was 20.2 percent, compared to the state average of 6.0 percent; and in 2005-2006 it was 17.7 percent, compared to the state average of 5.8 percent. It should also be noted that

school policy considered an out-of-school suspension as an “approved” absence not counting as part of the maximum allowed before a course would not be credited. Administrators stated to examiners that they felt that the strict discipline policy and concern for occupational shop safety were contributing factors to the high rate of suspensions. Administrators also felt that because a student missing a detention was suspended, either in school or out, and many students missed detention due to work commitments or to avoid an hour or two-hour bus ride on the limited late buses, this contributed to the high suspension numbers.

The handbook indicated that the dean of students administered suspension policy, depending on the seriousness of the student behavior. Students received suspension for physical injury, property damage, stealing, plagiarism, and defiance of authority. Expulsion was recommended for students for possession of dangerous weapons, possession of controlled substances, or assault of a staff member.

During the review period, administrators reported to examiners that they believed the Franklin Tech faculty had in place equitable policies, procedures, and practices regarding discipline. The school handbook outlined the philosophy, detention procedures, bus conduct rules, suspension/expulsion procedures, and disciplinary actions of the school. According to teachers and guidance staff, the entire staff worked as a team to support consistently good discipline, especially in hallways and restrooms during passing periods. With safety being a priority in occupational shops, teachers did not tolerate inappropriate, unsafe behavior. Teachers issued “teacher detentions” to students for the breaking of classroom rules or policies and also sent students to the learning center for time-outs and to be counseled by the center staff person. Teachers also referred students for “office detention” with a behavioral report to the main office for serious discipline issues. Detentions were held after school on Tuesday and Thursday. Students with emotional issues went to the guidance office for support and assistance in returning to class. In a further effort to prevent behavioral issues, the district had a mediation program using trained peer mediators. Guidance staff reported that they held about 16 to 18 mediations last school year with all mediations staying resolved. Administrators reported that students with special needs received discipline in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws.

School staff worked to prevent students from failing in their classes, in an effort to prevent students from being retained in a grade. According to teachers and guidance staff, teachers reported struggling students to the guidance office. Students who wanted help with schoolwork could attend after-school help classes, offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The guidance director expected counselors to monitor all failing students assigned to them, but there was no written policy stating this expectation.

According to staff, grading practices and parent notification were also important in the prevention of failure and thus reduced the grade retention rate. Teachers shared that, in addition to recommending students for remediation, they encouraged students to make corrections on assignments or to retake tests to improve the student's grade to passing. Administrators reported that they worked during the last three years to prevent failure by having a teacher study group consider adjusting grading practices to reflect student mastery.

According to administrators and teachers, during the review period there was a lack of consensus among the teaching staff concerning the school's approach to the grading of student work. They reported that staff met several times over the last few years to arrive at consistent procedures, but to limited success. The retention rate for students had a direct link to the course grade. The grade retention rate for the school was 2.9 percent in 2003-2004, 3.2 percent in 2004-2005, and 1.7 percent in 2005-2006.

6. <u>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.</u>

Rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

The district did not have a formal policy to prevent, minimize, or recover students who dropped out of school. Guidance staff shared that they used a number of practices and procedures when students reported their intention to drop out, but the procedures were not formalized in a step by step written process. In addition to finding out about potential dropouts through student reporting, potential dropouts were also discovered when staff were investigating excessive absences of students. During the review period there was no dropout recovery program in place at Franklin County Technical School.

Prevention of failure was one way that staff worked to prevent students from dropping out of school. According to teachers and counselors interviewed, teachers reported struggling students to the guidance staff. Interventions or adjustments took place, if necessary. Midway through each trimester, guidance staff also received failure sheets for all classes. The guidance director expected that counselors monitored all failing students assigned to them, but there was no policy or written directive to do so.

