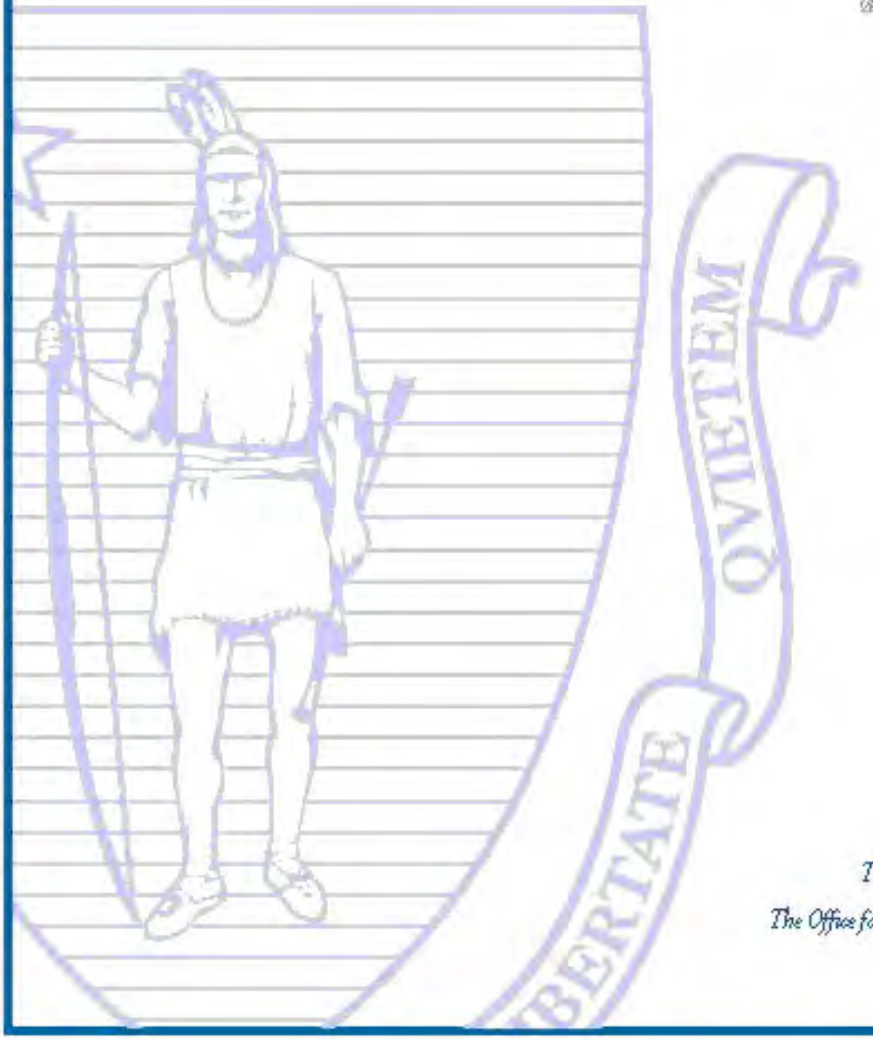
The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

School District *Reexamination Report:*

Greater Fall River Regional Vocational Technical School District

Technical Report

data driven
standards based
learner centered



The Education Management Audit Council

The Office for Educational Quality and Accountability

2004 - 2007

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Office of Educational Quality and Accountability

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The Educational Management Audit Council accepted this report and its findings at their meeting of October 24, 2007. The EMAC also voted to remove the District from 'Watch' status.

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 Greater Fall River Regional Vocational Technical School District, Rogerio Ramos; the school department staff of the Greater Fall River Regional Vocational Technical School District; and the town officials in Fall River, Somerset, Swansea, and Westport.

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Executive Summary

The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA) reexamined the Greater Fall River Regional Vocational Technical School District in April 2007. With an average proficiency index of 77 proficiency index (PI) points in 2006 (78 PI points in English language arts and 76 PI points in math), the district is considered a 'Moderate' performing school system based on the Department of Education's rating system (found in Appendix A of this report), with achievement below both the state average and the statewide vocational district average. Less than half of Greater Fall River's students scored at or above the proficiency standard on the 2006 administration of the MCAS tests.

District Overview

The Greater Fall River Regional Vocational Technical School District, located in Fall River, serves four Bristol County communities in southeastern Massachusetts: Fall River, Somerset, Swansea, and Westport. The district operates one school, Diman Regional Vocational Technical High School. The member city and towns vary in size, economic characteristics, and form of government. Fall River has a Mayor-Council form of government, and Somerset, Swansea, and Westport each have a Board of Selectmen/Administrator/Open Town Meeting form of government.

The city of Fall River, a medium-sized industrial city, and the suburban communities of Somerset and Swansea are located on the banks of the Taunton River at Mount Hope Bay. The town of Westport borders Fall River to the south on the coast of Buzzards Bay. Fall River originally developed as both a transportation center and an industrial seaport serving foreign trade. Water power and port facilities led to the development of industries, commercial fishing, and shipbuilding in Fall River, Somerset, and Swansea. As Fall River grew, it absorbed the industries of the other communities, preserving their agricultural and suburban character. Westport is a small town where agriculture and fishing have been the mainstays. Many immigrant populations from eastern and western Europe, the Mediterranean, and Canada were attracted to Fall River to work in the manufacturing, fishing, and whaling trades. Today the largest sources of employment are in chemical operations, electrical, and food products, tourism,

and the garment and textile industries, although many residents find employment in cities nearby.

Densely populated, Fall River is a comparatively low-income community with an ethnically diverse, working class population. The three other member communities are more moderate in income. According to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR), Fall River had a median family income of $37,671 in 1999, compared to the statewide median family income of $63,706, ranking it 343 out of the 351 cities and towns in the commonwealth. The median family income was $60,067 in Somerset (rank 211), $60,567 in Swansea (rank 204), and $64,568 in Westport (rank 168).

According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Fall River had a total population of 91,938 with a population of 17,442 school-age children, or 19 percent of the total. Somerset had a total population of 18,234 with a population of 3,154 school-age children, or 17 percent of the total. Swansea had a total population of 15,901 with a population of 2,970 school-age children, or 19 percent of the total. Westport had a total population of 14,183 with a population of 2,558 school-age children, or 18 percent of the total.

Of the total households in Fall River, 32 percent were households with children under 18 years of age, and 11 percent were unmarried female-headed households with children. Sixty-five percent of households in Fall River rented their homes. Eleven percent of the population age 25 years or older held a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 33 percent statewide. Of the total households in the other member communities, 31 percent in Somerset, 34 percent in Swansea, and 32 percent in Westport were households with children under 18 years of age. Of the population age 25 years or older, 20 percent in Somerset, 18 percent in Swansea, and 25 percent in Westport held a bachelor's degree or higher.

According to the Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE), in 2005-2006 Greater Fall River had a total enrollment of 1,311. The demographic composition in the district was: 94.8 percent White, 2.1 percent African-American, 1.7 percent Asian, 1.0 percent Hispanic, 0.5 percent Native American, and 0.0 percent multi-Race, non-Hispanic; 8.8 percent first language not English, 0.0 percent limited English proficient (LEP), 34.7 percent low income, and 9.2 percent special education. Eighty-seven percent of school-age children in Fall River and 90

percent in Swansea attended public schools (Somerset and Westport did not report data). The district does not offer school choice.

The Diman Regional Vocational Technical High School serves grades 9 through 12 and also provides post-secondary vocational programs. The administrative team in the district consists of a superintendent-director, an assistant superintendent-director/principal, an academic/post secondary coordinator, a business administrator, a dean of students, a director of special needs/grant writer, a director of guidance, and a supervisor of buildings and grounds. The district has a six-member school committee.

In FY 2006, Greater Fall River's per pupil expenditure, based on appropriations from all funds, was $12,884, compared to $11,211 statewide, ranking it 68 out of the 328 school districts reporting data. The district did not exceed the state net school spending requirement in any year of the review period. From FY 2004 to FY 2006, net school spending increased from $12,113,032 to $14,583,164; Chapter 70 aid increased from $10,259,130 to $11,587,076; the required local contribution increased from $1,993,993 to $3,592,883; and the foundation enrollment increased from 1,169 to 1,306. Chapter 70 aid as a percentage of actual net school spending decreased from 85 to 80 percent over this period. From FY 2004 to FY 2005, total curriculum and instruction expenditures as a percentage of net school spending remained at 58 percent.

Context

School districts examined by the Massachusetts Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA) are placed in 'Watch' status if the EQA examination reveals several areas of poor or unsatisfactory performance. All 'Watch' districts are monitored by the EQA and its staff. In addition, districts may be placed in 'Watch' status if they were referred to the Board of Education for a "declaration of underperformance" but the board declined to make that determination. For the next one to two years, an experienced and trained senior EQA examiner monitors a district in 'Watch' status. After a reexamination by the EQA, either the district is removed from 'Watch' status or an EQA report is forwarded to the Board of Education with a recommendation to declare the district underperforming. Underperforming districts receive additional support and services from the state to improve student achievement.

The EQA first examined the Greater Fall River Regional Vocational Technical School District in March 2004, and the district was subsequently placed in 'Watch' status. The district was monitored by an EQA examiner, Fred Savioie, and reexamined by a team of EQA examiners in April 2007. This reexamination report is the conclusion of the 'Watch' process, the purpose of which is to assess the progress the district has made since the prior examination.

The administration at Greater Fall River enjoys an enviable reputation among community leaders and citizens, and there is an enthusiastic population applying for the available seats in grade 9 every year. The Fall River/New Bedford area is a region of relatively high unemployment, where parents of grade 8 students greatly appreciate the Diman Regional Vocational Technical High School for its ability to produce graduates with skills that prepare them for immediate and predictable employment. The school annually accepts only a fraction of its grade 8 applicants, and has a special education population of only 9.8 percent compared to an average of 16.9 percent for all schools across the state. When asked about the lower percentage of special education students, the superintendent replied that they "just don't get the applicants." The district website proudly highlights "over 93 percent of our graduates successfully passing the MCAS competency determination" every year. The district did not meet the state requirements for minimum net school spending during the period under reexamination, yet had educationally adequate funding. The budget passed virtually unchallenged every year. Yet the district experienced a rate of improvement of its MCAS scores that was lower than that of most other vocational technical districts across the state.

Although one might expect an improved level of service to special education students considering their small percentage within the school community, in 2006 the average performance gap between regular education students and students with disabilities was 36 proficiency index (PI) points (see Appendix A for a description of the proficiency index), compared to 27 PI points statewide and 19 PI points for vocational districts statewide. Attendance was an issue within the district as well. Although student attendance was within one percentage point of the state average, nearly one out of five of the district's students met the state definition of being chronically absent, which is 10 percent or more of the number of school days annually. In addition, in-school suspension of students had climbed to 11 percent and out-of-

school suspension reached 11 percent for the past two years, according to data that the district supplied to the Department of Education.

The EQA team found in observations of 33 classroom that in only 65 percent of the classes observed did classroom time focus on challenging academic tasks, and that in only 21 percent of the classrooms had the teacher planned more than one activity for the entire class. Further, in only 24 percent did teachers plan a variety of instructional strategies designed to engage all levels of learners. In only 36 percent of observations did the teacher's questions transcend direct recall, or include open-ended questions that required the use of higher order thinking skills. District procedures did not encourage administrative walk-throughs, and the team found timely teacher evaluations in only 53 percent of 33 randomly selected teacher personnel files.

Greater Fall River Regional Vocational Technical School District has a number of positive attributes on which to build a more effective and efficient school. The means to improve the school are already at hand, and people are in place to begin the job. Meeting the challenge will be in the best interest of the students from the member communities.

The EQA Reexamination Process

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

From April 23-26, 2007, the EQA conducted an independent reexamination of the Greater Fall River Regional Vocational Technical School District for the period 2004-2007. This reexamination 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 on-site visit.

For the period under reexamination, 2004-2007, this report finds Greater Fall River to be a 'Moderate' performing school district with an average proficiency index of 77 proficiency index (PI) points, marked by student achievement that was 'Moderate' in English language arts (ELA) and 'Low' in math on the 2004-2006 MCAS tests. Over this period, student performance improved by nine PI points in ELA and 22 PI points in math, which narrowed the district's average proficiency gap by 41 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 reexamination.

Summary of Analysis of MCAS Student Achievement Data

Are all eligible students participating in required state assessments?

On the 2006 MCAS tests in ELA and math, all eligible students in Greater Fall River 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, slightly less than half of all students in Greater Fall River attained proficiency on the 2006 MCAS tests, 22 percentage points less than the grade 10 statewide average and five percentage points less than the statewide vocational school district average. Less than half of Greater Fall River students attained proficiency in English language arts (ELA), and slightly more than half of Greater Fall River students attained proficiency in math. Ninety-four percent of the Class of 2006 earned a Competency Determination.

- Greater Fall River's average proficiency index (API) on the MCAS tests in 2006 was 77 proficiency index (PI) points, eight PI points lower than that of grade 10 students statewide and one PI point lower than that of vocational districts statewide. Greater Fall River's average proficiency gap, the difference between its API and the target of 100 percent, in 2006 was 23 PI points.

- In 2006, Greater Fall River's proficiency gap in ELA was 22 PI points, nine PI points wider than the state's average proficiency gap in grade 10 ELA and two PI points wider than the gap for vocational districts statewide. This gap would require an average improvement in performance of nearly three PI points annually to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP).
- Greater Fall River's proficiency gap in math was 24 PI points in 2006, seven PI points wider than the state's average proficiency gap in grade 10 math and one PI point wider than the gap for vocational districts statewide. This gap would require an average improvement of three PI points per year to achieve AYP.

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

Between 2003 and 2006, Greater Fall River's MCAS performance showed considerable improvement overall, in ELA, and in math.

- The percentage of students scoring in the 'Advanced' and 'Proficient' categories rose by 18 percentage points between 2003 and 2006, while the percentage of students in the 'Warning/Failing' category decreased by 16 percentage points. The average proficiency gap in Greater Fall River narrowed from 36 PI points in 2003 to 23 PI points in 2006. This resulted in an improvement rate, or a closing of the proficiency gap, of 37 percent.
- Over the three-year period 2003-2006, Greater Fall River showed improvement in ELA, at an average of nearly three PI points annually. This resulted in an improvement rate of 28 percent, a rate higher than that required to meet AYP.
- Math performance in Greater Fall River showed even greater improvement during this period, at an average of approximately six PI points annually. This resulted in an improvement rate of 44 percent, also a rate higher than that required to meet AYP.

Do MCAS test results vary among subgroups of students?

MCAS performance in 2006 varied among subgroups of Greater Fall River students. Of the eight measurable subgroups in Greater Fall River in 2006, the gap in performance between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups was 32 PI points in ELA (regular education students, students with disabilities, respectively) and 40 PI points in math (male students, students with disabilities, respectively).

- The proficiency gaps in Greater Fall River in 2006 in both ELA and math were wider than the district average for students with disabilities and Hispanic students. Less than one-tenth of students with disabilities and less than one-third of Hispanic students attained proficiency.
- The proficiency gaps in ELA and math were narrower than the district average for regular education, White, and non low-income students. For each of these subgroups, approximately half of the students attained proficiency.
- The proficiency gap of low-income students (those participating in the free or reduced-cost lunch program) was wider than the district average in ELA but narrower in math. The proficiency gap for male students was the same as the district average in ELA but narrower in math, while the proficiency gap for female students was wider than the district average in math but narrower in ELA. Less than half of low-income and female students and more than half of male students attained proficiency.

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

The performance gap in Greater Fall River between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in ELA narrowed from 44 PI points in 2003 to 32 PI points in 2006, and the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in math widened from 38 PI points in 2003 to 40 PI points in 2006.

- All student subgroups except Hispanic students had improved performance in ELA between 2003 and 2006. The most improved subgroups in ELA were low-income students and students with disabilities.
- In math, all student subgroups had improved performance between 2003 and 2006. The most improved subgroup in math was low-income students.

Standard Summaries

Leadership, Governance, and Communication

The superintendent-director of the Greater Fall River Regional Vocational Technical School District was appointed to the position in 2001 after serving as principal. The school committee

was comprised of appointed and elected officials from the sending communities of Fall River, Somerset, Swansea, and Westport.

The school committee's annual evaluation of the superintendent served as a basis for improving future job performance. The school committee had a policy manual. However, most policies did not contain an adoption date. The committee members shared that they did not adhere to their stated procedures regarding the review of policies and goals.

Since the school district consisted of one vocational high school, the district considered its School Improvement Plan (SIP) to be the District Improvement Plan (DIP) and archived it as the District and School Improvement Plan. The SIP contained the district's vision and mission statements established in 2001. The school committee approved the plan and staff presented a yearly report that highlighted progress made on the SIP at a regularly scheduled meeting. The District and School Improvement Plan revealed that "MCAS data and results are available online" (at the DOE website). The district had no action plan to address it's rank of 21 out of the 30 vocational school districts in the commonwealth for its 2006 MCAS results.

Although EQA examiners did not find evidence of the analysis of disaggregated student achievement data for 2004 and 2005, the district did conduct aggregate MCAS item analyses in 2006 which led it to redesign the curricula in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics, add honors classes, and incorporate MCAS prep and remediation courses into the school day and beyond.

The district developed its safety plan during the 2006-2007 academic year with intentions for distribution to all administrators, supervisors, teachers, and designated local officials and full implementation in September 2007. A condensed version was included in the parent/student handbook.

The Greater Fall River Regional Vocational Technical School District has made progress since the last EQA site visit in 2004. It was obvious to examiners that the district had directed its focus to previously identified deficiencies and had established momentum. The challenge to the administration is to accelerate the change process to ensure that excellence in education will be embraced.

Curriculum and Instruction

The district had curricula in ELA, math and science aligned with the state curriculum frameworks. The components included topics, curriculum standards, skills and activities, name of text, pacing guide, assessment, and resources. Science documents included objectives, but ELA and math did not. The math curriculum document included date of completion, but no dates were evident in the science or ELA documents. In the vocational areas, teachers used the Vocational Technical Education Frameworks developed by the state to guide their instruction. They did not have completed curriculum documents aligned to the frameworks at the time of the reexamination, but were in various stages of the process.

The district did not have a well documented process for the regular review and/or revision of curriculum. Coordinators and teachers stated that they reviewed and revised curriculum on an "as needed" basis. Although, the district used MCAS and other assessment data to make curriculum modifications, the EQA team found no evidence the district used a formal or sustainable process for the changes, nor have a formal process based on student achievement data to evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum changes or programs.

During the site visit, the EQA examiners observed 33 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 practices, expectations, student activity and behavior, and classroom climate.

Examiners observed effective classroom management in 95 percent of the classrooms visited, in which students took responsibility for their work, were respectful, and the classroom was conducive to learning. For instructional practices, EQA examiners looked at questioning techniques and found that in only 36 percent of the observed classrooms did teacher's questions transcend direct recall and include open-ended questions that required the use of higher order thinking skills. Additionally, in only 21 percent of classrooms was there evidence that the teacher planned multiple tasks to engage all levels of learners, and in only 24 percent of the observed classrooms did the teacher engage students in a variety of instructional techniques. However, in 97 percent of classrooms teachers maintained the students' attention, and in 85 percent the objectives of the lesson were clear to students. Expectations refers to the

maintenance of high standards for students by teachers; EQA examiners found evidence of high quality work, challenging academic tasks, and teachers clearly communicating high expectations in only 63 percent of classrooms. Positive student activity and behavior are considered evident when students are actively engaged in the learning process; EQA examiners found that in 88 percent of classrooms students showed an awareness and understanding of the lesson's objectives and demonstrated active engagement in the lesson. Finally, positive classroom climate refers to a classroom in which students feel safe and valued and where the teacher and students are active and respectful listeners; EQA examiners observed a positive classroom climate in 94 percent of the classrooms.

Assessment and Program Evaluation

The Greater Fall River district required all students to participate in the MCAS exams, as well as other appropriate assessments. The district used the Diman Mathematics Achievement Test and the Stanford 9 Diagnostic Reading Test to place students into appropriate math and ELA classes, respectively. Math and biology teachers used standardized final exams for their classes. The Cape Cod Vocational Assessment Test was given to entering freshmen to guide them in determining a career path. Other tests, such as the Woodcock Johnson III Achievement Battery and the Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement, Second Edition (KTEA II), were available to special education teachers and the guidance department; however, the staff had not received training in the administration of these tests.

Some of the administrators at Diman were knowledgeable in the use of TestWiz for data analysis, but teachers had not received the appropriate training for this program. A data specialist was hired for 2006-2007 to assist with the disaggregation and interpretation of data. This position was funded as a 0.1 position, and as a result the consultant was only able to work on 2006 MCAS data. The EQA visiting team was presented evidence that the 2003 and 2006 MCAS results had been analyzed; no evidence was presented for the 2004 and 2005 results. The data specialist position was funded as a full-time one for 2007-2008.

The district leadership disseminated MCAS test results to appropriate staff through the academic coordinator, who then passed the data on to the lead teachers. The information was discussed at departmental meetings, and teachers made adjustments to their own curricula based on identified

areas of deficiency. The math curriculum revision committee had responsibility for recommending changes in curriculum that would lead to better performance.

As a result of analyzing data, the district made some changes to programs and curricula, such as instituting block periods for biology classes, a geometry class for grade 10 students, and changing the scope and sequence in the ELA curriculum in order to provide better preparation for the MCAS tests. Also, to provide additional support for students who performed poorly, the district established the EXTENDS program (an after-school homework support program). The math and ELA departments also instituted the MCAS Saturday program to help under-performing students.

The district did not use assessment data to set priorities for professional development, nor to reallocate staff and resources. Although it formed three professional development teams in 2006, the district did not present documentation to show what these teams had accomplished. Professional development offerings came strictly as a result of "needs assessment" questionnaires given to the staff, and from recommendations made by the administration. Fields of certification and class sizes dictated staff assignments.

Human Resource Management and Professional Development

The district had a regular, consistent procedure for recruiting and hiring replacement staff members. There was no financial impediment to hiring the best candidate available to fill the position. However, the district did not routinely request waivers for unlicensed teacher candidates. Furthermore, in a review of 33 randomly selected personnel folders, EQA examiners found no evidence of current licensure for seven teachers and two administrators. EQA examiners requested evidence of certification for those staff members, but the district did not or could not comply.

