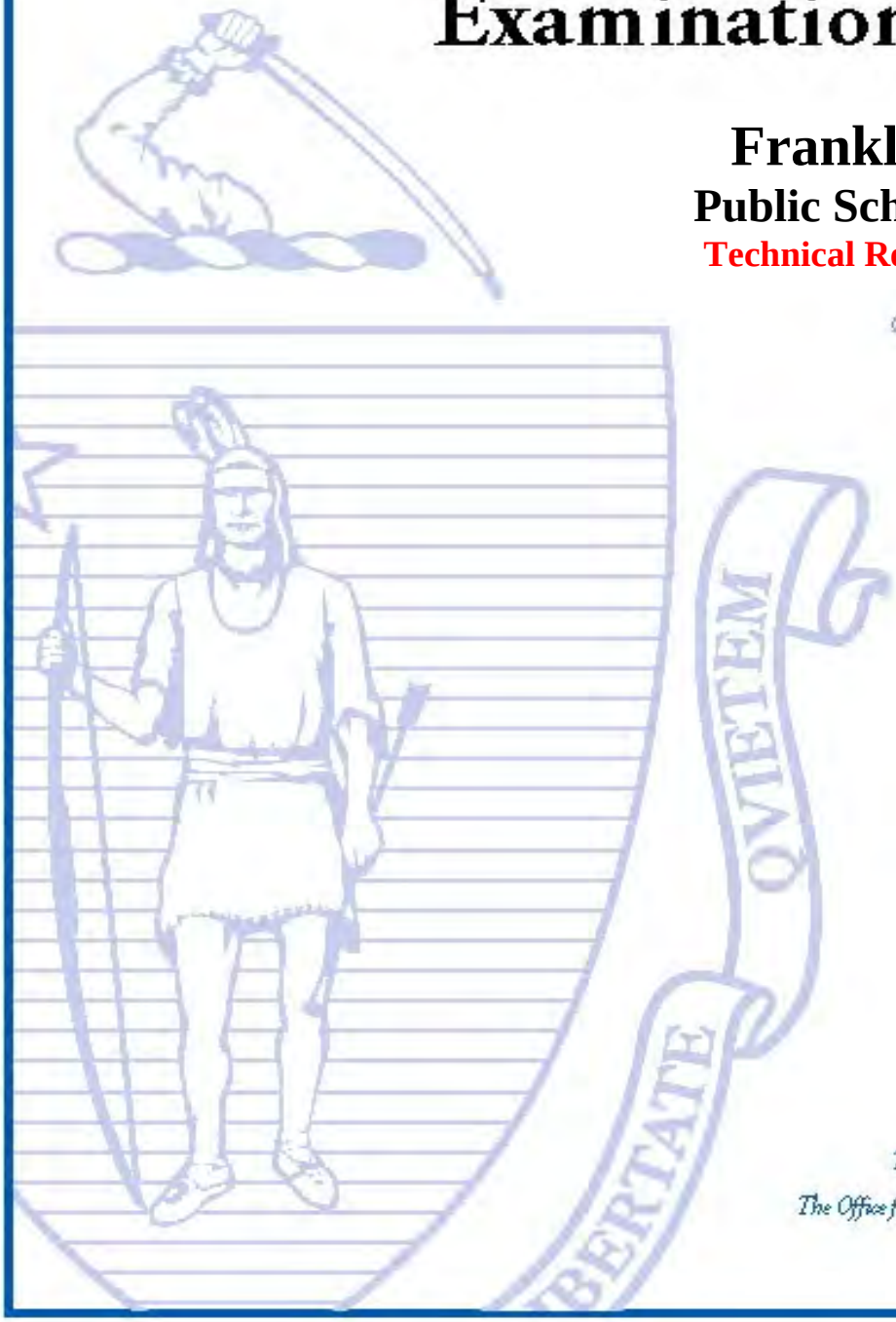
The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

School District Examination Report:

Franklin
Public Schools
Technical Report

data driven
standards based
learner centered



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

2004 - 2006

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Office of Educational Quality and Accountability

Visiting Examination Team

James Hearns, Coordinating Examiner
Joanne Newcombe, Senior Examiner
George Gearhart, Examiner
Linda Greyser, Examiner
Michael Shea, Examiner
William Wassel, 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 Public Schools, Wayne Ogden; the school department staff of the Franklin Public Schools; and the town officials in Franklin.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA) examined the Franklin Public Schools in April and May 2007. With an average proficiency index of 90 proficiency index (PI) points in 2006 (93 PI points in English language arts and 86 PI points in math), the district is considered a 'Very High' performing school system based on the Department of Education's rating system (found in Appendix A of this report), with achievement well above the state average. Three-fourths of Franklin's students scored at or above the proficiency standard on the 2006 administration of the MCAS tests.

District Overview

The town of Franklin, located in Norfolk County in southeastern Massachusetts, sits on the watershed of the Charles and Blackstone Rivers. Due to the availability of water power, Franklin developed as an industrial town. The largest sources of employment within the community are educational, health, and social services, and manufacturing. Franklin's population is relatively wealthy and well educated. The city is governed by a Town Council/Town Administrator form of municipal government.

According to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR), Franklin had a median family income of $81,826 in 1999, compared to the statewide median family income of $63,706, ranking it 67 out of the 351 cities and towns in the commonwealth. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the town had a total population of 29,560 with a population of 6,594 school-age children, or 22 percent of the total. Of the total households in Franklin, 46 percent were households with children under 18 years of age, and 18 percent were households with individuals age 65 years or older. Forty-three percent of the population age 25 years or older held a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 33 percent statewide.

According to the Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE), in 2005-2006 the Franklin Public Schools had a total enrollment of 6,136. The demographic composition in the district was: 93.4 percent White, 2.8 percent Asian, 1.6 percent Hispanic, 0.9 percent African-American, 0.4 percent Native American, 0.9 percent multi-race, non-Hispanic; 0.3 percent limited English proficient (LEP), 4.5 percent low income, and 14.7 percent special education. Ninety-five percent of school-age children in Franklin attended public schools. The district offers school

choice, and 29 students from other school districts attended the Franklin schools in 2005-2006. A total of 534 Franklin students attended public schools outside the district, including 146 students who attended Tri-County Regional Vocational Technical High School, 15 students who attended Norfolk County Agricultural High School, and 332 students who attended charter schools.

The district has 11 schools serving grades pre-kindergarten through 12, including a preschool, six elementary schools serving grades pre-kindergarten through 5, three middle schools serving grades 6 through 8, and one high school serving grades 9 through 12. Franklin Public Schools' administrative team consists of a superintendent, an assistant superintendent, a director of instructional services, an executive director of the Lifelong Learning Institute, a director of pupil personnel services, a director of finance, a director of human resources, a director of technology services, and a director of facilities. Each school has a principal, the Horace Mann, Remington, and Annie Sullivan Middle Schools each also has an assistant principal, and the high school also has three assistant principals and an assistant principal for student support services. The district has a seven-member school committee.

In FY 2006, Franklin's per pupil expenditure, based on appropriations from all funds, was $9,230, compared to $11,211 statewide, ranking it 267 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 $43,510,159 to $51,355,664; Chapter 70 aid increased from $21,308,583 to $23,359,339; the required local contribution increased from $18,682,531 to $21,157,822; and the foundation enrollment increased from 6,025 to 6,265. Chapter 70 aid as a percentage of actual net school spending decreased from 49 to 46 percent over this period. From FY 2004 to FY 2005, total curriculum and instruction expenditures as a percentage of total net school spending remained at 67 percent.

Context

Like many other school districts in Massachusetts, the Franklin Public Schools faced major financial challenges during the period under review. The town of Franklin experienced explosive growth over the last two decades, as it became a popular community that had easy access to Boston and Providence through a network of nearby highways and a commuter rail

system that connects Franklin to downtown Boston. As a result, the district has expanded to 11 schools that support an enrollment of approximately 6,100 students with a faculty in excess of 500. District financial reports showed that from FY 2003 to FY 2006 expenditures grew from $39,727,824 to $47,723,311, at an annual rate of approximately six percent. These increases were insufficient to fully fund costs associated with increased enrollment, additional special education teachers, contractual salary increases, and rising utility costs. For a number of years, the town has used other town revenue sources to support the school district; for example, the town periodically used stabilization revenue to fund school district budget shortfalls. Fortunately, in the spring of 2007, at the time of the EQA review, community members voted a Proposition 2½ override to increase taxes to fund rising school district expenses. The vote saved a number of teaching and administrative jobs and solidified the community's commitment to the school district and the educational needs of the children in Franklin. With this financial crisis behind them, the new superintendent, the school committee, and all the teachers and administrators can now refocus and recommit their energy and expertise to continue to improve student achievement in Franklin.

The EQA Examination Process

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

From April 30-May 3, 2007, the EQA conducted an independent examination of the Franklin Public Schools for the period 2004-2006, with a primary focus on 2006. This examination was based on the EQA's six major standards of inquiry that address the quality of educational management, which are: 1) Leadership, Governance, and Communication; 2) Curriculum and Instruction; 3) Assessment and Program Evaluation; 4) Human Resource Management and Professional Development; 5) Access, Participation, and Student Academic Support; and 6) Financial and Asset Management Effectiveness and Efficiency. The report is based on the source documents, correspondence sent prior to the on-site visit, interviews with the representatives

from the school committee, the district leadership team, school administrators, and teachers, and additional documents submitted while in the district. The report does not consider documents, revised data, or comments that may have surfaced after the onsite visit.

For the period under examination, 2004-2006, this report finds Franklin to be a 'Very High' performing school district with an average proficiency index of 90 proficiency index (PI) points in 2006, marked by student achievement that was 'Very High' in English language arts (ELA) and 'High' in math on the 2004-2006 MCAS tests. Over this period, student performance declined by one and one-half PI points in ELA and improved by nearly one and one-half PI points in math, which closed the district's average proficiency gap by close to three percent.

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

Summary of Analysis of MCAS Student Achievement Data

Are all eligible students participating in required state assessments?

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

- Franklin's average proficiency index (API) on the MCAS tests in 2006 was 90 proficiency index (PI) points, 12 PI points greater than that statewide. Franklin's average proficiency gap, the difference between its API and the target of 100, in 2006 was 10 PI points.
- In 2006, Franklin's proficiency gap in ELA was seven PI points, nine PI points narrower than the state's average proficiency gap in ELA. This gap would require an average improvement in performance of less than one PI point annually to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP).

Franklin's proficiency gap in math was 14 PI points in 2006, 14 PI points narrower than the state's average proficiency gap in math. This gap would require an average improvement of less than two PI points per year to achieve AYP. Franklin's proficiency gap in STE was 13 PI points, 16 PI points narrower than that statewide.

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

Between 2003 and 2006, Franklin's MCAS performance showed slight improvement overall, some improvement in math, a decline in ELA, and was relatively flat in STE.

- The percentage of students scoring in the 'Advanced' and 'Proficient' categories rose by five percentage points between 2003 and 2006, while the percentage of students in the 'Warning/Failing' category remained the same. The average proficiency gap in Franklin narrowed from 13 PI points in 2003 to 11 PI points in 2006. This resulted in an improvement rate, or a closing of the proficiency gap, of 15 percent.
- Over the three-year period 2003-2006, ELA performance in Franklin showed a slight decline, at an average of less than one-half PI point annually.
- Math performance in Franklin showed improvement, at an average of nearly one and one-half PI points annually. This resulted in an improvement rate of 25 percent, a rate slightly lower than that required to meet AYP.
- Between 2004 and 2006, STE performance in Franklin was relatively flat. Although the percentage of students attaining proficiency declined by one percentage point, STE performance increased by approximately one PI point over the two-year period, resulting in an improvement rate of six percent.

Do MCAS test results vary among subgroups of students?

MCAS performance in 2006 varied substantially among subgroups of Franklin students. Of the six measurable subgroups in Franklin in 2006, the gap in performance between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups was 22 PI points in ELA and 31 PI points in math (regular education students, students with disabilities, respectively).

- The proficiency gaps in Franklin in 2006 in both ELA and math were wider than the district average for students with disabilities and low-income students (those participating in the free

or reduced-cost lunch program). More than one-third of the students in each subgroup attained proficiency.

- The proficiency gaps in ELA and math were narrower than the district average for regular education students and non low-income students. More than three-fourths of the students in each subgroup attained proficiency.
- The proficiency gap for male students was wider than the district average in ELA but narrower in math, while the proficiency gap for female students was narrower than the district average in ELA but wider in math. For both subgroups, roughly three-fourths of the students attained proficiency.

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

The performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in ELA widened from 16 PI points in 2003 to 24 PI points in 2006, and the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in math narrowed from 33 to 28 PI points over this period.

- In Franklin, all student subgroups except regular education students had a decline in performance in ELA between 2003 and 2006. The subgroups with the greater declines in ELA were students with disabilities and low-income students.
- In math, all subgroups in Franklin showed improved performance between 2003 and 2006. The most improved subgroup in math was students with disabilities, while the improvement of low-income students was very slight.

Standard Summaries

Leadership, Governance, and Communication

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

During the period under review, the former superintendent improved collaboration between the school committee, the town council, and the finance committee, as requested by the school committee. The former superintendent was accessible but did not always keep the committee

informed of district progress on projects, according to committee members interviewed. Those interviewed also stated that they evaluated the former superintendent annually based on goals. During this same period, personnel files revealed that the former superintendent did not evaluate administrators annually based on the Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership.

The school committee had a subcommittee structure, and these subcommittees made recommendations to the whole committee on topics such as negotiations, policy, and finance. Committee members were knowledgeable of their roles and responsibilities through attendance at Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) conferences, legislative updates from MASC, and completion of the required professional development workshops.

The school committee was involved in communication with its stakeholders through attendance at meetings in the community and through the development of electronic capabilities, such as the district website, blogs, and budget presentation video clips made public via www.youtube.com. The budget subcommittee had regular meetings with the town council and finance committee during the period under review.

The district had effective methods of gathering, analyzing, and using aggregated and disaggregated data to make changes to curriculum and instruction to improve student achievement. Committee members and administrators shared examples of data-driven decision-making, such as the modification of the alternative high school program, the implementation of Impact Math at the middle school, and an analysis of the district's foreign language program. Presentations on the MCAS test results were conducted at school committee meetings during the period under review and shared with the community via cable television.

The school committee governed through the development of a district policy manual. A policy subcommittee reviewed all policy proposals and made recommendations to the entire committee as needed. A strategic plan covered the period of 2004-2007 and contained the district's mission and vision statements and six goals. The goals addressed curriculum and instruction, professional and support staff, school climate, community support, financial management, and evaluation of and accountability for the strategic plan. Steering and development committees, made up of parents, school committee members, and school and town administrators, developed

the plan which had as its main objective "improved student achievement." Each of the goals had measurable benchmarks and required data to report progress on an annual basis.

The school committee reviewed School Improvement Plans (SIPs) on an annual basis and stated that the inconsistencies in format made it difficult to review them in a timely manner. Crisis plans for each school in the district were not completed in a consistent or timely manner. Some administrators went ahead and developed plans while others waited and used plans from other districts. Collaboration took place during the period under review, including the placement of the district office in a new municipal building with town officials. Central office personnel worked on curriculum and instruction in a collaborative model with principals, curriculum teams, coordinators, and directors to improve student achievement.

Curriculum and Instruction

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

During the period under review, the district continued to work on curriculum development. It aligned the curriculum to the state frameworks and district-specific learning standards, and it documented curricula for all content areas in a new and more comprehensive format. Teachers and leaders ensured that the curriculum aligned horizontally and vertically. All elementary schools used the same ELA and math programs but were allowed discretion in their use of supplementary materials. Principals, reading specialists, and math curriculum enhancement teachers (CETs) addressed alignment in meetings with teachers, and principals checked for alignment during classroom walk-throughs. The middle schools also used the same curricular programs and monitored instruction. At the high school, teachers had common planning time, shared common expectations, developed common writing rubrics, and administered common final exams. Grade 5 and 6 teachers and grade 8 and 9 teachers met twice each year to encourage vertical alignment between the elementary and middle schools and the middle schools and high school.

Curriculum teams, under the direction of the director of curriculum and instruction and led by team-appointed co-chairs, reviewed and revised curriculum using a five-phase process that relied

on current research and formative and summative achievement data, including the MCAS test results, to inform their work. The district's curriculum teams represented all grade levels to ensure thorough analysis, discussion, decision-making, and communication. They also included special education staff to ensure that the needs of the district's largest subgroup were being met. A number of new curriculum initiatives occurred during the period under review. For example, the district implemented a new math curriculum at the middle schools, chose new reading anthologies at the middle schools, re-sequenced social studies courses, participated in professional development to improve instruction and support district priorities, and modified the schedule at the middle schools to allocate additional instructional time in each core subject area.

Principals of the elementary and middle schools used their role as instructional leader to exercise meaningful influence on improving instruction. They collaborated with CETs and other specialists to monitor instruction through classroom walk-throughs and classroom observations, and followed up with discussions on instructional techniques either with individual teachers or in small and large group meetings. At the high school, the task of monitoring instructional improvement fell mainly to the CETs in each core content area, supported by the principal and four assistant principals. Throughout the district, professional development offered teachers and leaders opportunities for professional growth that aligned with instructional and curricular priorities at both the district and school levels. Across the district, leadership personnel, teachers, and parents voiced high expectations for teaching and learning.

Observations of 74 randomly selected ELA, math, and science classrooms at the elementary, middle, and high school levels revealed an average class size of 18 students. Observations also indicated inconsistent use, availability, and functionality of computers across the district. Examiners noted the student-to-computer ratio to be 6.1:1 at the elementary schools, 26.5:1 at the middle schools, and 138:1 at the high school, as the high school had allocated most computers to labs rather than classrooms. Overall, observations revealed positive classroom management in 96 percent of the observed classrooms, positive instructional practice in 78 percent, evidence of high expectations in 69 percent, positive student activity and behavior in 76 percent, and positive school climate in 89 percent of the observed classrooms.

Assessment and Program Evaluation

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

The district used an array of testing and assessment analyses to develop the instructional programs for its students. Elementary and middle school principals had discretion regarding the specific assessment instruments teachers would use in ELA in addition to running records and common writing prompts, while the assessments used to measure progress in mathematics were more consistent throughout the district's elementary and middle schools. The work of the curriculum committees included the creation of grade-specific benchmarks. This task was ongoing during the time of the review. Interviewees noted that the results from several assessments proved to be accurate predictors of how students would perform on the MCAS tests.

Assessment analyses were conducted throughout the grade levels of the district, from the individual Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) and Stanford Reading assessment analyses at the elementary level to analyses of results from common final exams at the high school. The district's director of instructional services and the district data analyst first reviewed, analyzed, and discussed the MCAS achievement results with building principals. The director of instructional services also regularly discussed the data with curriculum teams, reading specialists, coordinators, and CETs. Further analysis occurred at the building level. Classroom teachers received the resulting analyses from their principals, reading specialists, coordinators, and/or CETs.

The district made concerted efforts to inform the parents of students and the community at-large of the assessment results. These efforts included school committee presentations televised through the local cable channel, articles in regional and community newspapers, and direct communication with parents via individual school report cards and progress reports. The district regularly prepared assessment reports focused on student achievement and communicated those reports to the staff and the community. The analysis reports included comprehensive item analyses that identified academic strengths and weaknesses of particular grade-level curricula.

The district had a regular five-phase process to review and revise curricula based on assessment data. The districtwide curriculum committees in each major content area, made up of teachers from all grade levels and CETs, served under the direction of the director of instructional services. District administrators and curriculum teams used MCAS results and trends, district-generated data, and on-going curriculum review to evaluate programs and refine plans for addressing programmatic and academic needs. The MCAS improvement plan, professional development plan, budget appropriations, and curriculum team tasks reflected this systematic evaluation of programs. Other examples included purchase of a new grade 4 social studies textbook, a new middle school mathematics program, curriculum revisions in mathematics and ELA at grades K-8 to include modification/accommodation suggestions for students with disabilities, and revisions to the algebra and biology curricula at the high school.

When data analysis of achievement results or other research and evaluation such as surveys and/or external audits indicated that weaknesses existed in the instructional programs, the curriculum committees made modifications to the programs with improving student achievement and instructional practice as the primary goal. Specific examples cited included the adoption of the new Impact Math middle school math program for the 2005-2006 school year, the creation in 2005 of an English language learner (ELL) program for the small but growing population of ELL students, and the changing of both the algebra and biology programs at the high school from one-year offerings to two-year offerings for freshmen and sophomores identified as needing the extra time to learn the material.

Human Resource Management and Professional Development

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

The Franklin Public Schools had a full-time human resources director who managed hiring procedures, monitored the status of staff certification, and filed for waivers when necessary. The district had an administrative advisory document that outlined hiring expectations and guided the hiring process. The advisory included procedures related to vacancies, advertising, applications, qualifications, and interviews. The district administrators posted positions on the district website,

advertised in newspapers, and attended job fairs. The district and all schools had a hiring process that included use of a committee to conduct interviews and make hiring recommendations. Interviewees indicated that the district did not have any financial barriers to hiring teachers or administrators. The district provided licensure data that showed all administrators and all but eight teachers had appropriate certifications. The district had applied for waivers for unlicensed staff.

The district provided professional development and mentoring programs to support teachers during the period under review and adequately funded the programs. The mentoring program was a two-year program, and the district had trained approximately 60 to 70 mentors. The district had a substantial and well-defined professional development program in place during the period under review, which included professional development in data analysis to support instructional strategies. The district identified professional development needs from a number of sources, including student achievement data and teacher evaluations and observations. The district website included a link to professional development opportunities, and staff could register for professional development offerings online.

Professional development in the district consisted of three building-based half days and two districtwide full days. Schools offered opportunities for professional development related to school-specific issues, while the districtwide days provided the district the opportunity to focus on professional development skills for all teachers. In addition, the district provided significant reimbursement for graduate courses and outside workshops. Teachers were given opportunities to advance to stipended positions or administrative positions. Staff turnover in the district was low.

Not all administrators had received training in Research for Better Teaching (RBT) observational analysis techniques, but the district indicated that administrators who had not received the training would receive it in the near future. The performance evaluation process did not hold administrators or teachers accountable for student achievement. Principals conducted classroom observations, but the evaluation cycle for teachers in place during the period under review did not comply with state statute. Most personnel files included summative evaluations for professional status teachers, but they were not performed every two years as mandated.

Professional status teachers were given alternative options to demonstrate professional growth in the years they did not receive a summative evaluation. The principals conducted the evaluations of non-professional status teachers annually as required by statute. The superintendent did not conduct annual evaluations for all administrators in accordance with MGL Chapter 71, Section 38. A review of 32 administrator personnel files showed that no administrator received an annual evaluation every year during the period under review.

Access, Participation, and Student Academic Support

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

The Franklin school district and its individual schools performed aggregated and disaggregated analysis of MCAS and other assessment data and provided academic support services at all levels. Examples of districtwide assessments included the MCAS tests, running records, mathematics unit tests, and writing prompts. Principals at the elementary and middle school levels had discretion to administer additional ELA assessments. Many programs were in place for at-risk students, including MCAS test support, special education services, and an enhanced ELL program. In addition, specific intervention plans were in place to help struggling students. For instance, Individual Student Success Plans (ISSPs) were created for all students scoring below 230 on the MCAS exams, and each school had a team in place to assist teachers of students having difficulty in regular education classes. The district provided assistance for homeless and transient students and followed the McKinney-Vento regulations. Further, the district set up procedures and practices to make transitions into school and between schools easier for students and parents.

The major subgroup in the district was students with disabilities, who comprised approximately 15 percent of the total enrollment of approximately 6,100 students. The district conducted data analysis for the special education subgroup because of special education AYP issues. Based on data analysis, the district developed a supplemental mathematics curriculum. The district had accelerated courses, including Advanced Placement (AP) and honors courses, but regular education students constituted most of the enrollment in these courses. The district used an

inclusion model to increase the percentage of special education students participating in accelerated courses at the high school.

The district had attendance policies in force at all schools and documented consequences for unexcused absences in student handbooks. In 2006, the district had an average attendance rate of 96.2 percent and an average chronic absenteeism rate of 5.4 percent. The district implemented procedures and practices to aggressively monitor attendance and account for all students who did not arrive at school.

During the 2005-2006 school year, teachers were absent an average of 11.9 days, or 11.1 days excluding professional development days. Overall, the average teacher attendance rate was 96.2 percent. Teacher attendance varied among schools with the average number of days absent ranging from 7.8 to 16.3 days. The schools used substitute teachers to maintain consistent instruction. The district issued a handbook to substitutes and substitutes attended an orientation.

The district had low rates of out-of-school suspensions and the high school did not report in-school suspensions. The middle schools issued both in- and out-of-school suspensions. There was a significant difference among suspension rates, both in- and out-of-school, at the three middle schools. All suspension rates in Franklin were below the state averages during the period under review. The district had a graduation rate of 91.3 percent in 2006 for a cohort of 367 students, and 4.1 percent of the cohort had dropped out, according to district data on the DOE website. The district had practices and procedures in place to monitor and assist students and the parents of students who considered dropping out, including an alternative education program, which provided an educational setting for grade 9-12 students who had difficulty in regular classes, and flexible scheduling.

Financial and Asset Management Effectiveness and Efficiency

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

Town and school officials worked cooperatively during the budget development process throughout the period under review. The superintendent and town administrator met to review

available funding for the schools, and a budget subcommittee of elected town and school officials as well as administrators reviewed the school budget in detail. Principals and school council members had opportunities to prepare and communicate budget needs to the school committee during Saturday workshops, except in 2005 when they were given a bottom line representing available funds and told to stay within it. The public had opportunities to learn about the budget and give feedback during school committee open hearings and subsequent town council budget sessions.

The district used student achievement and other data to justify budget initiatives, including new middle school math and social studies programs, a special education math initiative, new special education programs, ELA materials and reading specialists for grades K-8, and summer remediation programs. It added a social worker and modified its alternative education program for at-risk children in order to improve their achievement and keep them in school. District administrators made other budget and program decisions in order to be more cost effective, such as collaboration with the town in accounting and purchasing procedures, bringing special education students in-house from tuition placements, and an energy usage analysis to improve efficiencies and lower costs.

Although the district per pupil cost was below the state average and enrollments increased, the district avoided major layoffs and class size increases during the period under review. The town supported school budgets that would fund fixed cost increases, including those associated with contractual salary agreements, increased enrollments, and utility costs, by using its financial reserves to balance the budget. However, some school programs and staffing, such as elementary physical education/health, foreign language, music, and custodial and administrative support, were reduced. The district's budget was in deficit during the period under review, increasing to $413,079 in FY 2006, due to under-budgeting certain expenditures and overestimating revenues; the district covered budget deficits by using revolving fund balances and, in FY 2006, charging special education expenses to the FY 2007 circuit breaker reimbursement.

The town and school district were cooperative in a variety of ways. They shared facilities and technology directors and collaborated on purchasing. After both business offices adopted the MUNIS accounting software in 2006, reconciliations and more efficient purchasing procedures

were instituted, and administrators were provided with immediate access to reports and budget balances.

School buildings were clean and well maintained, but the district had no written preventative maintenance plan. NEASC reports cited shortcomings in the high school building, and the district completed some safety and other minor renovations recommended in the report. The town prepared plans for a major renovation project at the high school for when funding would be available. Two newly built schools opened during the period under review. The town had a six-year capital plan that included needed school renovations and regularly funded the plan. Security and safety were a priority. The schools controlled entry of visitors during the school day using locked doors, schools installed video cameras, and schools installed electronic keys to restrict access and record entry. The schools regularly maintained alarm systems, sprinklers, and mechanical systems.

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 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; 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?