According to counselors, when students told them that they wanted to drop out of school, they took several actions. The first procedure was to meet with students to determine issues involved. At this meeting other possible options were discussed with the student. Other possible actions taken by counselors could be meeting with the student and parents, consulting with teachers about the student's academic performance, making sure that the student felt safe at Franklin County Tech, and making referrals to the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, a GED program, or another agency. If the counseling intervention was successful, students returned to their educationally appropriate placement. If all options were exhausted and the student was determined to drop out, the counselor met with the student for an exit interview. A withdrawal sheet was prepared which all teachers, the guidance counselor, principal, librarian, class advisor, and parents signed.

During the period reviewed, the dropout rate for the school was 2.7 percent in 2003-2004, 3.0 percent in 2004-2005, and 3.1 percent in 2005-2006. Data for the cohort that graduated in June 2007 revealed that an entering class of 144 students in 2003 ended with 121 students in 2007. Some administrators stated that the school was oversubscribed and it did not take in students from the waiting list until after September 1.

An analysis of students leaving the school supplied by administrators indicated that during the 2005-2006 school year, 23 students transferred out of the school to their sending districts, 12 students left to pursue a GED, one left for employment, 10 were dropped for nonattendance, and one left to be home schooled. During the 2006-2007 school year, 30 students transferred back to their sending districts, two left to pursue a GED, one was dropped for nonattendance, two left for the Job Corps, and one student died.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

According to interviews by the examiners with administrators and professional staff, there were no systematic processes in the "official" sense for identifying or supporting homeless students during the period under review. Guidance staff found out about transient and homeless students through student reports and by tracking absences. The district admitted students using the identical criteria whether or not previously identified by sending schools as homeless. A guidance staff member served as the liaison for transient and homeless students and was responsible for ensuring that these students had timely and equitable access to the appropriate programs. Consistent with state regulations and school policy, the guidance staff conducted one or more of the following activities after transient or homeless students were identified: contacted family/guardians, referred and collaborated with community agencies, and implemented a system of tracking, documenting, and assessing achievement of these students. During the review period, guidance staff informally implemented a program to address the needs of emancipated students who were living away from their parents.

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

Rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

During the period reviewed, the district did not use a systematic approach to improve student attendance. District/school policy on student attendance in the student handbook stated an expectation of 100 percent attendance, with absences allowed only for serious illness or personal family emergency. "Students who exceed two absences in a trimester course, three absences in a half year or a semester course and six absences in a full year course will receive no credit for that course. Students who exceed six absences from their trade area will receive no credit for the year," according to the student handbook.

The student handbook further stated, “Parents will be notified of student absences by the administration at the halfway point, i.e., after one absence in a trimester course, after two absences in a semester course and three absences in a full year course/shop. If no improvement occurs a parent conference will be scheduled.” During interviews, administrators and guidance staff shared that in practice they took action much sooner with regard to student absences.

The attendance policy deemed an out-of-school suspension as an approved absence, meaning it did not count toward the absences that would result in no credit for courses or shop areas. According to DOE summary statistics, the attendance rate for the district was 93.2 percent in 2003-2004, 92.7 percent in 2004-2005, and 93.4 percent in 2005-2006. The statewide attendance rate in 2005-2006 was 94.5 percent, placing the district below the state average. The percentage of students chronically absent was 19.8 percent in 2003-2004, 22.1 percent in 2004-2005, and 17.9 percent in 2005-2006. Chronically absent is defined as students who are absent more that 10 percent of their days in membership. In 2005-2006, 22.7 percent of female students, 26.0 percent of juniors, and 28.9 percent of seniors were chronically absent.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Administrative staff reported to the examiners that staff attendance was generally good; however, the days absent for the professional staff during the last year of review period totaled 839.4, an average of 14.98 days per staff member. The breakdown was 58.0 days for long-term illness, 378.2 for short-term illness, 72.2 for professional development, 10.5 for jury duty or military service, and 320.2 for other unspecified reasons. With only short-term illness and unspecified days counted the average number of absences per staff member was 12.47 days. At times non-instructional paraprofessionals acted as substitute teachers. When a substitute not familiar or unqualified in an occupational area was used, the instructional equipment in that area was not used due to safety concerns.