District administrators were not adhering to their own evaluation procedures. The administration had last formally reviewed the principal in September 2005, had last evaluated the business manager in December 2004, and had last evaluated the supervisor of buildings and grounds in July 2000. All other administrators had been evaluated in 2006. The superintendent's evaluation contained references to "improving student achievement," but lacked specifics. The principal's evaluation did not refer to student assessment results beyond setting a goal of assisting students

who failed the MCAS tests. In the random sample of 33 teacher personnel files, most of the teacher evaluations contained brief reference to improving student achievement scores. There seemed to be little attempt to use such references to hold teachers accountable for improving student achievement, however. For the most part, evaluations, when present, were instructive, informative, and capable of contributing to future growth and overall effectiveness.

The 2005-2006 District and School Improvement Plan included the professional development plan, and it addressed weaknesses identified in the previous EQA report. The district was actively engaged in implementing its SIP, and continuing to improve the achievement of its students. Participatory decision-making and parental involvement were instrumental in the development of the SIP.

The district presented evidence of a teacher mentoring system to support newly hired teachers. In addition, it began to use a professional development committee to plan professional development activities for professional staff members. The activities generally aligned with the SIP, and most were offered in units of at least 10 hours and required a culminating product to allow for the awarding of professional development points (PDPs).

The professional development planning evolved from a formal faculty interest survey, changes in state program requirements, and some informal program evaluation results. Activities fell into the categories of personal health and safety, the vocational curriculum frameworks, using technology, differentiated instruction, learning styles, and special education. The committee also scheduled required staff training on topics such as sexual harassment, physical restraint, blood-borne pathogens, and other similar topics.

The professional development plan did not address training in data analysis skills for the staff, participatory decision-making, or community and parental involvement. The professional development committee used both the plan and a calendar of professional development events conducted for 2006-2007 to deliver effective professional development activities to the staff.

The district also created and distributed a DCAP to the staff. The proposed SIP for the 2007-2008 school year made reference to training for staff members in both data analysis and diverse learning styles that would align with the DCAP.

The district developed its crisis management plan in 2006-2007 through collaboration with teachers and administrators and the school resource officer and his supervisor, with the intention of full implementation in 2007-2008. A disaster drill took place during the 2004-2005 school year in conjunction with Fall River EMS personnel and the police and fire departments.

Access, Participation, and Student Academic Support

Greater Fall River offered services to students needing additional help in attaining proficiency in ELA, mathematics, and science courses. Leveled classes, including honors sections, allowed students to progress at appropriate levels for the students enrolled. The EXtra Time Educating & Nurturing Diman Students (EXTENDS) program provided a vehicle for additional tutoring and help with homework for students requiring it; the program operated on a voluntary basis. The Saturday MCAS support class provided four weeks of tutoring in ELA and mathematics as well as vocational skills support, with four hours per session. Title I services and preferential course placement were available for students who performed poorly on the grade 9 placement test.

The district did not use disaggregated data to plan services or activities for members of subgroup populations. With the exception of special education students, there was little differentiation between members of any subgroup population. When asked about subgroup participation, administrators and teachers repeated the equal access standard, "Anyone in this district can participate in any course or activity." Nonetheless, with the exception of students with special needs, it was not a district practice to encourage additional subgroup representation in courses or to provide additional programs or services for most subgroup members. Administrators and teachers reported that they chose to treat each student "as an individual."

The district attendance rates were similar to the statewide averages during the reexamination period. Despite this, the number of students categorized as chronically absent, according to data supplied by the district to the Department of Education, was 17.9, 20.6, and 18.3 percent during the school years 2004, 2005, and 2006, respectively. The district put into place a credit denial policy to attempt to control student absenteeism. The effectiveness of the program was unclear.

Administrators reported that student discipline was a concern during the reexamination period, with both in-school and out-of-school suspension rates approaching double the state averages. During 2005-2006 alone, for example, the district suspended 144 students from school for at

least one day, yielding a rate of 11.0 percent compared to the state average of 5.8 percent. Further, 149 students received at least one day of in-school suspension during the same year, yielding a rate of 11.4 percent compared to the statewide rate of 3.4 percent. Administrators reported that the district was considering a new plan for student discipline for school year 2007-2008. Both retention rate and dropout rates were low in the district during the reexamination period, although the district had no mechanism in place for recovery of students who had previously dropped out of school.

Financial and Asset Management Effectiveness and Efficiency

Rather than reexamine the district only on those 2004 indicators on which the district was rated 'Poor' or 'Unsatisfactory,' the EQA conducted a full examination of the district on Standard VI covering the period 2004-2007. The EQA examiners gave the Greater Fall River Regional Vocational Technical School District an overall rating of 'Satisfactory' on this standard. They rated the district as 'Excellent' on one, 'Satisfactory' on nine, 'Needs Improvement' on two, and not applicable on one of the thirteen performance indicators in this standard.

The district developed its budget through a participatory process. Central administrators began the process in January by estimating Chapter 70 aid and member district assessments. Academic and vocational administrators then received preparation documents from the central administration. Beginning with the FY 2007 budget period, the preparation documents contained student achievement data to enable school administrators to develop their equipment, supplies, and materials requests based on the analysis of those data. When school administrators returned their budget requests, the central office combined the individual budgets to form a working document. School administrators then met with central administrators to discuss their requests. The superintendent presented the budget to the school committee in March, and it approved it after a series of meetings. Central staff and some school committee members met with the mayor, finance committee, and selectmen of the sending districts. The budgets were finally voted at the annual town meetings of all four sending districts.

The district's budget and supplemental funding were adequate to provide for effective instruction and operational resources. Chapter 70 aid to the district was level funded from FY 2002 to FY 2003 and decreased by $787,427, or 7.1 percent, from FY 2003 to FY 2004. Since FY 2004,

Chapter 70 aid and assessments from sending districts have increased each year. Administrators, in interviews, stated that they have recovered from the level funding and decreased funding of the 2002-2004 period. The district's operating budget increased by 7.0 percent from FY 2004 to FY 2005 and by 11.2 percent from FY 2005 to FY 2006.

In interviews with school administrators and teachers, examiners learned that supplies and materials were adequate in most areas, textbooks were purchased when needed, funding for professional development was "not a problem," and instructional software was updated. A tour of the shops confirmed that they were well equipped with state of the art machinery and tools.

The district used current software programs for its budgeting, financial controls, and purchasing. Department heads had terminals on their desks with software that allowed them to submit requisitions and to monitor their budgets online. The EQA team examined the duties of the district treasurer and the school business manager and determined them to be in accordance with the regulations that separated their duties.

The district's facilities consisted of one building that was well maintained but was reaching its maximum enrollment. Student enrollment in the district in 2006 was 1,311 students, and maximum student capacity was listed at 1,380 students. Because of the student enrollment and the limited capacity of the student lunchroom, the district was required to have four lunch periods; despite this, the lunchroom appeared crowded. The facility had extensive security systems such as cameras, alarms, locking devices, and communications to assure student safety.

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 Greater Fall River 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 Greater Fall River; 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:

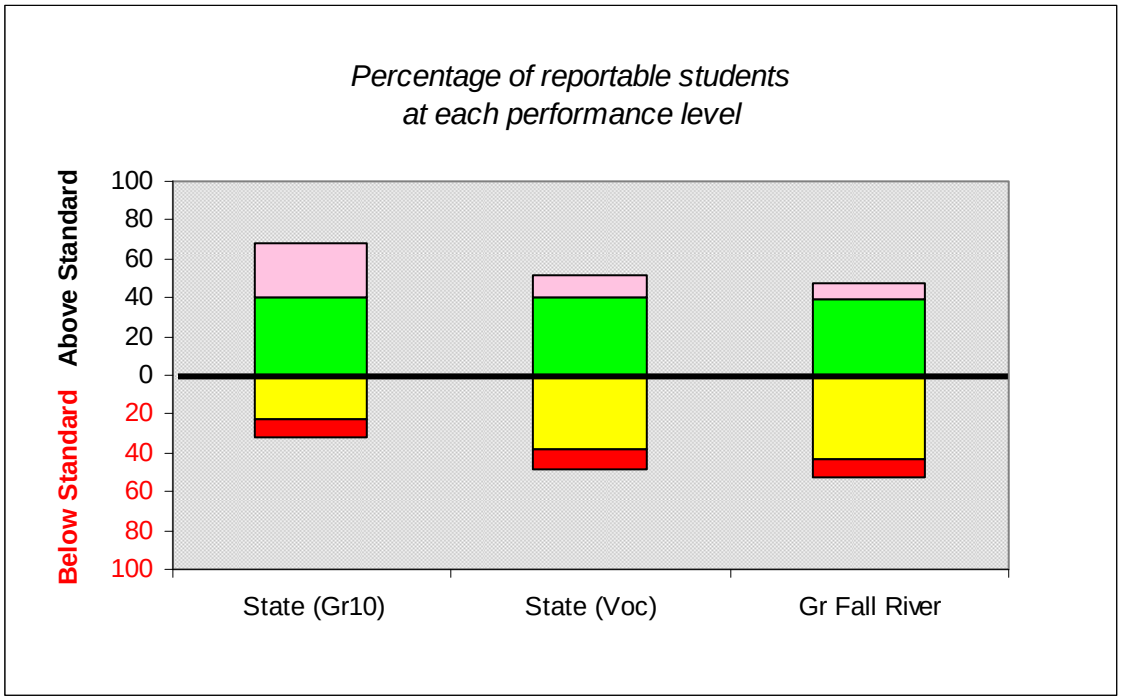
- On average, slightly less than half of all students in Greater Fall River attained proficiency on the 2006 MCAS tests, 22 percentage points less than the grade 10 statewide average and five percentage points less than the statewide vocational school district average. Less than half of Greater Fall River students attained proficiency in English language arts (ELA), and slightly more than half of Greater Fall River students attained proficiency in math. Ninety-four percent of the Class of 2006 earned a Competency Determination.

- Greater Fall River's average proficiency index (API) on the MCAS tests in 2006 was 77 proficiency index (PI) points, eight PI points lower than that of grade 10 students statewide and one PI point lower than that of vocational districts statewide. Greater Fall River's average proficiency gap, the difference between its API and the target of 100 percent, in 2006 was 23 PI points.

- In 2006, Greater Fall River's proficiency gap in ELA was 22 PI points, nine PI points wider than the state's average proficiency gap in grade 10 ELA and two PI points wider than the gap for vocational districts statewide. This gap would require an average improvement in performance of nearly three PI points annually to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP).

- Greater Fall River's proficiency gap in math was 24 PI points in 2006, seven PI points wider than the state's average proficiency gap in grade 10 math and one PI point wider than the gap for vocational districts statewide. This gap would require an average improvement of three PI points per year to achieve AYP.

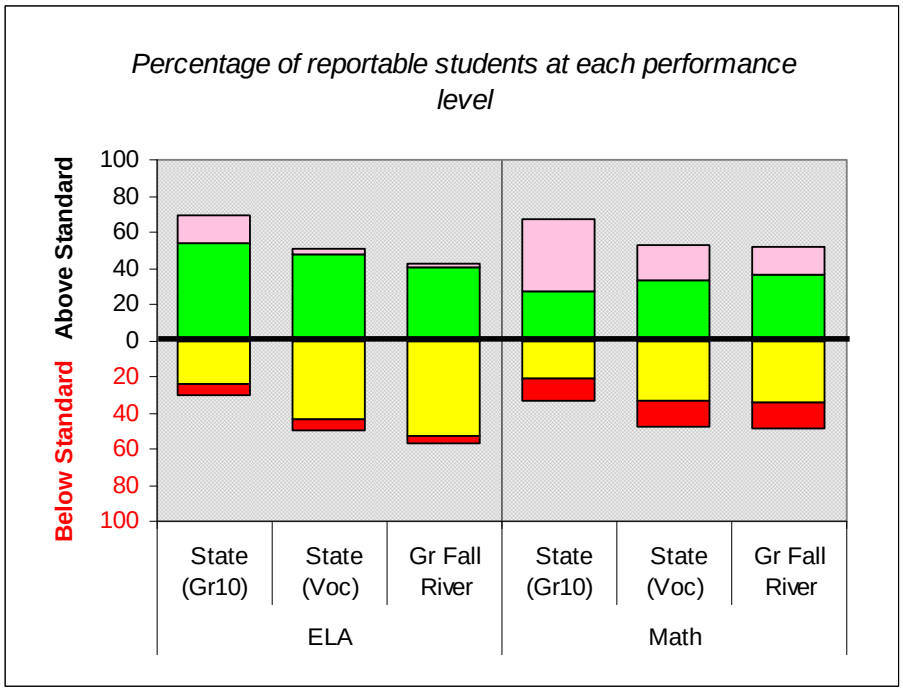
Figure/Table 1: Student MCAS Test Performance, All Students, 2006



	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Gr Fall River
Advanced	28	11	8
Proficient	41	41	39
Needs Improvement	23	39	44
Warning/Failing	9	10	9
Percent Attaining Proficiency	69	52	47
Average Proficiency Index (API)	85.0	78.3	77.3

In 2006, 47 percent of Greater Fall River students attained proficiency on the MCAS tests overall, 22 percentage points less than the grade 10 statewide average of 69 percent, and five percentage points less than the statewide vocational district average of 52 percent. Nine percent of Greater Fall River students scored in the 'Warning/Failing' category, the same as that of grade 10 students statewide and one percentage point less than that of vocational districts statewide. Greater Fall River's average proficiency index (API) on the MCAS tests in 2006 was 77 proficiency index (PI) points, eight PI points lower than that of grade 10 students statewide and one PI point lower than that of vocational districts statewide. Greater Fall River's average proficiency gap in 2006 was 23 PI points.

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



	ELA			Math		
	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Gr Fall River	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Gr Fall River
Advanced	16	2	2	40	19	14
Proficient	54	48	41	27	33	37
Needs Improvement	25	44	53	21	33	34
Warning/Failing	6	6	4	11	14	15
Percent Attaining Proficiency	70	50	43	67	52	51
Proficiency Index (PI)	86.8	79.9	78.1	83.2	76.7	76.4

In 2006, achievement in grade 10 English language arts (ELA) and math in Greater Fall River was lower than that statewide. In ELA and math, achievement was slightly lower than the statewide vocational district average. In ELA, 43 percent of Greater Fall River students attained proficiency, compared to 70 percent statewide and 50 percent in vocational districts. In math, 51 percent of Greater Fall River students attained proficiency, compared to 67 percent statewide and 52 percent in vocational districts.

Greater Fall River students had slightly stronger performance on the 2006 MCAS tests in ELA than in math. The proficiency index for Greater Fall River students in ELA was 78 PI points, and in math it was 76 PI points. These figures compare to 87 PI points in ELA and 83 PI points for grade 10 students statewide, and 80 PI points in ELA and 77 PI points for vocational districts statewide.

The proficiency gap for Greater Fall River students in 2006 was 22 PI points in ELA and 24 PI points in math. These figures compare to 13 PI points in ELA and 17 PI points in math for grade 10 students statewide, and 20 PI points in ELA and 23 PI points in math for vocational districts statewide. Greater Fall River's proficiency gaps would require an average annual improvement of nearly three PI points in ELA and three PI points in math to meet AYP.

Equity of Achievement

Do MCAS test results vary among subgroups of students?

Findings:

- MCAS performance in 2006 varied among subgroups of Greater Fall River students. Of the eight measurable subgroups in Greater Fall River in 2006, the gap in performance between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups was 32 PI points in ELA (regular education students, students with disabilities, respectively) and 40 PI points in math (male students, students with disabilities, respectively).

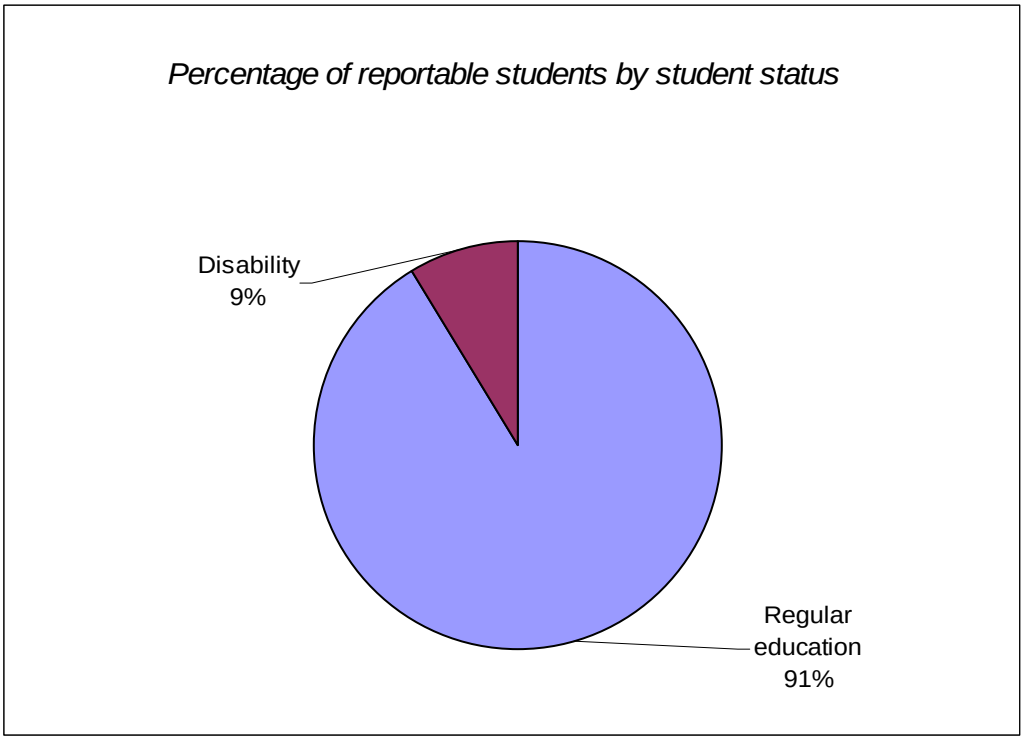
- The proficiency gaps in Greater Fall River in 2006 in both ELA and math were wider than the district average for students with disabilities and Hispanic students. Less than one-tenth of students with disabilities and less than one-third of Hispanic students attained proficiency.

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

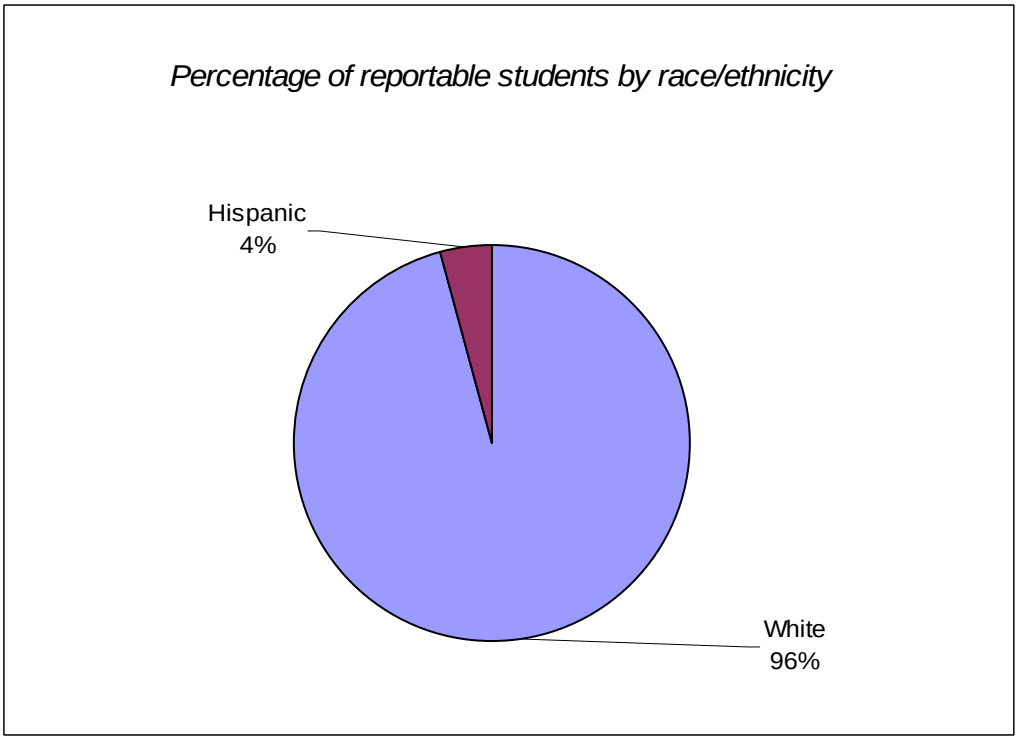
- The proficiency gap of low-income students (those participating in the free or reduced-cost lunch program) was wider than the district average in ELA but narrower in math. The proficiency gap for male students was the same as the district average in ELA but narrower in math, while the proficiency gap for female students was wider than the district average in math but narrower in ELA. Less than half of low-income and female students and more than half of male students attained proficiency.

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

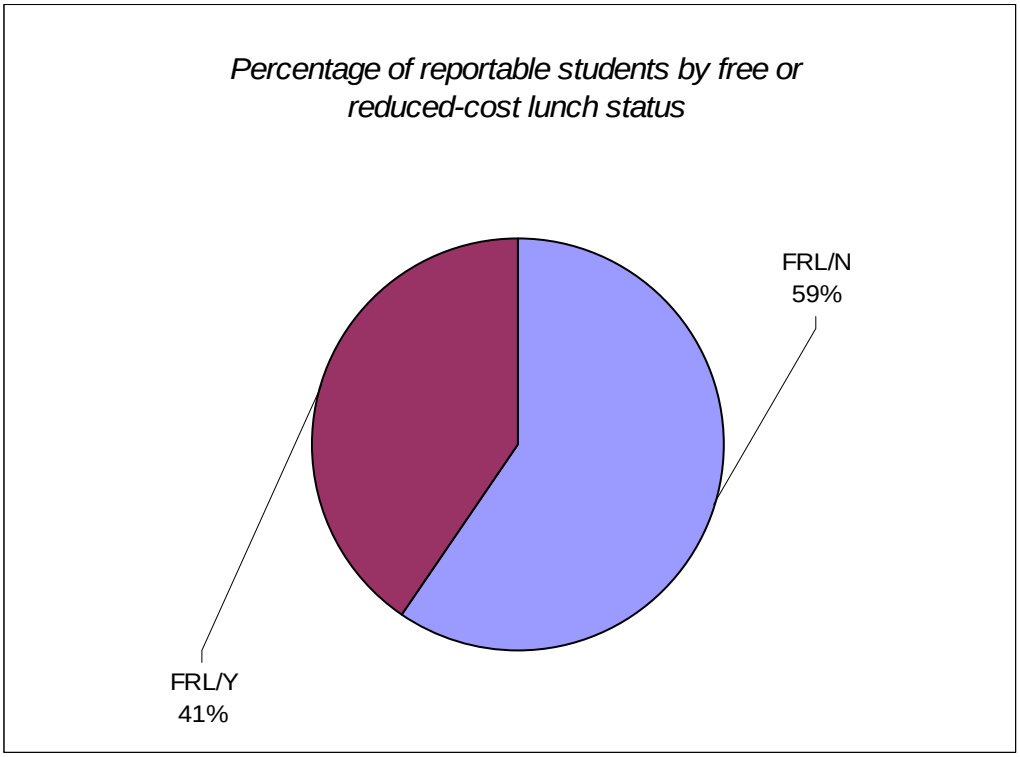
A.