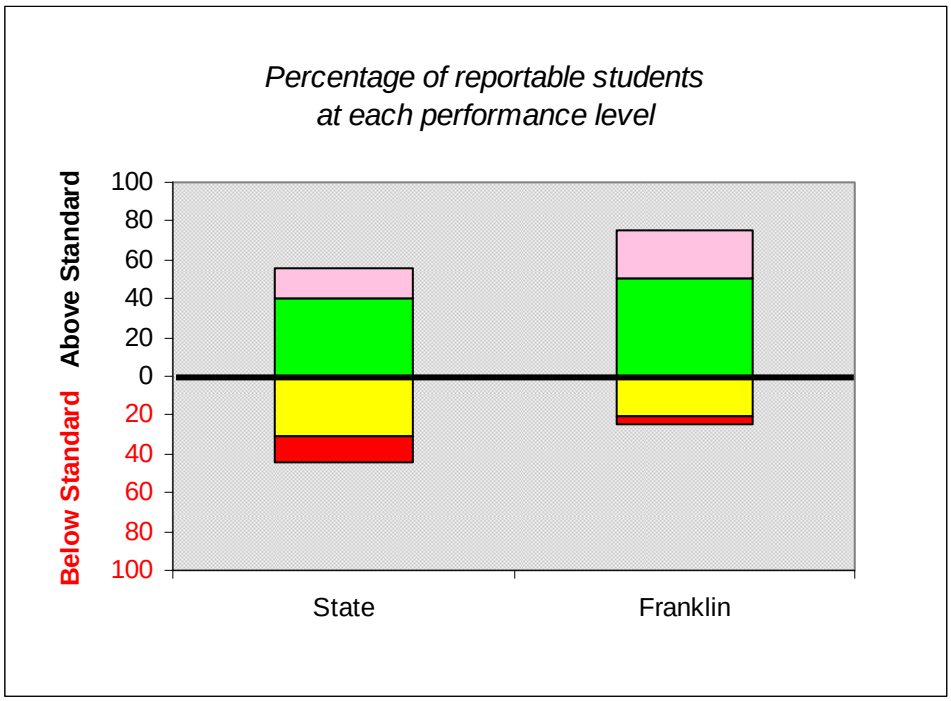
Findings:

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

- Franklin's average proficiency index (API) on the MCAS tests in 2006 was 90 proficiency index (PI) points, 12 PI points greater than that statewide. Franklin's average proficiency gap, the difference between its API and the target of 100, in 2006 was 10 PI points.

- In 2006, Franklin's proficiency gap in ELA was seven PI points, nine PI points narrower than the state's average proficiency gap in ELA. This gap would require an average improvement in performance of less than one PI point annually to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP). Franklin's proficiency gap in math was 14 PI points in 2006, 14 PI points narrower than the state's average proficiency gap in math. This gap would require an average improvement of less than two PI points per year to achieve AYP. Franklin's proficiency gap in STE was 13 PI points, 16 PI points narrower than that statewide.

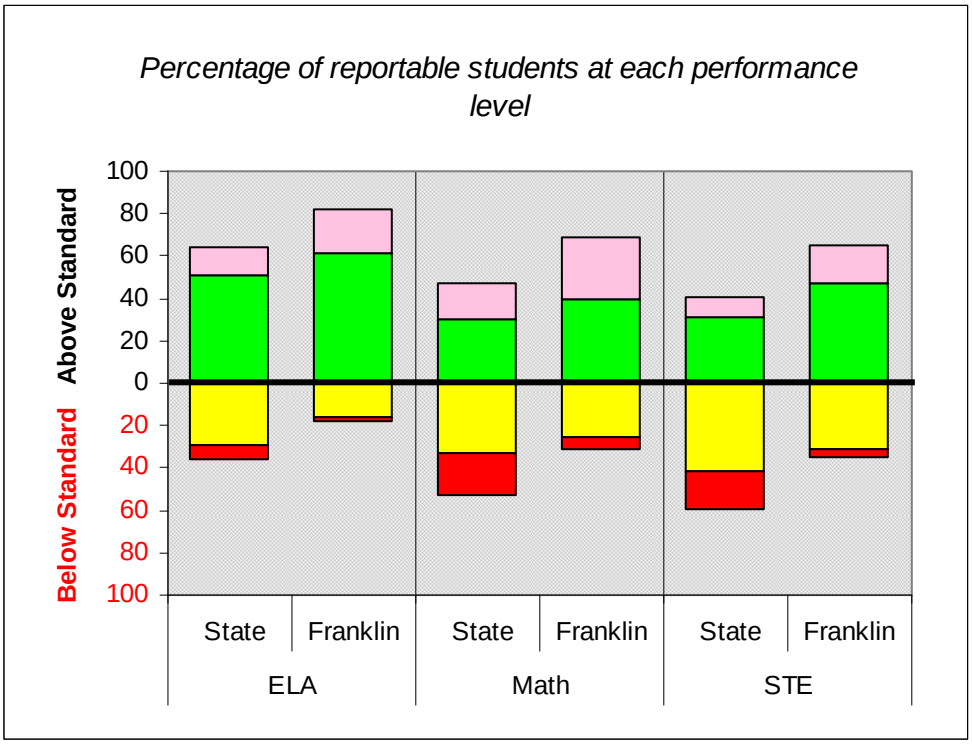
Figure/Table 1: Student MCAS Test Performance, All Students, 2006



	State	Franklin
Advanced	15	25
Proficient	41	50
Needs Improvement	31	21
Warning/Failing	14	4
Percent Attaining Proficiency	56	75
Average Proficiency Index (API)	78.3	89.9

In 2006, 75 percent of Franklin students attained proficiency on the MCAS tests overall, 19 percentage points more than that statewide. Four percent of Franklin students scored in the 'Warning/Failing' category, 10 percentage points less than that statewide. Franklin's average proficiency index (API) on the MCAS tests in 2006 was 90 proficiency index (PI) points, 12 PI points greater than that statewide. Franklin's average proficiency gap in 2006 was 10 PI points.

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



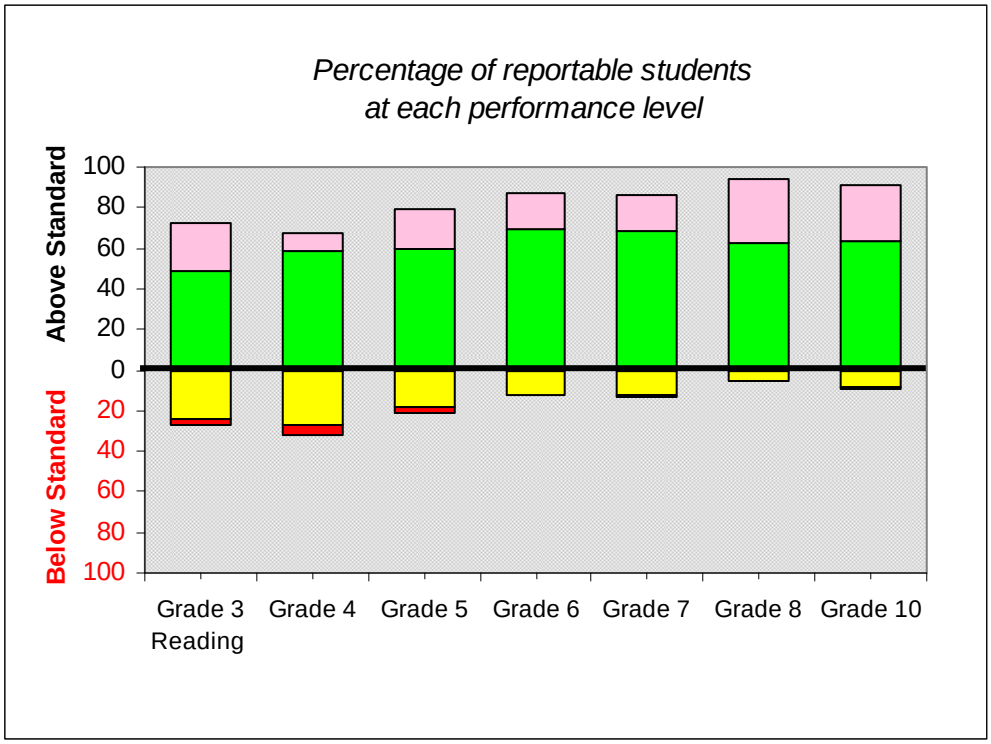
	ELA		Math		STE	
	State	Franklin	State	Franklin	State	Franklin
Advanced	13	21	17	29	10	18
Proficient	51	61	30	39	31	47
Needs Improvement	29	16	33	25	42	31
Warning/Failing	7	2	20	6	17	3
Percent Attaining Proficiency	64	82	47	68	41	65
Proficiency Index (PI)	84.3	93.3	72.3	86.4	71.4	86.7

In 2006, achievement in English language arts (ELA), math, and science and technology/engineering (STE) was higher in Franklin than statewide. In Franklin, 82 percent of students attained proficiency in ELA, compared to 64 percent statewide; 68 percent attained proficiency in math, compared to 47 percent statewide; and 65 percent attained proficiency in STE, compared to 41 percent statewide.

Franklin students had stronger performance on the 2006 MCAS tests in ELA than in math and STE. The proficiency index for Franklin students in ELA was 93 PI points; in math, it was 86 PI points; and in STE, it was 87 PI points. These compare to the statewide figures of 84, 72, and 71 PI points, respectively.

The proficiency gap for Franklin students was seven PI points in ELA, 14 PI points in math, and 13 PI points in STE. These compare to the statewide figures of 16, 28, and 29 PI points, respectively. Franklin's proficiency gaps would require an average annual improvement of less than one PI point in ELA and less than two PI points in math to meet AYP.

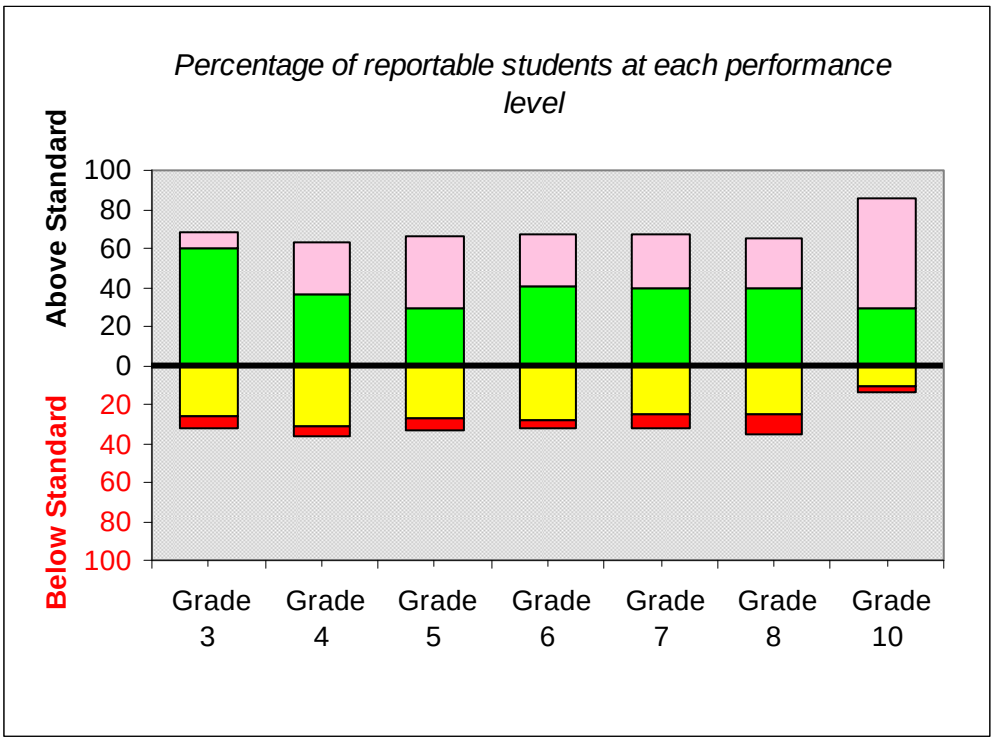
Figure/Table 3: Student MCAS English Language Arts (ELA) Test Performance, by Grade, 2006



	Grade 3 Reading	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 10
Advanced	24	10	20	18	18	31	27
Proficient	48	58	59	69	68	63	64
Needs Improvement	25	27	18	12	12	5	9
Warning/Failing	3	5	3	0	2	0	1
Percent Attaining Proficiency	72	68	79	87	86	94	91

The percentage of Franklin students attaining proficiency in 2006 in ELA varied by grade level, ranging from a low of 68 percent of grade 4 students to a high of 94 percent of grade 8 students.

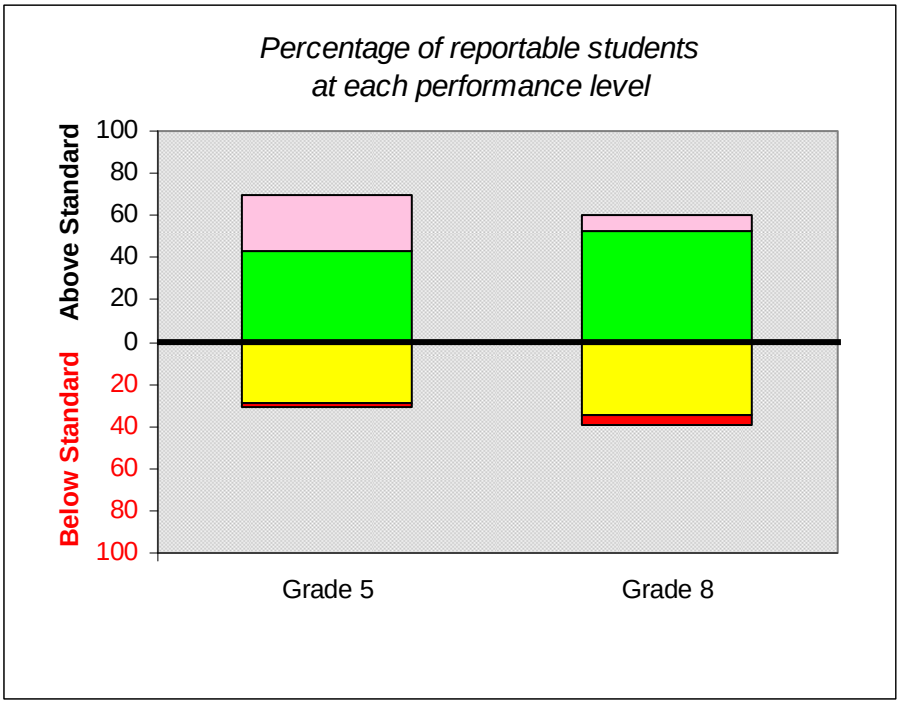
Figure/Table 4: Student MCAS Math Test Performance, by Grade, 2006



	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 10
Advanced	8	27	38	27	28	25	57
Proficient	60	36	29	41	40	39	30
Needs Improvement	27	31	27	28	26	25	11
Warning/Failing	5	5	7	5	7	10	3
Percent Attaining Proficiency	68	63	67	68	68	64	87

The percentage of Franklin students attaining proficiency in 2006 in math varied slightly by grade level, ranging from a low of 63 percent of grade 4 students to a high of 87 percent of grade 10 students.

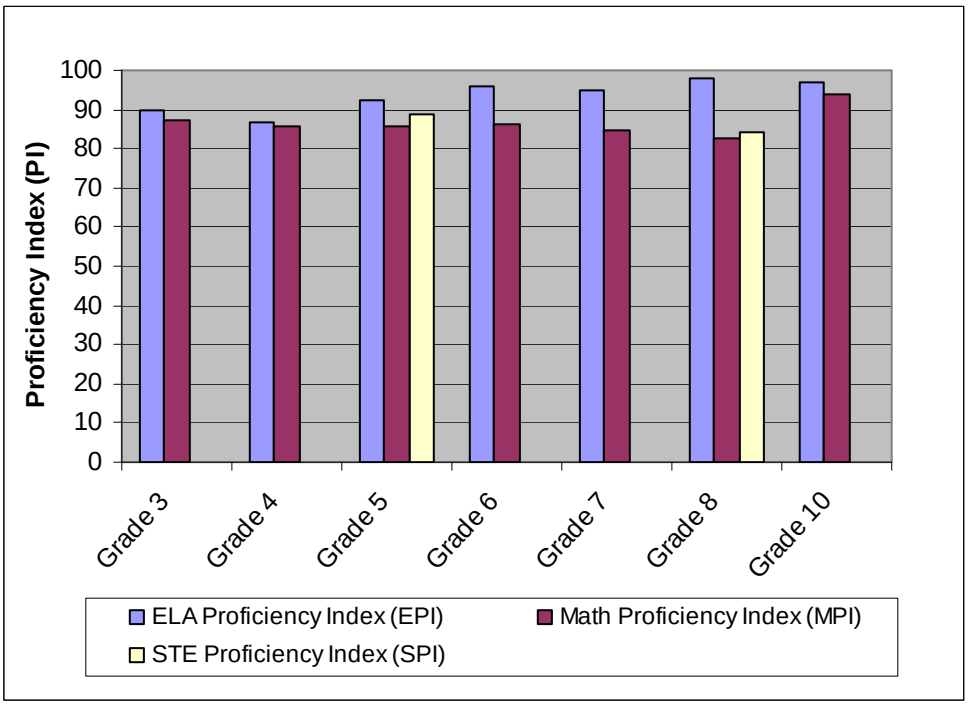
Figure/Table 5: Student MCAS Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) Test Performance, by Grade, 2006



	Grade 5	Grade 8
Advanced	27	8
Proficient	43	52
Needs Improvement	29	34
Warning/Failing	2	5
Percent Attaining Proficiency	70	60

In Franklin in 2006, 70 percent of grade 5 students attained proficiency in STE, and 60 percent of grade 8 students did so.

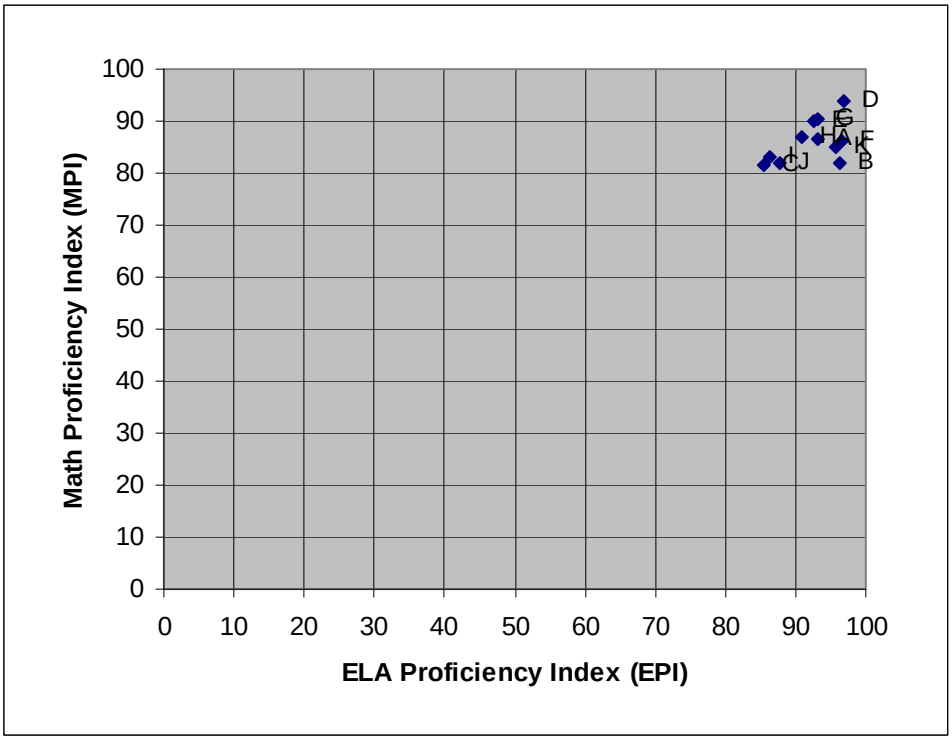
Figure/Table 6: Student MCAS Proficiency Indices, by Grade and Subject, 2006



	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 10
ELA Proficiency Index (EPI)	89.6	86.7	92.6	95.9	94.7	98.0	97.0
Math Proficiency Index (MPI)	87.4	85.5	85.7	86.1	84.9	82.5	94.0
STE Proficiency Index (SPI)			88.9			84.2	

By grade, Franklin's ELA proficiency gap in 2006 ranged from a low of two PI points at grade 8 to a high of 13 PI points at grade 4. Franklin's math proficiency gap ranged from a low of six PI points at grade 10 to a high of 17 PI points at grade 8. Franklin's STE proficiency gap was 11 PI points at grade 5 and 16 PI points at grade 8.

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



		ELA PI	Math PI	Number of Tests
A	Franklin	93.3	86.4	6,619
B	Annie Sullivan Middle School	96.3	82.0	907
C	Davis Thayer Elementary School	85.4	81.5	306
D	Franklin High School	97.0	94.0	770
E	Helen Keller Elementary	92.5	90.0	576
F	Horace Mann Middle School	96.6	86.2	1,055
G	J. F. Kennedy Memorial Elem	93.3	90.5	532
H	Jefferson Elementary	90.8	87.0	603
I	Oak Street Elementary	86.2	83.0	541
J	Parmenter Elementary	87.8	82.1	462
K	Remington Middle School	95.6	85.0	867

Franklin's ELA proficiency gap in 2006 ranged from a low of three PI points at Franklin High School and Horace Mann Middle School to a high of 15 PI points at Davis Thayer Elementary School. Franklin's math proficiency gap ranged from a low of six PI points at Franklin High School to a high of 18 PI points at Annie Sullivan Middle School, Davis Thayer Elementary School, and Parmenter Elementary School.

Equity of Achievement

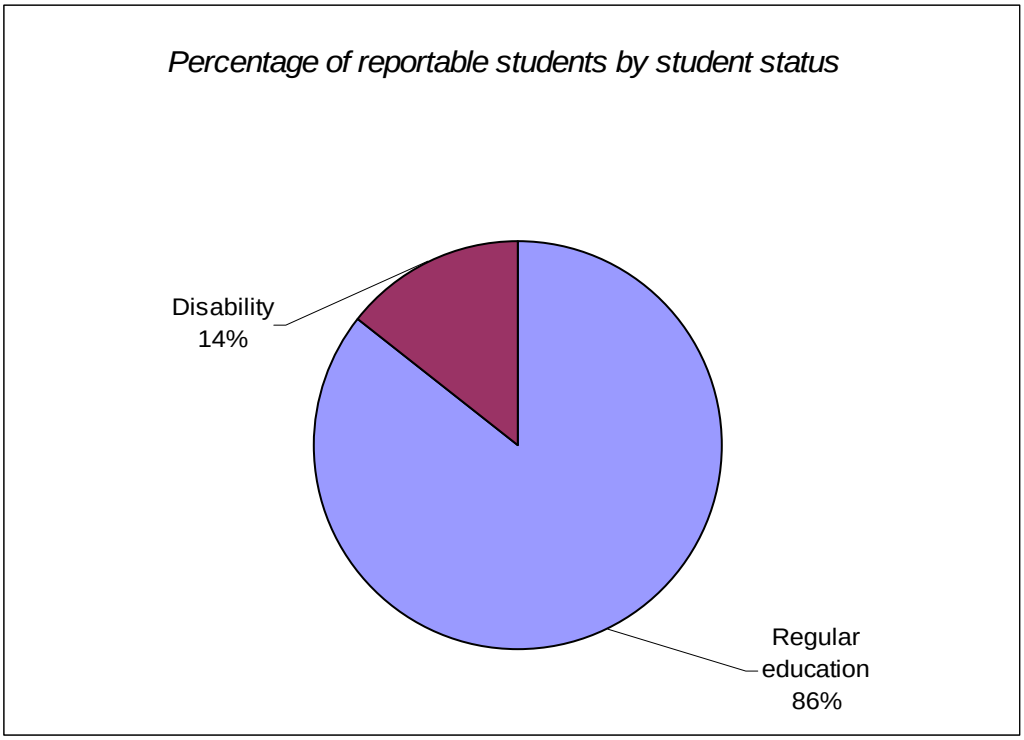
Do MCAS test results vary among subgroups of students?

Findings:

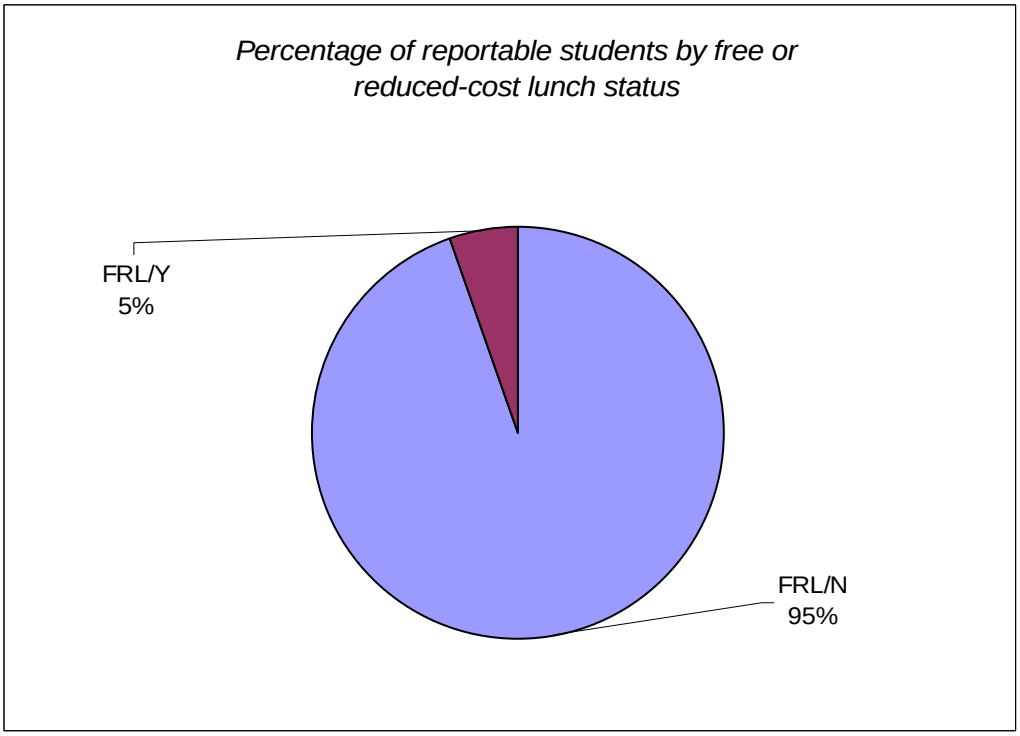
- MCAS performance in 2006 varied substantially among subgroups of Franklin students. Of the six measurable subgroups in Franklin in 2006, the gap in performance between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups was 22 PI points in ELA and 31 PI points in math (regular education students, students with disabilities, respectively).
- The proficiency gaps in Franklin in 2006 in both ELA and math were wider than the district average for students with disabilities and low-income students (those participating in the free or reduced-cost lunch program). More than one-third of the students in each subgroup attained proficiency.
- The proficiency gaps in ELA and math were narrower than the district average for regular education students and non low-income students. More than three-fourths of the students in each subgroup attained proficiency.
- The proficiency gap for male students was wider than the district average in ELA but narrower in math, while the proficiency gap for female students was narrower than the district average in ELA but wider in math. For both subgroups, roughly three-fourths of the students attained proficiency.

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

A.



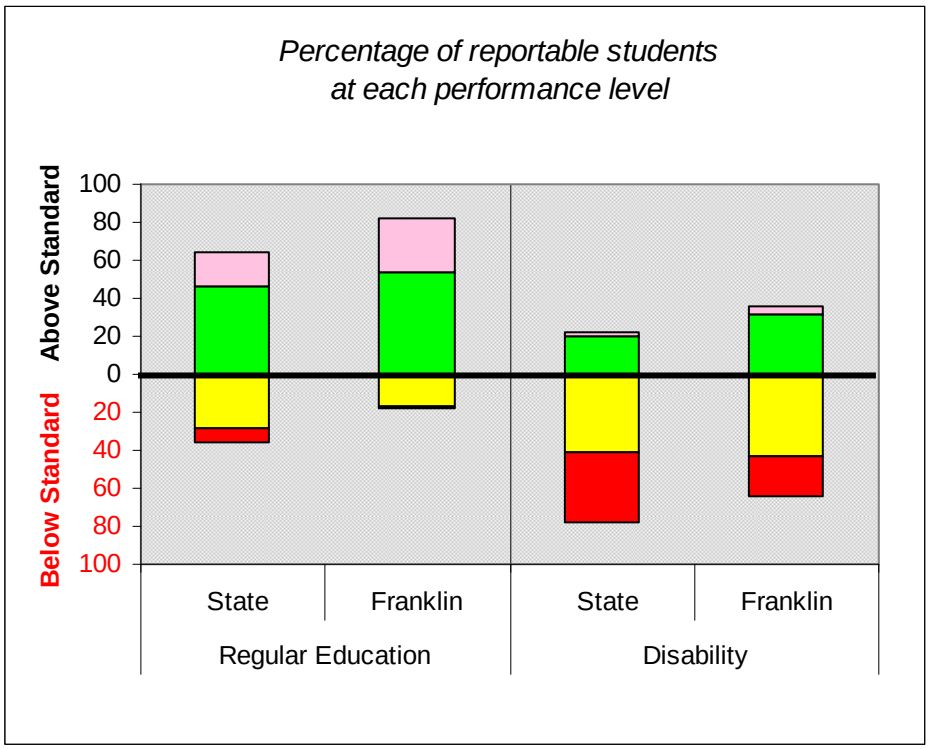
B.



	Subgroup	Number of Students
Student status	Regular education	2,856
	Disability	477
Free or reduced-cost lunch status	FRL/N	3,163
	FRL/Y	174

In Franklin in 2006, 14 percent of the students were students with disabilities and five percent were students participating in the free or reduced-cost lunch program.