The district offered sick leave buy back as an incentive for good attendance. Severance pay was at the rate of $10 per day for 1-50 days, $25 per day for 51-100 days, and $50 per day for 101 days or more. The district tracked staff attendance by keeping a daily list of absent staff and also listed the substitutes covering for them. Copies of this daily list served as the means for notifying office staff of the day's coverage and the absences for payroll. Teachers kept an emergency substitute folder, with lesson plans, in their classrooms.

According to administrative staff, during the review period there were few teachers who were chronically absent. For those rare occasions when teachers were chronically absent, the principal contacted the superintendent to report the teacher, and the superintendent addressed the issue with that staff member. Prior to contacting the superintendent, the principal took other steps to address these situations.

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: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

In a review of documents and through interviews with administrators, the examiners learned that district/school leadership and staff had not implemented policies, procedures, and practices or used a systematic approach to increase proportionate subgroup representation in accelerated programs during the review period. The district did not provide honors courses as such. It did offer integrated math for grade 9 and 10 students, with special needs students included in those classes. A course in Applied Physics was offered to seniors interested in engineering, and all students could take it. There was also a Greenfield Community College course called GCC 101 offered that could be taken by all senior students. The district did not keep figures on the number of subpopulation students entering or completing these courses. The achievement gap between the regular education students and the special needs students widened from 16 proficiency index (PI) points in 2002-2003 to 25 PI points in 2005-2006.

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	✓		✓		**N/A**	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓		**7**
Needs Improvement				✓					✓					**2**
Unsatisfactory		✓									✓		✓	**3**

VI. Financial and Asset Management Effectiveness and Efficiency

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

Standard Rating: Satisfactory

Findings:

- The budget workbook and the budgetary booklet contained all relevant data that resulted in a clear, detailed, and understandable document. The documents included budgetary information from other fund sources. The budget process was open and participatory, and it included input from the faculty and staff but did not involve the school improvement council or vocational-technical advisory committees.
- The financial resources of the district were adequate. The district municipalities approved sufficient resources, as indicated by the district exceeding the required net school spending. The per pupil cost was $17,508 in FY 2006, which ranked the district sixth out of 26 regional vocational technical school districts in the state.
- The business manager had MCCPO credentials and was currently involved in recertification. The business manager also had certification as a school business official. The district had policies and practices that assured procurement laws had been followed.
- The current auditing firm had been employed for over 10 years, and the district had no plans to competitively procure an independent auditing firm every five-years.

- The district did not have a formal written maintenance program. Contracted service provided the required maintenance of the facility. It became evident to examiners, after a walk-through of the facility, that a need existed to improve the upkeep of the school, both within the building and the outside grounds.
- The district had a five-year capital plan for equipment and maintenance. Most recently, the district allocated $100,000 per year toward this effort. Discussions with administrators revealed a need for upgrade and renovation of the facilities to meet current educational and maintenance standards.
- Franklin County Technical School lacked adequate security to ensure school safety. The facility did not have cameras or other electronic surveillance devices. A walk-through by examiners noted that shop and personnel doors had not been locked during school hours.

Summary

The budget process commenced annually in November with budget requests submitted by the faculty. The business manager collated the results of the requests into a budget workbook document, which the superintendent, director of curriculum and instruction, and the principal received. In December or January, the administration met to reduce the requests to an acceptable level that could be supported by the anticipated revenue sources. The district relied on its excess and deficiency (E&D) account, tuition, and other miscellaneous revenue sources to reduce the assessment to a level that the member municipalities would accept. The school improvement council and the vocational-technical advisory committees did not participate in the development of the budget. The budget workbook included information from other fund sources, such as state and federal grants, revolving accounts, Medicaid, and other revenue sources. The school committee finance subcommittee reviewed the proposed budget at several meetings followed by a recommendation to the full school committee. A public hearing was held, followed by the final approval of the budget and assessments. The superintendent and business manager attended both municipal finance committee and town meetings. During the review period, the member city and towns had been supportive by approving the district's assessment. The district used student achievement data to modify curriculum and programs, although there was not a connection between budget development and student achievement data. Formal evaluation of programs and

practices did not occur to determine cost effectiveness. Enrollment data had been used to review vocational-technical, academic, and special education programs.