B.



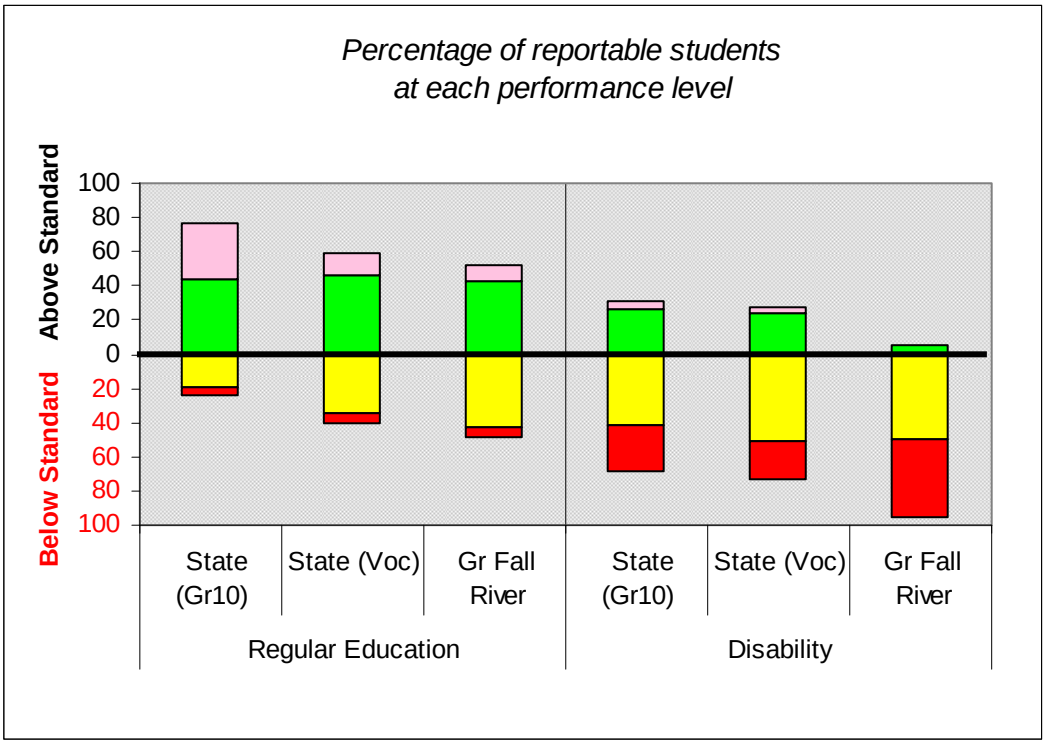
C.



	Subgroup	Number of Students
Student status	Regular education	314
	Disability	30
Race/ethnicity	White	315
	Hispanic	14
Free or reduced-cost lunch status	FRL/N	206
	FRL/Y	141

In Greater Fall River in 2006, nine percent of the students were students with disabilities, four percent were non-White students, and 41 percent were low-income students (those participating in the free or reduced-cost lunch program).

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

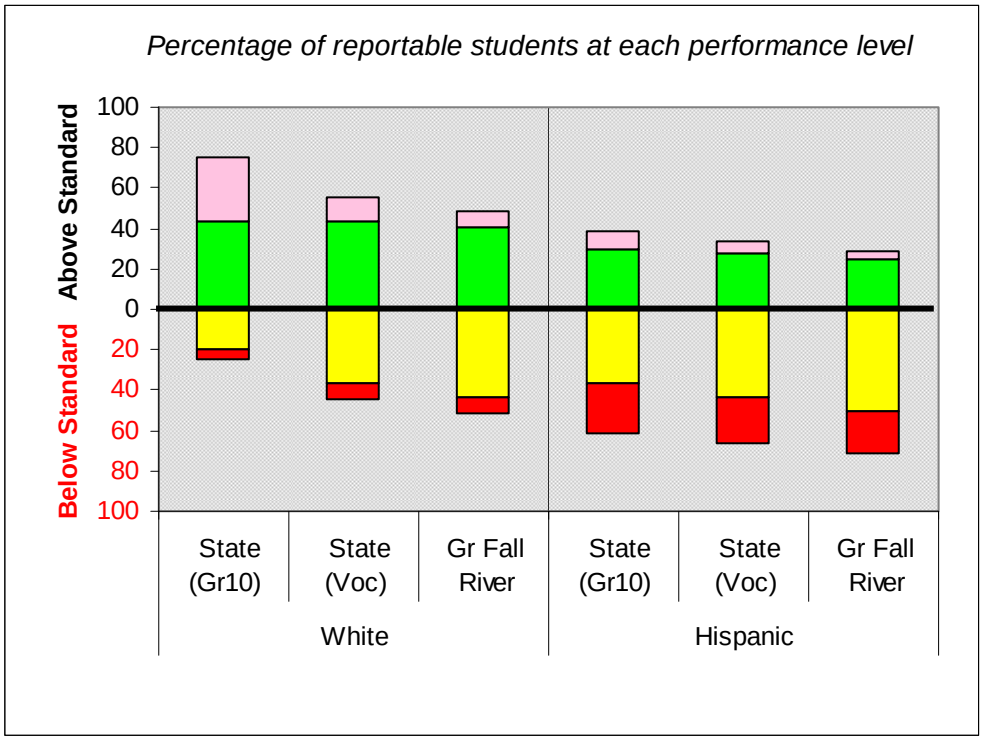


	Regular Education			Disability		
	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Gr Fall River	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Gr Fall River
Advanced	33	13	9	6	4	0
Proficient	44	47	42	26	24	5
Needs Improvement	19	35	43	41	51	49
Warning/Failing	4	6	6	27	22	46
Percent Attaining Proficiency	77	60	51	32	28	5
Average Proficiency Index (API)	90.0	83.4	80.6	62.7	63.5	44.9

In 2006, the proficiency rate of regular education students at Greater Fall River was more than 10 times greater than that of students with disabilities. Fifty-one percent of regular education students and five percent of students with disabilities attained overall proficiency on the MCAS tests. These figures compare to 77 and 32 percent, respectively, statewide; and 60 and 28 percent, respectively, for vocational school districts statewide.

Greater Fall River's average proficiency gap in 2006 was 19 PI points for regular education students and 55 PI points for students with disabilities. The average performance gap between regular education students and students with disabilities was 36 PI points. This compares to 27 PI points statewide and 20 PI points for vocational districts statewide.

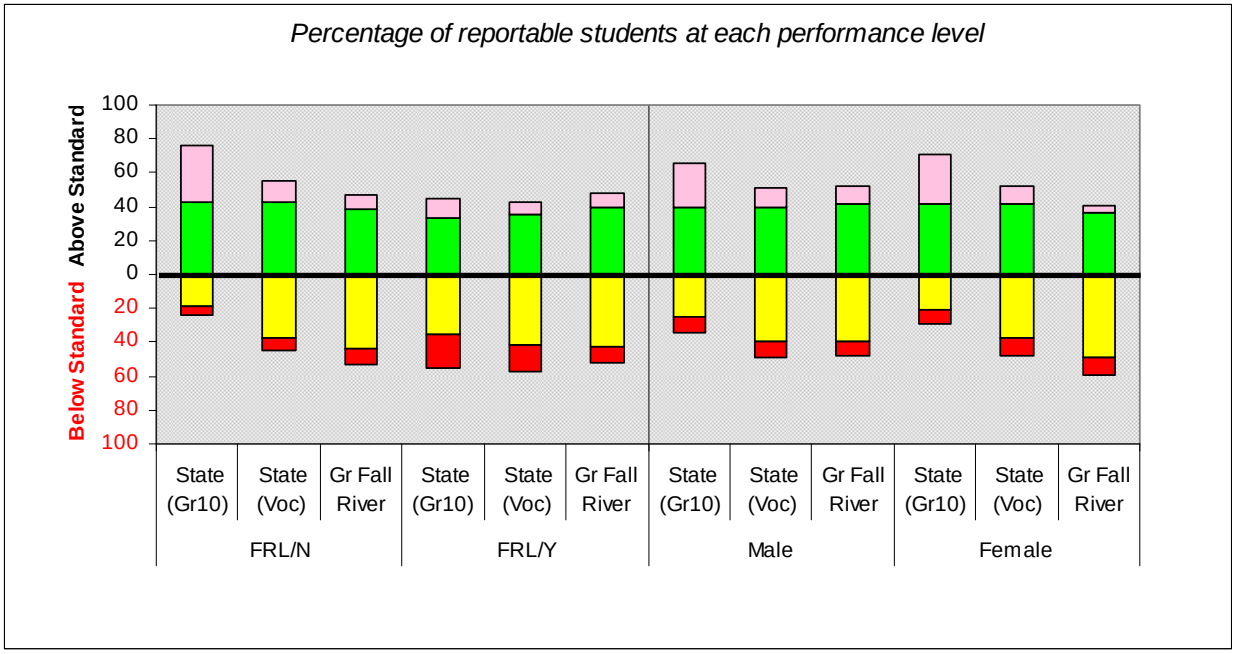
Figure/Table 5: Student MCAS Test Performance, by Race/Ethnicity Subgroup, 2006



	White			Hispanic		
	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Gr Fall River	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Gr Fall River
Advanced	32	12	8	9	6	4
Proficient	43	43	40	30	28	25
Needs Improvement	20	37	43	37	44	50
Warning/Failing	5	8	8	25	22	21
Percent Attaining Proficiency	75	55	48	39	34	29
Average Proficiency Index (API)	88.8	80.8	78.2	66.6	65.9	64.3

In Greater Fall River in 2006, 48 percent of White students attained overall proficiency on the MCAS tests, compared to 29 percent of Hispanic students. The average proficiency gap was 22 PI points for White students and 36 PI points for Hispanic students, and the average performance gap between the two subgroups was 14 PI points.

Figure/Table 6: Student MCAS Test Performance, by Socioeconomic Status and Gender Subgroups, 2006

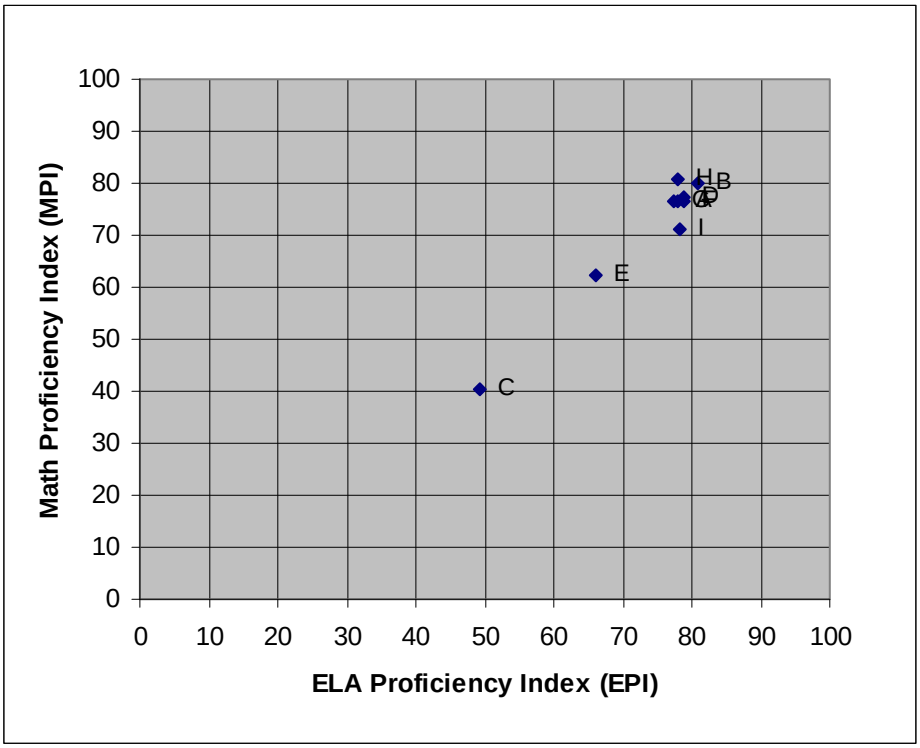


	FRL/N			FRL/Y			Male			Female		
	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Gr Fall River	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Gr Fall River	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Gr Fall River	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Gr Fall River
Advanced	33	12	8	12	8	8	26	11	11	30	10	5
Proficient	43	43	39	33	35	40	40	40	41	41	42	36
Needs Improvement	19	37	44	36	42	42	25	39	39	21	38	49
Warning/Failing	5	8	9	19	15	10	10	10	8	7	11	11
Percent Attaining Proficiency	76	55	47	45	43	48	66	51	52	71	52	41
Average Proficiency Index (API)	89.2	80.7	77.6	71.7	72.8	77.1	83.7	78.4	79.4	86.5	78.1	74.8

In Greater Fall River in 2006, 48 percent of low-income (FRL/Y) students attained overall proficiency on the MCAS tests, compared to 47 percent of non low-income (FRL/N) students. The average proficiency gap was 23 PI points for low-income students and 22 PI points for non low-income students, and the average performance gap between the two subgroups was one PI point.

Fifty-two percent of male students attained overall proficiency on the MCAS tests, compared to 41 percent of female students. The average proficiency gap was 21 PI points for male students and 25 PI points for female students, and the average performance gap between the two subgroups was four PI points.

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

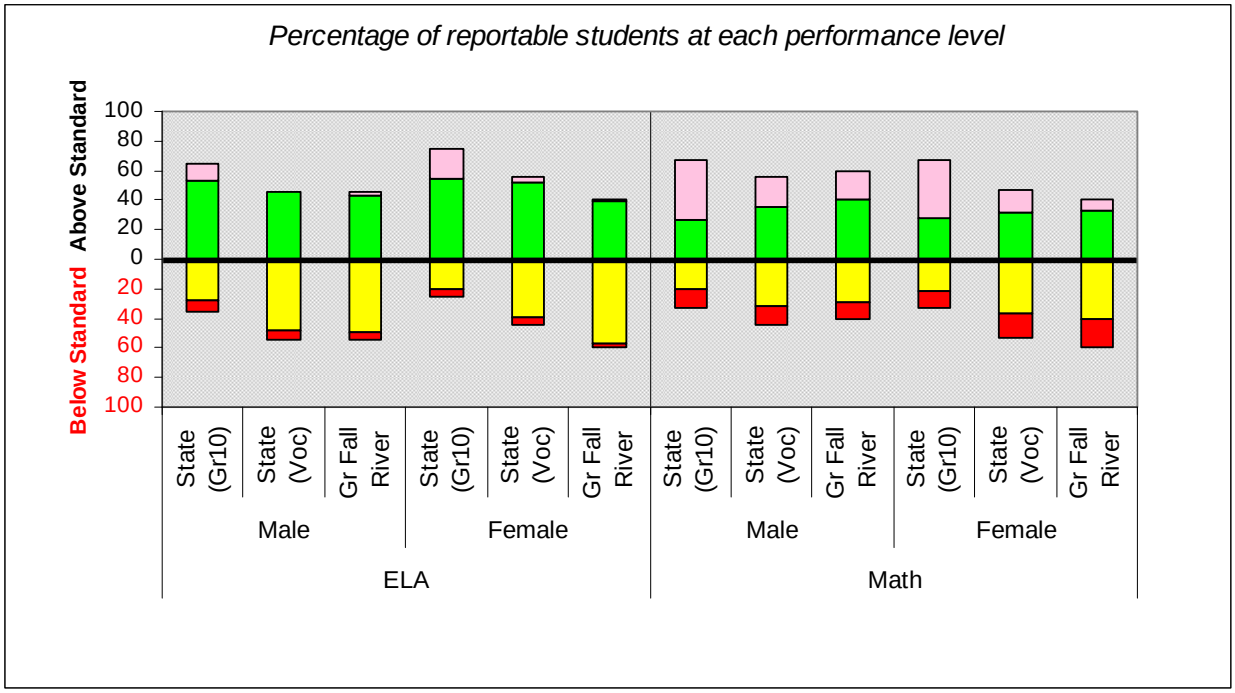


		ELA PI	Math PI	Number of Tests
A	Greater Fall River	78.1	76.4	694
B	Regular Education	81.0	80.1	629
C	Disability	49.2	40.5	59
D	White	78.9	77.4	630
E	Hispanic	66.1	62.5	28
F	FRL/N	78.7	76.5	409
G	FRL/Y	77.5	76.6	281
H	Male	78.1	80.7	386
I	Female	78.3	71.2	304

Of the eight measurable subgroups in Greater Fall River in 2006, the gap in performance between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups was 32 PI points in ELA (regular education students, students with disabilities, respectively) and 40 PI points in math (male students, students with disabilities, respectively).

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

Figure/Table 8: Student MCAS ELA and Math Test Performance, by Gender Subgroup, 2006



	ELA						Math					
	Male			Female			Male			Female		
	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Gr Fall River	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Gr Fall River	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Gr Fall River	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Gr Fall River
Advanced	11	1	3	20	4	1	41	21	19	40	16	8
Proficient	54	45	43	55	53	39	26	35	40	28	31	33
Needs Improvement	28	47	49	21	39	57	21	31	29	22	36	40
Warning/Failing	7	6	5	4	5	3	12	13	11	11	16	19
Percent Attaining Proficiency	65	46	46	75	57	40	67	56	59	68	47	41
Proficiency Index (PI)	84.4	78.1	78.1	89.3	82.4	78.3	82.9	78.7	80.7	83.6	73.9	71.2

On the 2006 grade 10 MCAS test in ELA, female students outperformed male students in Greater Fall River, whereas male students outperformed female students on the grade 10 math test. The proficiency gaps for Greater Fall River's male students were 22 PI points in ELA and 19 PI points in math, and for female students they were 22 PI points in ELA and 29 PI points in math.

Performance of both male and female students in Greater Fall River was lower than that of their counterparts statewide. Female students' performance was lower than that of female students in vocational districts statewide in both ELA and math. Male students' performance was the same as that of male students in vocational districts statewide in ELA and higher in math.

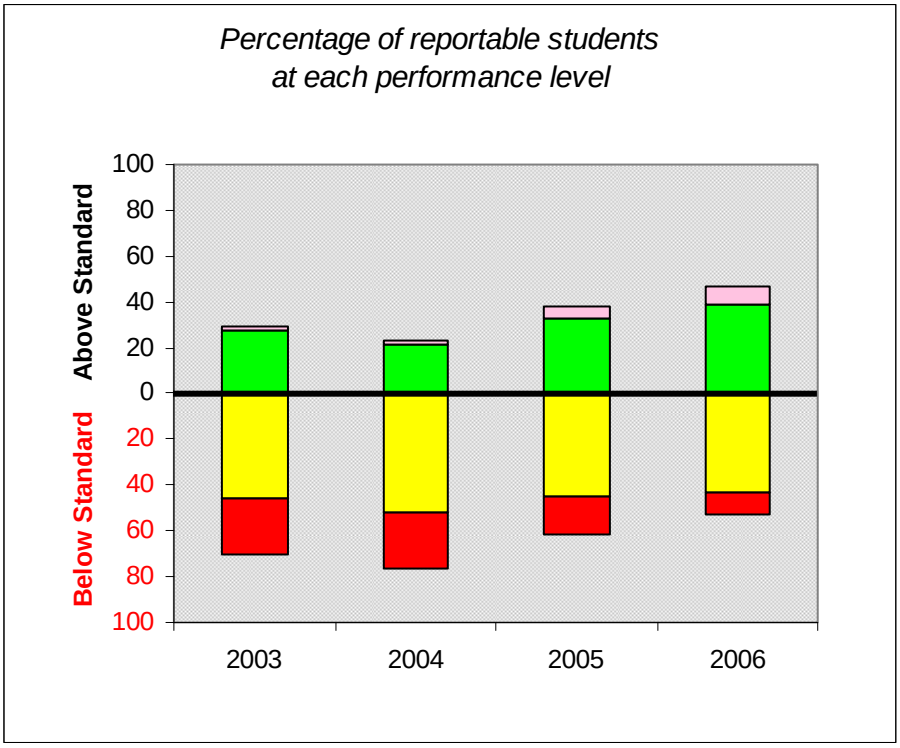
Improvement

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

Findings:

- Between 2003 and 2006, Greater Fall River's MCAS performance showed considerable improvement overall, in ELA, and in math.
- The percentage of students scoring in the 'Advanced' and 'Proficient' categories rose by 18 percentage points between 2003 and 2006, while the percentage of students in the 'Warning/Failing' category decreased by 16 percentage points. The average proficiency gap in Greater Fall River narrowed from 36 PI points in 2003 to 23 PI points in 2006. This resulted in an improvement rate, or a closing of the proficiency gap, of 37 percent.
- Over the three-year period 2003-2006, Greater Fall River showed improvement in ELA, at an average of nearly three PI points annually. This resulted in an improvement rate of 28 percent, a rate higher than that required to meet AYP.
- Math performance in Greater Fall River showed even greater improvement during this period, at an average of approximately six PI points annually. This resulted in an improvement rate of 44 percent, also a rate higher than that required to meet AYP.

Figure 9/Tables 9 A-B: Student MCAS Test Performance, All Students, 2003-2006



A.