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

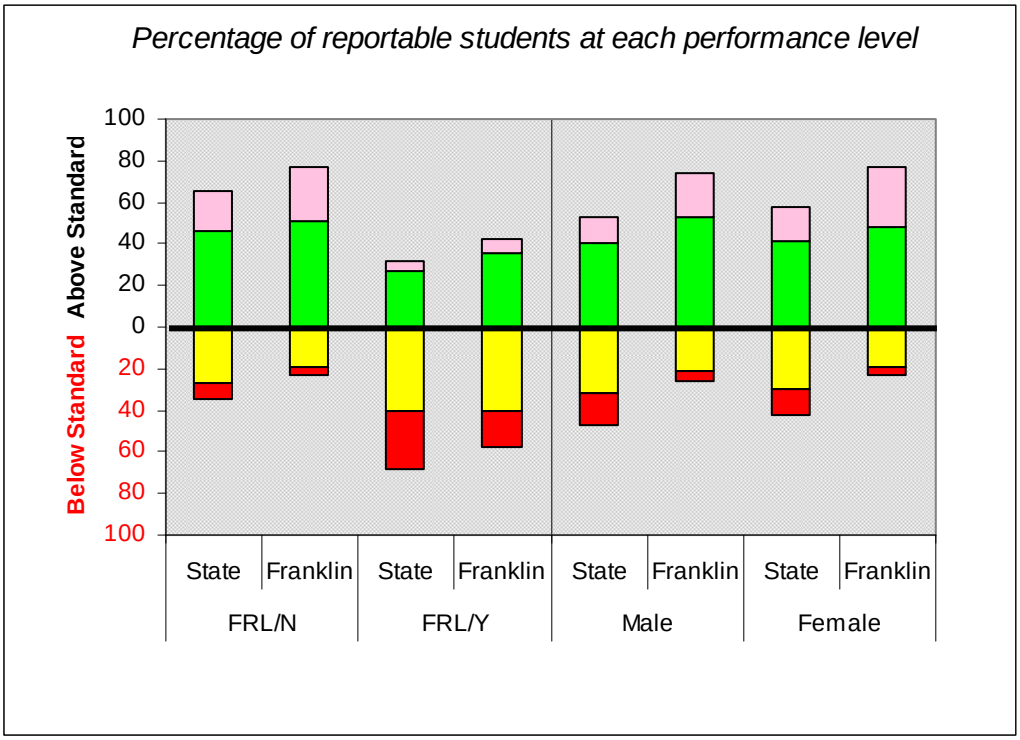


	Regular Education		Disability	
	State	Franklin	State	Franklin
Advanced	18	28	2	4
Proficient	46	53	20	32
Needs Improvement	28	17	41	43
Warning/Failing	8	1	36	21
Percent Attaining Proficiency	64	81	22	36
Average Proficiency Index (API)	84.0	93.4	55.9	67.4

In Franklin in 2006, the proficiency rate of regular education students was more than two times greater than that of students with disabilities. Eighty-one percent of regular education students and 36 percent of students with disabilities attained overall proficiency on the MCAS tests.

Franklin's average proficiency gap in 2006 was seven PI points for regular education students and 33 PI points for students with disabilities. The average performance gap between regular education students and students with disabilities was 26 PI points.

Figure/Table 10: Student MCAS Test Performance, by Socioeconomic Status and Gender Subgroups, 2006

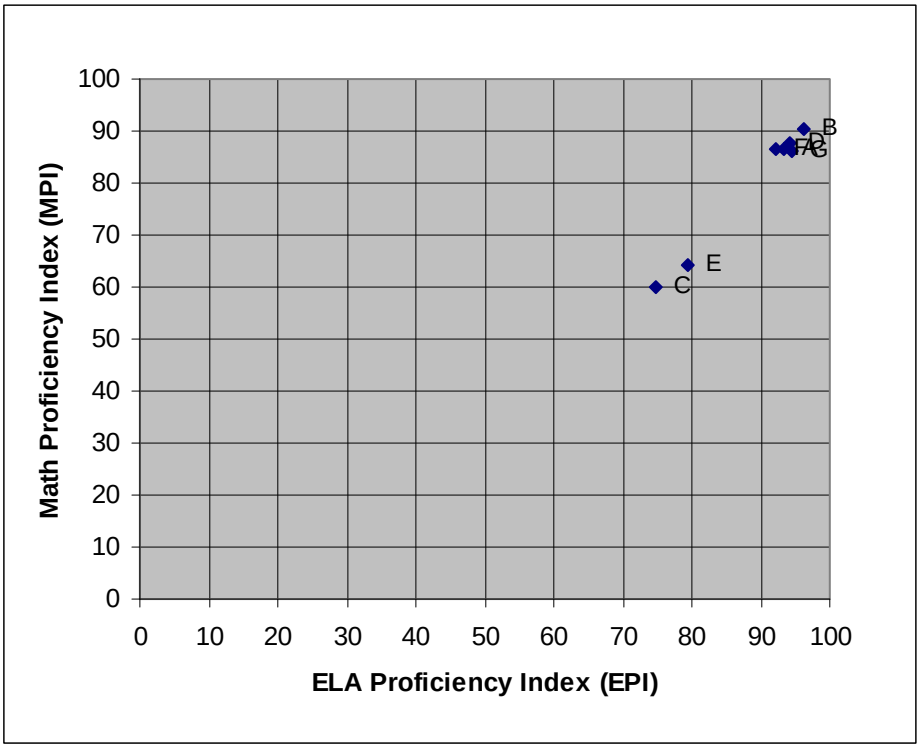


	FRL/N		FRL/Y		Male		Female	
	State	Franklin	State	Franklin	State	Franklin	State	Franklin
Advanced	19	26	5	7	13	22	17	29
Proficient	46	51	27	35	40	53	41	48
Needs Improvement	27	19	40	40	32	21	29	20
Warning/Failing	8	3	27	17	15	4	13	4
Percent Attaining Proficiency	65	77	32	42	53	75	58	77
Average Proficiency Index (API)	84.5	90.9	63.5	71.8	77.1	89.4	79.6	90.3

In Franklin in 2006, 42 percent of low-income (FRL/Y) students attained overall proficiency on the MCAS tests, compared to 77 percent of non low-income (FRL/N) students. The average proficiency gap was 28 PI points for low-income students and nine PI points for non low-income students, and the average performance gap between the two subgroups was 19 PI points.

Performance on the 2006 MCAS tests was comparable for male and female students in Franklin, with 77 percent of female students and 75 percent of male students attaining overall proficiency. The average proficiency gap was 11 PI points for male students and 10 PI points for female students, and the average performance gap between the two subgroups was one PI point.

Figure/Table 11: Student MCAS ELA Proficiency Index vs. Math Proficiency Index, by Subgroup, 2006

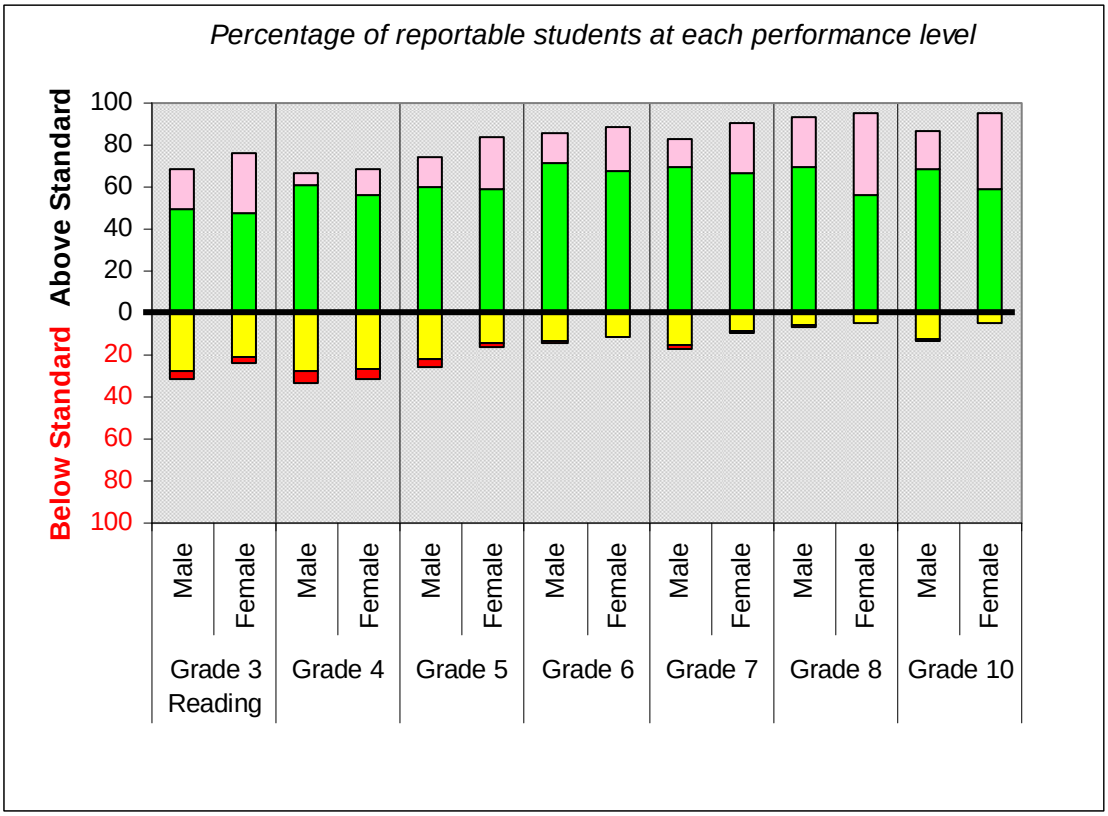


		ELA PI	Math PI	Number of Tests
A	Franklin	93.3	86.4	6,619
B	Regular Education	96.3	90.5	5,711
C	Disability	74.7	60.0	901
D	FRL/N	94.1	87.6	6,273
E	FRL/Y	79.5	64.2	346
F	Male	92.3	86.6	3,339
G	Female	94.4	86.2	3,280

Of the six measurable subgroups in Franklin in 2006, the gap in performance between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups was 22 PI points in ELA (regular education students, students with disabilities, respectively) and 31 PI points in math (regular education students, students with disabilities, respectively).

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

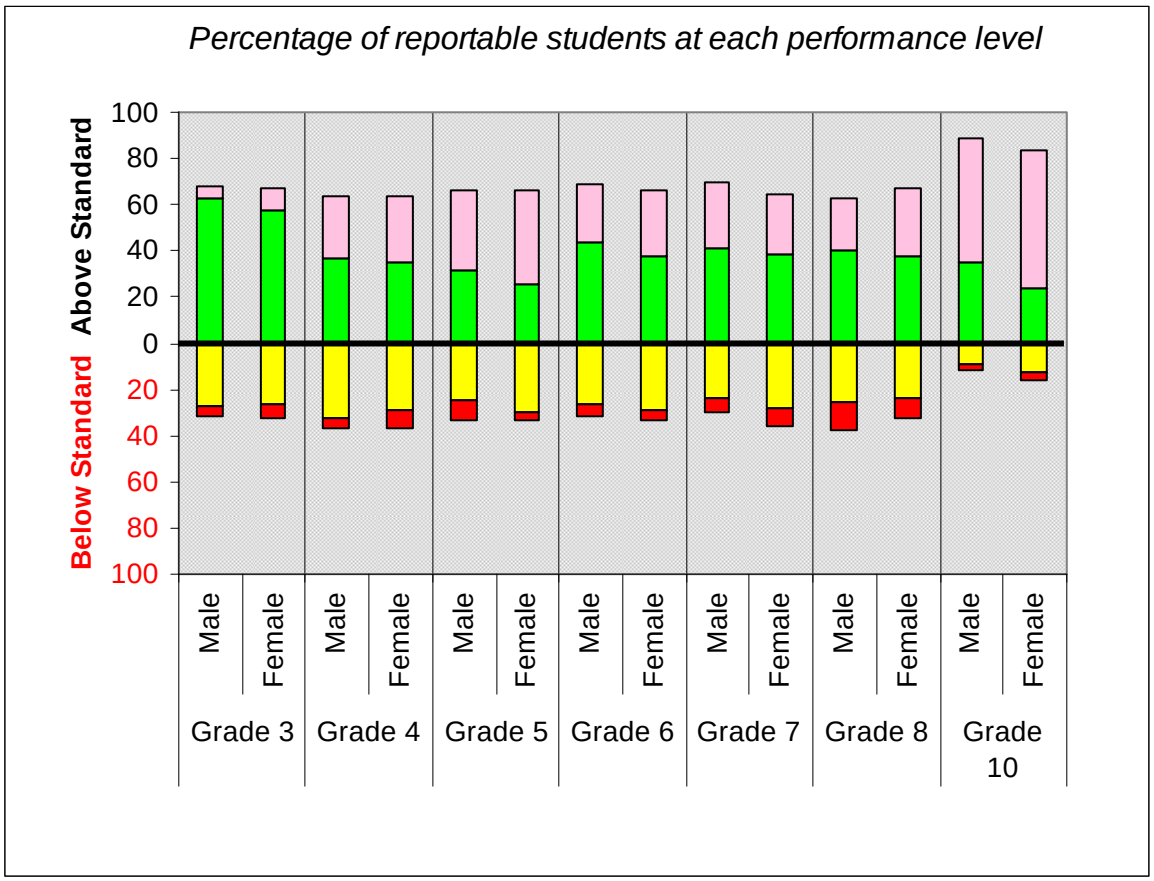
Figure/Table 12: Student MCAS English Language Arts (ELA) Test Performance, by Grade and Gender, 2006



	Grade 3 Reading		Grade 4		Grade 5		Grade 6		Grade 7		Grade 8		Grade 10	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Advanced	19	29	6	13	15	25	15	22	12	24	24	39	18	36
Proficient	49	48	61	56	60	59	71	67	70	67	70	56	68	59
Needs Improvement	28	21	27	26	22	14	13	11	15	8	6	4	13	5
Warning/ Failing	3	2	6	5	4	2	0	0	2	1	0	0	1	1
Percent Attaining Proficiency	68	77	67	69	75	84	86	89	82	91	94	95	86	95

In Franklin in 2006, female students outperformed male students on all grade-level ELA tests.

Figure/Table 13: Student MCAS Math Test Performance, by Grade and Gender, 2006



	Grade 3		Grade 4		Grade 5		Grade 6		Grade 7		Grade 8		Grade 10	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Advanced	5	10	27	28	35	41	25	28	29	26	22	29	54	59
Proficient	63	58	37	35	32	25	44	38	41	38	41	38	35	24
Needs Improvement	27	26	33	29	24	30	26	29	23	28	26	24	9	13
Warning/ Failing	5	6	4	7	9	4	5	5	7	8	12	9	2	4
Percent Attaining Proficiency	68	68	64	63	67	66	69	66	70	64	63	67	89	83

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

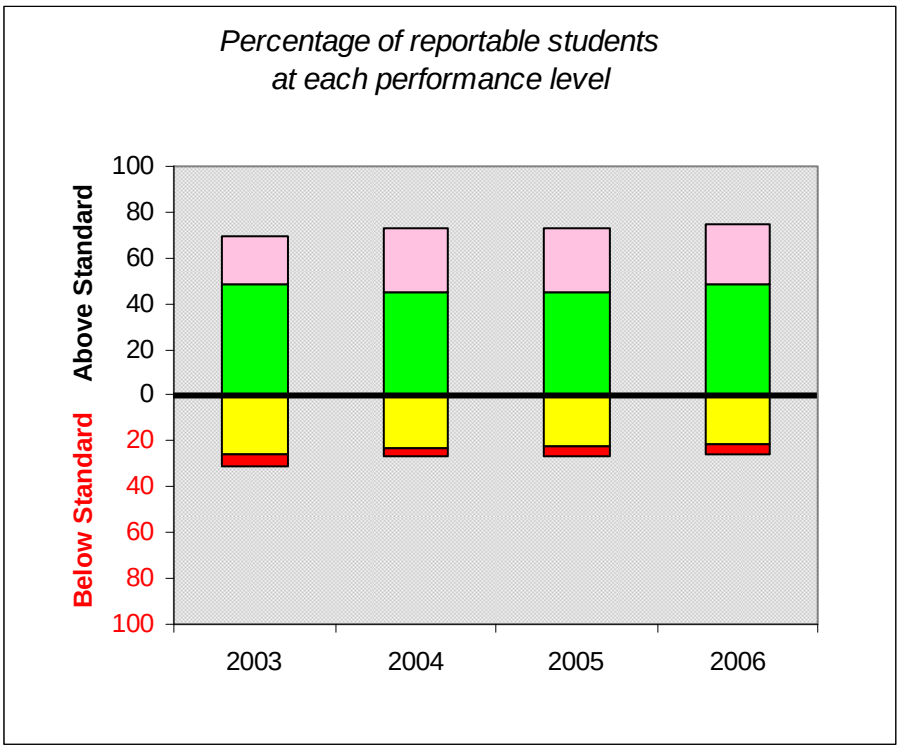
Improvement

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

Findings:

- Between 2003 and 2006, Franklin's MCAS performance showed slight improvement overall, some improvement in math, a decline in ELA, and was relatively flat in STE.
- The percentage of students scoring in the 'Advanced' and 'Proficient' categories rose by five percentage points between 2003 and 2006, while the percentage of students in the 'Warning/Failing' category remained the same. The average proficiency gap in Franklin narrowed from 13 PI points in 2003 to 11 PI points in 2006. This resulted in an improvement rate, or a closing of the proficiency gap, of 15 percent.
- Over the three-year period 2003-2006, ELA performance in Franklin showed a slight decline, at an average of less than one-half PI point annually.
- Math performance in Franklin showed improvement, at an average of nearly one and one-half PI points annually. This resulted in an improvement rate of 25 percent, a rate slightly lower than that required to meet AYP.
- Between 2004 and 2006, STE performance in Franklin was relatively flat. Although the percentage of students attaining proficiency declined by one percentage point, STE performance increased by approximately one PI point over the two-year period, resulting in an improvement rate of six percent.

Figure 14/Tables 14 A-B: Student MCAS Test Performance, All Students, 2003-2006



A.

	2003	2004	2005	2006
Advanced	20	28	28	26
Proficient	49	45	45	48
Needs Improvement	26	23	23	21
Warning/Failing	5	4	4	5
Percent Attaining Proficiency	69	73	73	74
Average Proficiency Index (API)	87.3	88.9	88.8	89.2

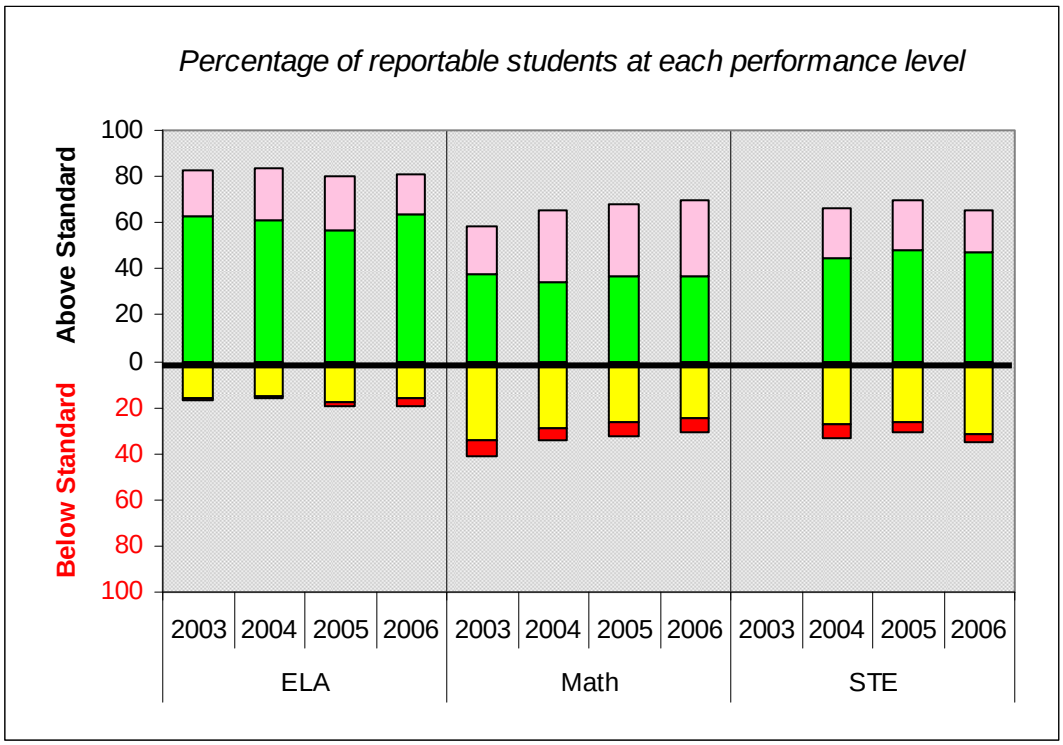
B. n-values

	2003	2004	2005	2006
Advanced	587	825	873	834
Proficient	1,416	1,343	1,414	1,530
Needs Improvement	757	684	705	666
Warning/Failing	143	120	131	146
Total	2,903	2,972	3,123	3,176

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 students attaining overall proficiency on the MCAS tests increased from 69 percent in 2003 to 74 percent in 2006. The percentage of students in the 'Warning/Failing' category was the same at five percent in 2003 and in 2006. The average proficiency gap in Franklin narrowed from 13 PI points in 2003 to 11 PI points in 2006, resulting in an improvement rate of 15 percent.

Figure/Table 15: Student MCAS Test Performance, by Subject, 2003-2006



	ELA				Math				STE			
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2003	2004	2005	2006	2003	2004	2005	2006
Advanced	20	23	23	18	20	31	32	33		21	21	18
Proficient	63	61	57	63	38	34	36	37		45	48	47
Needs Improvement	16	15	18	16	34	29	26	24		27	27	31
Warning/ Failing	1	1	2	3	8	6	6	6		6	4	3
Percent Attaining Proficiency	83	84	80	81	58	65	68	70		66	69	65
Proficiency Index (PI)	93.8	94.0	92.4	92.5	82.3	85.3	86.0	86.7		85.8	88.1	86.7

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

The percentage of Franklin students attaining proficiency in ELA decreased from 83 percent in 2003 to 81 percent in 2006. The proficiency gap in ELA widened from six PI points in 2003 to seven PI points in 2006.

The percentage of Franklin students attaining proficiency in math increased from 58 percent in 2003 to 70 percent in 2006. The proficiency gap in math narrowed from 18 PI points in 2003 to 13 PI points in 2006, resulting in an improvement rate of 25 percent, a rate slightly lower than that required to meet AYP.

Although the percentage of Franklin students attaining proficiency in STE decreased from 66 percent in 2004 to 65 percent in 2006, the proficiency gap in STE narrowed from 14 to 13 PI points over this period, resulting in an improvement rate of six percent.

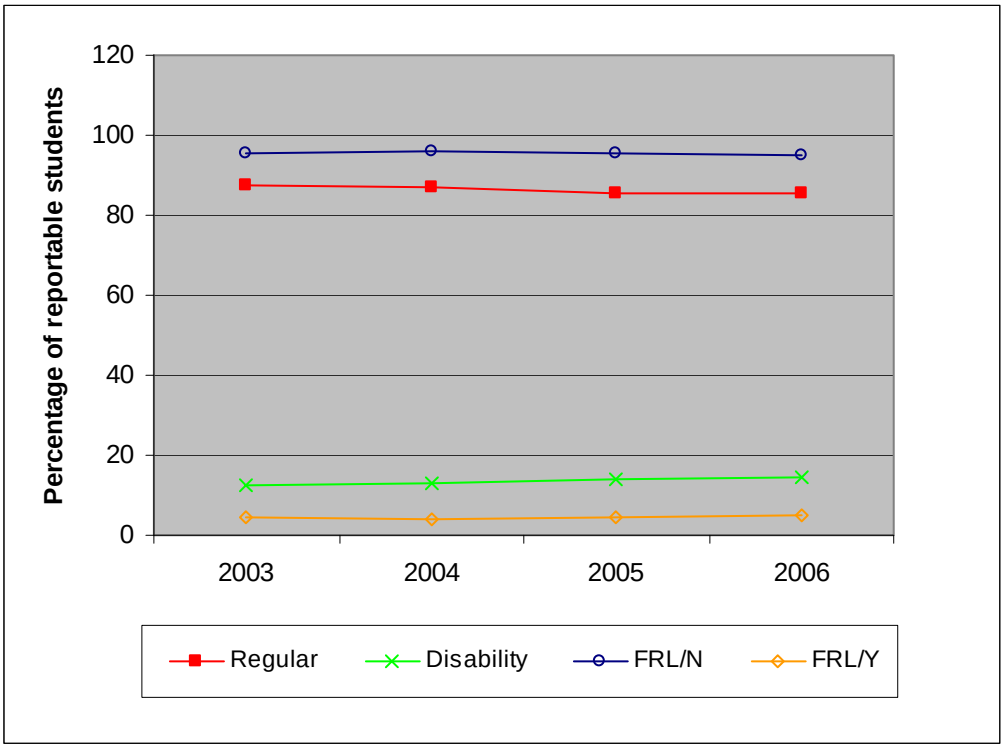
Equity of Improvement

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

Findings:

- In Franklin, all student subgroups except regular education students had a decline in performance in ELA between 2003 and 2006. The subgroups with the greater declines in ELA were students with disabilities and low-income students.
- In math, all subgroups in Franklin showed improved performance between 2003 and 2006. The most improved subgroup in math was students with disabilities, while the improvement of low-income students was very slight.
- The performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in ELA widened from 16 PI points in 2003 to 24 PI points in 2006, and the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in math narrowed from 33 to 28 PI points over this period.

Figure/Table 16: Student Population by Reportable Subgroups, 2003-2006



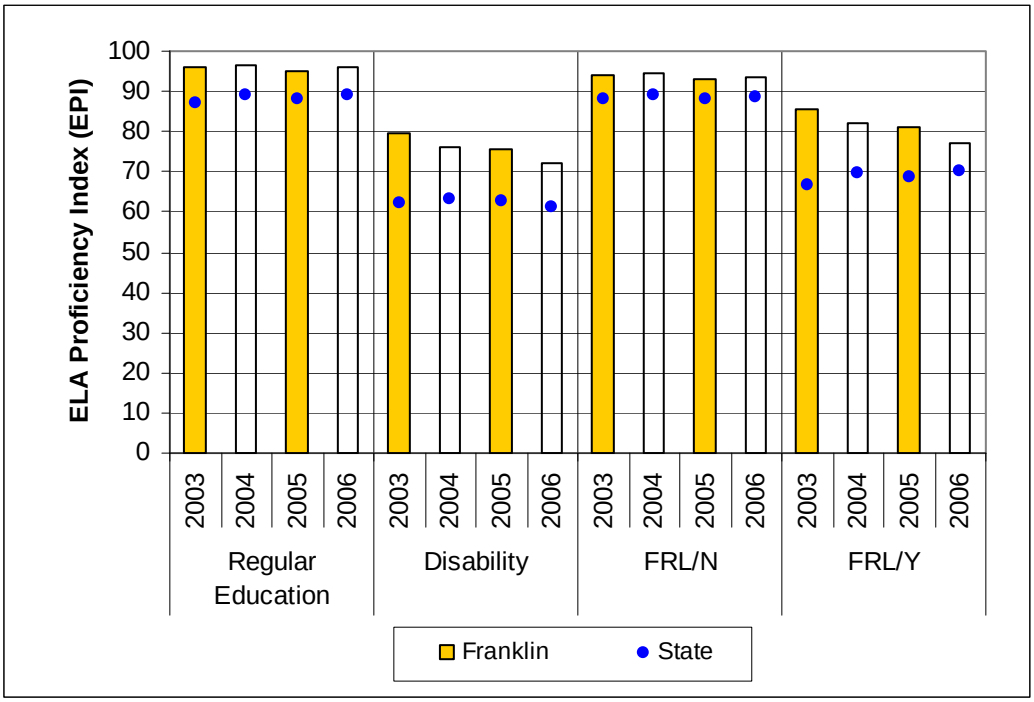
	Number of Students				Percentage of students			
	2003	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**
Franklin	2,156	2,715	2,785	3,337	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Regular	1,887	2,356	2,387	2,856	87.5	86.8	85.7	85.6
Disability	268	359	390	477	12.4	13.2	14.0	14.3
FRL/N	2,062	2,604	2,656	3,163	95.6	95.9	95.4	94.8
FRL/Y	94	111	129	174	4.4	4.1	4.6	5.2

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

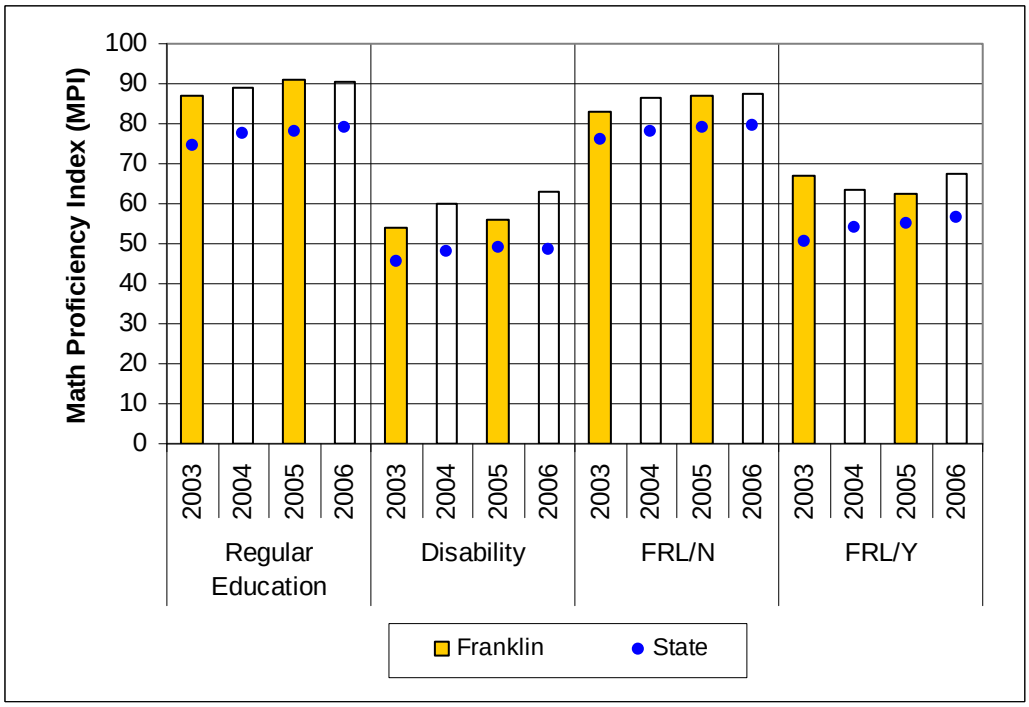
In Franklin between 2003 and 2006, the proportion of students with disabilities increased by nearly two percentage points, and the proportion of low-income (FRL/Y) students increased by nearly one percentage point.