The superintendent stated that the budget and assessments had been based on the educational needs of the students for providing quality education using available resources. Interviews with administrators, teachers, school committee members, and town officials confirmed the adequacy of the budget approved by the communities, which provided the necessary support to ensure educationally sound programs. The district exceeded the required net school spending (NSS) for the period under review. The FY 2006 per pupil cost was $17,508, which ranked the district sixth out 26 regional vocational-technical districts. The budget was $6,647,589 in FY 2004, $7,187,225 in FY 2005, and $7,830,300 in FY 2006, an 18 percent increase for the period. Analysis of the municipal revenue growth factor (MRGF) showed compatible increase with the municipality assessments. The assessments had been held to an acceptable increase by the use of E&D, tuition, and other revenue sources. Discussions with the superintendent, faculty, and town officials indicated the adequacy of the individual department budgets.

The school facility, which opened in 1976, had not had substantial improvement or renovation. This resulted in the required increase in the maintenance budget for the HVAC and other systems. The school had carpeting throughout the building that required replacement. A walk-through of the building by the EQA examiners noted a need to improve the maintenance and cleanliness of the facilities. The outside grounds and courtyard had been determined to need attention. The current energy plan had been developed on a computer running a DOS operating system and had not been updated to current standards. The district did not have a formal written preventive maintenance program to prolong the life of the building. The district had a feasibility study conducted in August 2002 that outlined the facility’s condition and areas in need of renovation and improvement. No substantial action had been taken during the review period to improve the condition of the facilities, in part because of a statewide moratorium on state funding for building and renovation projects. The school committee voted to allocate $100,000 annually toward capital projects or equipment as part of the budget.

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 school committee policy DA, under fiscal management goals, stated the committee's intent "to establish levels of funding that will provide high quality education for the students." Policy DB provided that "the annual budget is the financial expression of the educational expression of the school department, and it mirrors the problem and difficulties that confront the school system." The school committee designated the superintendent to serve as the budget officer. The district agreement outlined the schedule for the preparation and adoption of the budget. It stated that no later than 30 days after the adoption of the budget, but no later than April 30, the regional district treasurer shall certify to the treasurers of the member municipalities the amounts so apportioned for each municipality. A review of the minutes of the FY 2007 school committee budget meeting revealed that the approval of the assessments by the school committee did not have the required two-thirds vote (24 school committee members, 16 votes required, 15 members had been present and voted for the budget). The minutes on the budget for FY 2006 and FY 2008 had the required two-thirds vote.

The business manager reported that the budget process began in November with a memo sent to the staff from the business manager and the director of curriculum and instruction. Each of the departments submitted their budget requests online. Each of school departments could review the previous year budget and the prior three years of expenditures. The staff had the ability to review the superintendent's recommendation and the approved school committee budget.

The business manager reviewed and collated the budget requests and submitted a copy of the proposed budget to the superintendent, principal, and the director of curriculum and instruction. The business manager projected revenue and communicated with the school committee finance subcommittee for its input. The budget gap between the budget and revenue projections had been communicated to the superintendent by the business manger. The superintendent reviewed and

redlined possible budget reductions. Several follow-up meetings had been held with the administration. The proposed budget was then presented and reviewed by the finance subcommittee during several meetings. The finance subcommittee presented its recommendation to the full school committee. The superintendent made a PowerPoint presentation during the public hearing, followed by a vote of the school committee to accept the budget and assessments. The superintendent met with several of the town's finance committees and attended several town meetings.