	2003	2004	2005	2006
Advanced	2	2	5	8
Proficient	27	21	33	39
Needs Improvement	46	52	45	44
Warning/Failing	25	25	16	9
Percent Attaining Proficiency	29	23	38	47
Average Proficiency Index (API)	63.8	61.7	70.4	77.3

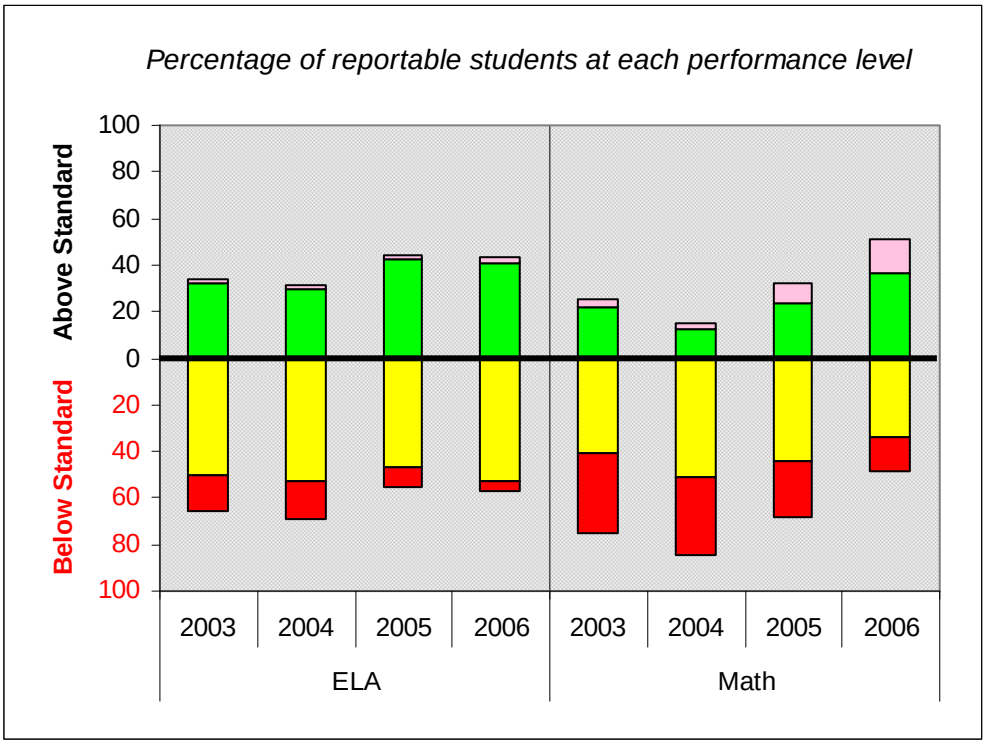
B. n-values

	2003	2004	2005	2006
Advanced	15	11	35	57
Proficient	167	133	221	270
Needs Improvement	281	324	303	302
Warning/Failing	151	154	109	65
Total	614	622	668	694

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 Greater Fall River students attaining overall proficiency on the MCAS tests increased from 29 percent in 2003 to 47 percent in 2006. The percentage of students in the 'Warning/Failing' category decreased from 25 percent in 2003 to nine percent in 2006. The average proficiency gap in Greater Fall River narrowed from 36 PI points in 2003 to 23 PI points in 2006, resulting in an improvement rate of 37 percent.

Figure/Table 10: Student MCAS Test Performance, by Subject, 2003-2006



	ELA				Math			
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2003	2004	2005	2006
Advanced	2	1	2	2	3	2	8	14
Proficient	32	30	43	41	22	13	24	37
Needs Improvement	50	53	47	53	41	51	44	34
Warning/ Failing	15	16	9	4	34	34	24	15
Percent Attaining Proficiency	34	31	45	43	25	15	32	51
Proficiency Index (PI)	69.5	69.2	76.9	78.1	58.1	54.2	63.8	76.4

The percentage of Greater Fall River students attaining proficiency in ELA increased from 34 percent in 2003 to 43 percent in 2006. The proficiency gap in ELA narrowed from 30 PI points in 2003 to 22 PI points in 2006, resulting in an improvement rate of 28 percent, a rate higher than that required to meet AYP.

The percentage of Greater Fall River students attaining proficiency in math increased from 25 percent in 2003 to 51 percent in 2006. The proficiency gap in math narrowed from 42 PI points in 2003 to 24 PI points in 2006, resulting in an improvement rate of 44 percent, also a rate higher than that required to meet AYP.

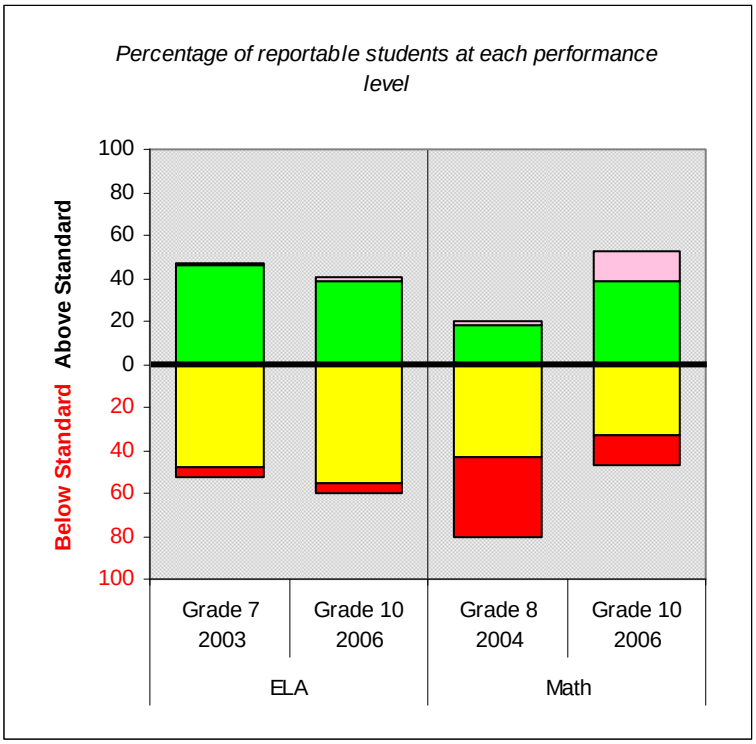
Table 11: MCAS Proficiency Indices by Vocational Technical District, 2003-2006

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

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

Performance in Greater Fall River on the 2003-2006 MCAS tests was below the average for vocational districts statewide. The average performance gap between Greater Fall River and vocational districts statewide was two PI points in both 2003 and 2006. The performance gap in ELA between Greater Fall River and vocational districts statewide widened from one and one-half PI points in 2003 to two PI points in 2006, and in math it narrowed from two and one-half PI points in 2003 to one and one-half PI points in 2006, both in favor of vocational districts statewide.

Figure 12/Tables 12 A-B: Change in Students' MCAS Test Performance, by Subject, from 2003/04 to 2006



A.

	ELA		Math	
	Grade 7 2003	**Grade 10 2006**	**Grade 8 2004**	**Grade 10 2006**
Advanced	1	2	2	15
Proficient	46	39	18	38
Needs Improvement	48	55	43	33
Warning/Failing	5	4	37	14
Percent Attaining Proficiency	47	41	20	53
Proficiency Index (PI)	80.4	76.8	53.6	77.5

B. n-values

	ELA		Math	
	Grade 7 2003	**Grade 10 2006**	**Grade 8 2004**	**Grade 10 2006**
Adv	3	5	5	42
Prof	135	113	53	111
NI	139	162	127	96
W/F	15	12	107	40
Total	**292**	**292**	**292**	**289**

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

Forty-one percent of the grade 10 students in Greater Fall River attained proficiency on the ELA test in 2006; as grade 7 students in 2003, 47 percent had attained proficiency on the ELA test, a decrease of six percentage points. Fifty-three percent of the grade 10 students in Greater Fall River attained proficiency on the math test in 2006; as grade 8 students in 2004, 20 percent had attained proficiency on the math test, an increase of 33 percentage points. The proficiency gap of grade 10 students in 2006 in ELA was 23 PI points; in 2003 the proficiency gap for those same students in grade 7 in ELA had been 20 PI points. The proficiency gap of grade 10 students in 2006 in math was 22 PI points; in 2003 the proficiency gap of those same students in grade 8 in math had been 46 PI points.

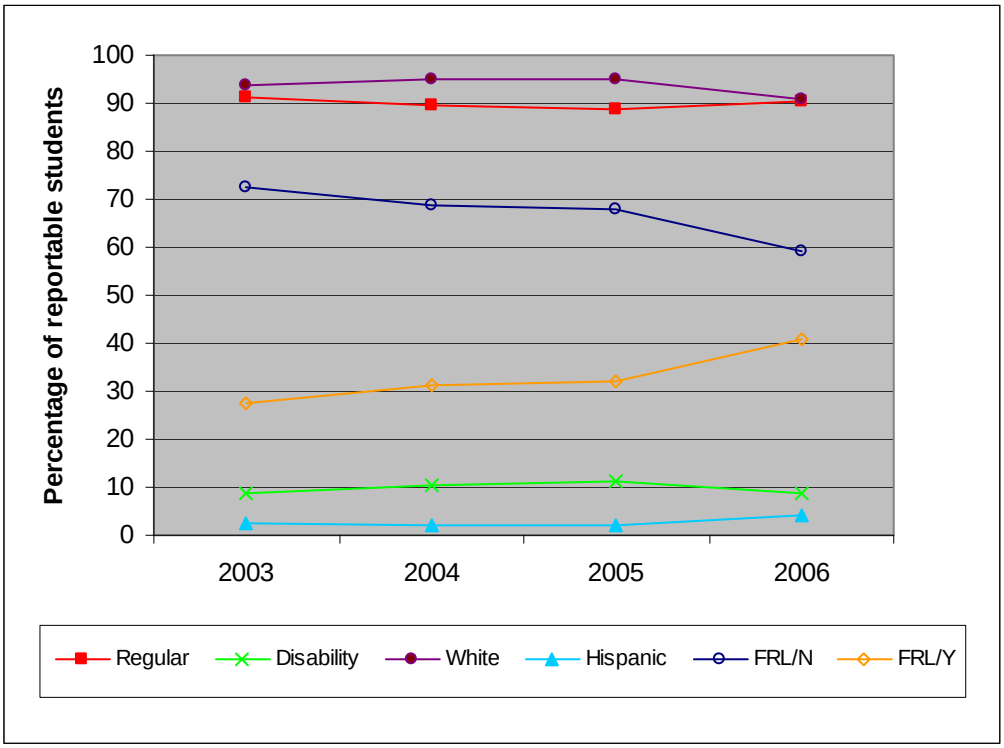
Equity of Improvement

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

Findings:

- All student subgroups in Greater Fall River except Hispanic students had improved performance in ELA between 2003 and 2006. The most improved subgroups in ELA were low-income students and students with disabilities.
- In math, all student subgroups had improved performance between 2003 and 2006. The most improved subgroup in math was low-income students.
- The performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in ELA narrowed from 44 PI points in 2003 to 32 PI points in 2006, and the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in math widened from 38 PI points in 2003 to 40 PI points in 2006.

Figure/Table 13: Student Population by Reportable Subgroups, 2003-2006



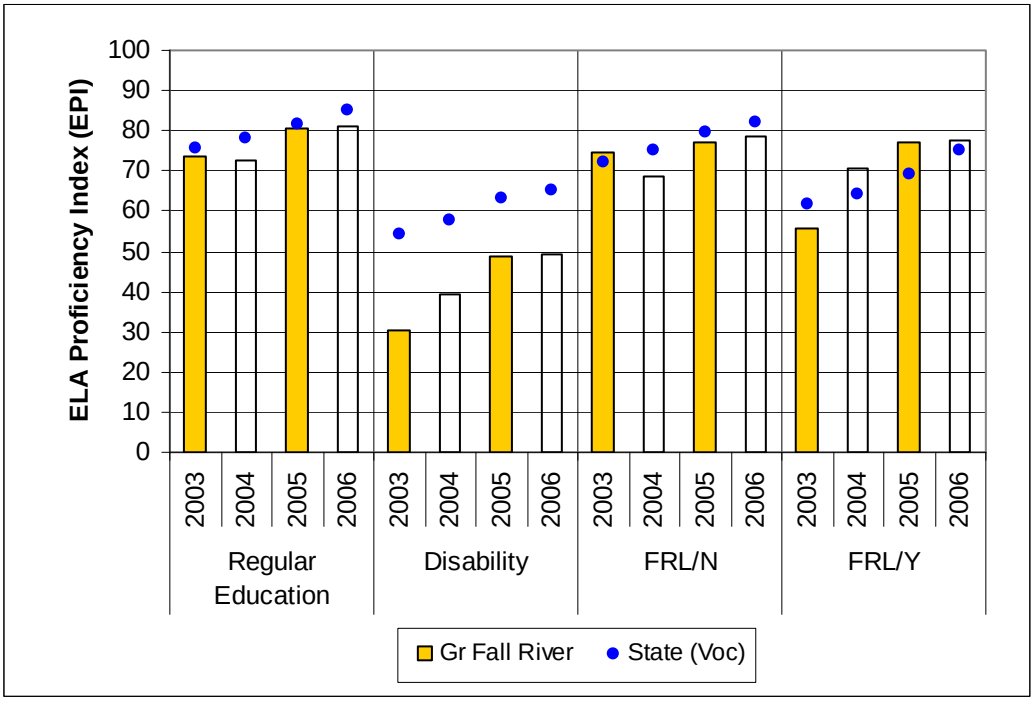
	Number of Students				Percentage of students			
	2003	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**
Gr Fall River	307	312	334	347	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Regular	280	279	297	314	91.2	89.4	88.9	90.5
Disability	27	33	37	30	8.8	10.6	11.1	8.6
White	288	297	317	315	93.8	95.2	94.9	90.8
Hispanic	8	6	7	14	2.6	1.9	2.1	4.0
FRL/N	223	215	227	206	72.6	68.9	68.0	59.4
FRL/Y	84	97	107	141	27.4	31.1	32.0	40.6

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

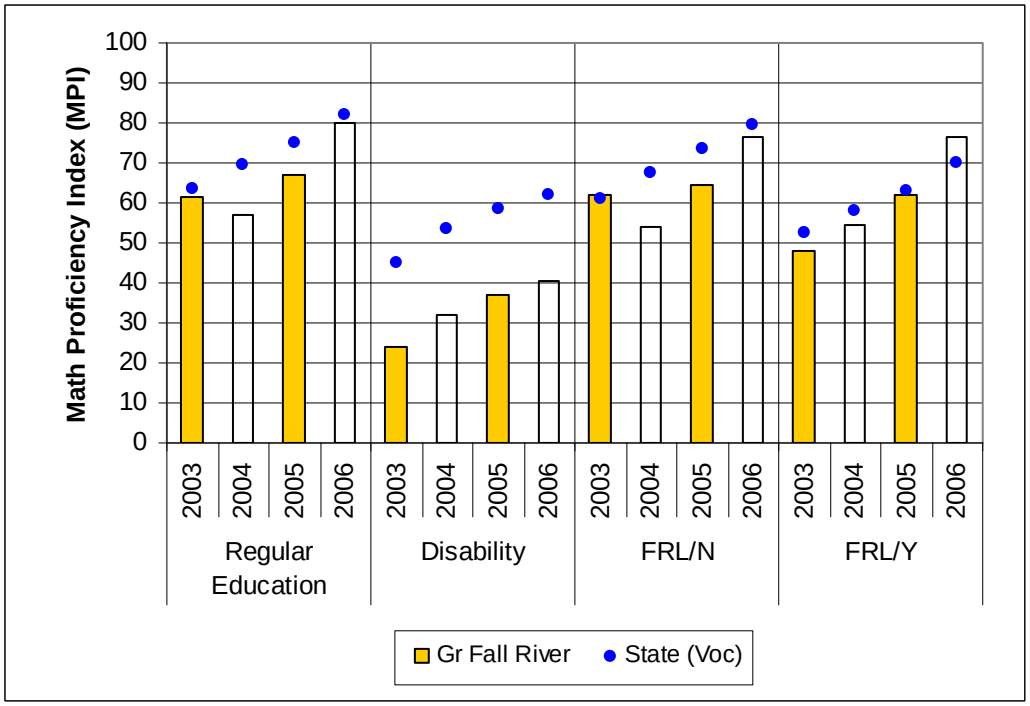
Between 2003 and 2006 in Greater Fall River, the proportion of students with disabilities remained the same, the proportion of non-White students increased by three percentage points, and the proportion of low-income (FRL/Y) students increased by more than 13 percentage points.

Figures 14 A-D/Table 14: MCAS Proficiency Indices, by Subgroup, 2003-2006

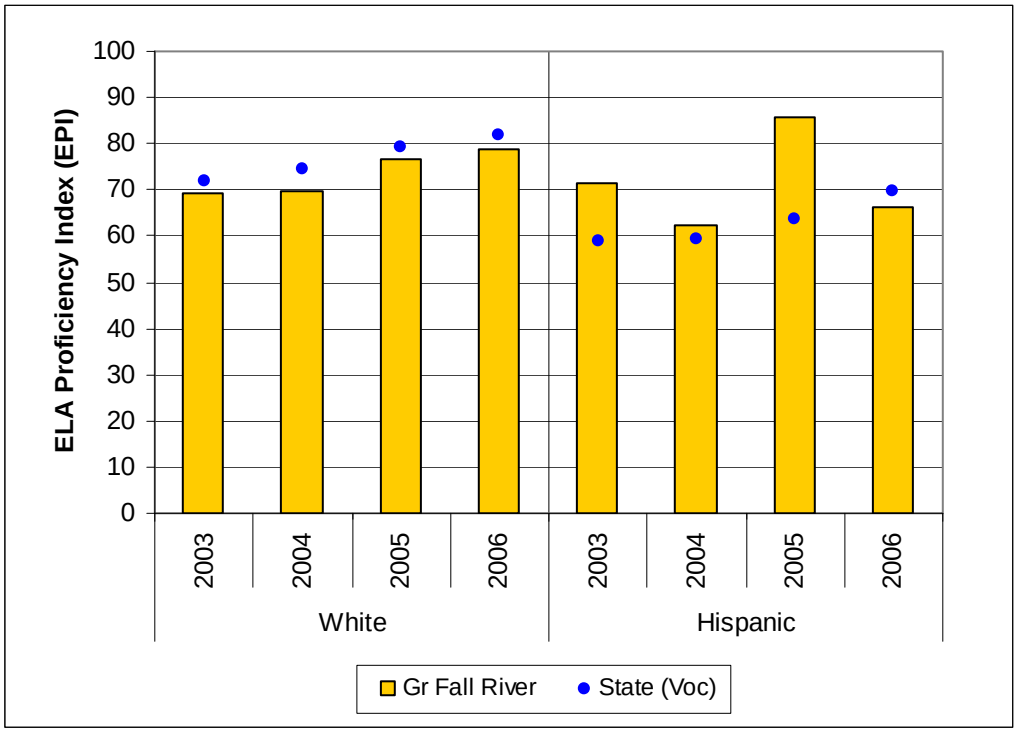
A. ELA Proficiency Index (EPI) by Student Status and Free or Reduced-Cost Lunch Subgroups



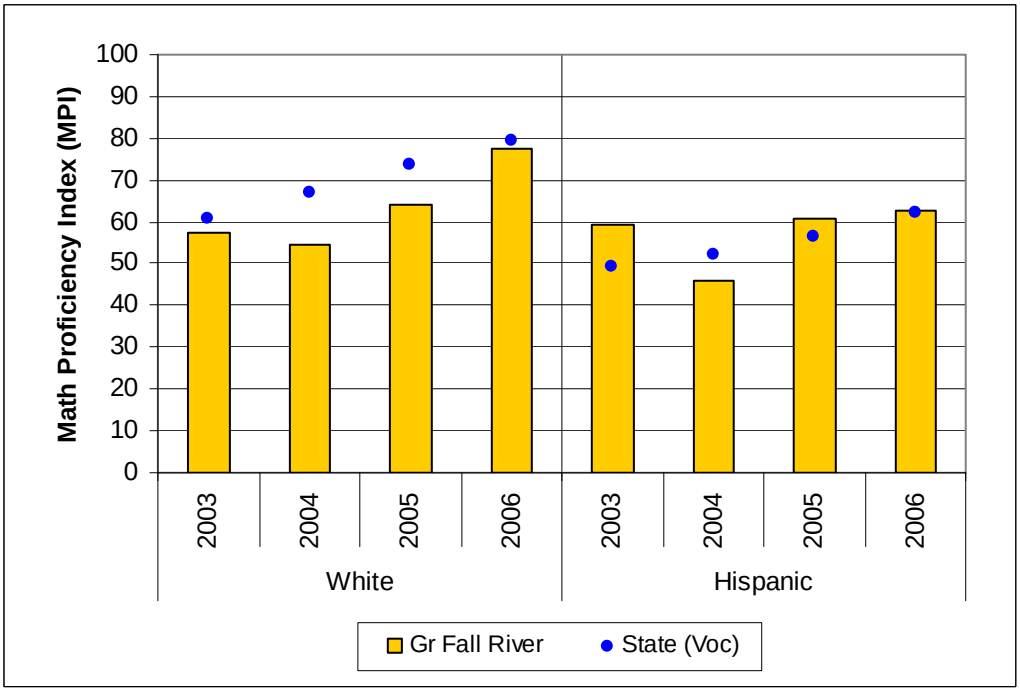
B. Math Proficiency Index (MPI) by Student Status and Free or Reduced-Cost Lunch Subgroups