Figures 17 A,B/Table 17: 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

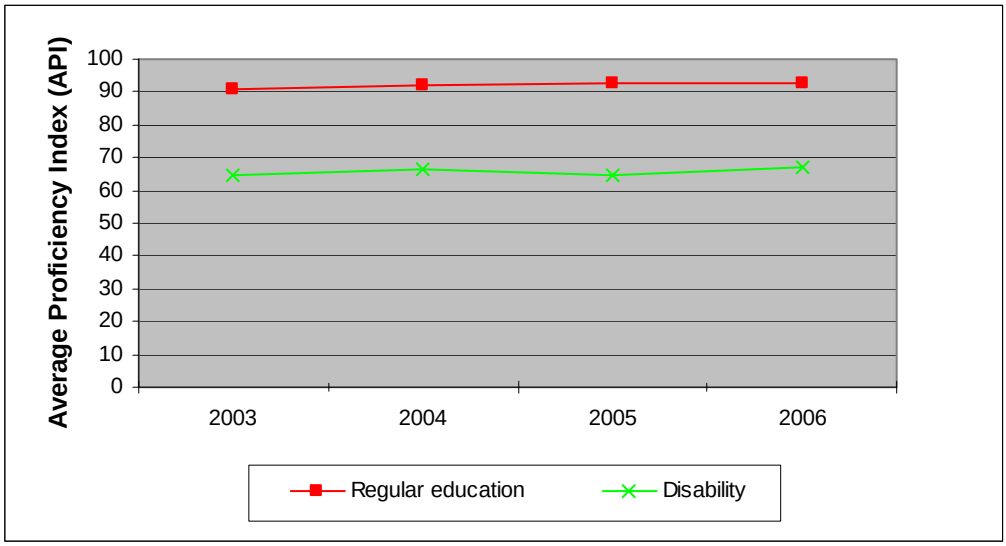


State				Franklin			
Subgroup	**Year**	**EPI**	**MPI**	**Subgroup**	**Year**	**EPI**	**MPI**
Regular Education	2003	87.3	74.7	Regular Education	2003	95.8	86.8
	2004	89.2	77.4		2004	96.6	89.1
	2005	88.3	78.2		2005	95.1	91.0
	2006	89.0	78.9		2006	95.9	90.6
Disability	2003	62.1	45.3	Disability	2003	79.8	54.0
	2004	63.3	47.9		2004	76.1	59.8
	2005	62.9	49.0		2005	75.8	56.2
	2006	61.2	48.4		2006	72.0	62.9
FRL/N	2003	87.9	75.9	FRL/N	2003	94.2	82.9
	2004	88.9	78.1		2004	94.5	86.3
	2005	88.3	79.0		2005	92.9	87.1
	2006	88.6	79.7		2006	93.4	87.7
FRL/Y	2003	66.6	50.7	FRL/Y	2003	85.6	67.2
	2004	69.7	53.9		2004	82.1	63.7
	2005	68.8	55.0		2005	81.3	62.3
	2006	70.0	56.3		2006	77.2	67.5

In Franklin, all student subgroups except regular education students had a decline in performance in ELA between 2003 and 2006. The subgroups with the greater declines in ELA were students with disabilities and low-income (FRL/Y) students. In math, all subgroups in Franklin showed improved performance between 2003 and 2006. The most improved subgroup in math was students with disabilities.

The performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in ELA widened from 16 PI points in 2003 to 24 PI points in 2006, and the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in math narrowed from 33 to 28 PI points over this period.

Figure/Table 18: Student MCAS Test Performance, by Student Status Subgroup, 2003-2006

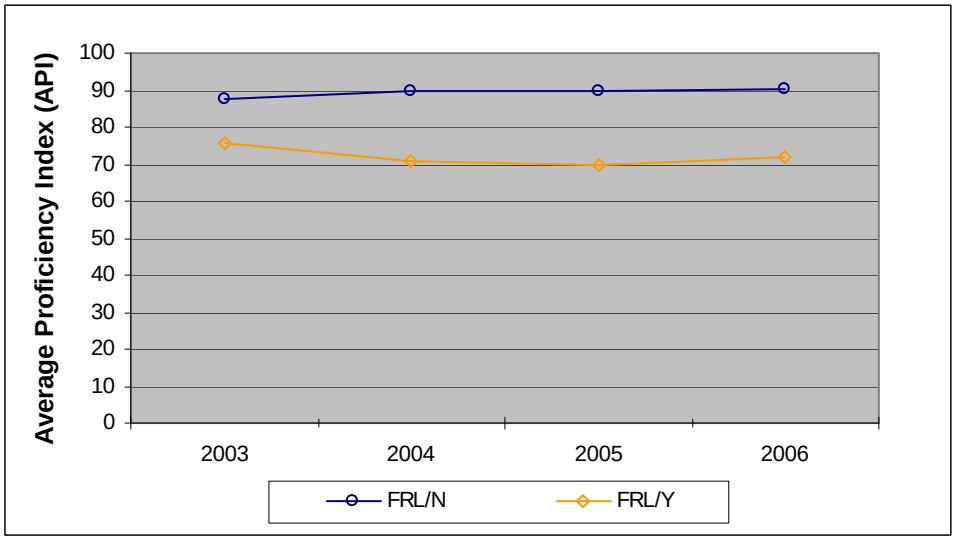


		API	EPI	MPI	Percent Attaining Proficiency ELA	Percent Attaining Proficiency Math
Regular education	2003	90.7	95.8	86.8	87	65
	2004	92.2	96.6	89.1	89	72
	2005	92.8	95.1	91.0	86	76
	2006	92.9	95.9	90.6	87	76
Disability	2003	64.6	79.8	54.0	53	16
	2004	66.5	76.1	59.8	45	24
	2005	64.4	75.8	56.2	44	20
	2006	66.9	72.0	62.9	42	33

Both regular education students and students with disabilities in Franklin had slightly improved overall performance on the MCAS tests between 2003 and 2006 due to improved math performance. The average proficiency gap for Franklin's regular education students narrowed from nine to seven PI points; for students with disabilities, it narrowed from 35 to 33 PI points. These gains resulted in improvement rates of 24 percent for regular education students and six percent for students with disabilities.

Between 2003 and 2006, the average performance gap between regular education students and students with disabilities remained the same.

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

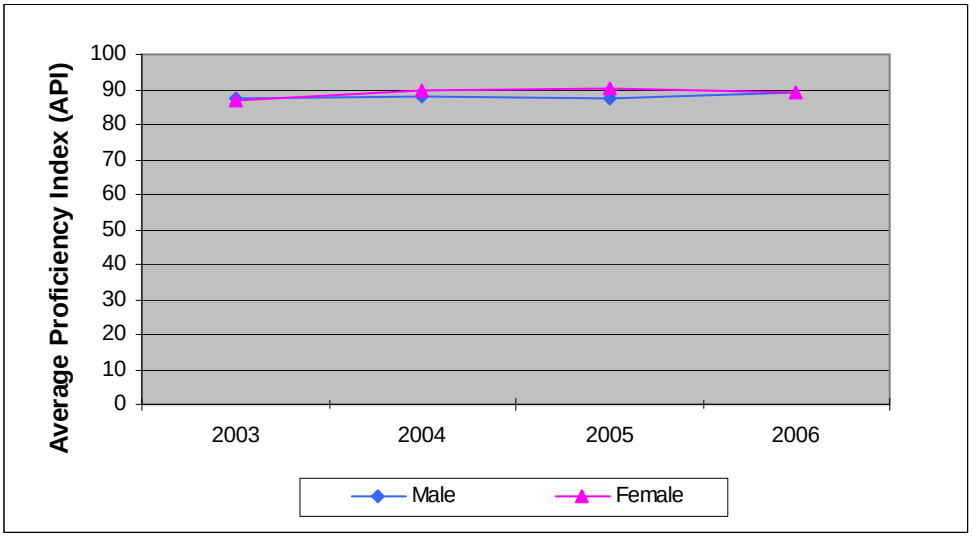


		API	EPI	MPI	Percent Attaining Proficiency ELA	Percent Attaining Proficiency Math
FRL/N	2003	87.8	94.2	82.9	84	60
	2004	89.7	94.5	86.3	85	67
	2005	89.6	92.9	87.1	81	70
	2006	90.1	93.4	87.7	83	71
FRL/Y	2003	75.8	85.6	67.2	66	25
	2004	71.0	82.1	63.7	55	32
	2005	70.0	81.3	62.3	56	30
	2006	72.1	77.2	67.5	53	38

Non low-income (FRL/N) students in Franklin had slightly improved overall performance on the MCAS tests between 2003 and 2006, while low-income (FRL/Y) students showed a decline. The average proficiency gap for non low-income students narrowed from 12 to 10 PI points, resulting in an improvement rate of 19 percent. The average proficiency gap for low-income students widened from 24 to 28 PI points.

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

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



		API	EPI	MPI	Percent Attaining Proficiency ELA	Percent Attaining Proficiency Math
Male	2003	87.4	92.6	83.5	79	62
	2004	87.8	92.0	84.8	78	64
	2005	87.3	89.9	85.3	75	67
	2006	89.0	91.4	87.1	78	70
Female	2003	87.1	95.0	80.9	87	55
	2004	89.9	95.9	85.8	89	67
	2005	90.4	95.1	86.8	86	69
	2006	89.4	93.6	86.3	84	69

Both gender subgroups in Franklin had slightly improved overall performance between 2003 and 2006 on the MCAS tests. The average proficiency gap for both male and female students narrowed from 13 to 11 PI points. These gains resulted in improvement rates of 13 percent for male students and 18 percent for female students.

Participation

Are all eligible students participating in required state assessments?

Finding:

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

n-Values by Subgroup and Performance Level, 2006

Subgroup	Performance Level	ELA	Math	STE
Franklin	ALL LEVELS	**3,313**	**3,306**	**1,007**
	Advanced	692	967	181
	Proficient	2,032	1,297	476
	Needs Improvement	521	836	316
	Warning/Failing	68	206	34
Regular Education	Advanced	679	946	179
	Proficient	1,843	1,193	431
	Needs Improvement	322	645	243
	Warning/Failing	11	72	6
Disability	Advanced	13	21	2
	Proficient	187	102	44
	Needs Improvement	197	190	71
	Warning/Failing	57	134	28
Limited English Proficient	Advanced	0	0	0
	Proficient	2	2	1
	Needs Improvement	2	1	2
	Warning/Failing	0	0	0
White	Advanced	653	908	172
	Proficient	1,937	1,245	460
	Needs Improvement	494	798	298
	Warning/Failing	63	190	34
Hispanic	Advanced	2	7	2
	Proficient	22	11	4
	Needs Improvement	7	12	6
	Warning/Failing	2	3	0
African-American	Advanced	1	1	0
	Proficient	21	9	2
	Needs Improvement	9	12	8
	Warning/Failing	1	9	0
Asian	Advanced	33	45	7
	Proficient	42	27	9
	Needs Improvement	9	11	3
	Warning/Failing	2	2	0
Free or Reduced-Cost Lunch/No	Advanced	681	953	181
	Proficient	1,951	1,256	461
	Needs Improvement	454	763	287
	Warning/Failing	55	160	29
Free or Reduced-Cost Lunch/Yes	Advanced	11	14	0
	Proficient	81	41	15
	Needs Improvement	67	73	29
	Warning/Failing	13	46	5
Male	Advanced	260	461	88
	Proficient	1,067	692	256
	Needs Improvement	301	410	168
	Warning/Failing	41	107	12
Female	Advanced	432	506	93
	Proficient	965	605	220
	Needs Improvement	220	426	148
	Warning/Failing	27	99	22

n-Values by Grade and Year, 2003-2006

Grade	Year	ELA	Math	STE
Grade 3	2003	463	0	0
	2004	542	0	0
	2005	492	0	0
	2006	477	473	0
Grade 4	2003	478	478	0
	2004	459	460	0
	2005	539	538	0
	2006	496	495	0
Grade 5	2003	0	0	0
	2004	0	0	478
	2005	0	0	466
	2006	540	539	538
Grade 6	2003	0	428	0
	2004	0	474	0
	2005	0	477	0
	2006	465	468	0
Grade 7	2003	467	0	0
	2004	417	0	0
	2005	459	0	0
	2006	480	482	0
Grade 8	2003	0	424	0
	2004	0	471	471
	2005	0	403	403
	2006	467	467	469
Grade 10	2003	314	314	0
	2004	347	344	0
	2005	355	352	0
	2006	388	382	0
All Grades	2003	1,722	1,644	0
	2004	1,765	1,749	949
	2005	1,845	1,770	869
	2006	3,313	3,306	1,007

Notes

Trend data include grades for which testing was administered for each subject in all four years. The following grades are included in the trend data for 2003-2006 reported in Figures/Tables 14-20 and in the table of n-values by grade and year:
English language arts (ELA): 3, 4, 7, 10
Math: 4, 6, 8, 10
Science and technology/engineering (STE): 5, 8

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

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

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

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

Rounded values may result in slight apparent discrepancies.

Standard Findings and Summaries

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

I. Leadership, Governance, and Communication

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

Standard Rating: Needs Improvement

Findings:

- The district had a strategic plan for the period of 2004-2007 that contained mission and vision statements, values, and six goals that had benchmarks to measure success.
- School Improvement Plans (SIPs) were inconsistent and not aligned to the strategic plan.
- The school committee and district and school leadership used student achievement data in the budget decision-making process and advocated for needed programs and services.
- School committee members understood their responsibilities under education reform and attended training sessions.
- During the period under review, the district did not evaluate administrators on an annual basis as required by statute.

- District and school safety planning was inconsistent during the period under review. The district had individual school safety plans, but the district was just beginning to develop a districtwide emergency crisis plan.
- The former superintendent delegated the curriculum development process along with instructional supervision responsibilities; however, budgets were not consistently developed collaboratively with principals during the period under review.

Summary

During the period under review, the former superintendent improved collaboration between the school committee, the town council, and the finance committee, as requested by the school committee. The former superintendent was accessible but did not always keep the committee informed of district progress on projects, according to committee members interviewed. Those interviewed also stated that they evaluated the former superintendent annually based on goals. During this same period, personnel files revealed that the former superintendent did not evaluate administrators annually based on the Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership.

The school committee had a subcommittee structure, and these subcommittees made recommendations to the whole committee on topics such as negotiations, policy, and finance. Committee members were knowledgeable of their roles and responsibilities through attendance at Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) conferences, legislative updates from MASC, and completion of the required professional development workshops.

The school committee was involved in communication with its stakeholders through attendance at meetings in the community and through the development of electronic capabilities, such as the district website, blogs, and budget presentation video clips made public via www.youtube.com. The budget subcommittee had regular meetings with the town council and finance committee during the period under review.

The district had effective methods of gathering, analyzing, and using aggregated and disaggregated data to make changes to curriculum and instruction to improve student achievement. Committee members and administrators shared examples of data-driven decision-making, such as the modification of the alternative high school program, the implementation of Impact Math at the middle school, and an analysis of the district's foreign language program.

Presentations on the MCAS test results were conducted at school committee meetings during the period under review and shared with the community via cable television.

The school committee governed through the development of a district policy manual. A policy subcommittee reviewed all policy proposals and made recommendations to the entire committee as needed. A strategic plan covered the period of 2004-2007 and contained the district's mission and vision statements and six goals. The goals addressed curriculum and instruction, professional and support staff, school climate, community support, financial management, and evaluation of and accountability for the strategic plan. Steering and development committees, made up of parents, school committee members, and school and town administrators, developed the plan which had as its main objective "improved student achievement." Each of the goals had measurable benchmarks and required data to report progress on an annual basis.

The school committee reviewed School Improvement Plans (SIPs) on an annual basis and stated that the inconsistencies in format made it difficult to review them in a timely manner. Crisis plans for each school in the district were not completed in a consistent or timely manner. Some administrators went ahead and developed plans while others waited and used plans from other districts. Collaboration took place during the period under review, including the placement of the district office in a new municipal building with town officials. Central office personnel worked on curriculum and instruction in a collaborative model with principals, curriculum teams, coordinators, and directors to improve student achievement.

Indicators

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district had vision and mission statements and each school had a mission statement with all documents online. The EQA team reviewed school committee minutes from November 30, 2004 and determined that steering and development committees, made up of parents, school

committee members, and school and town administrators, developed the district Strategic Educational Plan for 2004-2007. The main objective of the plan was "improved student achievement" based on an analysis and monitoring of data from a variety of sources. "The mission of the Franklin Public Schools is to provide the environment and the resources to enable and to encourage every student to become: an enthusiastic lifelong learner who is self-motivated and inquisitive; successful in reaching his/her emotional, intellectual, and physical potential; capable of success in higher learning; a critical and creative thinker who can communicate skillfully through a broad range of disciplines; a compassionate individual respectful of other points of view and appreciative of differences; and a self-confident, responsible, and active member of an ever-changing world community."

The standards-based plan had six goals that addressed curriculum and instruction, professional and support staff, school climate, community support, financial management, and evaluation of and accountability for the plan. Each of the goals had measurable district benchmarks, and progress toward those goals was reported to the school committee on an annual basis after a review of 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

In an interview with the EQA team, school committee members stated that they were aware of their responsibilities under the Education Reform Act through information forwarded by the superintendent and attendance at the MASC annual conference. The superintendent and school committee members stated that newly elected members attended an MASC orientation session for new members conducted in the district by the MASC executive director.

As evidenced by a review of school committee minutes, school committee members were aware of and relied on MCAS student achievement data and other relevant data as foundations of their policymaking and decision-making processes. A variety of groups made presentations to the

school committee and the public, including information about the MCAS mathematics scores that resulted in the adoption of the Impact Math series at the middle school level.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

Each of the schools reviewed the MCAS test data provided by the central office in aggregated and disaggregated forms in all appropriate content areas. After an analysis by the director of instruction and the district data analyst, the district provided the analysis to principals and to school faculties in a variety of meetings: schoolwide, grade-level, and content area meetings. In addition to the MCAS achievement data, district and school leaders used a variety of formative and summative assessments to measure student progress in ELA and mathematics. At the elementary level, schools used discretionary assessments such as the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), and the Qualitative Reading Inventory (QRI) to monitor student progress. At the middle school level, ELA and mathematics program assessments were used along with writing prompts and a math exit test to monitor student progress. The high school used quizzes, writing prompts with rubrics, and common final exams.

Central office staff used data to review curriculum through the curriculum committees, and to provide school committee members with information regarding student progress across the district. Committee members stated that the central office staff and principals provided them with adequate achievement data, and more was available if they desired.

The district oversaw the development and analysis of student, staff, and parent surveys used to collect data for the writing of SIPs, and employed a data analyst to complete the disaggregation of the data for distribution to interested parties including Title I and special education teachers.

The EQA team noted that the district analyzed the results of a variety of surveys on a number of topics including professional development days and assessment for improving student achievement. The schools reviewed midterm and final exam data, as well as writing prompts

and unit tests. School committee members stated that the district leaders provided them with dropout rate data that led to the strengthening of the alternative high school program.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Each school had a SIP, but the SIPs did not align with the district strategic plan on a consistent basis or in a consistent format. Not all of the goals were measurable or based on student achievement. The following chart indicates the lack of cohesion between the District Improvement Plan (DIP) and the SIPs. A "✓" indicates which SIP goal aligned with the district strategic goal. (The Jefferson principal reported that the Jefferson SIP had goals in reading and technology which should be included as curriculum/instruction compliance.)

Goal Categories	Kennedy	FHS	Remington	Mann	Sullivan	Keller	Jefferson	Oak St	Parmenter	Thayer
Curr/Instr	✓	✓	✓			✓			✓	✓
Staff										
Climate/ Safety		✓	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓
Community	✓		✓		✓					
Finance							✓			
Evaluation										

The Oak Street and Horace Mann schools were new at the end of the period under review and had just completed their SIPs. Oak Street School opened in a new facility and only moved from one site to another; it operated continuously as Oak Street School. Horace Mann relocated to the Keller-Sullivan complex but was named the HMMS at Annie Sullivan (as per DOE, the new school was the Annie Sullivan). Most of the SIPs aligned with the district MCAS improvement plan, which was the plan to address District Goal 1 in the strategic plan regarding the improvement of student achievement through curriculum and instruction.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district promoted equity by treating school populations differently depending on the programs needed for attention to special needs. The district also distributed allocations differently depending on needs and weaknesses identified by a review of student achievement data. For example, according to interviewees, the district purchased math textbooks for all middle school students based on an analysis of the MCAS test data and the result of a yearlong pilot of the Impact Math series. In addition, the district purchased science materials to address a weakness discovered in a review of science achievement data.

Parent information brochures described scholarships that were available for students in need of extended day, extended learning, the Honor Band Program, the String School, summer academic support programs, the summer STAR program, or the summer adventure program. The district had an alternative high school, and the district provided many special needs programs along with Title I and English language learner (ELL) programs. The district enhanced the ELL program during the latter part of the period under review in response to issues described in the Department of Education (DOE) Coordinated Program Review (CPR) as well as an increase in the number of students who needed ELL services. The special education department continued to seek alternative placements for students enrolled out of district by implementing in-district programs.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

According to interviewees, during the period under review, the budget for the school district was educationally sound, and the town appropriated additional monies for mathematics and science

based on achievement data from the MCAS tests and other formative and summative assessments. School committee members interviewed stated that they created budgets based on achievement data provided by the central office and presentations from members of administrative and curriculum teams. School committee members gave examples of data-driven decision-making in the area of special education that included the introduction of three special education programs at the middle school to reduce tuition costs. The district increased time in mathematics at grades 6-8, and purchased materials to enhance the grade 8 ELA curriculum to address poetry weaknesses, and to enhance the social studies curriculum. The district added a social worker to strengthen its alternative high school program in order to address dropout and attendance issues.

School committee members stated that they saw a large portion of their roles and responsibilities to be advocacy for the budget with the town council and sharing information with the public when the schools needed additional funding. The district and school committee used the websites, blogs, and other electronic media to keep stakeholders informed.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

A review of school committee minutes showed that district leaders made many presentations relative to the MCAS test results and other educational issues at school committee meetings, which the district televised for the benefit of the community. These presentations related to practices in and implications for the areas of curriculum, instruction, and professional development. Each of the elementary schools and some of the middle schools included MCAS updates and highlights in faculty meeting minutes and newsletters, and principals presented new SIPs to the school committee with updates regarding progress on the previous year's accomplishments. The SIP goals were aligned with the MCAS improvement plan. School committee members stated that the wide variation in the SIPs made it difficult to review them in

a timely manner. The school web pages included information regarding progress in student achievement.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The leadership of the district indicated that the use of aggregated and disaggregated data was consistent across the district under the supervision of the director of instruction with the assistance of the data analyst, curriculum enhancement teachers (CETs), specialists, coordinators, and directors. The district data analyst not only worked with MCAS data using TestWiz, but also analyzed the results from surveys of faculty members, parents, and students regarding a wide variety of issues in the general curriculum and specialized programs such as special education and Title I. In addition to the data analyst, approximately 45 people in the district were trained to use TestWiz, according to interviewees. Although the district had not trained all teachers in the use of TestWiz, they did receive many opportunities to access the analyses of the MCAS test data. Principals reported that teachers reviewed item analyses and disaggregated data for their students. Teachers indicated that they modified instruction based on analyses of student achievement data.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

According to interviewees and documentation, principals regularly met with teachers at grade-level meetings at the elementary and middle levels to discuss student progress on the MCAS tests as well as other assessment measures. Elementary principals required informal inventories of all students several times a year to determine literacy needs and/or weaknesses. Writing samples were submitted to the reading specialists and graded with a standard rubric. At the high

school level, the EQA team noted the use of common exams as faculty worked to meet the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) recommendations. Also, there were common writing rubrics for grades K-8 and 9-12. Based on the review of assessment results, a number of existing programs were modified and new programs were implemented including a biology science program, additional services for ELL students, changes in the schedule at all middle schools, modifications to the alternative high school program, and the implementation of Impact Math at the middle school level.

10. <u>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.</u>

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

School committee members stated that they evaluated the former superintendent during the period under review in writing on an annual basis, but evaluations were not found in the personnel file of the former superintendent. Since the former superintendent had left the district prior to the EQA visit, it was unclear as to the whereabouts of the originals. School committee members interviewed offered to provide copies of the evaluations of the former superintendent to the EQA team and stated that they based the evaluations on the attainment of annual goals as well as student achievement and the Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership.

Through a review of 32 personnel records, the EQA team found that no administrators were evaluated annually during the period under review. The evaluations that were completed were signed and found to be informative and instructive, but did not address all of the Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership. Some of the evaluations were based on specific goals while others were generic in their coverage of competencies. The files revealed that at the time of the review, all of the 21 administrators who were required to have certification had the appropriate licensure.

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

Administrators told the EQA team members that there were many occasions when the former superintendent delegated decision-making powers and then altered them without consulting the administrators. This ambiguity caused administrators to be confused, and some felt undermined in the eyes of staff and parents. Interviewees stated that during the period under review, the former superintendent delegated hiring and spending decisions to the appropriate building-level administrators, but other operating issues, such as budget development, were not addressed collaboratively.

The director of instructional services and the assistant superintendent were responsible to work together to oversee the curriculum review cycle and to work with principals, CETs, and program directors to ensure the implementation of appropriate measures that the district identified as important to the improvement of student academic achievement.

The EQA team reviewed personnel files and found that the evaluation process, when implemented, did not address the success of administrators in addressing student achievement. The job descriptions of the district also did not address accountability for student 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: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the period under review, the former superintendent improved the collaboration between the school department and other town offices as directed by the school committee, according to school committee members interviewed. At the same time, relations between the former superintendent and the rest of the administrative team were not always collaborative, according to interviewees. Principals stated that the budget process during the last year of the period under

review was neither collaborative nor inclusive, and at times the principals felt that they were undermined. Interviewees stated that the assistant superintendent played an important role in forging a collaborative atmosphere during the period under review. Interviewees also stated that collaboration took place in the district at the building level and between building personnel and other central office personnel. The curriculum leaders maintained good lines of communication and were accessible and helpful in bringing curricular and instructional consistency to the district. This collaboration resulted in no grievances from the teachers' association.