The budget consisted of two documents, "the budget workbook" and the fiscal budget. The budget included two years of prior year expenditures, the prior year budget, the current requests, and the recommended and approved budget. Included in the document was enrollment information for the past several years. In interviews with two of the district's town finance committees, they considered the approval of the budget and assessment process to be satisfactory.

The budget and assessment documents were clear, comprehensive, current, and understandable, and included historical data. The budget workbook included information from Perkins, special education, Title I, and Title II grants. The tuition revolving, cafeteria revolving, and pre-employment accounts had been included as part of the budget document. The school improvement council and the vocational-technical advisory committees did not participate in the budget process. The budget and assessment document were posted on the district's website.

2. <u>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.</u>

Rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

In interviews with the superintendent, it was stated that there had not been a formal analysis of aggregated and disaggregated achievement data. There was not a connection between budget allocation and student achievement. According to a self-evaluation prepared for the EQA examiners by the district/school staff, "staff, scheduling, professional development, supply/equipment/technology resources, student remediation and other support services had been

prioritized base on various student assessment data. The previous year's budget was reviewed for effectiveness and improvements were suggested on an ongoing basis." An analysis of special education students' achievement data showed a decline corresponding, but not necessarily related, to the elimination of two special education instructors. A review of MCAS and other assessment data had been used to modify curriculum. The science program had been modified with the hiring of an additional science teacher and the budgeting of the required supplies and materials in an attempt to better prepare students for the MCAS science requirement. An analysis of MCAS released test items resulted in the budgeting of $15,000 for calculators. A review of assessment data resulted in the development of an MCAS remediation program. Due the large geographic area of the district, it was difficult to provide after-school remediation programs because of the cost of transportation and the difficulty of attracting students to participate in a program that added substantial time to their school bus ride.

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 superintendent stated that the district's budget and supplementary funding provided adequate financial support in meeting the educational needs of its students. Interviews with administrators, teachers, school committee members, and town officials confirmed that the communities provided sufficient financial resources to ensure educationally sound programs. The district exceeded the required net school spending (NSS) for each of the years under review. The per pupil cost for FY 2006 was $17,508, which ranked the district the sixth out of the 26 regional vocational technical districts in the state. Interviews with administrators indicated that the 19 member communities annually supported the operational and capital budget and assessments. This had been confirmed by interviews with municipal officials from two of the district's towns. The town's assessments had been driven by the bottom line as determined by the superintendent, business manager, and the school committee finance subcommittee. The towns

allocated over $1.5 million in excess of the required minimum contribution. An analysis of the municipal revenue growth factor (MRGF) compared to the towns' assessment showed the percentage to average to have the same increase over the past 10 years.

Instructional expenditures by the school committee reported in the End of Year Report (EOYR) totaled $3,620,147 in FY 2004, $3,609,062 in FY 2005, and $4,024,528 in FY 2006, an increase of 11.5 percent from the previous year. The DOE October 1 enrollment was 526 in FY 2004, 529 in FY 2005, and 543 in FY 2006. The assessment was $4,256,980 in FY 2005, $4,512,398 in FY 2006, and $4,602,646 in FY 2007 and FY 2008. The "no increase" in the assessments had been based on the district's ability to provide a 5.3 percent increase in the budget. The superintendent, business manager, and school committee finance subcommittee determined that a zero increase for the FY 2008 assessment was manageable. Schedule 19 of the EOYR showed that the school committee appropriated $6,787,725 in FY 2004, $7,824,159 in FY 2005 and $8,489,249 in FY 2006, or an 8.6 percent increase over the previous year. The district used interest, Medicaid, E&D, and other miscellaneous revenue to reduce the towns' assessment.