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



D. Math Proficiency Index (EPI) by Race/Ethnicity Subgroups

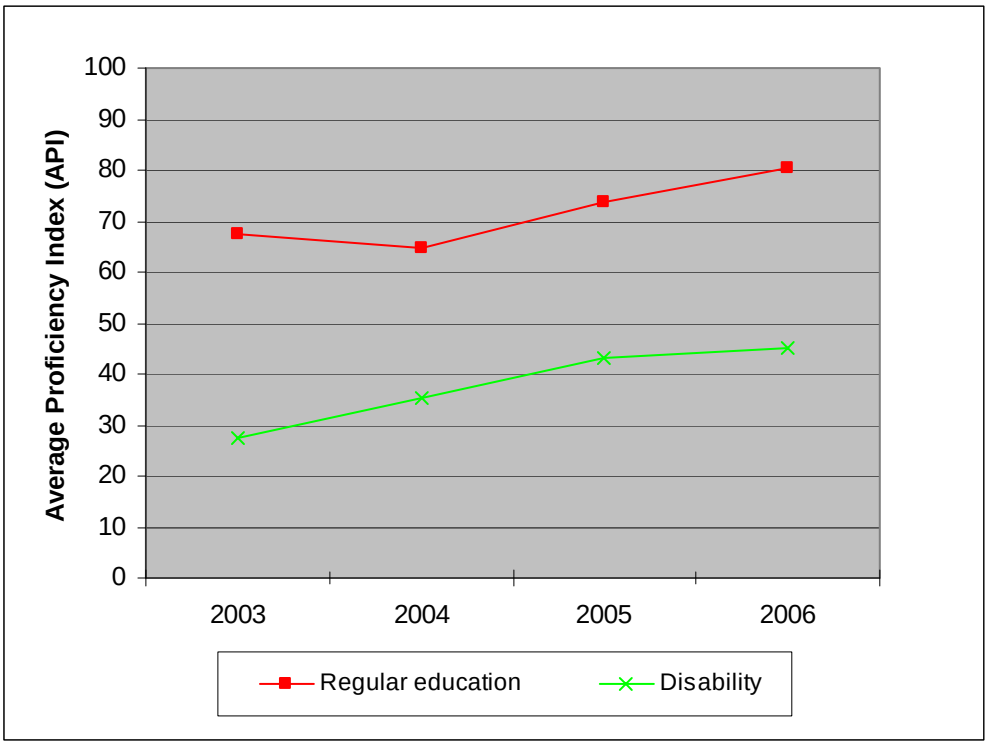


State (Voc)				Gr Fall River			
Subgroup	**Year**	**EPI**	**MPI**	**Subgroup**	**Year**	**EPI**	**MPI**
Regular Education	2003	75.8	63.7	Regular Education	2003	73.5	61.3
	2004	78.0	69.3		2004	72.7	56.8
	2005	81.8	75.0		2005	80.5	67.1
	2006	85.0	81.8		2006	81.0	80.1
Disability	2003	54.2	44.8	Disability	2003	30.4	24.1
	2004	57.9	53.6		2004	39.1	31.8
	2005	63.2	58.7		2005	48.7	37.2
	2006	65.1	61.9		2006	49.2	40.5
FRL/N	2003	72.3	60.8	FRL/N	2003	74.8	61.9
	2004	75.2	67.4		2004	68.5	54.0
	2005	79.6	73.7		2005	76.9	64.6
	2006	81.9	79.5		2006	78.7	76.5
FRL/Y	2003	61.9	52.5	FRL/Y	2003	55.7	47.9
	2004	64.3	57.8		2004	70.6	54.6
	2005	69.4	62.8		2005	76.9	62.1
	2006	75.3	70.2		2006	77.5	76.6
White	2003	72.0	60.7	White	2003	69.2	57.2
	2004	74.5	67.0		2004	69.7	54.4
	2005	79.3	73.5		2005	76.8	63.9
	2006	81.9	79.6		2006	78.9	77.4
Hispanic	2003	58.7	49.1	Hispanic	2003	71.4	59.4
	2004	59.4	52.0		2004	62.5	45.8
	2005	63.5	56.6		2005	85.7	60.7
	2006	69.5	62.2		2006	66.1	62.5

All student subgroups in Greater Fall River, with the exception of Hispanic students, had improved performance in ELA between 2003 and 2006. The most improved subgroups in ELA were low-income (FRL/Y) students and students with disabilities. In math, all student subgroups had improved performance between 2003 and 2006. The most improved subgroup in math was low-income students.

The performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in ELA narrowed from 44 PI points in 2003 to 32 PI points in 2006, and the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in math widened from 38 PI points in 2003 to 40 PI points in 2006.

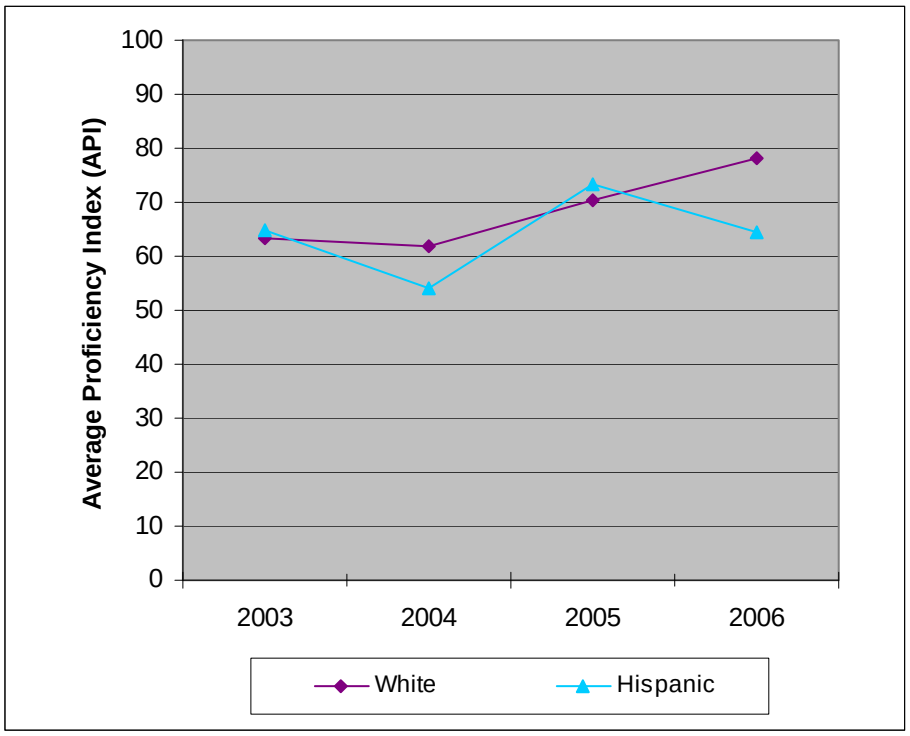
Figure/Table 15: Student MCAS Test Performance, by Student Status Subgroup, 2003-2006



		API	EPI	MPI	Percent Attaining Proficiency ELA	Percent Attaining Proficiency Math
Regular education	2003	67.4	73.5	61.3	72	58
	2004	64.7	72.7	56.8	71	58
	2005	73.8	80.5	67.1	74	63
	2006	80.6	81.0	80.1	78	67
Disability	2003	27.3	30.4	24.1	10	2
	2004	35.4	39.1	31.8	15	14
	2005	43.0	48.7	37.2	29	19
	2006	44.9	49.2	40.5	25	17

Both regular education students and students with disabilities in Greater Fall River had improved overall performance on the MCAS tests between 2003 and 2006. The average proficiency gap for Greater Fall River's regular education students narrowed from 33 to 19 PI points, and for students with disabilities it narrowed from 73 to 55 PI points. These gains resulted in improvement rates of 40 percent for regular education students and 24 percent for students with disabilities. The average performance gap between regular education students and students with disabilities narrowed by four PI points during this period.

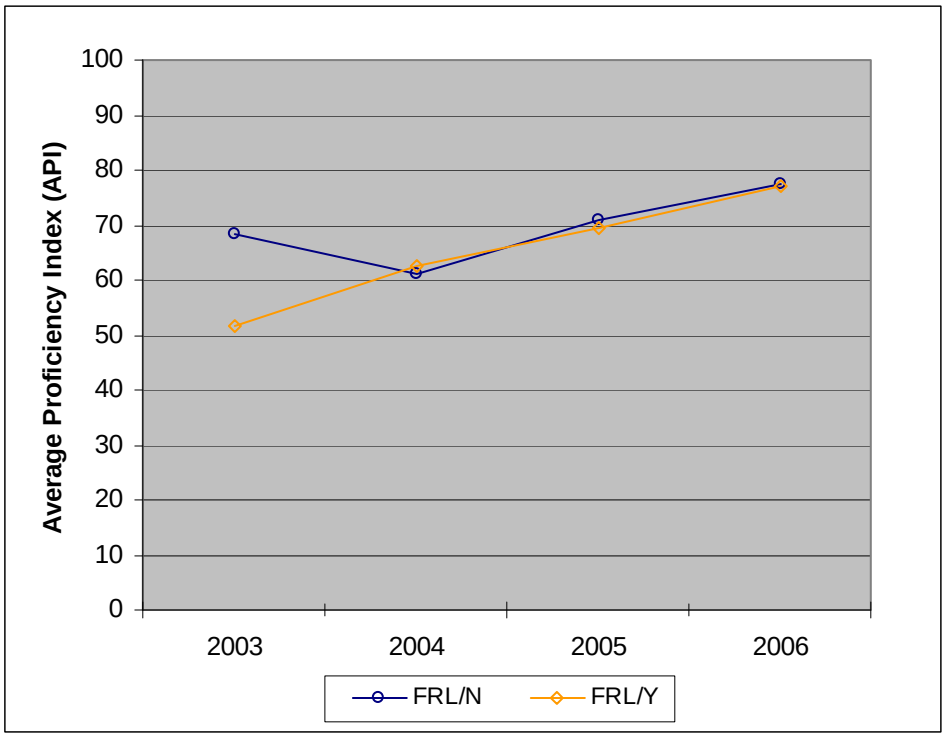
Figure/Table 16: Student MCAS Test Performance, by Race/Ethnicity Subgroup, 2003-2006



		API	EPI	MPI	Percent Attaining Proficiency ELA	Percent Attaining Proficiency Math
White	2003	63.2	69.2	57.2	34	23
	2004	62.0	69.7	54.4	32	15
	2005	70.4	76.8	63.9	44	32
	2006	78.2	78.9	77.4	44	52
Hispanic	2003	65.0	71.4	59.4	29	38
	2004	54.2	62.5	45.8	17	17
	2005	73.2	85.7	60.7	71	14
	2006	64.3	66.1	62.5	29	29

White students in Greater Fall River had improved overall performance on the MCAS tests between 2003 and 2006, while Hispanic students did not. The average proficiency gap for White students narrowed from 37 to 22 PI points, resulting in an improvement rate of 41 percent. For Hispanic students, the average proficiency gap widened from 35 to 36 PI points. Between 2003 and 2006, the average performance gap between White and Hispanic students changed from two PI points in favor of Hispanic students in 2003 to 14 PI points in favor of White students in 2006.

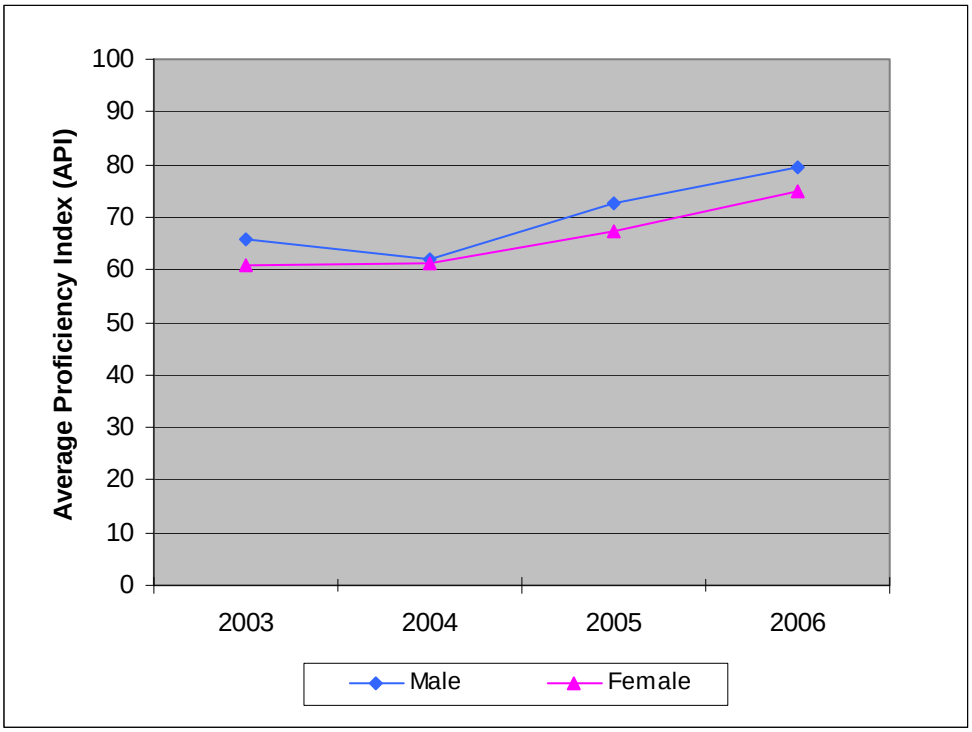
Figure/Table 17: Student MCAS Test Performance, by Free or Reduced Lunch Subgroup, 2003- 2006



		API	EPI	MPI	Percent Attaining Proficiency ELA	Percent Attaining Proficiency Math
FRL/N	2003	68.4	74.8	61.9	39	29
	2004	61.2	68.5	54.0	30	14
	2005	70.8	76.9	64.6	46	33
	2006	77.6	78.7	76.5	44	50
FRL/Y	2003	51.8	55.7	47.9	37	32
	2004	62.6	70.6	54.6	49	38
	2005	69.5	76.9	62.1	53	43
	2006	77.1	77.5	76.6	62	49

Both the low-income (FRL/Y) and non low-income (FRL/N) subgroups in Greater Fall River had improved overall performance on the MCAS tests between 2003 and 2006. The average proficiency gap for low-income students narrowed from 48 to 23 PI points, and for non low-income students it narrowed from 32 to 22 PI points. These gains in performance resulted in improvement rates of 52 percent for low-income students and 29 percent for non low-income students. Between 2003 and 2006, the average performance gap between low-income students and non low-income students narrowed by 15 PI points.

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



		API	EPI	MPI	Percent Attaining Proficiency ELA	Percent Attaining Proficiency Math
Male	2003	65.7	68.7	62.6	34	30
	2004	62.0	67.8	56.2	30	16
	2005	72.6	75.3	70.0	42	41
	2006	79.4	78.1	80.7	45	59
Female	2003	60.9	70.8	51.0	54	40
	2004	61.1	71.6	50.8	53	40
	2005	67.3	79.0	55.6	61	47
	2006	74.8	78.3	71.2	64	53

Both gender subgroups in Greater Fall River had improved overall performance between 2003 and 2006 on the MCAS tests. The average proficiency gap for male students narrowed from 34 to 21 PI points, and for female students it narrowed from 39 to 25 PI points. These gains in performance resulted in improvement rates of 40 percent for male students and 36 percent for female students. Over this period the average performance gap between male and female students narrowed by one PI point.

Participation

Are all eligible students participating in required state assessments?

Finding:

- On the 2006 MCAS tests in ELA and math, all eligible students in Greater Fall River 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
Gr Fall River	ALL LEVELS	**349**	**345**
	Advanced	7	50
	Proficient	143	127
	Needs Improvement	185	117
	Warning/Failing	14	51
Regular Education	Advanced	7	50
	Proficient	141	126
	Needs Improvement	164	104
	Warning/Failing	4	33
Disability	Advanced	0	0
	Proficient	2	1
	Needs Improvement	18	11
	Warning/Failing	10	17
Limited English Proficient	Advanced	0	0
	Proficient	0	0
	Needs Improvement	3	2
	Warning/Failing	0	1
White	Advanced	6	45
	Proficient	134	119
	Needs Improvement	166	107
	Warning/Failing	11	42
Hispanic	Advanced	0	1
	Proficient	4	3
	Needs Improvement	8	6
	Warning/Failing	2	4
African-American	Advanced	0	1
	Proficient	4	3
	Needs Improvement	3	2
	Warning/Failing	0	1
Asian	Advanced	1	2
	Proficient	1	2
	Needs Improvement	6	2
	Warning/Failing	1	3
Free or Reduced-Cost Lunch/No	Advanced	5	29
	Proficient	85	73
	Needs Improvement	106	75
	Warning/Failing	9	27
Free or Reduced-Cost Lunch/Yes	Advanced	2	20
	Proficient	58	54
	Needs Improvement	77	42
	Warning/Failing	5	23
Male	Advanced	5	37
	Proficient	83	77
	Needs Improvement	96	56
	Warning/Failing	10	22
Female	Advanced	2	12
	Proficient	60	50
	Needs Improvement	87	61
	Warning/Failing	4	28

Notes

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

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

Rounded values may result in slight apparent discrepancies.

Reexamination Findings

This section summarizes the conclusions of the EQA team's reexamination of the Greater Fall River Regional Vocational Technical School District. It reports on only those 2004 indicators that received a 'Poor' or 'Unsatisfactory' rating and that the EQA team reassessed. The table below displays the initial 2004 ratings and the 2007 reassessments. The narrative that follows presents the relevant 2004 indicators, followed by the ratings from 2004 and 2007 and corresponding evidence for the ratings. Because of the changes in the EQA standards and indicators, the 2004 indicators are organized according to the 2007 standards.

Standard I: Leadership, Governance, and Communication							
Ratings▼ Indicators►	**9.2**	**9.3**	**9.4**	**9.6**	**9.7**	**9.8**	**13**
Excellent							
Satisfactory					**2007**		**2007**
Needs Improvement	**2007**	**2007**	**2007**	**2007**		**2007**	
Poor	**2004**	**2004**	**2004**	**2004**	**2004**		
Unsatisfactory						**2004**	

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.

Findings:

- The superintendent's annual report to sending communities dedicated a section to student growth and development.
- The annual evaluation of the superintendent by the school committee served to improve future job performance.
- The principal's evaluation instrument contained at least 130 indicators. EQA examiners could not identify any reference to accountability for student achievement.

- Three administrators directly reporting to the superintendent were not evaluated in a timely fashion.

Summary

The superintendent-director of the Greater Fall River Regional Vocational Technical School District was appointed to the position in 2001 after serving as principal. The school committee was comprised of appointed and elected officials from the sending communities of Fall River, Somerset, Swansea, and Westport.

The school committee's annual evaluation of the superintendent served as a basis for improving future job performance. The school committee had a policy manual. However, most policies did not contain an adoption date. The committee members shared that they did not adhere to their stated procedures regarding the review of policies and goals.

Since the school district consisted of one vocational high school, the district considered its School Improvement Plan (SIP) to be the District Improvement Plan (DIP) and archived it as the District and School Improvement Plan. The SIP contained the district's vision and mission statements established in 2001. The school committee approved the plan and staff presented a yearly report that highlighted progress made on the SIP at a regularly scheduled meeting. The District and School Improvement Plan revealed that "MCAS data and results are available online" (at the DOE website). The district had no action plan to address it's rank of 21 out of the 30 vocational school districts in the commonwealth for its 2006 MCAS results.

Although EQA examiners did not find evidence of the analysis of disaggregated student achievement data for 2004 and 2005, the district did conduct aggregate MCAS item analyses in 2006 which led it to redesign the curricula in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics, add honors classes, and incorporate MCAS prep and remediation courses into the school day and beyond.

The district developed its safety plan during the 2006-2007 academic year with intentions for distribution to all administrators, supervisors, teachers, and designated local officials and full implementation in September 2007. A condensed version was included in the parent/student handbook.

The Greater Fall River Regional Vocational Technical School District has made progress since the last EQA site visit in 2004. It was obvious to examiners that the district had directed its focus to previously identified deficiencies and had established momentum. The challenge to the administration is to accelerate the change process to ensure that excellence in education will be embraced.

2004 Indicators

9.2. The District Improvement Plan (DIP) incorporates the district's vision and mission statement, and the analysis of student achievement data drives the development, implementation, and modification of educational programs, services, and practices.

EQA Rating for 2004: Poor

EQA Rating for 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The district consists of one school and at the time of the initial EQA review did not have a document referred to as the District Improvement Plan, but it had a School Improvement Plan. Interviews with school committee members, administrators, and a school council member indicated that the district considered its vision and mission statements when planning its educational programs and initiatives. The SIP included student achievement, test participation, performance, and improvement records. The interviews indicated that these data, as well as enrollment and placement data, were considered during the decision-making process. The availability of the MCAS test scores and placement data and the interviewees' knowledge of these data supported the contention that they considered these data; however, there was no documented evidence indicating that the analysis of student achievement data drove decisions regarding programs, services, and practices during the initial review period (2000-2003).

During the reexamination period under review (2004-2007), the district considered its School Improvement Plan to be the District Improvement Plan and archived it as the District and School Improvement Plan. This was acceptable according to current EQA interpretations. See below for information regarding the SIP.

9.3. The School Improvement Plan (SIP) for every school is aligned with the district's mission statement, and the analysis of student achievement data drives the development, implementation, and modification of educational programs, services, and practices.

EQA Rating for 2004: Poor

EQA Rating for 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

At the time of the initial EQA review, a salient element of the mission statement, "… developing the unique potential of each learner…" was stenciled on the walls throughout the school. School committee members, administrators, and staff clearly expressed and illustrated this philosophy in interviews. The report from the most recent New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) review (October 2003, page 8) and the 2003-2004 SIP (page 3, recommendation 6) identified a need for consistent vision, mission, and objectives language in the SIP and student handbook. The availability of MCAS student achievement data and placement data, and the knowledge of these data by interviewees, supported the claim that they considered these data. However, there was no documented evidence that indicated the analysis of student achievement data drove decisions regarding programs, services, and practices.

During the reexamination period under review, the district formed a seven-member planning committee chaired by the principal and consisting of a proportionate number of administrators, faculty, and representatives from advisory boards. The committee produced two improvement plans entitled District and School Improvement Plan. Each of the two plans covered one year.

A previous committee had established the vision and mission statements in 2001, and had developed 13 objectives and submitted commendations and recommendations for the vision, mission, and objectives. The committee identified seven topics for attention: academic programs, vocational programs, school staff and administration, school facilities, student extracurricular activities, time on learning, and professional development. Each topic included recommendations.

The 2006-2007 District and School Improvement Plan indicated that committee membership had increased from seven to 14 representatives. The vision, mission, and objectives remained identical; however, areas of focus had been revised to include attendance, use of curriculum,

revision of curriculum, integration, personnel evaluations, professional development, and time on learning. Each focus area identified a goal, objective, benchmark, and evaluation procedures.