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: Needs Improvement

Evidence

According to a review of documents provided to the EQA team, district and school safety planning was inconsistent. The district had individual school safety plans; the town of Franklin had an emergency crisis plan; the town and the district had emergency planning oriented toward health and safety; and the town had emergency planning procedures related to transportation and shelter. According to interviewees, the district was just beginning to develop a districtwide emergency crisis plan. The EQA team found safety plans available for each school as well as for the district and for the town, but these various plans were not aligned with each other and were not in a consistent format to assist substitutes and/or volunteers. Specific crisis plans were not available for each school since some buildings had their own plans while others waited for the police and fire personnel to meet with them. One school had a crisis plan that had been developed in another district and had not yet been customized to the Franklin school system due to the unavailability of the fire and police departments. According to interviewees, none of the plans was reviewed annually with police and fire departments, and some were not initially developed in conjunction with those departments. The majority of the schools did have safety plans that were in the form of flip charts, but they did not have consistent information.

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

II. Curriculum and Instruction

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

Standard Rating: Satisfactory

Findings:

- The Franklin Public Schools aligned curricula in all tested content areas to the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks and learning standards as well as district-specific learning standards.
- Curriculum teams, principals, and others responsible for curriculum leadership collaborated to align curriculum both horizontally and vertically and to monitor alignment.
- Elementary and middle school principals provided key curriculum leadership in their respective schools. The district distributed meaningful curriculum leadership to other staff members including the director of instructional services, curriculum enhancement teachers (CETs), reading specialists, and coordinators.
- To improve student achievement, curriculum teams led by team-appointed co-chairs were consistently reviewing, updating, and revising curricula in all tested content areas using a five-phase, research-based, data-driven process during the review period.
- Leadership at the district and school levels collaborated with classroom teachers to analyze formative and summative achievement data, including the MCAS test results, and modified curriculum, instruction, and instructional time to improve students' knowledge and skills.
- Examiners observed limited use of educational technology during classroom observations. Based on data from the classroom observations and evidence from interviews, the district had

an inadequate amount of updated and functional educational technology, particularly at the high school and at self-contained elementary schools.

Summary

During the period under review, the district continued to work on curriculum development. It aligned the curriculum to the state frameworks and district-specific learning standards, and it documented curricula for all content areas in a new and more comprehensive format. Teachers and leaders ensured that the curriculum aligned horizontally and vertically. All elementary schools used the same ELA and math programs but were allowed discretion in their use of supplementary materials. Principals, reading specialists, and math curriculum enhancement teachers (CETs) addressed alignment in meetings with teachers, and principals checked for alignment during classroom walk-throughs. The middle schools also used the same curricular programs and monitored instruction. At the high school, teachers had common planning time, shared common expectations, developed common writing rubrics, and administered common final exams. Grade 5 and 6 teachers and grade 8 and 9 teachers met twice each year to encourage vertical alignment between the elementary and middle schools and the middle schools and high school.

Curriculum teams, under the direction of the director of curriculum and instruction and led by team-appointed co-chairs, reviewed and revised curriculum using a five-phase process that relied on current research and formative and summative achievement data, including the MCAS test results, to inform their work. The district's curriculum teams represented all grade levels to ensure thorough analysis, discussion, decision-making, and communication. They also included special education staff to ensure that the needs of the district's largest subgroup were being met. A number of new curriculum initiatives occurred during the period under review. For example, the district implemented a new math curriculum at the middle schools, chose new reading anthologies at the middle schools, re-sequenced social studies courses, participated in professional development to improve instruction and support district priorities, and modified the schedule at the middle schools to allocate additional instructional time in each core subject area.

Principals of the elementary and middle schools used their role as instructional leader to exercise meaningful influence on improving instruction. They collaborated with CETs and other specialists to monitor instruction through classroom walk-throughs and classroom observations,

and followed up with discussions on instructional techniques either with individual teachers or in small and large group meetings. At the high school, the task of monitoring instructional improvement fell mainly to the CETs in each core content area, supported by the principal and four assistant principals. Throughout the district, professional development offered teachers and leaders opportunities for professional growth that aligned with instructional and curricular priorities at both the district and school levels. Across the district, leadership personnel, teachers, and parents voiced high expectations for teaching and learning.

Observations of 74 randomly selected ELA, math, and science classrooms at the elementary, middle, and high school levels revealed an average class size of 18 students. Observations also indicated inconsistent use, availability, and functionality of computers across the district. Examiners noted the student-to-computer ratio to be 6.1:1 at the elementary schools, 26.5:1 at the middle schools, and 138:1 at the high school, as the high school had allocated most computers to labs rather than classrooms. Overall, observations revealed positive classroom management in 96 percent of the observed classrooms, positive instructional practice in 78 percent, evidence of high expectations in 69 percent, positive student activity and behavior in 76 percent, and positive school climate in 89 percent of the observed classrooms.

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: Satisfactory

Evidence

Evidence from documents and interviews revealed that during the period under review, the district focused on revising curricula in core content areas to ensure that they were standards based rather than school or district based. The revised curricula addressed components of the state curriculum frameworks and learning standards and, with the addition of Franklin-specific learning standards, exceeded them. Also during the period under review, the professional staff worked in curriculum teams to document curricula in a new format that included the state and

Franklin-specific learning standards or expectations, essential questions, texts/topics, vocabulary, resources, content, assessment options, activities, accommodations, and often recommended timelines or pacing calendars. By the end of the review period, the ELA and mathematics curricula conformed to the new format, but gaps existed in curricula for other tested core content areas.

In a review of curricula, the EQA examiners found that documents conformed to descriptions made by teachers and administrators in interviews and printed on the documents themselves. Each curriculum was a "work in progress." Although some curricula were more comprehensive and more complex than others, most curricula and teaching materials reviewed provided guides for classroom instruction in terms of defining what students should know and be able to do, what materials teachers could use for both instruction and assessment, and often in ELA and mathematics how teachers, as well as students, would know whether students had reached proficiency. In interviews, teachers and administrators specifically cited their ongoing work to update curricula and to develop curriculum maps, benchmarks, assessments, and rubrics across content areas and grade levels.

An exemplary district practice was the use of a link called First Class Access on the district's website. The link enabled staff to access, post, share, revise, and use all curricula as well as supporting resources, such as rubrics, test data analyses, final exams, pre- and post-tests, websites, and other items. A second exemplary practice that indicated teachers' clarity in instruction became evident to the EQA examiners during classroom observations; almost without exception, teachers posted daily instructional objectives on the board, often with an agenda that delineated activities and strategies that teachers and students would use to achieve those objectives.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

Evidence from interviews and a review of documents indicated that the district's professional staff worked to align curriculum both horizontally and vertically through several curriculum management strategies. Under the direction of curriculum teams chaired by CETs and guided by

the director of instruction, teachers documented curricula in a format organized around the state curriculum frameworks and state and local learning standards. This work was ongoing. In practice, the district achieved alignment by using common curricula and common academic programs and textbooks across schools and courses. The district established multiple opportunities for professional staff to meet and discuss curricula, and created multiple overlapping curriculum leadership roles that monitored instructional alignment as well as curricular alignment. To ensure vertical alignment in the school transition process, grade 5 and 6 teachers and grade 8 and 9 teachers met twice each year. Finally, districtwide curriculum teams in each content area continually met and addressed curriculum issues including horizontal and vertical alignment.

At the elementary level, the district used the Harcourt Trophies program, a research-based developmental reading and language arts program, across all schools. The district allowed some flexibility to individual schools and teachers to supplement the core program with trade books and other ELA materials to support struggling students or for enrichment. All elementary schools used Everyday Math, an elementary mathematics curriculum developed by the University of Chicago School Mathematics Project and published by Wright Group McGraw-Hill. Teachers used common texts, resource binders, kits, and materials in science and social studies. To further support alignment at the elementary schools, principals, reading specialists, and math CETs met regularly with grade-level teachers, content-area teachers, and school faculty to discuss curricular issues. Principals kept a watchful eye on alignment when conducting short classroom walk-throughs and longer classroom observations and when reviewing teacher-generated instructional materials. They collaborated with reading specialists and the math CETs at each school who tracked pacing and content as part of their responsibilities.

At the middle schools, the core ELA program implemented in the district was Holt, Rinehart and Winston's Elements of Language and Elements of Literature, which was supplemented with teacher-selected trade books, vocabulary books such as *Wordly Wise*, assorted poetry, and dramatic literature. During school year 2004-2005, the district studied the middle school mathematics program and recommended a change from the Connected Math Program (CMP) to Glencoe/McGraw-Hill's Impact Math in the 2005-2006 school year. Middle school principals functioned similarly to elementary principals in curriculum leadership roles. They held meetings

with grade-level and content-area teachers, and they conducted informal walk-throughs and more formal classroom observations. They collaborated with the math CETs to monitor delivery of the curriculum.

In addition to participation in similar curriculum documentation and alignment at the high school, late in the review period the professional staff stepped up its efforts to revise and align curricula in the tested content areas in response to the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) 2005 accreditation report. High school CETs met monthly with the director of instructional services to discuss curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices. In addition, the high school dedicated common planning time to support teachers' curriculum planning; this time provided teachers and the leadership to include pacing, alignment, and implementation in their discussions.

Although the high school principal's role was to be informed about curriculum, responsibility for monitoring the curriculum for alignment fell to teachers and the high school's CETs in English, mathematics, science, and social studies. CETs functioned much like department heads; they taught part time, and although they had supervisory responsibilities, they had no evaluative role in their work with teachers. At twice monthly departmental meetings and at course meetings that took place once every seven-day cycle, high school teachers discussed curriculum issues and monitored horizontal and vertical alignment across courses and programs. During the review period, high school courses also shared common expectations, developed common writing rubrics across disciplines, and administered common final exams.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

In interviews, most teachers identified the principal as the key curriculum leader in their school, and although principals accepted responsibility for curriculum leadership, most acknowledged that they collaborated with other professional staff to oversee curriculum. The district, in fact, had distributed curriculum leadership at each school and within the district. The director of

instructional services monitored all curricular work in the district, and principals, reading specialists, CETs, and coordinators each played an oversight role in improving the use, alignment, consistency, and effectiveness of delivery of the curriculum. However, the principals evaluated teachers since other curriculum leaders were members of the teachers' bargaining unit.

Elementary principals were responsible for monitoring curriculum, observing and evaluating classroom instruction, and analyzing student achievement data before sharing the data at the school or grade level. They collaborated with their school's reading specialists to oversee delivery, alignment, and effectiveness of the ELA curriculum and to prescribe support for struggling students and even for struggling teachers. Elementary principals also worked with their school's math CETs and grant-funded coordinators to oversee and monitor the delivery of the curriculum and monitor effectiveness. They focused on instructional improvement for all students by leading the initial discussions of the analyses of the MCAS test data at their schools; they planned professional development to meet school and district goals; and they met with teachers in small and large group settings to discuss curriculum implementation related to individual, subgroup, and aggregate student achievement.

At the middle schools, evidence from interviews and a review of documents revealed that each principal monitored curriculum both formally and informally. Middle school principals served the same multifaceted curricular role as elementary principals.

Math CETs were in place at the middle schools, and they provided leadership through their work on curriculum teams and in their capacity to support instruction. They worked directly with teachers to more effectively deliver and ensure alignment in the mathematics curriculum. When funds were available, grant-funded coordinators provided leadership for science and social studies at the middle schools. Coordinators taught full time, and each year, one principal reported, middle school principals hoped that the district would find the funds for coordinators' stipends either through grants or in the school budget.

At the high school, curriculum leadership resided mainly with CETs in English, mathematics, science, and social studies. All high school CETs were members of the district's curriculum teams. Under the direction of the director of instructional services, they oversaw curriculum development, alignment, and implementation and tracked student progress, especially the MCAS

test results. The high school principal stayed informed about larger curricular issues and monitored instruction during informal walk-throughs and more formal classroom observations that informed summative performance evaluations. Assistant principals also conducted informal walk-throughs and observations and shared observation notes with teachers and principals.

Interviews and a review of documents revealed autonomy at the schools in terms of assessing the effectiveness of delivery of the curriculum. While the district required each school to follow the curricula in core content areas, the choice of supplementary materials or formative and summative assessments to measure student progress, other than the MCAS tests, varied by school at the elementary and middle school levels. The district's director of instructional services also monitored curriculum implementation, consistency, and effectiveness through administrative team meetings and meetings with CETs, reading specialists, coordinators, and curriculum teams that were held twice a month and, if funding permitted, also met during the summer.

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: Satisfactory

Evidence

At each school, principals, CETs, specialists, and coordinators provided leadership and support for effective instructional strategies, techniques, and research-based methods through supervision, evaluation, and professional development. For example, they convened teachers in large and small groups to discuss instructional strategies and techniques. CETs modeled lessons, observed classrooms in a non-evaluative role, and offered coaching to teachers in grade-level, content-area, or school-level groups. Principals and assistant principals conducted regular informal walk-throughs to monitor instructional techniques, but most indicated they had no specific protocol or process when conducting walk-throughs. They followed up with teachers either in conversations or via emails with comments and suggestions.

Principals and assistant principals also conducted formal classroom observations, but only the principals could evaluate classroom instruction. Principals used their role in the evaluation

process to promote effective instructional strategies and techniques. A review of a random sample of teacher evaluations conducted during the review period indicated comments on classroom instruction were informative and instructive.

In interviews, teachers and principals cited professional development both inside and outside the district to support both school and district instructional goals. Examples of professional development activities offered during the period under review included differentiated instruction, reading and writing across the curriculum, and mathematics professional development, especially for teachers and CETs at the middle school when the district implemented the Impact Math program in school year 2005-2006. The district also allocated a significant amount of summer professional development time and financial support to documenting and aligning curricula in the core content areas.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

Evidence obtained during interviews and from a review of documents explained how K-12 curriculum teams worked to review, revise, develop, and communicate about curriculum during the period under review. CETs in ELA, math, science, and social studies chaired the curriculum teams, which met regularly. The teams typically included appropriate CETs; at least one classroom teacher from each school level, K-5, 6-8, and 9-12; and a member of the special education staff from each school level. Each team had representation from each school and the teams represented all grades. As it was a teacher-driven initiative, administrators did not participate as team members. However, the director of instructional services attended curriculum team meetings and met with the chairs monthly. In June, curriculum teams presented data and recommendations to the administrative team. With expansive representation, members of curriculum teams could easily communicate expectations for and revisions of content and pacing within and across grades and schools.

During the period under review, under the guidance of the director of instruction, the district dedicated most curriculum reviews to ensuring that curriculum guides reflected current research in each content area, were aligned with state curriculum frameworks and Franklin-specific learning standards, and conformed to the new format. At each phase of the process, curriculum teams reviewed the MCAS test results and used the MCAS test data to inform the various stages of curriculum development. Since special education staff from each level participated as team members, their input into discussions and decisions ensured that the needs of the district's major subgroup would be included. Teams made steady progress in reviewing and revising programs in mathematics, STE, social studies, and reading/ELA during school years 2004 through 2006. Examples of data-driven decisions to alter or modify curricula and academic programs included the adoption of Impact Math at the middle school in 2005-2006 and the recommendation in 2005-2006 to change the grade 8 social studies program from Civics to World History I. In addition, the district developed a stronger program for ELL students and implemented a new mathematics initiative for middle school special education students.

In their work to improve the district's curriculum and its delivery, curriculum teams investigated current research in their content areas and considered analyses of assessment data. Although the curriculum review process unfolded in five phases, it was designed to be fluid so teams could incorporate modifications on a yearly basis without waiting to complete and submit a report for approval every five years. The district believed it was important for the curriculum to be responsive and agile, to be able to respond to changes in the state frameworks and maintain currency in each discipline. Curriculum reviews entailed a five-phase, data-driven process that consisted of: 1) review student achievement and research best practices; 2) evaluate and revise current curriculum; 3) review materials and identify professional development; 4) develop short- and/or long-term plans, communicate plans, and implement curriculum, materials, and professional development; and 5) monitor and evaluate implementation. In 2006, the district stretched the timeline for reviews so that some phases lasted more than one year.

Curriculum teams used surveys in their research and used survey feedback to inform curriculum development work. An example was the math curriculum team's use of a teacher survey in May 2006, after the middle schools had implemented Impact Math, the new middle school mathematics program, for one school year. The survey investigated teachers' use of various

instructional techniques and resources associated with Impact Math, explored the program's instructional strengths and challenges, asked teachers to describe differences in students' mathematical thinking, and invited suggestions for professional development. The survey results also became a communication tool, informing school leaders and mathematics teachers about a significant change in mathematics instruction in the district.

In addressing improved achievement for all subgroups, although MCAS test proficiency rates in Franklin during the period under review were high or very high compared to state averages, for two years during the period under review the district did not make adequate yearly progress (AYP) for all subgroups in ELA and mathematics. This became a major impetus to revise mathematics instruction, especially at the middle school and for special education students. In the last year of the review period, the district achieved its goal to meet middle school AYP targets in math.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district provided numerous opportunities for teachers and leaders to analyze and use student achievement data to improve student achievement. The MCAS test results systematically made their way through the district's schools and content areas from the director of instruction to principals and CETs and then to teachers in whole-school meetings and grade-level or content-area meetings. Discussions of the MCAS test results in various formats resulted in multiple and frequent small-scale adjustments or large-scale improvements to both content and instructional practice. Several interviewees noted the consistent presence and use of the MCAS test results in the district to both inform and reform practice. At grade-level, content-area, and school-level discussions of the MCAS test results, teachers, principals, and CETs focused on item analyses, year-to-year comparisons of grade-level proficiency, and cohort proficiency. Curriculum teams analyzed the MCAS test results each year.

Information provided by interviewees and documents showed that individual schools and teachers used a plethora of formative and summative assessments to measure student progress in

ELA and mathematics, especially at the elementary schools. With relative autonomy at each school, the use of formative assessments varied by school and sometimes by grade, although each elementary school required all teachers to administer running records every three months to measure individual student progress in reading. Some schools used the DRA for all students; some used it only for Title I students. Some used the DIBELS, especially with special education students, while others made use of the QRI. To assess student writing, districtwide writing benchmarks were in place across grades 1-8, and the district developed one during 2006-2007 for grades 9-12. Some middle schools used the Stanford Achievement Test. In addition, K-8 ELA and mathematics programs included built-in formative and summative assessments. For example, the mathematics program had both pre-tests and post-tests with common scoring rubrics, teacher-designed measures of progress, and exit tests compiled by the mathematics CETs.

At the high school, interviewees provided examples of formative assessments, such as daily quizzes, tests, labs, peer reviews, projects, oral presentations, and core writing assignments using a common grades 9-12 writing rubric. High school courses administered common final exams that counted for 10 percent of a student's final course average, and some courses administered midyear exams. High school interviewees offered examples of how the use of data analyses at whole-school, departmental, and course-level meetings influenced changes in program, pacing, and priorities in the classroom.

The special education staff members paid particular attention to patterns of achievement for students with disabilities, the primary subgroup in the district. They worked with the general education staff to understand special education students' achievement and to accommodate students' instructional and behavioral needs in and out of classrooms to adequately meet Individualized Education Program (IEP) requirements.

Based on an examination of instructional time data submitted by the district in EQA Attachments D and D1, the district allocated sufficient time in the tested core content areas to meet the minimum state requirements of 990 instructional hours at the elementary schools and 900 hours at the secondary schools. The district considered time as an instructional tool. For example, the district decided to modify learning time to improve student achievement at the middle schools

during the period under review by implementing a seven-day cycle that scheduled each academic course for 60 minutes for six of the seven days. The new schedule replaced one that had daily class sessions of 45 minutes each and increased the amount of time academic courses met each year. Also at the middle school, interviewees noted that the district had reduced instructional time for Spanish from 180 days to 90 days to 60 days during the period under review, mainly due to financial constraints.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Appropriate technology was available in the district, but overall, according to interviewees, it was inadequate in supply, and much was outdated or in disrepair. The inventory of technology equipment found in the district's technology plan for 2006-2009 indicated that almost 42 percent of computers in the district were "low-end" and only 13 percent were "high-end." During random observations of 74 classrooms, equally distributed among the elementary, middle, and high schools, the EQA examiners recorded 6.1 elementary students per classroom computer, 26.5 middle school students per classroom computer, and 138 high school students per classroom computer. However, portable laptop carts were in place at some schools and Mac and PC labs existed at all schools. The district equipped school libraries with computers for students and teachers to use and do research, although interviewees stated that many were in poor condition, especially at the high school, and some equipment was outdated due to lack of funds.

Each elementary school had a technology CET who worked with students and teachers to integrate technology. Technology CETs had developed web quests for specific units to help students and teachers do research and helped develop a media retrieval system in several schools in which media were broadcast to specific classrooms from a source located in the library.

Overall, students and/or teachers used available technology in 18 percent of the 74 randomly selected classrooms observed by the EQA examiners. Interviewees stated that there were few expectations for using computers to support teaching in the district. In fact, in the elementary schools the EQA examiners observed technology used appropriately by teachers or students in

13 percent of the observed classrooms. The examiners observed the same percentage at the high school where functional equipment was scarce. At the middle schools, the EQA examiners observed technology in use in 30 percent of the observed classrooms. However, in the classrooms where examiners observed teachers or students using technology, observers' comments reflected skillful use of computer simulations, graphing calculators, and a projector connected to computers. Observers noted few SmartBoards either present or in use at all schools. Interviewees stated that students were well positioned to use technology, but lack of access was often an issue. One area in which technology was an asset was special education. For example, in one classroom a full-time captionist was observed who shadowed a deaf child in every class, capturing classroom discussions and directions for the student.

The district facilitated curriculum documentation and management using the First Class Access website to allow teachers access to all the district's curricula and relevant curriculum development materials and resources.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

One important measure that reflected high expectations for students was the goal to improve proficiency in tested content areas as measured by the MCAS test results. By creating standards-based curricula aligned to the state frameworks that could adjust to DOE modifications swiftly, district and school leaders clearly communicated expectations viewed through the lens of the 1993 education reform legislation. District and school leadership used active supervision and professional development to improve teacher skills and knowledge. Walk-throughs were informal and tended to be unstructured and inconsistent in format. However, evaluations using classroom observations as one evaluative tool took a more formal role given their intent to be informative and instructive for teacher development. Given the large number of teachers in their first three years of service, regular and active supervision and evaluation communicated high expectations for instruction. For professional status teachers, the district offered an alternative pathway for teachers to demonstrate professional growth.

Several interviewees articulated the district's expectations for classroom instruction and explained them as the qualities looked for informally by instructional leaders in walk-throughs and more formally in observations and followed up on in subsequent post-observation conversations. Leaders looked for evidence of higher order thinking skills, skills that were implicit in the standards and the curriculum. Leaders expected clarity in teaching, and they expected teachers to define objectives daily, plan and post how they would achieve them, and summarize key learning at the end of the class. Leaders looked at the quality of written materials and how well students could write as defined by common writing rubrics. Leaders looked at the nature of the questions teachers asked: did questions push students to think more deeply in class, in assignments, and on quizzes and tests? Leaders in the early grades looked at what students were reading and tracked students' reading progress as closely as their classroom teachers did. Leaders looked to see that all students were engaged in all classrooms, including being engaged in investigation in science and social studies rather than memorizing. Leaders tracked multiple sets of assessment data and discussed them with teachers in small and large group settings, collaboratively examining what the data meant and how they could inform improvement in the classroom for students in general education as well as in special education. Leaders sought collaborative ways to plan and offer professional development to teachers that would support the curricular and instructional improvement goals the district and its schools had set.

While school autonomy and inconsistency in all of these characteristics were evident almost everywhere in the district, there was still coherency in that the district's schools were moving in the same direction in terms of expectations, curriculum, and instruction.

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: Satisfactory

Evidence

Evidence from documents and interviews indicated that the district monitored instruction through the examination of multiple forms of assessment data. As a result, the district provided

support through supervision, professional development, and resource allocation, when possible, to improve and maintain high levels of instruction. The district examined and discussed the MCAS test results, using the data as a key indicator to target improvement in curriculum and instruction. In addition, principals, assistant principals, CETs, specialists, and teachers continually used formative and summative assessments, such as reading assessments at the elementary and middle school levels, pre- and post-tests in mathematics at the middle schools, and final exams at the high school, to track trends in individual and aggregate student achievement. At the high school, principals and assistant principals kept informed of SAT, PSAT, and Advanced Placement (AP) results, but interviewees stated that most high school faculty concentrated on data from specific course and departmental assessments, as well as the MCAS test and final exams, for ongoing review.

Although the district's use of formative and summative assessment data provided important information to define progress in student achievement, the district used them informally as a signal of how well teachers met district, school, and instructional goals. The district did not directly use achievement data to evaluate instructional performance. However, school leaders stated that they knew where and how instructional strengths and weaknesses linked to achievement and did not hesitate to use assessment information in discussions and meetings with teachers to identify areas in need of improvement.

At the schools and districtwide, assessment data contributed to decision-making on how to allocate scarce and limited resources, such as time and financial support. Teachers had common planning time. Days were set aside for professional development in the summer and during the school year. Assessment data, especially from the MCAS tests, also figured into decisions about allocating resources to professional development that district personnel identified as priorities. Graduate courses, content workshops, and instructional workshops in critical thinking, differentiated instruction, project-based learning, and writing across the curriculum were offered to teachers based upon data analysis.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the site visit, the EQA examiners observed 74 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. Observations were conducted at the district's schools as follows: 38 at the elementary schools, 20 at the middle schools, and 16 at the high school. In total, the EQA examiners observed 25 ELA classrooms, 25 math classrooms, 19 science classrooms, and five classrooms of other subjects.

Classroom management refers to the maintenance of order and structure within the classroom. Positive indicators of classroom management were evident in 96 percent of the classrooms observed districtwide, with 96 percent at the elementary level, 99 percent at the middle school level, and 92 percent at the high school level.

Instructional practice was the largest category reviewed by the examiners. Effective instructional practice is considered evident when the teacher's questions transcend direct recall and include open-ended questions that require the use of higher order thinking skills. Students should be encouraged to go beyond their initial responses, to analyze, to synthesize, to compare and contrast, and to explain their own thinking. Class time should be focused on student learning. Students who have finished their work should be provided with other appropriate tasks; students who are off task should be redirected to their task. The work should engage all students; it should be age-appropriate, and attuned to many learning modalities, including auditory, visual, and kinesthetic. The pace of the class should be appropriate, challenging, and engaging for all students. Instruction should be differentiated so that all learners are challenged. The lesson

should be clearly aligned with the state curriculum frameworks and either posted on the board or cited in the teacher's planner. The lesson's objectives should be clear and explicitly articulated. The teacher should use standards-based instruction to set objectives, to plan activities, to assess the effect of the lesson, and to measure progress for all learners. Positive indicators of instructional practice were evident in 78 percent of the classrooms observed districtwide, with 81 percent at the elementary level, 80 percent at the middle school level, and 71 percent at the high school level.

Expectations refers to the maintenance of high standards for students by teachers. Evidence of high expectations could include recent examples of high quality student work posted in the classroom. In addition, high quality work should be evident through rubrics that may sometimes be generated by students. Tasks should be challenging for all students, and all students should have access to the same curriculum, although the instruction and strategies may be adapted to the needs of students. The teacher should clearly maintain and communicate high expectations for student work during class time. All students should be expected to be on task and engaged in the lesson. High expectations for students were observed in 69 percent of the classrooms observed districtwide, with 70 percent at the elementary level, 83 percent at the middle school level, and 48 percent at the high school level.

Positive *student activity and behavior* are considered evident when students are actively engaged in the learning process. They must show a clear understanding of the objective of the lesson and interact with the teacher and each other in accomplishing the tasks at hand. They should be attentive and responsive. While the environment may be busy and constructive, it must also be controlled and orderly. There should be few distractions, and the learning process must be clearly evident. Indicators of positive student activity and behavior were evident in 76 percent of the classrooms districtwide, with 79 percent at the elementary level, 75 percent at the middle school level, and 71 percent at the high school level.

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

overhead projectors, and a classroom library. Positive indicators of climate were evident in 89 percent of the classrooms observed districtwide, with 95 percent at the elementary school level, 93 percent at the middle school level, and 71 percent at the high school level.