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: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the review period, the district did not have a review process to determine the cost effectiveness of all programs, initiatives, and activities. Based on the cost effectiveness and a program evaluation review by a committee consisting of the district, community college, and the congressman's office and future career and employment opportunities, the district's community service program, which consisted of childcare and healthcare services, had been modified to health technology. In interviews with staff personnel, it was stated that the district evaluated vocational-technical programs using enrollment data, job placement, and career opportunities. Two new programs had been implemented in heating, ventilation, air conditioning, and refrigeration (HVAC/R), and office technology. The changes made by the district in the instrument used to assess incoming students had been based on cost and effectiveness.

Based on an analysis of energy costs, the district embarked on a lighting replacement program and replacement of computers to reduce electricity consumption. The district participated in a large consortium to obtain the best cost for heating oil. The business manager cited a need to review the HVAC system for cost effectiveness and efficiency. In the FY 2008 budget presentation, the business manager projected the high cost of maintenance of the 30-year-old HVAC system. A review of the health insurance program had been planned in the FY 2008 budget to consider design changes in co-pay and unblended rates in addition to the Group Insurance Commission (GIC) option

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: N/A

Evidence

The Franklin County Vocational Technical School District is a regional school district and does not require a written agreement for indirect charges.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

DOE data shows that the district exceeded the required NSS since FY 1997. In FY 2004, the district exceeded the required NSS by 20.7 percent or $998,463 ($5,831,923-$4,833,460); in FY 2005, the district exceeded the required NSS by 14.8 percent or $791,087 ($6,1149,075-$5,357,988); and in FY 2006, the district exceeded the required NSS by 28.1 percent or $1,576,766 ($7,186,300-$5,609,534), based on the budgeted figure.

The district's required local contribution increased from $2,908,214 in FY 2004 to $2,954,680 in FY 2005 and decreased to $2,938,885 in FY 2006. The Chapter 70 reimbursement decreased by 18.0 percent in FY 2004 to $1,925,246 from the previous amount of $2,346,963 in FY 2003. In

FY 2005, Chapter 70 aid increased by 24.8 percent (from $1,925,245 to $2,403,308), and in FY 2006 by 11.1 percent (from $2,403,308 to $2,670,649). As a result of the reduction in Chapter 70 aid in FY 2004, the budget decreased by $365,299 ($7,012,868-$6,647,569). The foundation enrollment increased from 490 in FY 2003 to 495 in FY 2006, a one percent increase.

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 finance subcommittee of the school committee received accurate and complete quarterly financial reports. Annual financial reports were provided to the finance subcommittee and member towns. Staff members had online access to budget information for all departments. The information included encumbrances (supplies and material), payments, transfers receipt, and account balances on a line item basis. The financial statements did not include a total encumbrance system. Periodic reports of special revenue funds had been shared with stakeholders of these funds. According to the business manager, all federal, state, and local reports and statements had been accurate and submitted on time. The EOYR had been submitted in a timely manner but required amendments. The annual auditor's report of findings was presented to the finance subcommittee. The district had not yet received the FY 2006 audit reports at the time of the review.

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

During the review period, the district used the IFIPS budgetary software system from IMG. The system provided for the preparation of requisitions by the teaching staff, to purchase orders and

to the payment system. According to the business manager, appropriation account balances had been updated automatically by the system and available to all faculty and staff for review. ADP had been used for the preparation of the payroll. Using Excel, the payroll would be journalized into the financial system. The superintendent, supervisors, and the business manager reviewed all purchases for appropriateness and determined if spending was within budgetary limits. Only purchase orders were encumbered. Salaries were reviewed using the Excel system that was also used for forecasting. The financial software system was a non-web based software program. The business manager, payroll clerk, and accounts payable clerk had access to the general ledger and other financial files. The business manager prepared all financial reports and the treasurer reconciled all bank statements. The business manager prepared all financial reports, which were made available to the finance subcommittee and which the school committee received as well.