The section headed "Time On Learning" reflected an increase in professional development time for teachers. The section "Professional Development" was missing a mechanism for helping teachers to address student academic performance. It referred the reader to look up the data with the comment "MCAS data and results are available online." EQA examiners could not find an action plan that responded to the district's 2006 MCAS proficiency index ranking of 21 out of the 30 vocational school districts in the state.

EQA examiners could not locate evidence of disaggregated student achievement analysis for 2004 and 2005; however, the district had conducted aggregate MCAS item analyses in 2006. As a result, the district had redesigned the curricula in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics, added honors classes, and incorporated MCAS prep and remediation courses into the school day and beyond.

District leaders indicated the school committee approved the District and School Improvement Plan. In interviews with four members of the school committee, it was revealed that a yearly report that highlighted progress made on the SIP had been presented at a regularly scheduled meeting.

9.4. District leaders monitor student achievement data throughout the year, considering the goals identified in the DIP and individual SIPs and implement programs, policies, and services that are most likely to result in improved student achievement.

EQA Rating for 2004: Poor

EQA Rating for 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

At the time of the initial EQA review, the receipt of student achievement data during the year was clearly illustrated in interviews with administrators and school committee members. This was linked to recommendations contained in the SIPs for the initial period of review that called for such improvements as an additional math course in grades 9 and 10 to improve the MCAS test scores, after-school and summer MCAS test support programs, and the implementation of a

grades 10 and 11 integration project. A change in instructional strategy after the first trial year (2004) gave evidence of ongoing data monitoring. However, the EQA team found no documented evidence that linked the monitoring of student achievement data during the year with a determination that accomplishment of SIP goals would result in improved student achievement.

During the reexamination period under review, according to interviews with district administrators and coordinators, the 2006 MCAS data were forwarded to the academic coordinator, who shared the test results with the principal, superintendent, and a data consultant (a part-time position which will be increased to full time in 2008). The academic coordinator also shared this information with lead teachers in the ELA, math, and science departments, as well as the entire faculty. The lead teachers provided the impetus for further departmental review.

The school supplemented the MCAS data with locally designed assessments, semester examinations, the Stanford 9 test, the Cape Cod Vocational Assessment Test, and, for qualifying students, Title I assessments in reading and mathematics. Monitoring of student achievement was described as an "ongoing" activity.

Based on the assessments and analyses noted above, the school implemented programs to address identified needs. For example, Project EXTENDS (EXtra Time Educating & Nurturing Diman Students) was open to all students for after-school help on Tuesdays and Thursdays. MCAS Saturday gave invited students assistance and attention for four hours on Saturday mornings; attendance was reported to be 97 percent. The most recent initiative involved more communication between academic and vocational teachers—an integration committee planned designated activities in 2007 for implementation in 2008. The school provided in-service educational opportunities for teachers to ensure that more English and mathematics activities were embedded in all disciplines.

EQA examiners were aware that student achievement had recently met adequate yearly progress (AYP) targets; however, 2006 MCAS data revealed a ranking of 21 out of the 30 vocational districts in the state. The only reference to MCAS status or progress in the SIPs was that the "data and results are available online."

9.6. The leadership reports annually to the school committee, staff, and community concerning the extent to which the implementation of the DIP and SIPs have or have not resulted in improved student achievement.

EQA Rating for 2004: Poor

EQA Rating for 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

At the time of the initial EQA review, the district's policy manual (file CL and CM) required annual reports from the superintendent concerning the efficiency, effectiveness, and needs of the school in order to achieve its educational purpose. The annual report, required in the district policy manual (file: BAA), included the SIP, reports from vocational technical and academic departments, and MCAS test results. According to school committee members and administrators interviewed, the school committee reviewed and approved the annual report in open public meetings. An executive summary was distributed to the member communities for inclusion in the city and town reports. The annual report was kept on file in the superintendent's office; there was no copy available in the media center. There was no documented evidence that linked the implementation of SIP goals with improved student achievement during the initial review period.

During the reexamination period under review, the superintendent periodically reported to the school committee on the achievements and needs of the students and the school, as recorded in committee minutes. The meetings were videotaped and were broadcast on a delayed basis on the local cable channel. Interviews with four members of the school committee and administrative leaders revealed that the district engaged in a diversified public relations program.

The superintendent prepared a comprehensive annual report, presented it to the school committee for approval, and forwarded this document to stakeholders in member communities. For all departments the annual report included a curriculum summary, newly purchased supplies, materials and equipment, student growth and development, and student and schoolwide accomplishments and recommendations.

The school committee policy manual specifically referenced, under operational goals (section BA), "conducting a concrete and periodic review of performance against these goals." When

asked, the committee shared that a review had not been conducted and specific reference to SIP progress was not addressed. EQA examiners could not locate any evidence in the 2005-2006 SIP that linked SIP goals to improved student achievement.

9.7. The superintendent is evaluated annually on the district's state assessment results and implementation of the DIP. This performance evaluation serves as the basis for improving the future job performance of the superintendent.

EQA Rating for 2004: Poor

EQA Rating for 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the initial period of review, the district's policy manual (file CBI) required an annual evaluation of the superintendent by the school committee. The superintendent's contract required the mutual establishment of goals and objectives annually, between July 1 and August 31. One evaluation was performed during the 2000-2001 school year on the performance of the previous superintendent, who served from 1993 to 2001. Some school committee members cited the avoidance of conducting an annual evaluation during this period as due to the perceived biases of the school committee members at that time, making the evaluative instrument "ineffective." The superintendent in place from 2001 to 2004 had one evaluation conducted by the school committee during the 2002-2003 school year. The school committee cited the abbreviated first year (August 1, 2001 start date) as the reason for not evaluating the superintendent during school year 2001-2002. The evaluation instrument cited 55 areas of responsibility plus comments for improvement and on strengths. There were no specific references made to the DIP (SIP), but comments on the superintendent's strengths cited "improvement in test scores."

During the reexamination period under review, the superintendent was evaluated in November 2005 and in November 2006, according to the school committee and the superintendent. The superintendent's personnel folder contained a composite for each year; however, there were no signatures.

The process to evaluate the superintendent was a collaborative effort. The superintendent researched and the school committee reviewed several models. The superintendent presented a

recommendation to the school committee, who voted to accept the instrument in November 2005. The components included relationships with the school committee, instructional leadership, administration and management, staff and personnel relationships, and relationships with the community. Indicators rated as exceeds expectations, meets expectations, or needs improvement accompanied each major topic. There was also a provision for comments. Each member of the committee completed his/her review and forwarded it to the chair. The chair developed a composite and presented it to the superintendent, who had the opportunity to react and respond. The composite was not discussed in open session.

Student performance was integral to the process. The superintendent was applauded for his efforts to increase student academic achievement. There were no specific references to the SIP, but indicators such as "use of test results to identify problems and develop objectives" were part of the evaluation. The comment portion of the composite evaluation identified areas in need of attention in order to encourage overall growth and improvement.

9.8. Principals are evaluated annually on school state assessment results and the implementation of their respective SIPs. These performance evaluations serve as the basis for improving future job performance of the principals.

EQA Rating for 2004: Unsatisfactory

EQA Rating for 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

For the initial period of review, there was no district policy on the frequency of the principal's evaluation. During an interview with administrators, it was stated that principal evaluations were conducted every other year. The superintendent in place at the time of the review held the position of assistant superintendent-director/principal during school years 2000 and 2001. The assistant superintendent-director/principal in place at the time of the review held the position during school years 2002 and 2003. One evaluation of the principal was conducted during the 1999-2000 school year. There was no reference to the school's state assessment results or the SIP in the administrator's evaluation form. The areas of evaluation included relations with the community, professional responsibility, personal qualities, professional growth, and potential for excellence. The one principal evaluation (dated July 2000) called for the planning to begin for

the remediation of students who failed the MCAS tests and to start the review process for the 2003 NEASC evaluation. The superintendent indicated in an interview that evaluations were not the driving force behind change, but that conversations with the principal in the superintendent's office served this purpose.

During the reexamination period under review, the principal was last evaluated on September 8, 2005, as determined in interviews with administrative leaders and from personnel records. EQA examiners could not access any evaluations made after that date.

The 17-page performance review summarized the period from July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005. Major components included effective instructional leadership, effective organizational leadership, effective administration and management, promotion of equity and appreciation of diversity, effective relationships with the community, fulfillment of professional responsibilities, and personal qualities. Indicators, a rating system, and comments accompanied each of the seven components. There were additional narrative opportunities for professional growth, commendations, and recommendations.

Although there were ratings on at least 130 indicators and narrative supplements, EQA examiners could not identify specific linkages with state assessment results and the status of implementation of the SIP. There were suggestions designed to promote overall growth and effectiveness.

The Memorandum of Agreement for Administrators, Article VIII, Section 4.0, in which the principal is included, stated, "The school committee shall act on the administrator and supervisory recommendations of the Superintendent…." A review of the Education Reform Act and its current interpretations reveal that this article may violate the authority and autonomy of the principal and superintendent. Whether or not actual practice violated the provisions of the law was unclear.

2007 Indicator

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.

EQA Rating for 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district developed its safety plan during the 2006-2007 academic year with intentions for implementation in September 2007. A committee chaired by the principal included academic and vocational coordinators and teacher representatives. The school resource officer and his supervisor were consulted throughout the process.

The committee researched national models and reviewed the high school plan for Fall River. The committee recommended a plan in use in another state with refinements, and forwarded the final version to faculty for review and suggestions. The committee officially presented the document to faculty in February 2007, who voted to accept it. The safety plan identified designated incidents and documented duties and responsibilities of administrators, teachers, and support personnel.

The school resource officer consulted with the police department for its knowledge of emergency management, and the police department had promised that it would sign off on the plan. The district intended to hold practice sessions in May and/or June 2007 to pilot test for imperfections and/or deficiencies. The district will review the accepted plan on an annual basis.

The district planned to distribute the document to teachers and officials. Teachers will discuss an abbreviated version with students and will display the plan in all classrooms. A condensed version was also included in the parent/student handbook.

Standard II: Curriculum and Instruction							
Ratings▼ Indicators►	**4.2**	**4.3**	**4.4**	**4.5a**	**5.1**	**5.3**	**10**
Excellent							
Satisfactory					**2007**	**2007**	
Needs Improvement	**2007**	**2007**	**2007**	**2007**			**2007**
Poor	**2004**	**2004**	**2004**	**2004**	**2004**	**2004**	
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.

Findings

- The district developed a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) in 2004 and implemented a number of initiatives including the creation of the teacher assistant team (TAT), a pre-referral process to assist struggling students, and the EXTENDS (EXtra Time Educating & Nurturing Diman Students) program, an after-school homework club.
- The district had curriculum documents in ELA, math, and science that included topics, standards, skills/activities, pacing guide, assessment, resources, and name of the text used in the course.
- Curriculum documents in ELA and math did not include objectives, and the ELA and science documents were undated. The math documents were marked with their completion date.
- Vocational areas were in various stages of aligning their curricula to the state frameworks.
- Currently, vocational teachers emphasized the first three out of the six standards in the Vocational Technical Education Frameworks (VTEFs) for their respective areas.
- In 2006, the district established a committee to redesign the integration project beginning in 2007-2008. Phase I activities, completed in spring 2007, included identifying integration project teams, determining the target group of students, and redesigning the Trades Fair project to integrate academic and vocational subject areas.

- The district did not have a well documented curriculum review/revision process. Administrators and teachers described the revision and review of curriculum as an ongoing process that occurred "as needed."

Summary

The district had curricula in ELA, math and science aligned with the state curriculum frameworks. The components included topics, curriculum standards, skills and activities, name of text, pacing guide, assessment, and resources. Science documents included objectives, but ELA and math did not. The math curriculum document included date of completion, but no dates were evident in the science or ELA documents. In the vocational areas, teachers used the Vocational Technical Education Frameworks developed by the state to guide their instruction. They did not have completed curriculum documents aligned to the frameworks at the time of the reexamination, but were in various stages of the process.

The district did not have a well documented process for the regular review and/or revision of curriculum. Coordinators and teachers stated that they reviewed and revised curriculum on an "as needed" basis. Although, the district used MCAS and other assessment data to make curriculum modifications, the EQA team found no evidence the district used a formal or sustainable process for the changes, nor have a formal process based on student achievement data to evaluate the effectiveness of curriculum changes or programs.

During the site visit, the EQA examiners observed 33 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 practices, expectations, student activity and behavior, and classroom climate.

Examiners observed effective classroom management in 95 percent of the classrooms visited, in which students took responsibility for their work, were respectful, and the classroom was conducive to learning. For instructional practices, EQA examiners looked at questioning techniques and found that in only 36 percent of the observed classrooms did teacher's questions transcend direct recall and include open-ended questions that required the use of higher order thinking skills. Additionally, in only 21 percent of classrooms was there evidence that the teacher planned multiple tasks to engage all levels of learners, and in only 24 percent of the

observed classrooms did the teacher engage students in a variety of instructional techniques. However, in 97 percent of classrooms teachers maintained the students' attention, and in 85 percent the objectives of the lesson were clear to students. Expectations refers to the maintenance of high standards for students by teachers; EQA examiners found evidence of high quality work, challenging academic tasks, and teachers clearly communicating high expectations in only 63 percent of classrooms. Positive student activity and behavior are considered evident when students are actively engaged in the learning process; EQA examiners found that in 88 percent of classrooms students showed an awareness and understanding of the lesson's objectives and demonstrated active engagement in the lesson. Finally, positive classroom climate refers to a classroom in which students feel safe and valued and where the teacher and students are active and respectful listeners; EQA examiners observed a positive classroom climate in 94 percent of the classrooms.

2004 Indicators

4.2. Teachers in all of the district's schools:

a. have access to the current curriculum,

b. are trained in their use, and

c. are expected to use them in planning and delivering instruction.

EQA Rating for 2004: Poor

EQA Rating for 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the site visit of the initial EQA review, a number of academic and vocational technical curricula were available for review. In interviews, administrators and teachers said that all teachers had access to course curricula during the initial review period (2000-2003). Teachers were not formally trained in their use. Teachers said that the use of curriculum in planning and delivering instruction was not monitored with regularity.

In interviews during the reexamination site visit, teachers and administrators stated that during the reexamination period under review (2004-2007), all teachers had access to their current curriculum and coordinators distributed updated documents to appropriate staff members.

Academic teachers were given curriculum documents while vocational instructors were given the current Vocational Technical Education Frameworks (VTEF) developed by the state. Vocational teachers stated that curriculum alignment was in various stages depending on the vocational area. The EQA team found evidence that the district did not adhere to the evaluation cycles, which resulted in evaluators not regularly monitoring teachers' planning and delivery of instruction.

The district assigned mentors to new teachers. In most cases, academic lead teachers and vocational department heads who were trained in mentoring techniques served as mentors in their respective content areas. In addition to the distribution of curriculum documents, frameworks, and texts, the mentor met regularly with his/her protégé to facilitate understanding of the curriculum and corresponding materials, monitor pacing, and provide resources and needed assistance. New teachers submitted weekly lesson plans to their mentors. This process provided the means for access to the curriculum, trained new teachers in its use, and assisted with planning oversight. However, the EQA team found no evidence that the district provided training to improve the skills of the regular staff members in the use of the curriculum. To monitor delivery of instruction, administrators stated that the evaluation cycle for professional status teachers occurred every two years and that evaluation for non-professional status teachers occurred on an annual basis. The EQA team found that only 52.9 percent of the evaluations reviewed were timely according to the district's evaluation cycle guidelines.

4.3. <u>The district has an established, well-documented process that involves teachers in the annual review and/or revision of curriculum based on the analyses of results of standardized tests.</u>

EQA Rating for 2004: Poor

EQA Rating for 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

At the time of the initial EQA review, the district did not have an established, well documented process that involved teachers in an annual review/revision of curriculum based on student test data. The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) decennial visit of March 24-27, 2003 recommended that the district implement "a process that allows staff input into curriculum." Some staff members were involved, however, in the development of the ELA and

math curricula used in the MCAS ELA and math test courses offered in grades 9 and 10, respectively.

During the reexamination period under review, the district did not have an established, well documented curriculum review/revision process based on the analysis of standardized test results. In addition, the EQA team requested all curriculum documents prior to its reexamination, but the district did not submit them until the team was on site. Curricula submitted included ELA, math, science, and social studies. Documents for business math, applied physics II and all vocational areas were not initially submitted. However, the vocational coordinator provided samples of the Vocational Technical Education Frameworks and stated that all vocational instructors had copies of the framework that applied to their respective areas. Interviews with vocational department heads confirmed that instructors possessed their respective VTEF documents and that some vocational areas were still aligning their curricula to the frameworks. For example, health related programs removed some units previously taught that were not in the current frameworks. The district also provided sample competency documents used previously to guide vocational instruction. Further, when asked what the district expected vocational instructors to use for instruction, the vocational coordinator indicated that teachers emphasized the first three out of six standards of their VTEF. The district never submitted the curricula for business math and applied physics II.

Administrators and teachers told the EQA team that the review and revision of curriculum was ongoing and "as needed." Curriculum documents that existed in ELA, math, and science followed a format that included the following components: topics, standards, skills/activities, text, pacing guide, assessment, and resources. Most documents did not include objectives. Exceptions existed in some science curricula in which objectives were written under either the topic ("Design and make a self-contained eco-system") or assessment ("List and describe the major functions of life"). Math curriculum documents included dates, but those for ELA and science were undated, making it difficult for the EQA team to ascertain when the district had reviewed, revised, or completed the documents.

Two documents submitted to the EQA team referred to the need for an established, well documented process for curriculum review. The "future strategies" in the District Curriculum

Accommodation Plan (DCAP) stated the need for "development of a strategic plan for curriculum revision and alignment." The 2006-2007 District and School Improvement Plan contained a goal for the annual review and revision of curriculum based on student test data; however, the district did not have a sustained regular process in place during the reexamination period. The goal intended to have teachers involved in the process, with an expectation that the administration would receive documentation of the curriculum review/revision at the end of the school year. Interviews with teachers and administrators revealed that processes in place had increased the involvement of teachers in the curriculum revision process. Regularly scheduled meetings at the department level enabled teachers to participate and provide input about the curriculum. In addition, the district had hired a part-time data analyst in 2006 with plans for a full-time position in 2007 to assist with the analysis of the MCAS test results.

4.4. Modifications and/or revisions to curricula are:

a. evaluated for their effectiveness in improving equitable student achievement for all student populations, and

b. revised as necessary and disseminated to staff.

EQA Rating for 2004: Poor

EQA Rating for 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

For the initial period of EQA review, district did not make modifications and revisions to curriculum on a regular, formal basis, but administrators explained that changes were made under the leadership of the academic and occupational coordinators. However, teachers said that the process existed on an informal basis, with teachers sharing best practices and focusing on those areas of curricula where students had shown weaknesses on the MCAS tests.

During the reexamination period under review, the district made modifications and revisions to curriculum to improve student achievement but did not formally evaluate their effectiveness. For example, during the years under reexamination, the district offered a five-week MCAS Saturday program that provided four hours of remediation each week to students who failed the grade 7 or 8 ELA or math MCAS test, and to students who had never taken MCAS tests. The curriculum included intensive instruction in the areas that students found problematic, with sample test

questions, understanding of the rubrics used, and test taking strategies. Lead teachers reported that 36 students attended during 2006-2007 and the rate of attendance was 97 percent.

After reviewing the standards of the National Institute of Metalworking Skills (NIMS), the machine shop vocational program modified its curriculum to include math problems that required students to use logical reasoning to solve.

The special education strategic plan targeted changes in curriculum to assist special education students moving to less restrictive environments. These modifications included providing text materials at lower reading levels in ELA, math, science, and social studies. The DOE student achievement data indicated that between 2003 and 2006, the students with disabilities subgroup was among the most improved subgroups in ELA in Greater Fall River.

Although the district made modifications and revisions to curriculum, formalized data collection on the effects of the changes did not occur.

4.5a. VOC**:** In vocational schools and districts, the district implements an established, well-documented process to ensure:

a. integration of academic skills, particularly in ELA, mathematics and science and technology into each occupational area,

b. sequencing and alignment of learning goals, skills and expectations from one grade to the next - 9-12.

c. alignment with the state curriculum frameworks across all grades and occupational areas 9-12.

EQA Rating for 2004: Poor

EQA Rating for 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the initial period of review, teachers prioritized two strategies: 1) actively engaging students in learning, and 2) integration of academic and vocational technical programs. The administrators and teachers interviewed indicated that the improvement of student achievement became the shared responsibility of academic and vocational technical teachers. When math

courses below the algebra/geometry level were dropped from the math curriculum, many students still needed support in basic arithmetic skills. The MCAS test preparation courses were added to the curriculum, ELA in grade 9 and math in grade 10. The classes met for an 86-minute block during the academic week. Evidence of sequencing and alignment of learning goals contained in vocational technical curricula varied among shop programs. The district utilized a computer-based program that was directly linked to student enrollment in a particular vocational technical program. All vocational technical programs had access to and used this grading system for student competencies. A student's progress on a particular competency was aligned with the state vocational competencies established under chapter 74 and not the national standards.

During the reexamination period under review, the district's shop time project linked vocational areas to academics, but the district had established an integration project committee to revise the project. The committee had developed the infrastructure for a new integration project scheduled to begin in the 2007-2008 school year.

Teachers and administrators told EQA examiners that vocational areas embedded academic skills into the curriculum. For example, in the health related areas, students used math skills in order to check vital signs, height and weight readings, and dispense medication. In graphic arts, students used writing skills in the text for informational posters. Although interviews revealed some inconsistencies related to the grade levels involved and the format of the new project, EQA examiners determined that students were responsible for a shop time project during the period under reexamination. One interview source stated that the project incorporated three phases and linked the occupational area primarily to ELA. Phases included an outline, an expository writing piece, and an oral presentation for which students received a related ELA grade and shop grade. Another source said the project could be worksheets, a supplementary novel, or a specific project.

During the 2006-2007 school year, the district's integration committee redesigned the integration project. The vocational and academic coordinators stated that the previous shop project created logistical problems involving timelines, authenticity of the project, and inconsistencies regarding guidelines and teacher responsibilities. In the fall of 2006, the committee researched integration models from other regional school programs. At the time of the reexamination, the committee

recommended the following: grade 11 students as the target group for the first year beginning in 2007-2008; the established Trades Fair project with a portfolio component integrating ELA, math, and science; and setting up integration project teams expected to take effect in 2007-2008. Each team consisted of at least one ELA, math, and science teacher assigned to one shop area. Phase 2, beginning in 2007-2008, included implementation, timeline, and topic development for shop and academic teachers, and rubric development, followed by Phase 3 that included assessment, evaluation, and recommendations for improvement.