Summary of Classroom Observations

	Number of Classrooms				Average Class Size	Average Paraprofs. per Class	Computers		
	ELA	Math	Other	Total			Total Number	Number for Student Use	Average Students per Computer
Elementary	13	12	13	38	18.0	0.4	143	112	6.1
Middle	6	7	7	20	18.6	0.3	32	14	26.5
High	6	6	4	16	17.3	0.2	16	2	138.0
Total	25	25	24	74	18.0	0.3	191	128	10.4

	Classroom Management	Instructional Practice	Expectations	Student Activity & Behavior	Climate
Elementary					
Total observations	146	276	107	181	108
Maximum possible	152	342	152	228	114
Avg. percent of observations	96%	81%	70%	79%	95%
Middle					
Total observations	79	144	66	90	56
Maximum possible	80	180	80	120	60
Avg. percent of observations	99%	80%	83%	75%	93%
High					
Total observations	59	102	31	68	34
Maximum possible	64	144	64	96	48
Avg. percent of observations	92%	71%	48%	71%	71%
Total					
Total observations	284	522	204	339	198
Maximum possible	296	666	296	444	222
Avg. percent of observations	96%	78%	69%	76%	89%

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

III. Assessment and Program Evaluation

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

Standard Rating: Satisfactory

Findings:

- The district regularly collected and analyzed student achievement data to improve instruction.
- All elementary and middle schools assessed ELA skills using running records and common writing prompts. Additional ELA assessments were administered at the discretion of the principal and these varied from building to building.
- Math assessments were more consistent throughout the district with Everyday Math assessments primarily used at the six elementary schools and Impact Math assessments used at the three middle schools.
- The district and all its schools stressed the importance of all students taking the MCAS tests, which resulted in a near perfect record of student participation over the last four years.
- The district communicated the assessment results consistently and in a timely fashion to all staff members, parents, and community members.

Summary

The district used an array of testing and assessment analyses to develop the instructional programs for its students. Elementary and middle school principals had discretion regarding the

specific assessment instruments teachers would use in ELA in addition to running records and common writing prompts, while the assessments used to measure progress in mathematics were more consistent throughout the district's elementary and middle schools. The work of the curriculum committees included the creation of grade-specific benchmarks. This task was ongoing during the time of the review. Interviewees noted that the results from several assessments proved to be accurate predictors of how students would perform on the MCAS tests.

Assessment analyses were conducted throughout the grade levels of the district, from the individual Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) and Stanford Reading assessment analyses at the elementary level to analyses of results from common final exams at the high school. The district's director of instructional services and the district data analyst first reviewed, analyzed, and discussed the MCAS achievement results with building principals. The director of instructional services also regularly discussed the data with curriculum teams, reading specialists, coordinators, and CETs. Further analysis occurred at the building level. Classroom teachers received the resulting analyses from their principals, reading specialists, coordinators, and/or CETs.

The district made concerted efforts to inform the parents of students and the community at-large of the assessment results. These efforts included school committee presentations televised through the local cable channel, articles in regional and community newspapers, and direct communication with parents via individual school report cards and progress reports. The district regularly prepared assessment reports focused on student achievement and communicated those reports to the staff and the community. The analysis reports included comprehensive item analyses that identified academic strengths and weaknesses of particular grade-level curricula.

The district had a regular five-phase process to review and revise curricula based on assessment data. The districtwide curriculum committees in each major content area, made up of teachers from all grade levels and CETs, served under the direction of the director of instructional services. District administrators and curriculum teams used MCAS results and trends, district-generated data, and on-going curriculum review to evaluate programs and refine plans for addressing programmatic and academic needs. The MCAS improvement plan, professional development plan, budget appropriations, and curriculum team tasks reflected this systematic

evaluation of programs. Other examples included purchase of a new grade 4 social studies textbook, a new middle school mathematics program, curriculum revisions in mathematics and ELA at grades K-8 to include modification/accommodation suggestions for students with disabilities, and revisions to the algebra and biology curricula at the high school.

When data analysis of achievement results or other research and evaluation such as surveys and/or external audits indicated that weaknesses existed in the instructional programs, the curriculum committees made modifications to the programs with improving student achievement and instructional practice as the primary goal. Specific examples cited included the adoption of the new Impact Math middle school math program for the 2005-2006 school year, the creation in 2005 of an English language learner (ELL) program for the small but growing population of ELL students, and the changing of both the algebra and biology programs at the high school from one-year offerings to two-year offerings for freshmen and sophomores identified as needing the extra time to learn the material.

Indicators

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district consistently used the collection and analysis of student assessment results to plan for the academic improvement of its students. Central office administrators formulated the strategic plan/DIP based in part on the analysis of student achievement data, and that led to the development, implementation, and modification of educational programs. School principals, with the assistance of school councils, annually created their respective SIPs and, as a part of those plans, analyzed student achievement data.

Annually the breakdown and analysis of the MCAS test results began after the district received the results from the DOE. Central office administrators worked on disaggregating the data and analyzing them using the TestWiz software before presenting the results to the individual school principals. The elementary principals, with the assistance of their school's reading specialists and CETs, would further analyze the data and disseminate the information to teachers at full faculty

meetings, grade-level meetings, and/or individually. Secondary principals would analyze the data in concert with the CETs, and then disseminate the information to the teachers at faculty and departmental meetings.

During the period under review, the elementary teachers annually administered a number of student assessments, which varied from school to school. Although the Harcourt Literacy Series assessments were the district's basic ELA assessments for students at grades K-5, interviewees stated that those assessments were used at the discretion of the individual elementary principal and other school leaders, such as the reading specialists, so that, in fact, elementary ELA assessments were school based and were not used consistently throughout the district. The district provided the EQA team with a document entitled the Franklin Public Schools' Assessment Profile, which was a breakdown of the different assessments used at each school. All elementary schools used running records and writing prompts in tracking the ELA progress of children, but the variance in other assessment instruments used was substantial. For example at the Parmenter Elementary School the primary diagnostic tool used to assess student progress at each grade level was the Stanford Reading Assessment, while at the Thayer Elementary School teachers administered the DIBELS to all students three times a year and used the DRA and QRI for at-risk students. Elementary principals confirmed this discretionary practice during their interviews with the EQA team.

Conversely, the district's elementary schools used the Everyday Math assessments as their basic instruments to determine student progress in mathematics, and all elementary schools used the standards-based grade 5 math exit test to inform middle school teachers and administrators of the math capabilities of incoming students.

Similar to the practices occurring at the elementary schools, the district's three middle schools used a variety of ELA assessments to monitor student progress, including the Stanford Diagnostics, the Bader Reading and Language Inventory, and the Silvaroli Reading Inventory. However, interviewees stated that common writing prompts, created by the districtwide ELA committee based on the MCAS writing prompts, had been used regularly by all middle schools. The district's middle schools assessed their students more consistently in mathematics using the CMP assessment tests until the Impact Math program was adopted as in 2005-2006.

At the high school, teachers created common final exams in all disciplines. They analyzed the results, made adjustments annually, and changed the emphasis of their instructional practices if needed. Some courses added common unit-ending tests as a regular part of the instructional program.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the period under review, the district and school leadership required all students to participate in all appropriate assessments. As for MCAS testing, during the last four school years more than 99.9 percent of all students eligible to be tested were tested. In 2006, the district recorded 100 percent participation on all tests at all grade levels except for grade 10 mathematics. During the 2005-2006 school year, in the administration of 16 different tests at seven grade levels (grades 3-10), only five tests were not taken of the more than 7,700 possible tests. The school district also required all students to participate in other standardized and/or locally generated assessments in addition to the MCAS tests.

The district reported an increase in the number of students taking the PSAT and the SAT during the period under review. High school administrators stated that almost all juniors took the PSATs and most seniors took the SAT exam during the last two years, as 90 percent of the seniors enrolled in and attended post-secondary schools.

School administrators at all levels communicated the importance of the various tests to both their students and the students' parents. The district provided the EQA examiners with newsletters and fliers sent to parents that stressed the importance of the upcoming tests. Individual school principals and secondary guidance personnel made efforts to contact the parents of any student missing any test due and made arrangements to have those students take the test as soon as possible after they returned to school.

3. Through the use of district-generated reporting instruments and report cards, district and school leaders implemented assessment systems to measure the attainment of goals, progress,

and effectiveness. These assessment reports were focused on student achievement and were communicated to all appropriate staff and community members.

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district implemented assessment systems to measure the attainment of goals, progress, and effectiveness of testing on student achievement. The district made efforts to communicate assessment reports to all appropriate staff and community members.

The district's instructional leaders analyzed the results of the MCAS tests and the other locally administered tests. Interviewees stated that after completing the analysis of the MCAS test results, a detailed presentation to the school committee took place. The district communicated these school committee presentations to the community through local cable television and the local newspapers, such as the *Milford Daily News* and the Franklin *Country Gazette*. Typically, the district used direct mailing to inform parents of their child's individual MCAS results. The district created a comprehensive website that included analyzed test scores.

District administrators made efforts to communicate to all parents the results of the locally generated assessments. These efforts involved notifying parents of the results of standardized assessments such as the Stanford Diagnostics, the DIBELS, Everyday Math midyear and final tests, the PSATs, and the SATs, as well as providing the regularly issued, locally generated standards-based report cards and/or progress reports for the different schools. The schools scheduled parent-teacher conferences throughout the year to strengthen the communication between the schools and parents.

The district prepared assessment reports focused on student achievement and communicated those reports to the staff and the community. The analysis reports included a comprehensive item analysis that identified academic strengths and weaknesses of a particular grade-level curriculum. Interviewees confirmed that the analysis of results from assessments, such as the Harcourt and Stanford Reading assessments, had assisted the district in predicting how students would perform on the MCAS tests.

Additionally, after preparing their respective SIPs with the school councils, principals presented the document to the school committee and reported the status of each goal they had set the year before, reported the achievement of their students, and proposed new goals for the upcoming year.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district and school leadership used assessment tools to measure student progress, analyzed the data, and disseminated the results to appropriate staff in a timely fashion. Prior to the period under review, the district had established districtwide curriculum committees in all the major academic areas made up of teachers from all grade levels and CETs. One task of the curriculum committees was to establish benchmarks for each grade level. The work of these committees included embedding a number of assessment instruments at each grade level with the expectation that all teachers would continuously use the tools to map the academic progress of their students. The EQA team found that the establishment of grade-specific benchmarks had not been completed and that process was ongoing at the time of the EQA visit. Interviewees indicated that it was important to note that the work of the curriculum committees during the period under review was not work that took place occasionally and for a specific reason, but rather was continuous and constantly evolving. The committees met regularly throughout the school year and continually reviewed and revised the curricula and instructional practices.

Teachers and elementary principals stated that they used the ELA assessments to determine independent reading levels of K-3 students so that they could make an informed decision on placement or implement an academic support program. Interviewees stated that they used the specific ELA, math, and science benchmarks embedded in the curriculum frameworks as the local benchmarks to chart the academic progress of their students. During school year 2005-2006, the upper elementary schools used diagnostic tests in both ELA and mathematics to determine whether a student was prepared to move to the next level. The district had in place a

common writing rubric used by teachers at grades K-8. The high school English teachers also used a common writing rubric and were in the process of training teachers to use it in other disciplines.

At the middle and the high schools, English, math, and science teachers assigned their students writing projects so that writing skills would improve and increase their chances of succeeding on the open-response questions of the MCAS tests. Interviewees stated that high school English teachers, often in concert with teachers of other disciplines, regularly assigned different types of writing projects and/or term papers so that students could improve and better develop their writing skills.

Interviewees stated and the documentation provided by the district confirmed that administrators disseminated the analyzed data to the appropriate staff members in a timely fashion. In recent years, the process began with the director of instructional services and the district data analyst reviewing the data and then meeting with individual school principals and school leaders to analyze the data for the schools. Interviewees stated that 45 administrators and school leaders were trained in the use of TestWiz over the last two to three years, and the district had purchased TestWiz software to enhance data analysis capabilities.

The principals and other school leaders further reviewed the achievement data of the students before disseminating the analyses to the teachers through a variety of methods, including full faculty meetings, grade-level meetings, team meetings, departmental meetings, and/or individually with a teacher. Administrators and teachers, in focus group interviews, agreed that the analyses of achievement data indicating the strengths and weaknesses of the district's curricula and instructional practices consistently and regularly reached the district's classroom teachers, and many discussions had taken place.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district and school leadership used student assessment results and other pertinent data to measure the effectiveness of instructional and support programs. The district's instructional leaders, through the work of the respective curriculum committees, performed cross-grade analyses to assess student performance in particular disciplines, using comparative data from the different grade levels. Through the ongoing efforts of these committees, the district made decisions that affected which instructional programs would be offered and what modifications would be made to academic programs.

Interviewees cited several examples of how the district used data to measure the effectiveness of instructional programs and make changes. Perhaps the most significant change that took place during the period under review was the district's decision to adopt the Impact Math program as the middle school math program. The math curriculum committee recommended this change after analyzing the achievement data, surveying teachers and parents, and piloting several programs.

Another example was the ELA curriculum committee's recommendation to modify the implementation of the anthology program for the elementary schools effective in school year 2005-2006 because analysis of the existing program indicated weaknesses in the phonics program. The middle school anthology was changed because of outdated and inconsistent instructional materials at this level. Another example was the decision by the science curriculum committee to develop a two-year biology program for the lower-level students so that the students could strengthen their life science skills at grade 9 and then receive a concentration of content prior to taking the MCAS STE exam at the end of the grade 10.

6. <u>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.</u>

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district engaged in several internal and external audits and/or surveys during the period under review to evaluate the effectiveness of program implementation and delivery of those

programs, and communicated the results of these audits and/or surveys to the staff and the community in a timely fashion. The district periodically reviewed programs, such as professional development. Professional development data were collected on every professional development offering in the district. Data were analyzed and shared electronically with all buildings/faculty/administrators. Feedback included opportunities for teachers to offer suggestions for additional professional development opportunities. All curriculum teams, reading specialists, CETs, and coordinators provided additional feedback on the professional development program via team meetings and building-based grade-level and departmental meetings. In addition, faculty surveys provided additional input into the effectiveness of program offerings and future needs. The district professional development focus was discussed at administrative team meetings and during the summer administrative retreats. This information was used by the district professional development sub-team to develop the framework for the following year's program.

The district underwent two external audits during the period under review, the NEASC accreditation review of the high school in the spring of 2005, and the DOE Coordinated Program Review in the spring of 2004. Endicott College's Center for Educational Advancement performed another external audit, the Pre-Self-Study (NEASC) Survey, the results of which were included in the Self-Study completed by the high school staff. This large survey measured the perceptions of students, parents, and teachers of various aspects of school life at the high school.

The district conducted a number of internal audits or surveys of many facets of school life. The district used the audits/surveys to help determine the changes that should take place to meet the needs of all the students of the district. The district provided the following examples of these audits/surveys that occurred during the period under review.

The Middle School Mathematics Program Review was a grades 6-8 comprehensive program review began in the 2004-2005 school year to determine the middle school needs in mathematics. The math committee recommended that a number of math programs be tested, including Everyday Math at grade 6, CMP, and Impact Math. The Impact Math program was chosen to be implemented in all grade 6-8 classes. The Impact Math Survey was conducted in May 2006, in which all middle school math teachers were surveyed at the end of their first full

year of teaching Impact Math. A comprehensive statistical analysis of the survey results was included in the final report. The Role of the Educational Support Person (ESPs or paraprofessionals) was a survey of all teachers and ESPs on the role they perform in the Franklin Public Schools. The K-8 Science Curriculum Committee Report was a report on new textbook adoption for middle school science and revised curriculum at grades K-5.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district provided documentation and interviewees confirmed that 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.

The district's school leaders stated that they regularly analyzed student achievement scores to understand how the district's academic offerings affected student learning and that they consistently allotted and adjusted time and resources based on the analysis of that data. For example, the district altered the middle school daily time schedule in 2005 by lengthening all instructional class periods from 45 to 60 minutes, which added more than 1,000 minutes to the instructional school year for each academic subject. All elementary teachers were required to instruct their students in reading and writing for a minimum of three hours per day and in mathematics for a minimum of one hour at grades K-2 and 90 minutes at grades 3-5. In addition, because the middle school special education students did not make AYP in math, the district adopted a new math program. District leadership assigned only those teachers it felt would be successful leading a specific instructional program, such as the advanced algebra program at the grade 8 level and honors and AP courses at the high school.

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: Satisfactory

Evidence

Although the district did not have a standardized process of program evaluation, the district did participate in some mandatory audits, initiated surveys, and reviewed student achievement data, the results of which district and school leadership used to initiate, modify, or discontinue programs and services to attempt to improve the delivery of instruction and student achievement. Interviewees provided numerous examples of how a review of a program resulted in modifications to improve the delivery of instruction. Examples included the adoption of the Impact Math program as the new middle school math program after analysis of the CMP program, the creation of an ELL program after the Coordinated Program Review, and implementation of the NEASC recommendation that all teachers at the high school use a schoolwide rubric.

Other examples included the grade 8 social studies curriculum changes, which included the teaching of World History, and the initiation of a two-year program in both algebra and biology at the high school for lower-level students so that they would be better prepared to succeed on the grade 10 MCAS examinations. Interviewees pointed out other examples such as the enhancement of the K-5 ELA program through the addition of several types of anthologies and the addition of different literature trade texts after weaknesses were observed in the phonics program. Yet another example was the introduction of more public speaking into the curricula of all the major disciplines after a number of consecutive alumni surveys urged the district to do more with public speaking.

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	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		**10**
Needs Improvement									✓	✓			✓	**3**
Unsatisfactory														

IV. Human Resource Management and Professional Development

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

Standard Rating: Satisfactory

Findings:

- The Franklin Public Schools had a human resources director who managed hiring practices and procedures, monitored the licensure status of teachers and administrators, and applied for waivers for uncertified staff.
- The district provided a professional development program and a two-year mentoring program to support teachers. This included professional development sessions in data analysis skills for approximately 45 staff members.
- Administrators performed active supervision in the form of formal and informal classroom observations and walk-throughs, but they did not use common protocols. The district had not trained administrators with evaluation responsibilities in classroom observation techniques.
- The teacher and administrator evaluation processes in place during the period under review did not comply with the requirements of education reform.
- The district provided safety, crisis, and emergency training and had resources in place to react to emergencies; however, safety and crisis training was not consistent in all schools due to the different plans in the schools.

Summary

The Franklin Public Schools had a full-time human resources director who managed hiring procedures, monitored the status of staff certification, and filed for waivers when necessary. The district had an administrative advisory document that outlined hiring expectations and guided the hiring process. The advisory included procedures related to vacancies, advertising, applications, qualifications, and interviews. The district administrators posted positions on the district website, advertised in newspapers, and attended job fairs. The district and all schools had a hiring process that included use of a committee to conduct interviews and make hiring recommendations. Interviewees indicated that the district did not have any financial barriers to hiring teachers or administrators. The district provided licensure data that showed all administrators and all but eight teachers had appropriate certifications. The district had applied for waivers for unlicensed staff.

The district provided professional development and mentoring programs to support teachers during the period under review and adequately funded the programs. The mentoring program was a two-year program, and the district had trained approximately 60 to 70 mentors. The district had a substantial and well-defined professional development program in place during the period under review, which included professional development in data analysis to support instructional strategies. The district identified professional development needs from a number of sources, including student achievement data and teacher evaluations and observations. The district website included a link to professional development opportunities, and staff could register for professional development offerings online.

Professional development in the district consisted of three building-based half days and two districtwide full days. Schools offered opportunities for professional development related to school-specific issues, while the districtwide days provided the district the opportunity to focus on professional development skills for all teachers. In addition, the district provided significant reimbursement for graduate courses and outside workshops. Teachers were given opportunities to advance to stipended positions or administrative positions. Staff turnover in the district was low.

Not all administrators had received training in Research for Better Teaching (RBT) observational analysis techniques, but the district indicated that administrators who had not received the training would receive it in the near future. The performance evaluation process did not hold administrators or teachers accountable for student achievement. Principals conducted classroom observations, but the evaluation cycle for teachers in place during the period under review did not comply with state statute. Most personnel files included summative evaluations for professional status teachers, but they were not performed every two years as mandated. Professional status teachers were given alternative options to demonstrate professional growth in the years they did not receive a summative evaluation. The principals conducted the evaluations of non-professional status teachers annually as required by statute. The superintendent did not conduct annual evaluations for all administrators in accordance with MGL Chapter 71, Section 38. A review of 32 administrator personnel files showed that no administrator received an annual evaluation every year during the period under review.

Indicators

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district had policies and practices for the identification, recruitment, and selection of staff. The district had a policy manual that included a number of personnel policies and a human resources director who managed and monitored selection and hiring procedures. The EQA reviewed an administrative advisory, which clarified hiring expectations and guided the hiring process. Procedures were included in the advisory related to the posting of vacancies, advertising, applications, qualifications, interviews, recommendations for hiring, central office interviews, and new hire processing. In addition, the advisory included hiring forms and sample questions as well as questions that an interviewer should not ask. Examples of school committee policies included personnel policy goals, conditions of employment, staff conduct, professional staff hiring, and evaluation of staff.

Interviewees indicated that schools used a similar team-based approach to hiring and principals developed hiring committees to interview prospective candidates. Team membership varied depending on the type of vacancy, and committees included specialist teachers when a school hired a specialist teacher. Interviewees indicated that hiring committees asked candidates to model classes. Interviewees stated that the district advertised positions on the websites of the district, the DOE, and various professional associations. In addition, the district advertised vacancies in the newspaper.

The district had a similar committee hiring structure in place for administrators. One administrator indicated that eight people served on a hiring committee, including teachers and parents, and the process included multiple interviews before the hiring committee made a recommendation. The district also conducted site visits when hiring administrators.

2. All professional staff had appropriate Massachusetts licensure.

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

A review of staff licensure information provided by the district for school year 2005-2006 on EQA Attachment D showed that of the 516 staff included in the Franklin Education Association (FEA) contract, 508 held the appropriate license. All 21 of the administrators employed in the district in school year 2005-2006 who required a license held the appropriate license. No teachers taught out of field for any period of the day. The district employed 125 paraprofessionals to support special education students in the classroom, but because the district did not have schools designated as Title I schools, paraprofessionals did not have to meet the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) 'highly qualified' standard. A review of documents provided by the district and information gleaned in interviews showed that the district notified unlicensed personnel of the need to obtain the appropriate certification to retain their positions.

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

According to information provided to the EQA through interviews and a review of documents, the district applied to the DOE and received waivers for the eight unlicensed staff members included in the FEA teacher contract for school year 2005-2006. According to interviewees, the director of human services monitored the licensure status of staff and progress toward licensure. The director of human resources provided the EQA spreadsheets with teachers' names and licensure status, including licensure category, the date of issue, stage, and primary subject area of all staff included in the FEA contract as well as the names and licensure status of all administrators. Interviewees stated that the district provided all teachers new to the district with a mentor.

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 which addressed the importance of the assessment and use of student data.

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

Massachusetts statute requires school districts to make available an induction program for new teachers, with such components as providing a trained mentor to new teachers within a certain period and providing time for the new teacher and the mentor to conduct mentoring activities. According to a description of the mentoring program on the district website, "the purpose of the Mentoring Program is to link the new teacher with the veteran teacher with whom he/she can rely on for assistance and guidance. During this mentoring period, ongoing collaboration will facilitate the growth of the new teacher toward the highest levels of professional and personal growth during his/her first two years of teaching in Franklin." According to interviewees and a review of documents, during the period under review the district had a two-year, 30-hour annual mentoring program for new teachers, and principals assigned mentors to new teachers. Interviewees stated that the district had no shortage of mentors, with approximately 60 to 70 mentors who had participated in 16 hours of Teacher 21 mentor training and received a monetary stipend and three credits to move across the salary schedule. According to interviewees, mentoring was a defined process with a paper trail, and the examiners reviewed mentoring manuals for the period under review that confirmed this information. Principals indicated that

they interacted with mentors and mentees and tried to schedule common planning time for the mentor and mentee. Interviewees indicated that as the result of a classroom observation, the observer might suggest to a mentor that the mentee should work on a certain aspect of teaching. Mentors gave examples of how they helped new teachers, such as providing strategies to help them feel comfortable in the classroom, and assistance with lesson planning. One mentor who worked with a special education teacher helped the new teacher develop accommodations for students. Mentors indicated that new teachers all had different needs when they were new to the classroom. In addition, the district provided beginning teachers with a district- and school-based orientation day in the summer prior to school opening. A review of a sample of agendas showed that at these sessions the district discussed such issues as professional development, benefits, school policies, payroll, plan books, mentors, and substitute folders. The process for the mentoring of administrators was informal with senior administrators helping new administrators on an ad hoc basis.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district professional development plan listed as one educational improvement goal "to use data to identify instructional and curricular weaknesses and strengths." To meet this goal, the district provided professional development offerings that would help teachers and administrators use data to identify instructional and curricular weaknesses and strengths. A review of the professional development plan showed that the district provided TestWiz training to approximately 45 administrators and specialist teachers, such as reading specialists and CETs. The plan also noted that the district provided during the same time training on the analysis of MCAS data using Excel. Administrators and specialist teachers provided the analyses to teachers, and principals reviewed the data with teachers at whole-group or grade-level meetings and made modifications to instructional delivery strategies. The district also provided summer workshops on the evaluation of math, science, social studies, reading/ELA, and foreign language assessments.

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

A review of the FEA teacher contract showed that the district had a professional evaluation program that followed the Principles of Effective Teaching and recognized there were several ways that staff members could grow professionally. The teachers' contract included five options for staff evaluation: observation, portfolio, study group, professional writing, and published curriculum unit. The last four options were only available to staff with professional status, and the language in the contract described those four options as alternative pathways to professional growth. For instance, the portfolio option allowed staff "to assemble evidence of their professional growth, which demonstrates in measurable terms their progress since their last evaluation." Study groups allowed staff to "work in small groups to investigate a particular topic of common interest."

Information provided by interviewees and confirmed by a review of documents showed that policies and procedures were in place that led to the hiring of effective personnel. Interviewees indicated that staff turnover in the district was low. The district had substantial mentoring and professional development programs for teachers, and teachers were able to build their individual professional development plans within the structure of district professional development goals. Administrator contracts included professional development reimbursement, and a number of administrators had received training in analyzing assessment data and teacher supervisory methods. The district provided graduate course reimbursement as well as access to stipended positions, such as coaches, mentors, and extracurricular advisors. Interviewees indicated that the district had a number of professional opportunities for teachers to strive for, including curriculum enhancement, specialist, and coordinator teacher positions. Interviewees stated that the district had selected a number of former Franklin teachers to serve as district administrators.

7. The district's professional development program was informed by most or all of the following: the instructional program content; student, teacher, and administrator needs as

indicated by program assessments; research-based practices; the staff evaluation process; and student achievement data.

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

A review of documents and information provided by interviewees indicated the district had a professional development plan in place during the period under review and supported it with appropriate and substantial funding. According to Massachusetts General Law, a district must adopt a professional development plan for all principals, teachers, and other professional staff, and paraprofessionals, teacher assistants, and members of school councils. According to information included in the district professional development plan, professional development in the district formally consisted of three building-based half days and two districtwide full days. According to the plan, the building-based days provided principals the opportunity to develop professional development oriented toward school specific issues, while the districtwide days provided the district the opportunity to focus on professional development skills that teachers at all schools could use.

In addition, interviewees stated that that the district provided significant reimbursement for graduate courses and offered teachers outside workshops and training sessions related to curriculum and instruction. The schools held faculty and grade-level meetings at which some professional development occurred informally. The district had a dedicated section on its website that allowed district staff to register online for professional development workshops, district-sponsored workshops, and staff development day opportunities. The website kept a running record of staff professional development credits. Interviewees stated that principals monitored and approved individual professional development plans.

The director of instructional services managed the professional development program with support and input from a professional development team. In 2006, the district focused on six K-12 strands to develop professional development offerings: general/special education issues, classroom and behavior management, assessment, understanding content, differentiated instruction, and the new teacher. Interviewees indicated that the district planned and

implemented professional development programs based on teacher evaluations, student achievement data, and research-based practices.

Interviewees provided examples of how the district used achievement data to inform professional development. Because the district did not attain AYP in math at the middle school level, the district implemented Impact Math and worked with a consultant to train teachers. At the elementary level, a review of MCAS test writing scores showed a weakness in answering open-response questions and in writing skills. As a result, the district provided writing performance workshops and workshops on developing critical thinking skills.

Interviewees indicated that the teacher evaluation process informed professional development Evaluators developed plans for struggling teachers, and principals periodically sent teachers to other schools to observe the teaching techniques of successful colleagues.

The district provided TestWiz training to approximately 45 staff, including head teachers and CETs. Interviewees indicated that these staff members used the data analysis skills learned at these sessions to train and assist teachers in the analysis of achievement data. In addition, the district provided staff with RBT training, and some administrators had received training on observational analysis skills. The superintendent indicated that administrators who had not received observational training would receive it in the near future. The professional development plan also noted that during the period under review, administrators received professional development in team building, legal issues, and current instructional issues.

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: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the period under review, the district supported changes in program offerings through professional development opportunities that provided teachers with strategies to implement new programs and improve classroom instruction. Principals, assistant principals, mentors, head teachers, coordinators, and CETs formally or informally supervised the implementation of skills

learned in professional development offerings, the implementation of new programs, and the delivery of instruction in the classroom, according to interviewees.