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: Needs Improvement

Evidence

School committee policy stated that the school committee would encourage the administration to seek state, federal, and private grants. The district acquired entitlement grants but did not actively pursue competitive state and federal grants. The superintendent had the responsibility as grant writer with input from the administrative staff. The district created the position of accountability, reporting, and grants secretary to support the analysis of various data and the preparation of reports in the system including grants. In FY 2006, the district received $411,276 in entitlement grants. The school received $70,000 in a bequest that had been used for scholarships. The district used internal accounting and procedures to monitor special revenue, revolving accounts, and student activity accounts to assure management efficiency and that they were used effectively for the purpose intended. Periodic reports were given to the superintendent and the director of curriculum and instruction. The business manager monitored all grants and prepared final reports for the Department of Education.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The business manager was MCPPO certified by the state Office of the Inspector General. The business manager had continued professional development activities toward recertification. DOE certified the business manager as a school business official. District bidding policy required that all supplies and service contracts under $5,000 would be procured using sound business practices. Supplies and service contracts exceeding $5,000 but less than $25,000 would be based upon price quotes from qualified vendors. The superintendent was authorized to award contracts not exceeding $10,000 and having a life term of three years or less. The superintendent approved all purchase orders. All purchase in excess of $10,000 required formal bids or requests for quotation (RFQ) to be in conformance with MGL Chapter 30B. The district maintained inventory for all items over $5,000 in addition to specialty items, such as computer equipment. As of FY 2006, the district had been in compliance with GASB 40 regarding the school's assets. Items under $5,000 had not been inventoried.

The EQA examiners received financial statements, a management letter, and the EOYR for FY 2005. The management letter addressed perceived deficiencies in the lunch department receipt procedures, reconciliation of trust funds, and the utilizing of tailing accounts. The business manager stated that action had been taken to resolve these audit exceptions. The FY 2006 audit reports had not been received by the district and were not available to EQA examiners, who were thus not able to verify that the exception had been addressed. At the end of FY 2006, the cafeteria revolving account was found to be in deficit by $83,883. The FY 2006 portion of the deficit was $34,839. The business manager stated that steps had been taken to reduce the deficit.

It required that the district provide a $35,000 subsidy. EQA examiners did not receive audit reports of student activities accounts.

The district did not competitively procure an independent financial auditing service every five years. The current auditing firm of Melanson, Heath & Company had been employed for over 10 years when the current business manager had been hired. In interviews with the business office staff and a review of payroll, purchasing documents and tracking monitoring systems met acceptable standards.

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: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

The district had no formal written preventive maintenance program to maximize and prolong the effective use of the facilities. The school facilities opened in 1976. The report submitted by the district noted the facilities to be in fair condition. The district outsourced the maintenance of the HVAC system along with the clock system, the fire alarm and fire suppression system, and the emergency generators, etc. In interviews with staff personnel and a walk-through of the building and the exterior of the grounds, it was found that, for the most part, the school was safe. The cleanliness and the lighting were described as needing improvement. In interviews with administration, a renovation and update had been considered. The staff brought attention to EQA examiners for the need to improve the conditions of the grounds, facilities, and courtyards. The building had carpeting throughout that was in need of replacement. The current energy management system had been installed many years ago and was run on a computer using a DOS-based operating system. The district planned to review the need to convert from an analog to a digital energy management system.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The business manager stated that the district had a five-year equipment and maintenance plan. This plan was updated annually. The plan was developed with data collected from the vocational shops and various departments. The district included $100,000 in capital outlay assessment in each of the FY 2005 and FY 2006 budgets. The school committee voted to assess member towns for $100,000 to begin funding over $2 million in capital improvement and equipment needs identified by the school committee. This assessment would be reserved and could only be expended for capital items upon appropriation by the school committee. In August 2002, the district conducted a feasibility study that outlined the facility's condition for potential improvement. Part of the report had been used to seek and upgrade the obsolete energy management system. Although there had been recognition of the need to improve the facility, the necessary financial resources had not been provided. In an interview with the former superintendent, attempts had been made to upgrade the infrastructure, prior to SBAB "locking the door" on new renovation projects, which included the sewer system, refrigeration, roof, HVAC, playing fields, storage spaces, and support service spaces. According to the business manager, high priority equipment purchases had been moved to federal funds for funding. The federal Perkins grant had been used to help fund thousands of dollars in equipment requests annually.