Administrators and teachers verified that each vocational instructor had copies of the Vocational Technical Education Frameworks for their respective areas. Components of complete academic curriculum documents also apply to vocational curricula and should include at a minimum the following: objectives, curriculum standards, skills/activities, resources, assessment, and pacing guide. At the time of the reexamination, in the district's vocational areas sequencing and alignment of learning goals, skills, and expectations with the state frameworks were in various stages. For example, the dental assistant program still needed to add clinical rotations, and the health related programs removed some units not aligned to the frameworks. Vocational areas primarily used a combination of the previously developed competency documents and the state vocational frameworks. The vocational coordinator stated that each shop emphasized the first three out of six standards in the VTEF that included health and safety, technical knowledge and skills, and embedded academics.

5.1. The district has implemented instructional programs that:

a. are designed to meet the assessed needs of its students, and

b. include the practices, resources and procedures needed to support the instructional programs.

EQA Rating for 2004: Poor

EQA Rating for 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the initial period of EQA review, the district implemented some instructional programs designed to meet the assessed needs of students, such as ELA and math MCAS preparation courses and the combined algebra/geometry courses in grades 9 and 10 to prepare students for

the MCAS test. All incoming freshmen were given the Stanford 9 diagnostic test in April, during the school vacation.

During the reexamination period under review, the district implemented several programs designed to meet the assessed needs of students. Examples included the Diman Mathematics Assessment, the EXTENDS program, MCAS Saturday, and the Summer Academy. The programs included practices, resources, and procedures needed to support the instructional program. For example, the math department curriculum revision committee recommended that all incoming freshmen take the Diman Mathematics Assessment to help the district place students more successfully in freshman math courses. It was administered to all accepted grade 9 students in April 2005 and 2006. The district compiled the scores of the Stanford 9 reading comprehension test, Stanford 9 math test, and the Diman Mathematics Assessment and used the data to place students in math courses.

The special education strategic plan developed in 2004-2005 "expanded instructional supports to improve student opportunities for academic success" by funding the EXTENDS after-school homework assistance program. The Title I and special needs budgets paid teachers a stipend to assist selected students with homework completion. Although Title I and special education students were targeted for this program, student referrals through the teacher assistant team (TAT) and the guidance department offered the option to other struggling students. The program met for one hour after school two times a week. The program also included transportation for those students who needed it. Students attended the EXTENDS program voluntarily and teachers said that the program was well attended.

An additional program entitled MCAS Saturday, implemented by the district in 2004, provided remediation to students in ELA and math. The program ran for two five-week sessions for four hours each meeting. Teachers received an hourly wage and students provided their own transportation. The district invited students who had failed the grade 7 or 8 MCAS test and students who had not taken the MCAS tests. In the 2006-2007 school year, 36 students attended the program.

Lastly, the district implemented a trimester basic skills math course for freshmen that students took in addition to their regular math course. The course curriculum emphasized basic math

skills in order to build a more solid foundation for math learning. However, the district found that students scheduled for the last trimester repeated concepts they had learned in their regular math course. Therefore, the district planned to eliminate the grade 9 math course and implement a Summer Academy for 2007 using the same curriculum. At the time of the reexamination, although the school committee had approved funding, the logistics of the Summer Academy had yet to be determined.

5.3. The district has allocated sufficient instructional time in the core content areas to promote academic achievement and a level of proficiency for all students. Instructional time in each content area:

a. meets state requirements at each level, and

b. meets the educational needs of students as determined through an analysis of student achievement data.

EQA Rating for 2004: Poor

EQA Rating for 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

At the time of the initial review, the district had an 86-minute block of ELA instruction at grades 9-12 and an 86-minute block of math instruction at grades 9-10. All other academic classes at all grade levels were 43 minutes in length. The MCAS ELA test preparation course was added at grade 9 and MCAS math preparation at grade 10. Instructional time met state requirements. Although these changes were made after an analysis of student achievement data, they had not yet resulted in a level of proficiency for all students.

During the reexamination period under review, the district exceeded the minimum state requirement of 990 hours of instructional time in the core content areas. Although the 2006-2007 District and School Improvement Plan contained an attachment outlining 1063.5 hours of instructional time, the district made no time allowance for 10 early release days in the 2006-2007 school calendar that shortened the day by three hours. When the 1063.5 time on learning hours were reduced by 30 hours (10 release days times three hours), the district's instructional time was 1033.5 hours in 2006-2007, thus exceeding the state requirements by 43.5 hours.

The district had implemented an 86-minute block in ELA at grades 9-12 and in math at grades 9-10 when the 2004 EQA review was completed. Further, the district planned to schedule an 86-minute math time block for grade 11 students in the 2007-2008 school year. According to the DOE student achievement data, the average proficiency gap at Diman narrowed from 36 PI points in 2003 to 23 PI points in 2006, resulting in an improvement rate of 37 percent. In addition, the proficiency gap narrowed in ELA from 30 PI points in 2003 to 22 PI points in 2006 and in math from 42 PI points in 2003 to 23 PI points in 2006. As a result, the district met the requirements for adequate yearly progress (AYP) in ELA and math for 2005 and 2006.

2007 Indicator

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.

EQA Rating for 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the site visit, the EQA examiners observed a total of 33 randomly selected classrooms and recorded the presence or absence of 26 attributes reflected in the Principles of Effective Teaching. The attributes were grouped into five categories: classroom management, instructional practice, expectations, student activity and behavior, and climate. The EQA examiners checked the attributes that they observed in each of the five categories during their time spent in the classroom. In total, the EQA examiners observed 11 ELA classrooms, 7 math classrooms, and 15 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 95 percent of the classrooms observed.

Instructional practice was the largest category reviewed by the examiners. Effective instructional practice is considered evident when the teacher's questions transcend direct recall and include open-ended questions that require the use of higher order thinking skills. Students should be encouraged to go beyond their initial responses, to analyze, to synthesize, to compare and

contrast, and to explain their own thinking. Class time should be focused on student learning. Students who have finished their work should be provided with other appropriate tasks; students who are off-task should be redirected to their task. The work should engage all students; it should be age-appropriate, and attuned to many learning modalities, including auditory, visual, and kinesthetic. The pace of the class should be appropriate, challenging, and engaging for all students. Instruction should be differentiated so that all learners are challenged. The lesson should be clearly aligned with the state curriculum frameworks and either posted on the board or cited in the teacher's planner. The lesson's objectives should be clear and explicitly articulated. The teacher should use standards-based instruction to set objectives, to plan activities, to assess the effect of the lesson, and to measure progress for all learners. Positive indicators of instructional practice were evident in 67 percent of the classrooms observed.

Expectations refers to the maintenance of high standards for students by teachers. Evidence of high expectations could include recent examples of high quality student work posted in the classroom. In addition, high quality work should be evident through rubrics that may sometimes be generated by students. Tasks should be challenging for all students, and all students should have access to the same curriculum, although the instruction and strategies may be adapted to the needs of students. The teacher should clearly maintain and communicate high expectations for student work during class time. All students should be expected to be on task and engaged in the lesson. High expectations for students were evident in 63 percent of the classrooms.

Positive student activity and behavior are considered evident when students are actively engaged in the learning process. They must show a clear understanding of the objective of the lesson and interact with the teacher and each other in accomplishing the tasks at hand. They should be attentive and responsive. While the environment may be busy and constructive, it must also be controlled and orderly. There should be few distractions, and the learning process must be clearly evident. Indicators of positive student activity and behavior were evident in 60 percent of the classrooms.

Finally, the concept of *climate* is considered evident when the classroom is welcoming, and the teacher is an active listener and treats all students with respect. Students should listen attentively to and be respectful of all other students. Many resources and means beyond the textbook should

be available for learning; these may include technology, manipulatives, cassettes, visuals, overhead projectors, and a classroom library. Positive indicators of climate were evident in 80 percent of the classrooms observed.

Summary of Classroom Observations

	Number of Classrooms						Computers		
	ELA	Math	Other	Total	Average Class Size	Average Paraprofs. per Class	Total Number	Number for Student Use	Average Students per Computer
Total	11	7	15	33	14.1	0	146	117	4.0

	Classroom Management	Instructional Practice	Expectations	Student Activity & Behavior	Climate
Total observations	126	196	81	119	79
Maximum possible	132	294	129	197	99
Avg. percent of observations	95%	67%	63%	60%	80%

Standard III: Assessment and Program Evaluation							
Ratings▼ Indicators►	**1.3**	**1.4**	**1.5**	**1.6**	**1.8**	**3.3**	**3.6**
Excellent							
Satisfactory	**2007**						
Needs Improvement		**2007**	**2007**	**2007**	**2007**	**2007**	**2007**
Poor	**2004**	**2004**	**2004**	**2004**		**2004**	**2004**
Unsatisfactory					**2004**		

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.

Findings:

- District leadership required students to participate in all appropriate assessments.
- Examiners found no evidence of data analysis for the years 2003-2004 and 2004-2005.
- After analyzing 2006 MCAS data, the district added and modified some programs in order to improve student achievement.
- The district used some assessment results to measure the effectiveness of instructional and support programs, but it did not use benchmarks to measure student progress.
- The district failed to use assessment data to drive professional development, staff assignments, or allocation of resources prior to 2007.
- Academic teachers reported a lack of equity between vocational and academic programs in the allocation of resources. According to teachers, requested equipment was more often denied to academic teachers than to vocational teachers.

Summary

The Greater Fall River district required all students to participate in the MCAS exams, as well as other appropriate assessments. The district used the Diman Mathematics Achievement Test and the Stanford 9 Diagnostic Reading Test to place students into appropriate math and ELA classes, respectively. Math and biology teachers used standardized final exams for their classes. The

Cape Cod Vocational Assessment Test was given to entering freshmen to guide them in determining a career path. Other tests, such as the Woodcock Johnson III Achievement Battery and the Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement, Second Edition (KTEA II), were available to special education teachers and the guidance department; however, the staff had not received training in the administration of these tests.

Some of the administrators at Diman were knowledgeable in the use of TestWiz for data analysis, but teachers had not received the appropriate training for this program. A data specialist was hired for 2006-2007 to assist with the disaggregation and interpretation of data. This position was funded as a 0.1 position, and as a result the consultant was only able to work on 2006 MCAS data. The EQA visiting team was presented evidence that the 2003 and 2006 MCAS results had been analyzed; no evidence was presented for the 2004 and 2005 results. The data specialist position was funded as a full-time one for 2007-2008.

The district leadership disseminated MCAS test results to appropriate staff through the academic coordinator, who then passed the data on to the lead teachers. The information was discussed at departmental meetings, and teachers made adjustments to their own curricula based on identified areas of deficiency. The math curriculum revision committee had responsibility for recommending changes in curriculum that would lead to better performance.

As a result of analyzing data, the district made some changes to programs and curricula, such as instituting block periods for biology classes, a geometry class for grade 10 students, and changing the scope and sequence in the ELA curriculum in order to provide better preparation for the MCAS tests. Also, to provide additional support for students who performed poorly, the district established the EXTENDS program (an after-school homework support program). The math and ELA departments also instituted the MCAS Saturday program to help under-performing students.

The district did not use assessment data to set priorities for professional development, nor to reallocate staff and resources. Although it formed three professional development teams in 2006, the district did not present documentation to show what these teams had accomplished. Professional development offerings came strictly as a result of “needs assessment”

questionnaires given to the staff, and from recommendations made by the administration. Fields of certification and class sizes dictated staff assignments.

2004 Indicators

1.3. The district regularly employs criterion-referenced tests, norm-referenced tests, or other standardized tests in addition to the MCAS test to assess the progress of all student populations.

EQA Rating for 2004: Poor

EQA Rating for 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the initial period of review (2000-2003), the district had limited its assessments to the MCAS tests, according to administrators in interviews and documentation. The district did use the Stanford 9 test to initially assess students when they entered the school.

During the reexamination period under review (2004-2006), the district gave a number of standardized tests. The Diman Mathematics Achievement Test, written by members of the math department and given in the spring of grade 8, was used to evaluate basic math skills of all entering grade 9 students in conjunction with the Stanford math test to determine placement into a freshman math course. At the recommendation of the math department revision committee the district used a composite score. The test was also used to screen students who may be in need of Title I services. In addition, teachers reported that they used the test results to tailor their curriculum in order to address the specific areas of weaknesses identified for their students.

The reading language arts curriculum used the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Tests (SDRTs) as forms of evaluation. According to the academic curriculum coordinator, students in grades 9 and 11 take form G of the SDRT in the fall and form H in the spring. Students in grades 10 and 12 take form H in the fall and form G in the spring. The tests given in the fall were for assessment purposes, while the tests given in the spring were for placement into the following year's math class. These tests may also be administered at any time at a teacher's request.

The Stanford Diagnostic Reading Assessment (blue level) was administered to all identified Title I students. A Title I grant was used to fund the work of the math and the ELA lesson plan

committees. These committees examined MCAS results to identify the 10 main areas of weakness. They also developed lesson plans in each content area to assist teachers in the reinforcement of specific topics.

In the vocational areas, Diman students took a number of standardized national tests in order to receive certification. Among the tests administered were the National Automotive Technology Education Foundation Test, the American Culinary Federation Test, the Dental Association National Board Test, the American Design and Drafting Association Test, the American Welding Society Test, the National Institute of Metallurgical Society Test, and the Microsoft Office User Specialist Test.

In interviews with academic lead teachers, the EQA team learned that the district gave standardized final exams in all math and science classes. Members of each academic department created these tests and all students taking a specific course took the same tests, regardless of the teacher teaching it. ELA teachers did not give the same final exams, although the exams covered the same concepts. Different final exams were given to honors classes and to college prep classes in all academic areas.

Math teachers indicated that they used standardized assessments that come with the chosen textbooks. Algebra I teachers used the Health Formal Assessment Book; Algebra IB teachers used the Addison-Wesley assessment book as a resource. The math department planned to standardize geometry tests by the end of April 2007.

According to the guidance coordinator, between 15 and 20 percent of Diman students took the PSATs and SATs. The district used the results of these tests exclusively for career planning and college placement purposes.

The Cape Cod Vocational Assessment Test is an aptitude and interest test given to entering freshmen to aid in the determination of a career path. According to the principal in interviews, it "is not a very useful tool." Counselors had difficulty interpreting the scores, and many of the questions were outdated. The vocational team that EQA interviewed agreed that there is a need to find a better test. The district did not present evidence that it was addressing this issue at the time of the site visit.

Documentation provided to the EQA team also indicated that a number of other standardized tests were available at Diman. The director of guidance informed the team that these tests were only used at the request of a specific teacher. The Woodcock Reading Mastery Test is used to identify strengths and weaknesses in reading skills, and the Woodcock Johnson III Achievement Battery, based on reading and math assessments, is used to determine if a student is eligible for special services. According to the special education coordinator, these tests were purchased, as were some others (such as the KTEAII and PPVT tests). However, teachers have not been trained to administer them.

1.4. Regular analysis of assessment results informs improvements to:

a. curricula,

b. instructional practices,

c. supplementary and remedial programs and services,

d. professional development, and

e. purchasing and provisioning for improved student achievement.

EQA Rating for 2004: Poor

EQA Rating for 2007: Needs improvement

Evidence

During the initial period of EQA review, the district used the assessment results from the MCAS and Stanford 9 tests to direct the revisions of the curriculum. Curriculum revisions for academic areas occurred on an almost annual basis. For example, the district had updated ELA and math curricula in three of the four years under review. Program advisory committees for the vocational technical areas met two times per year and made modifications to the curricula as needed. The district did not have a well defined instructional program, and therefore did not use data to influence this area. Professional development activities for the school were determined, to some degree, based upon input from individual teachers.

During the reexamination period under review, the district formally analyzed MCAS test results only in 2006. According to the EQA monitor's report of February-June 2006, the district analyzed MCAS test data in July 2005 covering the period 2001 through 2004 using the

Performance Improvement Mapping (PIM) process. One administrator stated that the PIM leadership team set goals to improve MCAS scores, but that the team no longer existed. EQA examiners requested evidence of the district's MCAS test analysis for the years under review but the data submitted only corresponded to the 2003 and 2006 test results, both completed by two different part-time data analysts. In 2006, the district hired a part-time data analyst, who used Test Wiz to analyze the 2006 MCAS test results. This analysis also included disaggregated data for the special education subgroup. The district planned to increase the position to full time in the 2007-2008 school year.

The analyst worked with coordinators, academic lead teachers, and vocational department heads to analyze test items to determine trends, weaknesses, and strengths. In addition to assessment results from the MCAS tests, the district also used the Stanford 9 for placement of incoming freshmen and to determine eligibility for Title I services. The Stanford Achievement Blue, given at the beginning and end of the school year, helped the school to measure progress of Title I and special education students. To date, the district had not developed benchmark assessments in the academic content areas. Although the district analyzed results of the MCAS tests as well as other standardized tests, MCAS test data analysis was inconsistent during the years under reexamination, and the district used the Stanford results primarily for diagnostic and/or placement purposes, not to inform improvements to curriculum and instructional practices.

a. Curricula

Administrators and academic lead teachers stated that the district revised curriculum based on MCAS data. The district organized a math curriculum revision committee, which proposed recommendations to restructure the curriculum so that grade 9 students who took Algebra I would have a full year of geometry in grade 10 with a goal for all students to have taken Algebra II by the time they graduated. The district purchased textbooks to support the course offerings. In ELA, in order to prepare students for the MCAS long composition, adjustments to the curriculum involved moving the reading of *Julius Caesar* and *To Kill a Mockingbird* to earlier in the school year. Revisions to the freshman curriculum included additional poetry selections and supplemental novels of greater challenge. Previously in science, students only had a half year of biology prior to MCAS testing due to the two-week rotation between academic and vocational courses. Last year, the MCAS practice test results prompted the department to change biology

from a one-year course to two years, revised the scope and sequence, and increased the amount of lab work. The district hired an additional teacher in 2006 and planned to add another for 2007 to reduce class sizes.

b. Instructional practices

The district made improvements in instructional practices because of MCAS test results. For example, analysis of the 2003 MCAS test results prompted the formation of math and ELA lesson plan committees in 2004. These committees developed a series of lesson plans on specific standards for which test scores reflected student deficiencies. Completed in October 2004, the plans included behavioral objectives, materials, methods, and assessments and provided a resource for teachers. In addition, lead teachers reported that their departments increased the use of multimedia with electronic tablets in math and digital microscopes in science. In addition, to provide support for students, the district purchased textbooks on CDs in academic subject areas for students to access at home. These included an auditory component to benefit students with weaker reading skills.

c. Supplementary remedial programs and services

The district provided supplementary and remedial programs to students identified as at risk. Administrators reported that many sending middle schools did not assess middle school students and that the district used the Stanford, along with middle school grades and teacher reports, to identify such students. The district provided Saturday MCAS preparation classes, provided in-school support classes in both mathematics and ELA, and increased emphasis on MCAS practice questions during the weeks leading up to the grade 10 administration.

d. Professional development

During the period under reexamination, the district began using a professional development committee to plan activities intended to improve staff instructional skills. Although the committee planned a number of events and workshops, events to improve data analysis skills for teachers were not scheduled, nor were there any designed to improve teachers' ability to use data in changing curriculum or instructional practices. Teachers serving on the professional development committee reported that such training was included in the School Improvement Plan for 2007-2008.

e. Purchasing and provisioning for improved student achievement

One example of basing purchasing and provisioning on student performance was the selection and revision of the district biology program as the focus of the MCAS science requirement. The district purchased textbooks; all students in grades 9 and 10 were using the Holt biology series, copyright 2006, and, according to teachers, the department's budget doubled.

1.5. The district and each of its schools disseminate assessment analyses to appropriate staff at regular intervals.

EQA Rating for 2004: Poor

EQA Rating for 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the initial period of review, the district ensured that it distributed assessment data as soon as they became available. The MCAS test results were given to ELA and math lead teachers. The administration expected that the lead teachers would then share the information with their respective departments. The test results were also available to vocational and other academic area teachers if they wanted them.

During the reexamination period under review, the EQA team learned that when the spring 2006 MCAS results were released to the district, the academic coordinator evaluated them first, and then passed them on to the math and ELA lead teachers. The lead teachers then disseminated the data to the rest of the teachers in their departments. The results of the biology pilot tests were similarly distributed. The teachers discussed the overall scores and examined general trends at departmental meetings. The academic lead teachers stated that prior to 2007, the classroom teachers did their own item analyses; this was confirmed when the EQA team examined curriculum folders. Teachers shared and discussed the results of their analyses at subsequent departmental meetings. Teachers adjusted their curricula based on the identification of areas of deficiency. According to the superintendent, the district also distributed the MCAS data to the vocational staff.

1.6. District administrators, building administrators, and teachers demonstrate that they have the skills to use aggregate and individual test analyses to improve instructional programs and services for all student populations.

EQA Rating for 2004: Poor

EQA Rating for 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

For the initial period of review, the district had not looked at data disaggregated by student subgroup. According to interviews, certain key staff members who showed an aptitude and interest in doing so provided administrators with data analyses. Administrators explained in interviews that they had differing levels of data analysis skills.

During the reexamination period under review, administrators confirmed that they used TestWiz for data analysis, but that the teaching staff was not trained to do so. In 2005-2006, a staff member was in charge of analyzing MCAS data. A part-time data specialist was hired for 2006-2007 to work with MCAS data and identify areas of strength and weakness; the specialist also conducted an analysis by question type and by subgroup. In 2007-2008, the data specialist position will become a full-time position.

The district instituted an MCAS Saturdays program in 2004-2005 to improve MCAS scores, and the four-hour class has been running for the last three years. The teacher's stipend is funded by a grant. The program has been well attended since its inception, and teachers indicated that it "helped" many at-risk students. The district has not analyzed these students' scores to assess the effectiveness of the program.

Several staff members expressed the concern to the EQA team that, although they felt that analysis of MCAS data was very useful, the administration did not want Diman to be compared to other vocational schools in the state. The superintendent stated that he was happy that scores had improved, but he felt that Diman scores should only be compared to those of the local high school.