Principals and assistant principals used formal and informal classroom observation walk-throughs and the formative and summative evaluation processes, and attended grade-level, departmental, and other faculty meetings, to monitor the delivery of the curriculum and implementation of professional development and instructional changes. Not all supervisory administrators received RBT training to learn how to support teachers in the classroom, but the superintendent stated those who had not would receive it in the near future. While the district had a satisfactory formal and informal active supervision process, the professional evaluation process described in the teachers' contract was not in compliance with the statute governing the timeliness of evaluations. The process described in the contract allowed teachers with professional status to participate in the observation process every three or four years. The contract allowed teachers with professional status to choose an alternative type of evaluation, such as portfolio or study group in years two and three.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

A review of administrator contracts indicated that the contracts included a section that described an annual evaluation process. However, interviewees indicated and a review of personnel files of administrators confirmed that during the period under review the district did not consistently evaluate administrators annually as required by statute, and the district had no standard tool in place to evaluate administrators. MGL Chapter 71, Section 38 requires that the district evaluate administrators annually. The present superintendent stated that he was in the process of meeting with administrators to set goals, which would be one component of the annual evaluation. Interviewees indicated that the school committee included a set amount of money for

administrator compensation in the budget and the district did not have a merit system in place for administrators.

The EQA team reviewed evaluations included in the personnel files of 32 administrators employed in the district during the period under review, including the superintendent. All administrators held the appropriate certification. During the period under review, not all administrators received annual evaluations in compliance with MGL Chapter 71, Section 38, as only one of 32 administrators received an evaluation annually. The evaluations performed were informative, but none followed the Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership. Approximately half the evaluations performed included recommendations for improvement, and all of the evaluations performed included recommendations. School committee members interviewed indicated they had evaluated the superintendent, but the personnel file did not include the evaluations.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

A review of the 2004-2007 teachers' contracts between the Franklin School Committee and the FEA and information provided by interviewees showed that the district had in place an evaluation process oriented toward professional growth that followed the Principles of Effective Teaching, during the period under review. However, the process and cycle adopted by the district did not comply with statute. The professional growth cycle description outlined five different evaluation options that staff could use to demonstrate professional growth: observation, portfolio, study group, professional writing, and published curriculum unit. Only teachers who had attained professional status could use the last four options as an alternative path to professional growth in the years they did not have an observation. The document noted that at least every three or four years a staff member with professional status must go through the

observation cycle. In addition, the process allowed staff with professional status with 10 years of service in Franklin to be exempt from the observation cycle for one year if they used the alternative pathway in years two and three of the cycle. The process for teachers with professional status, which included much detail regarding the requirements of each alternative pathway, did not comply with statutory evaluation requirements. The district did conduct evaluations of non-professional status teachers annually as required by statute. The district also had a format for evaluating directors and department heads.

A review of the evaluations of a random sample of 41 professional and non-professional status staff showed limited alignment with MGL Chapter 71, Section 38, in that a summative evaluation was not performed every two years for a teacher with professional status, but was performed every year for a teacher with non-professional status, by the principals. Most files included summative evaluations for professional status teachers that were not performed every two years. Some files of teachers with professional status contained information relative to an alternative pathway for professional growth. Most evaluations observed in files followed the Principles of Effective Teaching. Although staff signed evaluations and summative evaluations were informative, they were not instructive in that they did not include recommendations for improvement. Some of the write-ups of teacher observations attached to the Principles of Effective Teaching checklist included recommendations for improvement. Interviewees indicated that the district did not hold teachers explicitly accountable for student achievement results, but consequences were in place for ineffective teaching, such as putting a teacher on an improvement plan.

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: Satisfactory

Evidence

Interviewees indicated that administrators had effective systems of formative evaluation to monitor the implementation of professional development, instructional strategies, and the delivery of the curriculum.

A review of summative evaluations of teachers showed that principals and the superintendent did not perform summative evaluations in compliance with statute. A review of a random sample of teacher evaluations showed that principals did not consistently perform a summative evaluation every two years for professional status teachers. During the period under review, the superintendent did not perform evaluations of administrators annually and did not use a format that followed the Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership.

Interviewees stated, however, that principals and assistant principals conducted informal walk-through classroom observations as well as formal classroom observations required by the teachers' contract. Teacher focus group participants stated that principals and assistant principals provided informal and written feedback to teachers. The superintendent stated that the district had not trained all principals and assistant principals in supervisory methods, but many had received training and the district would provide training in observational analysis for those who had not received it in the near future. While it was clear that much active supervision took place, observers did not use a common protocol for classroom observations. CETs and mentors also provided informal feedback to support teachers. Interviewees indicated that observers looked for higher order thinking indicators, such as the depth of teacher questions, types of test questions, the quality of written material used by the teacher, the materials students read, differentiated instruction, scaffolding, classroom climate, teacher interaction, engagement, closure, and a review of plan books.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district linked its employment, supervision, and professional development processes and supported them with appropriate levels of funding. The district had a human resources director who had implemented evaluation, employment, hiring, and licensure practices, policies, and procedures for all staff. Schools used committees to interview prospective candidates. The district website had a link to human resources, which included information on employment opportunities, the procedures for applying for a position, and bargaining unit contracts. The

district substantially funded a two-year mentoring plan and professional development during the period under review. The district had an infrastructure that supported district services, including a superintendent, an assistant superintendent, a director of instructional services, a human services director, a director of finance, a director of pupil personnel services, principals, assistant principals, CETs, lead teachers, specialists, and coordinators to manage and coordinate district programs and staff. The district central office was located in the town municipal building, which allowed the district to share some town services, such as technology and facilities.

During the period under review, enrollment in the district increased and the district increased spending. For example, a review of district end of year reports showed spending on administration was approximately $749,543 million in FY 2004, $855,045 million in FY 2005, and $1,018,680 million in FY 2006. Spending on total instructional services increased from approximately $29.1 million in FY 2004 to approximately $34.2 million in FY 2006. Fixed charges, which included charges related to insurance, rentals, and debt, were approximately $2.9 million in FY 2004, $3.2 million in FY 2005, and $3.7 million in FY 2006**.** The district met net school spending requirements during the period under review, and according to a review of professional development spending data in the end of year reports, the district expended $144,778 for professional development in FY 2004, $282,394 in FY 2005, and $238,293 in FY 2006. This spending did not include additional spending from grants.

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

A review of the district policy manual showed the district had policies on staff health and safety, school safety and security, first aid, emergency plans, and emergency closings. In addition, the district had a policy on safety/crisis intervention. This policy indicated that the school committee would make every effort to assure school safety and the superintendent was responsible for "developing and implementing a districtwide policy that provides a safe atmosphere for

students….the Superintendent shall implement a districtwide procedure for school system response in the event of a crisis."

According to a review of documents provided to the EQA, district and school safety planning was inconsistent. The district had individual school safety plans; the town of Franklin had an emergency crisis plan; the town and the district had an emergency planning plan oriented toward health and safety; and the town had emergency planning procedures related to transportation and shelter. According to interviewees, the district was just beginning to develop a districtwide emergency crisis plan. Interviewees stated the police department had developed a comprehensive safety and emergency plan for the high school and provided three training sessions, including student training. The high school had conducted lockdown drills, and substitute folders included emergency protocols. The high school had not conducted evacuation drills. Some elementary and middle schools had conducted lockdown training and the town scheduled fire drills with schools. In addition, the district provided a 16-hour crisis intervention program, bus evacuation training, and training in harassment and suicide policy. School handbooks indicated that schools had crisis response teams. All schools had substitute folders that included emergency procedures. While it was clear that the district provided safety, crisis, and emergency training and had assets in place to react to emergencies, it was unclear whether the safety and crisis training was consistent in all schools.

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

V. Access, Participation, and Student Academic Support

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

Standard Rating: Satisfactory

Findings:

- Central office personnel worked collaboratively with principals, assistant principals, CETs, and teachers to review and analyze student achievement data, including subgroup analysis of special education data.
- The district used formative and summative assessments and provided supplementary and academic support programs for students at all levels of proficiency in all content areas.
- While the district provided early intervention programs at the elementary school to improve ELA performance, the results of the 2006 grade 4 MCAS ELA exam showed that students with disabilities and low-income students attained proficiency at a lower rate than did other Franklin students.
- The district had policies, practices, and consequences related to not attending school, and the district's attendance rate was approximately two percentage points above than the state average for each of the three years under review.
- The district had policies and practices that promoted and tracked the importance of staff attendance. During the 2005-2006 school year, teachers missed an average of 11.9 days of school.

- Beyond inclusion, few strategies were in place for increasing opportunities for special education and low-income students to participate in advanced or accelerated courses; only a limited number of students from the district's two major subgroups were enrolled in accelerated courses.

Summary

The Franklin school district and its individual schools performed aggregated and disaggregated analysis of MCAS and other assessment data and provided academic support services at all levels. Examples of districtwide assessments included the MCAS tests, running records, mathematics unit tests, and writing prompts. Principals at the elementary and middle school levels had discretion to administer additional ELA assessments. Many programs were in place for at-risk students, including MCAS test support, special education services, and an enhanced ELL program. In addition, specific intervention plans were in place to help struggling students. For instance, Individual Student Success Plans (ISSPs) were created for all students scoring below 230 on the MCAS exams, and each school had a team in place to assist teachers of students having difficulty in regular education classes. The district provided assistance for homeless and transient students and followed the McKinney-Vento regulations. Further, the district set up procedures and practices to make transitions into school and between schools easier for students and parents.

The major subgroup in the district was students with disabilities, who comprised approximately 15 percent of the total enrollment of approximately 6,100 students. The district conducted data analysis for the special education subgroup because of special education AYP issues. Based on data analysis, the district developed a supplemental mathematics curriculum. The district had accelerated courses, including Advanced Placement (AP) and honors courses, but regular education students constituted most of the enrollment in these courses. The district used an inclusion model to increase the percentage of special education students participating in accelerated courses at the high school.

The district had attendance policies in force at all schools and documented consequences for unexcused absences in student handbooks. In 2006, the district had an average attendance rate of 96.2 percent and an average chronic absenteeism rate of 5.4 percent. The district implemented

procedures and practices to aggressively monitor attendance and account for all students who did not arrive at school.

During the 2005-2006 school year, teachers were absent an average of 11.9 days, or 11.1 days excluding professional development days. Overall, the average teacher attendance rate was 96.2 percent. Teacher attendance varied among schools with the average number of days absent ranging from 7.8 to 16.3 days. The schools used substitute teachers to maintain consistent instruction. The district issued a handbook to substitutes and substitutes attended an orientation.

The district had low rates of out-of-school suspensions and the high school did not report in-school suspensions. The middle schools issued both in- and out-of-school suspensions. There was a significant difference among suspension rates, both in- and out-of-school, at the three middle schools. All suspension rates in Franklin were below the state averages during the period under review. The district had a graduation rate of 91.3 percent in 2006 for a cohort of 367 students, and 4.1 percent of the cohort had dropped out, according to district data on the DOE website. The district had practices and procedures in place to monitor and assist students and the parents of students who considered dropping out, including an alternative education program, which provided an educational setting for grade 9-12 students who had difficulty in regular classes, and flexible scheduling.

Indicators

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

A review of documents and information provided by interviewees, including the former superintendent, revealed that central office personnel, principals, and teachers reviewed and analyzed aggregated and disaggregated student achievement data. Most administrators had received training in TestWiz to facilitate data analysis. The district hired a data specialist, who not only enhanced the district's utilization of TestWiz in the analysis of the MCAS test results,

but also was instrumental in reviewing, analyzing, and disseminating data from other assessments and surveys. The district used the resulting analyses at biweekly administrative meetings and shared them with teachers at faculty meetings and other venues.

Interviewees stated that the use of student achievement data to drive instruction had become an expected and common practice in the district. Principals used data to develop grade-level instructional goals. District personnel used data analysis to identify areas of concern, which ranged from generic recommendations like "increased familiarity to strategies for answering open response questions" to identification of low performance on specific grade-level learning.

One example of how data analysis influenced instruction was evident in the mathematics program. The recognition of low math scores at grade 8 led to a review of the middle school mathematics program. This review resulted in the purchase of a new middle school math series, Impact Math. One of the advantages of selecting the Impact Math series was that it was a continuation of the Everyday Math series, which was already in place at the elementary grades. The district developed a mathematics pacing calendar for grades K-8. In addition, the district provided ongoing professional development to support the implementation of the new mathematics series.

An analysis of the MCAS test results led to the formation of a special/general education student math group during school year 2005-2006. The district required an ISSP for any student who scored below 230 on the MCAS examinations. The district made ISSPs for students who scored between 220 and 228 available to students, teachers, and parents. The district treated ISSPs for other students who scored below 230 as in-house documents that did not require a parent signature. In addition, the district offered professional development courses based on MCAS test data analysis. For example, the district offered training to assist teachers in differentiating instruction.

The Franklin Public Schools' District MCAS Improvement Plan 2005-2006 had as one of its stated goals "To meet state AYP performance expectations in Mathematics and English Language Arts for students with special needs." The plan called for analyses of the data in order to identify at-risk students and to establish programs to support these students. The plan listed

responsible parties and timelines. The report also set goals and focus areas in mathematics and ELA.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

Interviewees and a review of documents indicated the district had practices and procedures in place to use formative and summative data to identify at-risk students and provide support services during the period under review. The district used a wide variety of assessments at grades K-8. The district used the MCAS tests, running records, and writing prompts consistently, but the use of other assessments varied from school to school. Examples of assessments used included Harcourt Kindergarten Literacy Assessments, the DIBELS, the DRA, the Stanford Achievement Test, various special education assessments, midterm and final exams, the PSAT, homework review, team projects, peer editing, and oral presentations.

The district provided support programs for at-risk students, such as special education services, reading/math specialists, MCAS test support, and an ELL teacher. The district required an ISSP for any student who scored below 230 on the MCAS tests. Two of Franklin's elementary schools, the Parmenter and the Davis Thayer schools, received targeted assistance under Title I. Each of the schools had two certified teachers who worked with designated kindergarten and grade 1 students.

Principals played a key role in monitoring student progress. An examination of school handbooks revealed that each school had a school-based support team (SBST) or student assistance team (SAT) that served as a resource for teachers who expressed a concern about a child's difficulty in mastering the general education curriculum. The role of the team was to propose adjustments and strategies to enable the teacher to work with the student in a more effective manner. Potential team members included the school psychologist/school adjustment counselor, regular education teachers, administrators/principal, assistant principal or head-

teacher, and related service providers, such as speech or language pathologists. Special educators consulted with the team but only served in an advisory role.

Specialists in speech and language therapy, learning disabilities, and emotional and/or behavioral problems provided special education services to children in need. In addition, the special services department could suggest other specialized programs provided by other agencies. At the preschool level, the special services department provided a number of programs for children age three or older who were evaluated and found to have special educational needs. Classes at the preschool level emphasized language acquisition, school readiness skills, and socialization experiences.

Programs at the lower levels included Read, Organize, Analyze, and Respond (ROAR), a first grade early intervention program at the Keller, Davis Thayer, and Parmenter schools. Teachers, aides, specialists, and special educators worked with small groups of students for one hour, three times a week. Mathematics and reading clubs were in place in most schools and met either before or after school. Math clubs, which consisted of no more than three students, focused on number sense skills and met regularly during the school year. The district piloted an early intervention program entitled Fast Forward at two schools to boost language and reading skills. During the school year, the middle schools offered literacy and academic support both during school and non-school hours. Interviewees stated that programs were also in place to assist students with their homework. At-risk students could take a second math class in grade 8.

The Stay Sharp program was a five-week remedial program that provided assistance in ELA and math for K-8 students. The office of pupil personnel services administered the remedial program in which "instruction was directly related to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks." Originally, only special education students participated, but the district changed the criteria to make all students eligible.

The Lifelong Learning program offered several opportunities for at-risk students. One program offered incoming grade 7 and 8 students the opportunity to review English and mathematics curricula during the summer. The program was designed for students who passed the course, "but who want to strengthen their understanding of the subject prior to taking the subject in seventh or eighth grade." Middle school students who had failed or received low grades in math

and/or English during the school year had the opportunity to enroll in a four-week, 32-hour remedial course during the summer. At the high school, the Lifelong Learning Program conducted summer courses designed to offer support in math, English, and science. Among the courses offered for academic support were Algebra 1; Geometry; grade 9, 10, and 11 English; Earth Science; and Biology. These summer courses met for two and one-half hours per day, four days per week, for four weeks.

Interviewees and an examination of the documents provided by the district indicated the district created a range of programs at all grade levels to provide support for at-risk students in response to data analysis. In addition to the MCAS test results, assessments used included student journals and chapter reviews, as well as midterm and end of year assessments developed by the district math curriculum team.

The high school notified parents of students who were failing the MCAS tests and provided MCAS support in mathematics and ELA during the school day. Franklin High School students also received MCAS support after school through a DOE grant. Interviewees indicated that while students were not required to participate in MCAS support, most did. According to the high school course of studies, the alternative education program was designed to provide an academic setting for students who had difficulty with the regular course of study. The goal of the program was the reintegration of students into the regular course of study by providing support. The course of studies also described the district academic support program, which the district designed to provide assistance with mainstream courses, improve skills, and increase proficiency with study skills. The class allowed the student to maintain consistent, satisfactory progress in regular education courses.

The district designed services for ELL students to minimize barriers to educational services and extracurricular activities and to provide an appropriate education in the least restrictive learning environment. According to information provided by the district, professional staff assessed student needs and developed strategies, interventions, and services that enabled the student to acquire language skills and access the educational curriculum. Personnel provided instructional supports and services to learn language skills as rapidly and effectively as possible. The district enhanced the ELL program partially in response to the CPR. The district secured the services of

an ELL teacher. During school year 2005-2006, 40 students were assessed and 28 were eligible to receive ELL support.

In terms of equity of achievement, the proficiency rate of regular education students was almost three times greater than that of special education students, although the percentage of students with disabilities who attained proficiency exceeded the statewide average by five percentage points. ELA scores showed that while regular education students' scores increased between 2003 and 2006, scores for students with disabilities and low-income students declined. MCAS math test results improved between 2003 and 2006 for all subgroups, with students with disabilities being the most improved subgroup.

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: Needs Improvement

Evidence

In addition to the MCAS tests, the district used running records and writing prompts consistently to assess student performance at the lower grades. Other assessments used by one or more schools included Harcourt Kindergarten Literacy Assessments, the DIBELS, the DRA, the Stanford Achievement Test, and various special education assessments. The district used the data from the assessments to target at-risk students. Each elementary school had a reading specialist who supported all students scoring 230 or less on the MCAS tests. CETs worked with classroom teachers to implement differentiated instruction in mathematics. The Parmenter and the Davis Thayer Schools received targeted assistance as part of Title I. Under this program, a teacher and a paraprofessional worked with designated kindergarten and grade 1 students in each of those schools. One principal described a reading intervention program in which three adults worked with students in classrooms for 45-minute periods three times each week. Another support program at the lower grades was entitled Fast Forward in which kindergarten and grade 1 students went to the computer room during the day to work on memorizing and sequencing. The district offered the same program to grade 1 and 2 students after school.

Although the district had some early intervention programs in place, the district did not meet AYP in ELA in 2006 for the special education and low-income subgroups at grades 3-5. Students with disabilities and low-income students both experienced declines in achievement. Grade 4 ELA scores showed that in 2006, while 67 percent of all students attained proficiency, only 17 percent of special education students and 24 percent of the low-income students did so. In 2004, approximately 38 percent of students with disabilities had attained proficiency in grade 4 ELA, and in 2005 approximately 21 percent had done so. In 2004, 37 percent of low-income students had attained proficiency, and in 2005 approximately 29 percent had done so. In 2004, 76 percent of all grade 4 students attained proficiency in ELA, and in 2005 approximately 68 percent did so. Statewide in 2006, 50 percent of all students and 16 percent of the students with disabilities in grade 4 attained proficiency in ELA. Additional analysis of the MCAS test data revealed the following proficiency rates for Franklin's elementary schools on the 2006 grade 4 ELA test: Davis Thayer, 67 percent; Helen Keller, 71 percent; John F. Kennedy, 77 percent; Jefferson, 61 percent; Oak Street, 68 percent; and Parmenter, 66 percent.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

Interviews with principals indicated that elementary schools held information nights for the parents of incoming kindergartners. One principal described the "Bridge to Kindergarten Night." In attendance were principals, kindergarten teachers, and the early childhood director. The district presented information and parents had an opportunity to ask questions. Each elementary school had an open house night. In the summer, the schools sent additional information to incoming families and extended an invitation to parents and children to visit the schools. In the fall, the children started with a half-day session even though all kindergartens were full-day programs.

Interviewees stated that each middle school had two elementary feeder schools. The only exception occurred when a student needed a unique special education program that might only be

available in another of the middle schools. Letter writing played a key role in the plan for an effective transition from elementary to middle school. Each elementary student was teamed with a middle school student and they exchanged letters. When the elementary student came for a tour of the middle school, the pen pal served as his or her guide. In addition to the letter-writing program, multiple parent information sessions were offered at the convenience of the family. Coupled with special education transition meetings, time was provided for teachers from the sending and receiving schools to meet to discuss placement. Grade 5 teachers received a form for each of their students that asked for information concerning the student's performance in the major subjects. Pupils took a common exit test in mathematics at the end of grade 5 that assisted the teachers in making placements. The schools asked parents to describe the type of classroom they felt was the best for their child.

At the high school level, assistant principals were in charge of the transition process. The district website included a page describing the transition process from middle to high school. Each of the middle schools, as well as the local charter school, was assigned a date in early March when guidance counselors visited to review the high school's program of studies and the course selection process. On the same day, an information packet, including course recommendations, was sent home with students. At an evening meeting in March, the high school's program of studies and the course selection process were reviewed. Peer leaders visited the middle school and middle school students subsequently visited the high school. An open house was scheduled for August. Students met in either the morning or afternoon session by last name rather than sending school. They received schedules, locker information, and toured the building. Finally, a Panther Pride Night was scheduled for the fall. That event displayed high school programs and activities.

On the district website was a letter written by the middle school guidance counselor. It included an invitation to take advantage of the transition supports, as well as instructions explaining how to fill out course placement forms. The letter also advised parents "that over placing a student may result in undue stress and poor grades." The district instructed special education students to fill out the placement forms, and informed parents and students that course selections and the IEP were discussed at a high school transition meeting.

The director of instructional services posted a letter on the website that provided parents with information about the process teachers at the middle school used to make course placement recommendations. The letter explained that teachers had been working to develop a student profile in each subject area. The student profiles included data, such as test scores, homework, and projects.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

A review of documents provided by the district as well as information gleaned in interviews indicated that the district, for the most part, had fair and equitable policies, procedures, and practices to reduce discipline referrals, grade retention, suspension, and exclusion. There were some inconsistencies among handbooks in the presentation of disciplinary matters. For example, the Remington Middle School handbook discussed exclusion and expulsion in several paragraphs. It also listed students' rights under due process. The Anne Sullivan Middle School student handbook, however, did not have a separate section devoted to exclusion and expulsion, nor did it have a section devoted to due process. Also, during interviews middle school principals showed varying degrees of familiarity with the promotion guidelines as presented in middle school student handbooks. The handbooks stated that students could not pass if they failed more than one subject. At least one handbook included passing world language as part of the requirements for promotion; interviews with principals revealed that foreign language was no longer a requirement at the middle school. The process for retention allowed a student to take a failed course in summer school. Beyond that, there was an option for the principal to make the final decision.

A review of suspension data showed the district had out-of-school suspension rates substantially below the state average from 2004 to 2006. In 2004, the district had an out-of-school suspension rate of 1.6 percent and the state had a rate of 5.9 percent. In 2005, the district had a rate of 1.7 percent and the state had a rate of 6.0 percent. In 2006, the district had a rate of 1.7 percent and the state had a rate of 5.8 percent. In 2006, the district had 102 incidents of out-of-school

suspension. The high school's three-year out-of-school suspension rate for the years 2004-2006 was 4.8 percent. The highest suspension rates during the period under review occurred at grade 10 with 6.3 percent in 2006 and 6.4 percent in 2004. At the middle schools, the three-year out-of-school suspension rate was 3.6 percent at Annie Sullivan, 3.1 percent at Remington, and 0.4 percent at Horace Mann. Elementary out-of-school suspension rates were negligible.

Examination of the data revealed that there were no in-school suspensions reported at the high school during the period under review. The in-school suspension data for the district and state showed that in 2004 the district had an in-school suspension rate of 1.0 percent compared to 3.6 percent for the state. In 2005, Franklin had an in-school suspension rate of 0.8 percent compared to 3.5 percent for the state. In 2006, the district's in-school suspension rate was 0.4 percent compared to 3.4 percent for the state. Almost all of the district's in-school suspensions occurred at two of the three middle schools. Remington had a three-year rate of 3.8 percent and Horace Mann had a three-year rate of 3.6 percent; while Annie Sullivan Middle School, which opened during the period under review, had a three-year in-school suspension rate of 0.7 percent.

Sections on discipline in handbooks at the elementary and middle schools had many common components. Each of the elementary and middle school handbooks examined contained a student code of conduct with descriptions of inappropriate behavior in a variety of settings. The codes also specifically dealt with harassment, computer etiquette, vandalism, and bus behavior. Consequences listed included detention and in- and out-of-school suspension. The district listed offenses that could lead to expulsion, and the handbooks included a copy of the memorandum of understanding between the school and the police.

The following information was gleaned from the high school student handbook and from interviews with high school personnel. A minor detention was served with the teacher who assigned it. Examples of minor detention offenses listed included "tardiness" and "having food in the classroom." A major detention resulted from a more serious offense. Examples of major offenses listed included "Any behavior that interferes with the learning process" and "repeated tardiness to school." Major detentions were "coordinated through the assistant principals and were usually held in the cafeteria." The Alternative Discipline Program (ADP) was held from 2:10 to 4:40 p.m. on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. Saturday Detention, which ran from

8:00 to 11:30 a.m., included a community service requirement. In an effort to reduce the number of suspensions at the high school, the school initiated a program called Temporary Therapeutic Change of Setting (TTCS). It was designed to remove students from a classroom setting for a relatively short period of time.

The district had other levels of consequences for such offenses as "aggressive swearing, threats, drug talk, and vandalism in the classroom." Three different types of suspension were listed. A technical suspension was a formal notification of the student's parents that their child had been involved in an incident. An academic suspension occurred when a student was removed from a classroom for behavioral reasons. The third type of suspension listed was an out-of-school suspension. The list of consequences concluded with a legal description of expulsion/exclusion.

The Franklin Public Schools had low retention rates. Data provided to the EQA team by the DOE showed that in 2003 the district had a retention rate of 0.6 percent compared to 2.5 percent for the state. In 2004, the district had a retention rate of 0.9 percent compared to 2.6 percent for the state. In 2005, the district had a retention rate of 0.6 percent compared to 2.6 percent for the state. Twenty of the district's 30 retentions in 2005 took place in grades 9 and 10.

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: Satisfactory

Evidence

The DOE defines a dropout as a student in grades 9-12 who left school prior to graduation for reasons other than transfer to another school and did not enroll before the following October 1. According to DOE graduation data, the 2006 cohort of 367 students had a four-year graduation rate of 91.3 percent, compared to a 79.9 percent graduation rate for the statewide cohort during the same period. The data also revealed that 3.8 percent of the Franklin cohort was still in school, 0.3 percent were non-graduate completers, 0.5 percent had acquired a General Educational Development (GED) certificate, and 4.1 percent had dropped out. Dropout rates for subgroups were 6.1 percent for male students, 21 percent for female students, 11.9 percent for students with disabilities, and 13 percent for low-income students.

Information provided to the EQA by the district showed that from 2003 to 2006, 22 new students enrolled in the high school, 27 transferred out, eight were retained, and 12 dropped out. Of the eight students who the district had retained, five were in grade 9, one in grade 10, and two in grade 11. Of the seven students who dropped out in 2004-2005, five were retained before dropping out. Of the four students who dropped out in 2005-2006, three were retained before dropping out. One student dropped out during 2004-2005, reenrolled during 2005-2006, and then dropped out the same year.

During an interview, one response to the EQA team's question of support for the dropout prevention program was, "It has become a thread in all of our conversations." Any person could bring up an at-risk student for a student review. A social worker at the high school visited homes in an effort to win support for a student to continue with school. The administrative staff interviewed students who dropped out to determine the reason they left and to try to bring them back to school. The district hired a psychologist to create a profile of dropouts. Those faculty members interviewed expressed a willingness to work with at-risk students to keep them in school. The possibility of changing a student's schedule was one example given of an attempt to assist a student.