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

Rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence

The district did not have an adequate security system to ensure school safety. In discussions with the business manager and the facilities director, it was stated that the school facilities did not have security cameras in the school or outside the building. The school could be entered without detection. It was stated that exterior doors required to be locked once school began and all

visitors were required to sign in and sign out in the main office. A walk-through by EQA examiners revealed that shop and personnel doors were not locked and sign in/sign out of the building was not observed. It was stated that the school committee had been presented with plans for instituting an ID system. When the building was unoccupied, a motion detection system was activated and allowed the facilities manager to be notified of any intrusion. The faculty handbook described the function of the crisis response team that dealt with emergency/response situations.

The district had a planned lockdown/shelter procedure in place for 2007-2008. The school had one lockdown drill that had been conducted after school. There had been fire and evacuations drills held during the school year. The school had a 555 in-house emergency system that had been used to bring together appropriate staff in response to an emergency.

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	443	1.4	4,029,015	3.6	2,277,304	1,816,505	4.5	4,093,809	1.8	4,825,384	9.1	731,575	17.9
FY98	449	1.4	4,167,621	3.4	2,309,127	1,879,962	3.5	4,189,089	2.3	5,101,193	5.7	912,104	21.8
FY99	440	-2.0	4,209,399	1.0	2,398,594	1,923,571	2.3	4,322,165	3.2	5,045,703	-1.1	723,538	16.7
FY00	460	4.5	4,441,571	5.5	2,461,353	2,102,713	9.3	4,564,066	5.6	5,319,113	5.4	755,047	16.5
FY01	471	2.4	4,626,571	4.2	2,593,706	2,185,138	3.9	4,778,844	4.7	5,344,556	0.5	565,712	11.8
FY02	495	5.1	5,038,886	8.9	2,730,570	2,346,963	7.4	5,077,533	6.3	5,985,147	12.0	907,614	17.9
FY03	490	-1.0	5,040,003	0.0	2,878,048	2,346,963	0.0	5,225,011	2.9	6,262,378	4.6	1,037,367	19.9
FY04	484	-1.2	4,833,460	-4.1	2,908,214	1,925,246	-18.0	4,833,460	-7.5	5,831,923	-6.9	998,463	20.7
FY05	492	1.7	5,357,988	10.9	2,954,680	2,403,308	24.8	5,357,988	10.9	6,149,075	5.4	791,087	14.8
FY06	495	0.6	5,609,534	4.7	2,938,885	2,670,649	11.1	5,609,534	4.7	6,991,954	13.7	1,382,420	24.6

	Dollars Per Foundation Enrollment			Percentage of Foundation			Chapter 70 Aid as Percent of Actual NSS
	Foundation Budget	Ch 70 Aid	Actual NSS	Ch 70	Required NSS	Actual NSS	
FY97	9,095	4,100	10,893	45.1	101.6	119.8	37.6
FY98	9,282	4,187	11,361	45.1	100.5	122.4	36.9
FY99	9,567	4,372	11,468	45.7	102.7	119.9	38.1
FY00	9,656	4,571	11,563	47.3	102.8	119.8	39.5
FY01	9,823	4,639	11,347	47.2	103.3	115.5	40.9
FY02	10,180	4,741	12,091		100.8	118.8	39.2
FY03	10,286	4,790	12,780		103.7	124.3	37.5
FY04	9,986	3,978	12,049	39.8	100.0	120.7	33.0
FY05	10,890	4,885	12,498		100.0	114.8	39.1
FY06	11,332	5,395	14,125		100.0	124.6	38.2

46.6

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.

46.6

44.9

47.6