According to the description provided in the high school course of studies, the district designed the alternative education program to provide an appropriate educational setting for students in grades 9-12 who had experienced difficulty in regular classes with a goal of reintegrating them into the regular course of study. The program offered support to ensure successful performance in a full or shared schedule of classes in regular education. The course of studies described the Resource Program, which the district designed to provide academic subjects for students who required replacement classes within a small group setting in order to be successful academically. The district offered replacement courses in the areas of English, math, social studies, and science.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

School handbooks examined contained the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act that defined homeless children and youths. Interviewees indicated that there were 13 Franklin students who received services under the provisions of the McKinney-Vento legislation during school year 2005-2006. Principals indicated that they were alerted when the question of homelessness arose during the screening of incoming students. In such instances, the district provided parents or guardians with an information packet that included a printout of a PowerPoint presentation, a legal advisory, an informational flier, and a legal rights flier. A form to request interdistrict transportation was also included. School personnel gave examples of their efforts to provide transportation and to obtain school records so that the district could implement IEPs. The Department of Social Services (DSS) was involved when appropriate. The director of pupil personnel support services coordinated the homeless program for the district.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

Student attendance rates in Franklin were higher than statewide averages. Data provided by the DOE showed that Franklin's student attendance rate for 2006 was 96.2 percent, compared to 93.8 percent for the state. In 2005, Franklin's attendance rate was 96.4 percent, compared to 94.4 percent for the state. In 2004, Franklin's attendance rate was 96.2 percent, compared to 94.2 percent for the state. All district schools used computer software to track attendance.

The chronic absenteeism rate, defined by the DOE as missing at least 10 percent of school days, averaged 5.4 percent in 2006. In 2006, on average, each student missed 6.7 days. The highest percentage of chronic absenteeism in the elementary schools was 5.7 percent at grade 3. The highest percentage of chronic absenteeism in the middle schools was 4.5 percent at grades 7 and 8. Chronic absenteeism at the high school was 9.4 percent at grade 9, 12.0 percent at grade 10, 14.3 percent at grade 11, and 11.6 percent at grade 12. Average attendance ranged from a low of 94 percent at grade 12 to a high of 97.1 percent at grade 4.

Elementary handbooks examined stated that, "A letter is required for all absences regardless of duration. Absences of five (5) days or longer additionally require a note from a physician prior to the school readmitting your child to class." The section continued by stating that if a child was to be "absent for an extended period of time due to illness, fourteen (14) or more consecutive days, the family may be eligible to receive home tutorial services." The handbooks also contained a statement discouraging parents from taking a child out of school for vacations as well as a reference to the state law on required school attendance.

Middle school handbooks stated that students absent in excess of five days per quarter would receive a failing grade. All absences, including absences excused by parents, counted toward the limit. The exceptions were excused absences for family bereavement, school-approved field trips, and religious holidays. In the case of absences for medical reasons, a doctor's note was required. Absence on the day following dismissal by the nurse was also listed as an exception. All undocumented absences counted toward the quarter limit. After a student exceeded the undocumented absence limit during any quarter, the assistant principal sent a written notice to the parents as notification of failure for the quarter. Information about an appeals process was included with the notification. The appeals process began with the assistant principal and continued with the principal if necessary.

The high school handbook stated that when a student incurred three undocumented/unexcused absences from class during a quarter, the assistant principal would send a written notice home and arrange for a conference with the student and the parent if necessary. If at the middle of the term a student was in danger of failing due to undocumented absences, the teacher would issue a progress report. The teacher would also make an appropriate comment on the report card for any course the student was in danger of failing for a quarter due to undocumented absences. The guidance counselor would schedule a conference with the student to discuss absences and meet with the parents if the counselor considered it necessary.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The Franklin Public Schools' teacher calendar called for a 183-day work year. During school year 2005-2006, data provided by the district indicated that 513 teachers were absent an average of 11.9 days. Excluding professional development days, the average was 11.1 days. Overall teacher attendance was 96.2 percent. Excluding professional development days, the figure rose to 96.7 percent. A breakdown of the 3.33 percent of teacher absences showed that 2.0 percent were sick days, 0.64 percent personal days, 0.48 percent for family illness, 0.06 percent for jury duty, 0.16 percent for bereavement, and 0.47 percent for conferences and workshops.

At the high school, 125 teachers averaged approximately 9.8 days absent. Excluding professional development days, high school teachers averaged approximately 9.4 days absent. At the Remington Middle School, 48 teachers averaged approximately 8.5 days absent. Excluding professional development days, Remington teachers averaged approximately 6.8 days absent. At the Horace Mann Middle School, 48 teachers averaged approximately 12.6 days absent. Excluding professional development days, Horace Mann teachers averaged approximately 11.5 days absent. At the Anne Sullivan Middle School, 48 teachers averaged approximately 13.9 days absent. Excluding professional development days, Anne Sullivan teachers averaged approximately 13.1 days absent.

At the Oak Street Elementary School, 42 teachers averaged approximately 7.8 days absent. Excluding professional development days, Oak Street teachers averaged approximately 7.1 days absent. At the Early Childhood Development Center, 14 teachers averaged approximately 10.4 days absent. Excluding professional development days, Early Childhood Development Center teachers averaged approximately 10.2 days absent. At the Parmenter Elementary School, 35 teachers averaged approximately 13.5 days absent. Excluding professional development days, Parmenter teachers averaged approximately 12.2 days absent. At the Helen Keller Elementary School, 42 teachers averaged approximately 13.6 days absent. Excluding professional development days, Helen Keller teachers averaged approximately 12.9 days absent. At the Jefferson Elementary School, 44 teachers averaged approximately 14.7 days absent. Excluding professional development days, Jefferson teachers averaged approximately 13.2 days absent. At the John F. Kennedy Elementary School, 41 teachers averaged approximately 14.9 days absent. Excluding professional development days, John F. Kennedy teachers averaged approximately

14.3 days absent. At the Davis Thayer Elementary School, 26 teachers averaged approximately 16.3 days absent. Excluding professional development days, Davis Thayer teachers averaged approximately 15.7 days absent.

The Franklin teachers' contract allowed 14 sick days for teachers without loss of pay each year. There was a Sick Leave Buy Back plan described in section 16.2 of the contract. At the end of the school year, if a teacher had not used any sick leave days or personal leave days, up to seven days were placed in a buy back account. For each sick day used, the district credited one less to the Sick Leave Buy Back Bank.

The district provided substitute teachers with a Substitute Teacher Training Resource Guide that contained practical information. Pay for substitute teachers began at $70 with higher remunerations for long-term assignments. In interviews, principals indicated that substitutes received an orientation prior to working in a classroom. Several sample substitute folders were examined during the review. Teachers were required by contract to plan three days in advance.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Beyond inclusion, few strategies for increasing opportunities for students with disabilities to participate in advanced or accelerated courses were in place in the district. Data provided by the district listed 14 Advanced Placement (AP) sections at Franklin High School. Admission to an AP course required a B+ in a prerequisite course as well as a letter of recommendation from the teacher. A student could also appeal for admission if he or she scored in the top 15 percent on a standardized test. According to information gathered during interviews, the district acknowledged parental requests for admission to AP courses. Upon the completion of an AP course, students had the option of taking the AP test or a test made by the teacher.

The high school had two AP sections in each of the following subjects: Biology, European History, Spanish, and U.S. History. One AP section was listed for each of the following

subjects: Calculus, Economics, English, Environmental Science, French, and Physics. These sections provided 252 student slots. The district data indicated that one student from the low-income subgroup was enrolled the Biology, English, and Environmental Science courses. The same data did not list any student from the special education subgroup in the AP courses. Thus, students from the district's two major subgroups filled three out of a potential 252 slots. For comparison, DOE statistics for 2006-2007 indicated that 4.9 percent of Franklin students were low-income students and 15.6 percent were special education students.

District data also indicated that 17 low-income students and 17 special education students were enrolled in honors classes. The district attempted to increase opportunities for students with disabilities to participate in college preparatory classes by using an inclusion model with team teaching.

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	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	**10**
Needs Improvement			✓					✓			✓			**3**
Unsatisfactory														

VI. Financial and Asset Management Effectiveness and Efficiency

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

Standard Rating: Satisfactory

Findings:

- With the exception of FY 2006, the district engaged in an open and participatory budget process that included input from administrators, school councils, and the public. District and school officials worked together closely to prepare and adopt school budgets.
- The town used its stabilization fund and other one-time sources to balance budgets during the period under review, allowing the district to maintain class size as enrollment increased and new schools opened.
- The district used the results of the analysis of student achievement and budget data to reduce expenditures and allocate revenue for academic programs and materials.
- Although expenditures grew by approximately six percent annually during the period under review, the increases were not enough to fully fund the costs associated with increased enrollment, additional personnel, and other contractual obligations. To maintain class size, the district made reductions in some instructional programs.

- Auditors reported no major findings with the district. Expenditures required approvals by the superintendent, town comptroller, and town administrator as well as the appropriate school administrator.
- Examiners found buildings to be secure, safe, and well maintained, but the district had no written formal preventative maintenance plan.

Summary

Town and school officials worked cooperatively during the budget development process throughout the period under review. The superintendent and town administrator met to review available funding for the schools, and a budget subcommittee of elected town and school officials as well as administrators reviewed the school budget in detail. Principals and school council members had opportunities to prepare and communicate budget needs to the school committee during Saturday workshops, except in 2005 when they were given a bottom line representing available funds and told to stay within it. The public had opportunities to learn about the budget and give feedback during school committee open hearings and subsequent town council budget sessions.

The district used student achievement and other data to justify budget initiatives, including new middle school math and social studies programs, a special education math initiative, new special education programs, ELA materials and reading specialists for grades K-8, and summer remediation programs. It added a social worker and modified its alternative education program for at-risk children in order to improve their achievement and keep them in school. District administrators made other budget and program decisions in order to be more cost effective, such as collaboration with the town in accounting and purchasing procedures, bringing special education students in-house from tuition placements, and an energy usage analysis to improve efficiencies and lower costs.

Although the district per pupil cost was below the state average and enrollments increased, the district avoided major layoffs and class size increases during the period under review. The town supported school budgets that would fund fixed cost increases, including those associated with contractual salary agreements, increased enrollments, and utility costs, by using its financial reserves to balance the budget. However, some school programs and staffing, such as elementary

physical education/health, foreign language, music, and custodial and administrative support, were reduced. The district's budget was in deficit during the period under review, increasing to $413,079 in FY 2006, due to under-budgeting certain expenditures and overestimating revenues; the district covered budget deficits by using revolving fund balances and, in FY 2006, charging special education expenses to the FY 2007 circuit breaker reimbursement.

The town and school district were cooperative in a variety of ways. They shared facilities and technology directors and collaborated on purchasing. After both business offices adopted the MUNIS accounting software in 2006, reconciliations and more efficient purchasing procedures were instituted, and administrators were provided with immediate access to reports and budget balances.

School buildings were clean and well maintained, but the district had no written preventative maintenance plan. NEASC reports cited shortcomings in the high school building, and the district completed some safety and other minor renovations recommended in the report. The town prepared plans for a major renovation project at the high school for when funding would be available. Two newly built schools opened during the period under review. The town had a six-year capital plan that included needed school renovations and regularly funded the plan. Security and safety were a priority. The schools controlled entry of visitors during the school day using locked doors, schools installed video cameras, and schools installed electronic keys to restrict access and record entry. The schools regularly maintained alarm systems, sprinklers, and mechanical systems.

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

Administrators reported that during most of the period under review, the district prepared budget proposals in the fall, and the school committee discussed its "values" and priorities in January. In March, administrators presented their needs and proposals to the school committee during a

Saturday workshop. The school committee held an open hearing on the proposed budget prior to voting in March or April. The town finance committee held hearings on all town budgets in the spring, and their recommendations, together with the recommendation of the town administrator, went to the town council in June for public discussion and a vote on the appropriation. According to city and school officials, there were communications throughout the spring among the chairs of the school committee, finance committee, and the town council, as well as the superintendent and town administrator, on the budget. A budget subcommittee, consisting of members of the town council, finance committee, school committee, the town administrator, and the superintendent, met frequently during the spring to study the school budget in preparation for town council action. The town council supported the school budget to the extent possible throughout the period under review, using the stabilization fund to balance the budget and "cash capital" from free cash to fund math and social studies textbook initiatives, technology purchases, and rolling stock.

However, in 2005-2006 administrators and their school communities had little input into the development of the FY 2007 budget. The superintendent gave them a bottom line and they were allowed to adjust line item budget proposals within that amount. They had no opportunity to present their school and program needs in a Saturday workshop with the school committee as they had earlier in the period under review. With the arrival of a new superintendent in 2006, the process became much more inclusive and the district emphasized school and program needs during the development of the budget. Administrators reported that they submitted "zero-based budgets" reflecting the needs of their schools and programs, and meetings with school councils and staff contributed to budget proposals. The administrative council of central office administrators, principals, and assistant principals discussed and prioritized budget needs and generated three budget proposals: "good to great," "level service," and "level funded." The school committee resumed its practice of holding Saturday budget workshops with school administrators and parent representatives. Town and school officials reported feeling well informed about the needs and proposals of the schools.

The introduction to the budget document contained budget priorities, such as class size, and increases due to fixed costs, such as contractual salary obligations, health insurance, special education, and utilities. The document described recent cuts in programs, such as K-8 physical

education and music, elementary Spanish, middle school science specialists, grades 6-12 special education, and high school English. The document contained backup detail by school and function with previous year, current year, and proposed budgets and percent increase, along with major purchases, such as textbook replacements and updates of technology. The athletic budget included a breakdown by sport. The document contained a list of revolving funds but did not include grant information.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

According to administrators, the district made use of student achievement data in its budgetary decision-making process, and had hired a data analyst to expedite the process during the period under review. Analyses of financial data resulted in many budget proposals, including the introduction of three special education programs at the middle and high schools to reduce tuition costs and provide better for the academic needs of students. Achievement data were a major factor in the analysis of programs. For example, dissatisfaction with middle school math assessment results and surveys of parents and staff led to a successful proposal to the town council for funding for a new math textbook series in 2005. Other curriculum changes made on the basis of the MCAS test data and the state frameworks which led to budget allocations included those for elementary trade books to improve reading comprehension, middle school non-fiction materials to improve achievement in poetry, grade 8 social studies materials, and increased time in math at grades 6-8 and in ELA at grades 7-8. Personnel proposals to improve student achievement included addition of social workers, special education teachers and assistants, a data analyst, and reading specialists. The Lifelong Learning program instituted optional summer remediation in math and ELA to provide MCAS support, and the district offered the Stay Sharp summer program for special and regular education children to improve achievement. Based on a review of dropout and attendance data, the district added a social worker and revised its alternative education program for at-risk high school students.

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: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Department of Education End of Year Pupil and Financial Reports (EOYRs) showed that from FY 2003 to FY 2006 expenditures grew from $39,727,824 to $47,723,311, at an annual rate of increase of approximately six percent. These increases were insufficient to fully fund costs associated with increased enrollment, additional special education teachers, contractual salary increases, and utilities. The reports showed an increase in regular education teaching staff from 381 in FY 2003 to 409.1 in FY 2006 to provide for increased enrollment. According to administrators, the district placed a priority on maintaining class size. As a result, interviewees indicated the district had to make reductions in some instructional programs, including middle school guidance, elementary health and physical education, K-8 music, elementary Spanish, and high school special education and reading, and in personnel, including middle school science specialists, weekend security guards, central administrators, custodians, and classroom teachers. During the same period, the district imposed and increased fees for bus transportation and athletics.

The town consistently budgeted for the schools below the state average, and the gap had increased. According to the DOE, the district per pupil cost for net school spending (NSS) dropped from 16 percent below the state average in FY 2003 to 20 percent below the state average in FY 2006. However, the district spent a high proportion of its funding on teaching and instruction. Of all the categories broken out by the DOE, only district spending on teachers and instructional supplies rose above average. Department of Revenue (DOR) reports showed that the town had taxed at its levy limit under Proposition 2½. City and school officials reported that the town had depended on increases in Chapter 70 aid, the stabilization fund, and inflated school revenue estimates to balance budgets. Stabilization and free cash funds declined from $13,458,875 in FY 2003 to approximately $5 million in FY 2007, indicating the use of

approximately $2 million a year to balance budgets. A general override failed in 2004, and the town covered the school budget from the stabilization fund in order to open two new schools. Because these funds had diminished and less was available to maintain recent spending levels, administrators reported that the district might lose from 32.5 to 52.5 positions in FY 2008, depending on whether a proposed override passed in the spring of 2007.

Administrators, parents, and classroom teachers reported that funding to keep technology up to date was inadequate but that the district provided adequate funds for classroom supplies. The town funded new programs in middle school math and social studies through special appropriations from "cash capital," or free cash.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

Administrators reported many examples of efforts to control costs. The district created three special education programs in order to save on out-of-district tuition costs, and they enrolled regular education children for a fee in special education summer programs. The district had worked with National Grid and Bay State Gas to identify possible energy savings of approximately $160,000 per year, including lighting improvements and demand energy controls for ventilation, with costs shared between the town and the utility company. The district used a local hotel free of charge for professional development sessions, retreats, and fundraising activities. Automation changes made the processing of purchase orders, payroll, and human resources administration more efficient, and posting staff openings on the Internet reduced advertising costs. The district bid with The Education Collaborative (TEC) for school supplies and cafeteria food to take advantage of larger contracts' economies of scale.

The town and school district cooperated in other ways to be more cost effective. Administrators reported that they shared technology and facilities management with the town so that support staff worked more efficiently, and they bid for office and custodial supplies and certain utilities together to take advantage of economies of scale. Town officials reported that they worked with

a third party administrator to bid and negotiate health insurance contracts, which kept increases down to one percent.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The town and school district had a written agreement detailing the calculation of indirect charges. It did not include health insurance benefits, which were in the school budget. The agreement prorated town administrative and unemployment charges at 55 percent, based on the proportion of the school budget to that of the town as a whole. The agreement prorated benefit costs for retirees and pensions proportionately to the number of employees. The agreement based insurance and debt costs on actual school-related charges. Although the district budget included the salaries for the directors of facilities and technology, and the district and town shared their services, the agreement did not prorate their salaries. Both town and school officials regarded the agreement as fair and reasonable.

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 financial reports indicated that during the period under review, the town exceeded NSS requirements by 8.8 percent to 14.7 percent. Chapter 70 funding for FY 2006 was $23,359,339, or 45 percent of the district's NSS, and its continued increase during the period under review helped make it possible for the town to provide services related to increasing enrollment.

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

School committee policy and the district strategic plan emphasized that the central office make monthly financial reports to principals and the school committee, and interviewees confirmed they were informed of the status of the budget during the year. The district implemented new accounting software in 2006 that enabled principals and other administrators to access financial reports and data on demand. The school committee received monthly budget reports including the appropriation, transfers, expenditures to date, encumbrances, and net balance for each line of the budget. Revenue sources from the Lifelong Learning program, Medicaid reimbursements, circuit breaker funding, and school choice reimbursements were included, and a narrative highlighted major issues, such as projected salary, health, and special education expenditures. According to administrators, the budget report was discussed in detail with the budget subcommittee and the school committee as a whole. The school committee received final reports on transfers and budget balances at the end of the fiscal year.

The district signed the EOYRs to DOE in October 2005 and in November 2006, with a due date with extensions of October 31. Audits of the EOYRs cited a few instances in which the district allocated charges to the wrong line, and administrators reported that the district corrected these errors in amendments to the reports. The district timely filed grant reports that were approved by the director of finance and the administrator of the grant.

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: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Financial forecasting and controls for the district failed to prevent overspending during the period under review. EOYRs showed that the district overspent its budget by $21,628 in FY 2004, increasing to $413,390 in FY 2006. Administrators reported that they were able to cover these deficits from revolving fund balances until FY 2006, when they had to use over $300,000 from FY 2007 circuit breaker funds to pay for FY 2006 special education bills. The district did not know the extent of the FY 2006 deficit until September, when the town closed its books. A freeze on purchases during the year was insufficient to offset deficits due to over-budgeted revenues from the Lifelong Learning program and other reimbursements, overruns of at least six teachers not in the budget, underestimated salaries for new teachers, overruns in special education and snow removal accounts, and the failure to achieve the budgeted $200,000 in savings from staff attrition during the year. Administrators stated that the district made adjustments in the FY 2008 budget to prevent these shortfalls in the future.

According to administrators, the district used a combination of Data National and IMG accounting software packages prior to 2006, supplemented by Excel and Access databases. Because the town and schools were on different accounting systems, invoices and payroll data had to be entered twice and reconciliations were difficult. In 2006, both the town and school district began using MUNIS software with live access in all district and town offices, so that administrators, principals, and town officials were able to track expenditures immediately. They were also able to prepare and approve purchase orders electronically, making that process more accurate and efficient.

Examiners reviewed the purchasing and payroll procedures of the district. Purchase orders were subject to approval by the director of finance as well as the appropriate administrator; invoices were approved by the administrator who received the goods or services and the school business office with a verbal approval when packing slips were not available; and warrants were approved by the town comptroller, superintendent, and town administrator. Orders in excess of $25,000 were subject to approval by the town purchasing agent, who oversaw the bidding process as required. Principals recommended the appointment of new staff members, subject to the approval of the superintendent, and the human resources department reviewed their salaries and qualifications. Payroll was based on contractual salary schedules and appointment letters,

overtime was subject to approval by an appropriate administrator, and stipends were subject to approval by the assistant superintendent. The school committee received lists of all payroll and accounts payable warrant payments. Principals and program administrators could make transfers within their budgets, and transfers between programs were subject to approval by the school committee, which received a complete list of all transfers at the end of the year.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

According to the EOYRs, the district received $4,459,896 in FY 2003 and $6,142,727 in FY 2006 in grants and revolving funds. Reports to the DOE indicated the district spent all but $10,852 in FY 2006, of which $8,101 for Title I could be carried forward. Administrators reported that the director of pupil personnel services, the director of early childhood programs, the director of instructional services, and the director of Lifelong Learning pursued and managed grants. The district received $98,667 in private grants and gifts in FY 2006, of which $19,732 was raised by the Franklin Education Foundation and managed by a private board of directors. The director of finance, the Lifelong Learning program director, and the athletic director managed revolving funds including athletic receipts and fees, transportation fees, property rentals, pre-kindergarten and Lifelong Learning tuitions, school choice and circuit breaker receipts, and school lunch receipts. Administrators reported that the district distributed financial reports for grants and revolving funds twice a month to ensure that managers were up to date. The EOYRs showed that the school lunch program lost between $45,821 and $63,433 a year during the period under review, but administrators reported that the balance in its revolving account covered the deficits.

By policy, the district deposited student activity receipts with the town treasurer. The principal administered student activity accounts. Detailed written student activity account guidelines and

procedures were in use during the period under review, and principals had access to appropriate checking accounts of up to $25,000, as provided by statute.

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

Records showed that purchases in excess of $25,000 were subject to approval by the town purchasing agent, who bid contracts in accordance with state procurement laws. The town purchasing agent had MCPPO certification. Melanson and Heath audited the town finances annually. The audit for FY 2005 included recommendations to provide documentation for employees paid by federal grants and to develop processes to assure student activity fund compliance with state law; however, examiners observed that records for employees, including those paid by federal grants, and written guidelines for student activity accounts had been in use throughout the period under review. Town officials reported that the auditor did not cite these issues in the draft of the FY 2006 audit. The district's EOYR was audited each year, and for FY 2005 the director of finance submitted amendments correcting the noted discrepancies.

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: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Examiners visited all the district's schools and found some were old but all were clean, safe, well lit, and well maintained. However, administrators reported that the district had no written

preventative maintenance program. A work order system was in use, and maintenance personnel met weekly to prioritize and schedule maintenance requests. The maintenance staff included a plumber, electrician, and carpenter, and they performed minor work. The facilities director used contractors for major work, such as the maintenance of HVAC units, cleaning and maintaining burners and boilers, roof repairs, and other major jobs. The district had direct digital controls (DDC) for school HVAC systems, and the director reported he could check, diagnose, and adjust those systems remotely without having to send staff to the site. He contracted for annual maintenance of safety systems, including sprinklers, fire alarms, and fire extinguishers.

The district employed a director of technology and a staff of technicians to maintain its computers and network infrastructure. They reported that they responded to every request within one day. Five new schools had new technology, but warranties were due to expire in 2007. Teachers, administrators, and parents reported that many computers did not work or were too old to run current software, and one lab at the high school was cannibalized to provide working equipment for other labs. Technology staff estimated that the district needed approximately $700,000 per year to upgrade its technology, but received only between $165,000 and $220,000.

12. <u>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.</u>

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The town had a six-year capital plan, called the 20/20 Plan, which it updated annually. The plan included school projects, such as carpeting and flooring, a gym floor, two roofs, paving, windows, catch basins, track and playfield replacements, fire alarms, re-keying, lockers, boilers, DDC controls, and an elevator. Between $700,000 and $1,250,000 was budgeted annually for town projects, financed by bonding. Debt service for all but school construction projects was included in the town's general budget.

The town had built the high school in 1971, and the 2005 NEASC report cited the need for renovations to the building. Administrators reported that the district had performed some safety

and renovation projects, including eyewashes and shutoff valves in science labs, upgrades in electrical service for the media center, and ceiling tiles. The district has submitted a statement of interest to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) for a major renovation project at the high school.

In addition, the town had a "cash capital" fund for rolling stock, technology, and other smaller capital purchases, appropriated by the town council from free cash. The town approved textbook purchases for new math and social studies programs from this fund.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

Examiners found school doors locked while school was in session. A buzzer was required to enter all but one building, where it was necessary to walk through the office to gain entrance. Administrators reported that an electronic key system was in use that monitored and controlled the time of entry of all staff into a building. The district installed cameras at the front doors and throughout the schools. Science lab safety at the high school was a concern of the NEASC visiting committee, and the district upgraded safety systems in the science labs. All schools had fire alarms, and all but three had sprinkler systems.

Appendix A: Proficiency Index (PI)

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

The proficiency index is calculated as follows:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Appendix B: Chapter 70 Trends, FY1997 – FY2006

	Foundation Enrollment	Pct Chg	Foundation Budget	Pct Chg	Required Local Contribution	Chapter 70 Aid	Pct Chg	Required Net School Spending (NSS)	Pct Chg	Actual Net School Spending	Pct Chg	Dollars Over/Under Requirement	Percent Over/ Under
FY97	4,312	6.8	23,850,618	8.2	11,739,776	9,046,702	28.1	20,786,478	9.5	24,384,659	26.1	3,598,181	17.3
FY98	4,647	7.8	26,337,336	10.4	12,805,013	10,730,832	18.6	23,535,845	13.2	27,000,378	10.7	3,464,533	14.7
FY99	4,969	6.9	29,080,188	10.4	14,175,832	13,390,478	24.8	27,566,310	17.1	30,291,029	12.2	2,724,719	9.9
FY00	5,293	6.5	31,004,010	6.6	15,116,104	16,309,285	21.8	31,425,389	14.0	35,427,324	17.0	4,001,935	12.7
FY01	5,496	3.8	33,349,102	7.6	15,712,028	17,637,074	8.1	33,349,102	6.1	38,413,592	8.4	5,064,490	15.2
FY02	5,695	3.6	36,193,830	8.5	16,861,141	19,332,689	9.6	36,193,830	8.5	40,971,605	6.7	4,777,775	13.2
FY03	5,838	2.5	38,402,640	6.1	17,989,569	20,413,071	5.6	38,402,640	6.1	42,008,561	2.5	3,605,921	9.4
FY04	6,025	3.2	39,991,114	4.1	18,682,531	21,308,583	4.4	39,991,114	4.1	43,510,159	3.6	3,519,045	8.8
FY05	6,132	1.8	41,909,928	4.8	19,792,023	22,117,905	3.8	41,909,928	4.8	48,057,509	10.5	6,147,581	14.7
FY06	6,265	2.2	44,517,161	6.2	21,157,822	23,359,339	5.6	44,517,161	6.2	51,355,664	6.9	6,838,503	15.4

	Dollars Per Foundation Enrollment			Percentage of Foundation			Chapter 70 Aid as Percent of Actual NSS
	Foundation Budget	Ch 70 Aid	Actual NSS	Ch 70	Required NSS	Actual NSS	
FY97	5,531	2,098	5,655	37.9	87.2	102.2	37.1
FY98	5,668	2,309	5,810	40.7	89.4	102.5	39.7
FY99	5,852	2,695	6,096	46.0	94.8	104.2	44.2
FY00	5,858	3,081	6,693	52.6	101.4	114.3	46.0
FY01	6,068	3,209	6,989	52.9	100.0	115.2	45.9
FY02	6,355	3,395	7,194	53.4	100.0	113.2	47.2
FY03	6,578	3,497	7,196	53.2	100.0	109.4	48.6
FY04	6,638	3,537	7,222	53.3	100.0	108.8	49.0
FY05	6,835	3,607	7,837	52.8	100.0	114.7	46.0
FY06	7,106	3,729	8,197	52.5	100.0	115.4	45.5

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.