1.8. Classroom assessment standards, practices, and expectations for teachers and students are consistently linked with learning standards articulated in the state curriculum frameworks.

EQA Rating for 2004: Unsatisfactory

EQA Rating for 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the initial period of review, teachers were expected to use the curriculum guides to direct instruction in their classes, according to administrators. It was assumed that assessments would align with the curriculum guides and therefore would align with the state curriculum frameworks. This alignment was not a documented expectation, and there was no system in place to monitor this activity.

During the reexamination period under review, the district had vocational frameworks for each shop area, and most of the curricula aligned with these frameworks and "should be current," according to the vocational coordinator. The team learned, through interviews with vocational teachers, that several shops were still in the process of aligning their curricula. For example, the dental program still needed to add clinical rotations to the curriculum, and in the Health Career curriculum some units were removed but the work had not yet been completed.

All vocational teachers had copies of the frameworks. The coordinator monitored adherence to the frameworks through formal teacher evaluations, although it should be noted that only 52 percent of all teachers had timely evaluations. The coordinator stated that he did not monitor lesson plans and that there was little time for walk-through classroom visits.

Through interviews with teachers the EQA team learned that academic areas were embedded in all shop instruction, although there was a difference in the achievement levels of students in different shops. This was due to the nature of each course; some shops required better math skills or better writing skills than others. Starting in 2007-2008, written and practical statewide tests will be given to students in grades 11 and 12 for all shop areas that are taught at Greater Fall River. Phase II of the district's "integration plan," scheduled to be implemented in 2007-2008, will ensure that each shop works with a team of academic teachers (ELA, math, and science) that will help to support the vocational team. The vocational coordinator stated that teachers were in

the process of developing rubrics for the common assessment of their subjects, although there was no documentation presented to support this.

According to the academic coordinator, each department revised its curriculum and aligned it with the frameworks. Each department had an advisory board in place, which met twice a year in October and February. All academic teachers had copies of the curriculum and were expected to use these in the development of their lesson plans. Lead teachers monitored lesson plans, primarily for new teachers. In academic subjects, revision of the curriculum was done "as needed," with the lead teacher always involved.

For special education, a strategic planning committee, formed in 2004-2005, was still active and met twice a year. It was composed of the special education coordinator, the lead teacher, and several other teachers. Special education teachers did not follow a separate curriculum. They mirrored what was taught in the regular classrooms and made modifications for their individual students. Based on the work of this committee the district identified several areas of need and developed two new programs, the EXTENDS program and the teacher assistance team (TAT).

The EXTENDS program is an after-school homework support program that was open to the entire student body, although it was funded through special education and Title I allocation grants. This program ran for one hour, twice a week, and bus transportation was available to students at no cost.

The teacher assistance team, in its second year at the time of the reexamination, consisted of a group of teachers and administrators that met on the third Thursday of each month to discuss and evaluate the behavior and/or performance of referred students. Following a TAT meeting, the team made recommendations to help the classroom and/or shop teacher with strategies to help the student succeed. The referring teacher implemented these suggestions for one or two cycles, and then a follow-up meeting was conducted to evaluate whether further action was necessary.

3.3. There is an ongoing process to:

a. monitor, and

b. evaluate the quality, adequacy, and effectiveness of the curriculum and instructional programs.

EQA Rating for 2004: Poor

EQA Rating for 2007: Needs improvement

Evidence

During the initial period of review, the district used assessment results from the MCAS and Stanford tests to some extent to direct the revision of curriculum. Curriculum revisions took place for academic areas on an "as needed" basis. For example, the ELA and math curricula had been updated in three of the four years under review. Program advisory committees for the vocational areas met two times per year and modified the curriculum as needed. The district did not have a well defined instructional program and therefore did not use data to influence this area. Professional development activities for the district were determined, to some degree, based upon both input from teachers and an analysis of MCAS test data.

During the reexamination period under review, the district used regularly scheduled departmental meetings for academic departments and program advisory committees for vocational programs to address the quality, adequacy, and effectiveness of curriculum. However, monitoring curriculum and instructional programs posed a challenge due to the number of personnel evaluations each coordinator was responsible for each year. Additionally, the EQA team found that most curriculum documents in ELA and science were undated. Teachers and administrators confirmed this and saw the lack of dates as an area in need of attention.

Meeting of advisory boards, held twice a year in October and February, were attended by academic lead teachers or vocational department heads as well faculty members and regularly included curriculum discussions in the agenda. The lead teachers and vocational department heads provided boards with important input and feedback. The academic coordinator met at least once a month with lead teachers to discuss issues related to curriculum and other topics pertinent to each content area. Lead teachers reported that teachers submitted weekly lesson plans for review, and that although they did not evaluate teachers, the lesson plans helped them

monitor pacing of curriculum, provide resources as needed, and assist teachers they mentored. The academic coordinator also reviewed lesson plans. Although the district used department and advisory committee meetings to address matters related to curriculum and instructional practices, coordinators reported that the district used the evaluation process to monitor the quality, adequacy, and effectiveness of curriculum and instructional programs. However, they reported that the number of evaluations (averaging between 50 and 60 each over a two-year period) for which they were responsible affected their ability to visit classrooms on a regular basis. The vocational coordinator stated that he had no time to check lesson plans or to do walk-throughs. EQA examiners found that 47.1 percent of the personnel files reviewed contained evaluations that were not up to date.

3.6. In order to improve achievement for all students, the district uses disaggregated assessment scores to:

a. evaluate specific aspects of achievement, so that data can be analyzed to identify specific strengths and weaknesses in curriculum and instruction,

b. set priorities for professional development, and

c. reallocate staff and resources to improve achievement levels for all student populations.

EQA Rating for 2004: Poor

EQA Rating for 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the initial period of review, the district had used MCAS and Stanford test scores in evaluating student achievement. During the EQA interview process, it was indicated that such analysis resulted in doubling the instructional time in the teaching of literacy at the high school level to 120 minutes daily. Based on grade 7 and 8 MCAS test scores, some students were programmed for double English and math in grades 9, 10, and 11. The EQA team also learned that professional development offerings were connected to curriculum and instructional changes made to improve student performance. District administrators, during interviews, acknowledged that they needed to do a better job in the area of analysis of data disaggregated by student subgroup. The emphasis had been more on analysis of MCAS and Stanford test results related to program and course content. The district hoped to have improved data analysis by student

subgroup. The district used MCAS test data to allocate student support services through Title I, ELL, and teacher aides.

a. Curriculum and instruction

During the reexamination period under review, the district was beginning to look at disaggregated data with the help of a part-time data consultant (a 0.1 position for 2006-2007). In addition to analyzing data by subgroup such as regular education students, special education students, and low-income students, the data specialist also studied a new subgroup, that of "non-traditional females leaving the district."

In an interview with the data specialist, the EQA team learned that there is a need to purchase a test scanner so that in the future tests (such as final exams) can be analyzed by subgroups of students and by objectives.

Item analyses of 2003 and 2006 MCAS data were available to the EQA team. There was no evidence that data had been analyzed for 2004 or 2005. According to the academic coordinator, during those years each department worked on its own data analysis in an informal manner.

The 2006 MCAS math and ELA data were analyzed and broken down by question number and question type. As a result of the data analysis, a math curriculum revision committee was formed. The process of curriculum revision was done over the summer and a stipend was given to teachers who worked on it. One of the main conclusions reached in 2006 was that students at Diman either did not attempt, or had difficulties with, open-response questions. The committee made recommendations for changes in curriculum, changes in instructional practices, and new types of assessments that would improve students' test-taking skills. Math teachers began incorporating the new strategies into their lessons in 2007. Because of the data analysis, teachers can access tables for their respective subjects that link each MCAS question with its corresponding curriculum framework.

Several major changes were implemented as a direct result of MCAS data analysis. The grade 9 algebra course underwent a major revision and a formal geometry course for grade 10 students was introduced in 2006. The math curriculum revision committee also recommended extending the math courses for students in grades 11 and 12 to an 86-minute block period in 2007-2008.

The math department also instituted an MCAS remediation course, given during school hours and taught by a teacher in the department. Students with reading difficulties (mostly students whose native language was not English) benefited from this course. At the time of the site visit, the committee was working on a remedial math program to be instituted in the summer of 2007. The school committee has allocated money to fund this initiative.

Teachers described Diman as a "biology school," meaning that all students were prepared to take the MCAS biology test. In evaluating the 2006 MCAS biology pilot test results, the staff decided that there needed to be a change in scope and sequence, and that the biology curriculum needed to be revised. As a result of this program revision, starting in 2006-2007 biology was taught as a two-year course, introduced in grade 9 and completed in grade 10. In addition, with the move to block periods for labs in 2005-2006, the science teachers were better able to accomplish the goals of the curriculum frameworks. In order to reduce class sizes, the district hired an additional biology teacher in 2007 and plans to add another one in 2007-2008.

Curriculum changes were also made in ELA. The ELA lead teacher stated that although grade 10 ELA scores improved in the last two years, they would like to see more students move up to the 'Advanced' category. In order to accomplish this, teachers determined that more challenging supplemental novels were necessary for students in grade 10 and that they should place a greater emphasis on poetry. They also adjusted the timing of certain readings to ensure that students could use books such as *Julius Caesar* and *To Kill a Mockingbird* as a focus for their MCAS long composition answers.

In an interview with school committee members, EQA examiners learned that student data were also used to establish a new attendance policy, a new grading policy, and a change from a quarterly schedule to a trimester schedule.

b. Professional development

The Watch Status Monitor Report of February 28, 2006 stated that the principal formed and coordinated three different professional development teams. These teams were the academic professional development team, the vocational professional development team, and the integrated professional development team. According to the report, the functioning of these professional development teams needed to be documented. During its revisit the EQA team

found no documentation to support the work of these teams. There was, however, a professional development activities calendar established for 2006-2007.

Teachers who were interviewed told the visiting team that all the professional development teams, consisting of groups of faculty volunteers, sent out a needs assessment questionnaire to the rest of the faculty to get ideas for professional development topics. At the end of each professional development day, the staff was asked to submit suggestions for future presentations.

According to teachers who were interviewed, the topics covered in 2005 and 2006 dealt mostly with the use of technology, autism, differentiated instruction, and crisis intervention. Administrators confirmed this in interviews.

One professional development day in 2005 was devoted to a workshop presented by a math teacher on using the Excel software program. The EQA team saw little evidence that any more focused training on data analysis had been provided for the staff during the period under reexamination.

c. Staff assignments and resources

In interviews with administrators, EQA examiners learned that MCAS scores were not used for scheduling teachers. According to the school business manager, however, starting in 2007 MCAS data were being used to drive budget requests. Teachers and department heads received forms from the superintendent, and justification for the requests was done verbally. For example, a request was made that all students get calculators in order to enhance teaching and learning and also to become familiar with them before the MCAS tests. They were approved. On the other hand, a request for SmartBoards by many faculty members was denied.

ELA teachers were given class assignments according to the numbers of students who needed service. In an interview with lead teachers, the EQA learned that the ability level of the students in a class dictated class size. Twenty or more students were placed into honors classes, college prep classes had 15, and 10 students or fewer were assigned to lower level classes so that these students could be given more individualized attention.

During the period under reexamination there were no paraprofessionals at Diman, therefore special education students did not have any support in the classroom once they were

mainstreamed into science and social studies classes and shops. The regular education teachers made the necessary accommodations for their special education students according to their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). For math and ELA, some special education students never got integrated into regular education classes. Special education teachers were given classroom assignments in one or more areas of their certification, depending on the numbers of students that needed to be serviced. One of the modifications that was instituted by all special education teachers was that their students took the MCAS tests in their own classrooms, where they were more comfortable and less distracted.

The math department instituted a four-hour MCAS Saturday program held for five consecutive weeks during the 2004-2005 school year. The teacher received a stipend. The program emphasized three components: multiple choice questions, open-response questions, and a shop component for help with math skills used in shop. The English department offered a similar program.

Standard IV: Human Resource Management and Professional Development											
Ratings▼ Indicators►	**1.7**	**3.1**	**3.4**	**3.5**	**7.1**	**7.2**	**7.3**	**7.4**	**7.5**	**7.7**	**13**
Excellent											
Satisfactory	**2007**					**2007**				**2007**	
Needs Improvement		**2007**	**2007**	**2007**	**2007**		**2007**	**2007**	**2007**		**2007**
Poor	**2004**	**2004**			**2004**			**2004**	**2004**		
Unsatisfactory			**2004**	**2004**		**2004**	**2004**			**2004**	

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.

Findings:

- Teacher interest was the primary factor in development of the professional development plan. To a lesser extent, aggregate student achievement data informed it as well.
- The district was unable to provide evidence that all teachers and administrators maintained appropriate Massachusetts licensure.
- The district did not have a routine practice of requesting waivers for unlicensed teachers.
- The district had a crisis management plan in place and planned regular training and practice for staff.
- In a review of randomly selected teacher personnel folders, examiners found timely teacher evaluations in only 52.9 percent of the files.

Summary

The district had a regular, consistent procedure for recruiting and hiring replacement staff members. There was no financial impediment to hiring the best candidate available to fill the position. However, the district did not routinely request waivers for unlicensed teacher candidates. Furthermore, in a review of 33 randomly selected personnel folders, EQA examiners found no evidence of current licensure for seven teachers and two administrators. EQA examiners requested evidence of certification for those staff members, but the district did not or could not comply.

District administrators were not adhering to their own evaluation procedures. The administration had last formally reviewed the principal in September 2005, had last evaluated the business manager in December 2004, and had last evaluated the supervisor of buildings and grounds in July 2000. All other administrators had been evaluated in 2006. The superintendent's evaluation contained references to "improving student achievement," but lacked specifics. The principal's evaluation did not refer to student assessment results beyond setting a goal of assisting students who failed the MCAS tests. In the random sample of 33 teacher personnel files, most of the teacher evaluations contained brief reference to improving student achievement scores. There seemed to be little attempt to use such references to hold teachers accountable for improving student achievement, however. For the most part, evaluations, when present, were instructive, informative, and capable of contributing to future growth and overall effectiveness.

The 2005-2006 District and School Improvement Plan included the professional development plan, and it addressed weaknesses identified in the previous EQA report. The district was actively engaged in implementing its SIP, and continuing to improve the achievement of its students. Participatory decision-making and parental involvement were instrumental in the development of the SIP.

The district presented evidence of a teacher mentoring system to support newly hired teachers. In addition, it began to use a professional development committee to plan professional development activities for professional staff members. The activities generally aligned with the SIP, and most were offered in units of at least 10 hours and required a culminating product to allow for the awarding of professional development points (PDPs).

The professional development planning evolved from a formal faculty interest survey, changes in state program requirements, and some informal program evaluation results. Activities fell into the categories of personal health and safety, the vocational curriculum frameworks, using technology, differentiated instruction, learning styles, and special education. The committee also scheduled required staff training on topics such as sexual harassment, physical restraint, blood-borne pathogens, and other similar topics.

The professional development plan did not address training in data analysis skills for the staff, participatory decision-making, or community and parental involvement. The professional

development committee used both the plan and a calendar of professional development events conducted for 2006-2007 to deliver effective professional development activities to the staff.

The district also created and distributed a DCAP to the staff. The proposed SIP for the 2007-2008 school year made reference to training for staff members in both data analysis and diverse learning styles that would align with the DCAP.

The district developed its crisis management plan in 2006-2007 through collaboration with teachers and administrators and the school resource officer and his supervisor, with the intention of full implementation in 2007-2008. A disaster drill took place during the 2004-2005 school year in conjunction with Fall River EMS personnel and the police and fire departments.

2004 Indicators

1.7. The district educates all of its students to meet or exceed the Competency Determination (CD) standard by their senior year.

EQA Rating for 2004: Poor

EQA Rating for 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the initial period of review (2000-2003), 93 percent of the Class of 2003 and 82 percent of the Class of 2004 earned a Competency Determination (CD), based on the DOE progress report of students attaining the CD released in 2004.

During the reexamination period under review (2004-2007), the CD attainment rate for the members of the class of 2006 was 93 percent. Administrators reported that only three members of the grade 12 cohort still needed to attain their Competency Determination. Teachers reported that they felt that their main responsibility for grade 10 students was to prepare them for the MCAS tests. As a group, teachers and administrators identified the open-response questions as a category of question type that presented the most challenges to students. They began an increased emphasis in 2005-2006 on answering such questions. Beginning in 2005-2006, the district scheduled students who did not pass the MCAS math test in grade 10 into a remediation class for MCAS mathematics. Students who did not pass the ELA test were already scheduled into a reading support class. All such students also received the services of a one-on-one tutor,

two hours per week, taken from vocational time. The MCAS support mathematics class was offered in addition to a regularly scheduled math class.

The Saturday MCAS support class was offered by invitation and open enrollment to students who had failed MCAS tests in grades 7 or 8, or who had never taken the tests due to enrollment in parochial or private schools. The Saturday support class ran for five weeks, four hours per day, and covered, among other things, test taking skills that focused on multiple choice and open-response questions as well as shop-related skills like scale drawings and angle measurement. There was a similar class offered in ELA as well.

3.1. The district employs a system of:

a. school evaluation that focuses on accountability for administrators;

b. program evaluation that focuses on accountability for administrators and staff;

c. personnel evaluation that focuses on accountability for all administrators, teachers, and staff.

EQA Rating for 2004: Poor

EQA Rating for 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the initial period of review, the district had used its evaluation system for both teachers and administrators inconsistently. Several interviews with administrators as well as a review of personnel files confirmed that the documented processes and timelines were always followed. Additionally, those staff members who were evaluated were not held specifically accountable for the performance of the students as a whole, schoolwide or by specific program area.

During the reexamination period under review, the superintendent's evaluation contained references to "improving student achievement," but it lacked specifics. The principal's evaluation did not refer to student assessment results beyond setting a goal of assisting students who failed the MCAS tests.

Program evaluation was considered to be "ongoing," but specific efforts were made to do so at various points during the reexamination period. In July 2005, for example, the district initiated a

curriculum review based upon the PIM process. One goal in the 2006-2007 SIP stated, "In order for effective teaching and learning to occur on a continuous basis, it is recognized that curriculum must be reviewed and revised annually." Goals were set to improve MCAS scores, but according to administrators the committee discontinued its work before 2006-2007 began. Other curriculum reviews were conducted, notably in mathematics, science, and ELA, but the reviews were not linked with specific MCAS goals, subgroup performance, or specific areas of improvement. There was no effort made to assign responsibility for improvement toward particular goals to any specific person.

EQA examiners reviewed 33 teacher personnel files selected at random. While there was no reference to student achievement specifically printed on the checklist evaluation form, examiners noted that most of the teacher evaluations contained some reference to improving student achievement scores. The references were brief and tended to be cursory, but they were present in the majority of evaluations. There seemed to be little attempt to use such references to hold teachers accountable for improving student achievement, however.

3.4. The district's evaluation procedure for administrators is aligned with the requirements of the Massachusetts Education Reform Act.

EQA Rating for 2004: Unsatisfactory

EQA Rating for 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the initial period of review, the district's evaluation process complied with the requirements of the Education Reform Act, as determined through an examination of the evaluation instrument for administrators and a review of the documented procedure. However, a review of all administrators' personnel files, as well as interviews with administrators, confirmed that the district was not following its own documented process. For example, the majority of the administrators' files (seven out of eight) did not contain timely evaluations.

During the reexamination period under review, district administrators were not adhering to their own evaluation procedures, as confirmed by a review of all nine administrators' personnel files and through interviews with administrators. EQA examiners accessed documentation that revealed that the administration had last formally reviewed the principal in September 2005, had

last evaluated the business manager in December 2004, and had last evaluated the supervisor of buildings and grounds in July 2000. All other administrators had been evaluated in 2006.

EQA examiners also observed that the dean of students had a social studies license that expired in 2004 and possessed no other certification. The team could not access the certification document for the business manager.

The current performance reviews that were on file for administrators subordinate to the superintendent were signed, incorporated components of education reform, and promoted growth and overall effectiveness. An examination of the Memorandum of Agreement, Article VIII, Section 4.0, revealed that "the school committee shall act on the recommendation of the superintendent-director for all other administrative and supervisory positions" may be in conflict with education reform regulations regarding the superintendent's authority.

Interviews with district leaders revealed that they had attended workshops on training and supervision of administrators. An analysis of narratives revealed that their skills were current.

3.5. <u>The district's evaluation procedure for teachers is aligned with the requirements of the Education Reform Act.</u>

EQA Rating for 2004: Unsatisfactory

EQA Rating for 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the initial period of review , the district was not following its own documented evaluation process, as revealed through a random sampling of 15 percent of teachers' personnel files and through interviews with administrators. For example, approximately half (7 out of 15) of the randomly selected teachers' files did not contain evaluations that had been done in a timely manner. Administrators explained that this was because they had a large number of responsibilities, and as a result they were not able to accomplish all assigned tasks. The process did comply with the requirements of the Education Reform Act, as revealed through an examination of the evaluation instrument that had been negotiated for teachers and a review of the documented procedure.

During the reexamination period under review, the district made an effort to improve its performance on teacher evaluations. For example, for 2004 the personnel folders selected contained a timely evaluation only 46.6 percent of the time. For 2007, EQA examiners reviewed 28.8 percent of the personnel folders, and the percentage of timely teacher evaluations found rose to 52.9 percent. Of those, EQA examiners determined that 94.9 percent met the standards of the Education Reform Act, 88.2 percent were informative, and 76.5 percent were instructive. The EQA considers a teacher evaluation to be informative if it contains information relative to the teacher's pedagogical performance and instructive if it provides recommendations to improve the instructional or classroom performance of the teacher.

At the time of the EQA reexamination visit, the district had negotiated a replacement evaluation system with the teachers association. According to administrators, the instrument was created to "meet state standards," but it was shortened greatly to improve the administrators' ability to conduct a "more focused" evaluation. The district plans to introduce the new form for the 2007-2008 school year, pending school committee approval.

7.1. The district ensures that every school in the district has identified its professional development needs. The district has developed and implemented a professional development plan to address these identified needs for all:

a. principals,

b. teachers, and

c. other professional staff, including paraprofessionals and teacher assistants.

EQA Rating for 2004: Poor

EQA Rating for 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the initial period of review, the district had no professional development plan. Examiners reviewed past Perkins plans that described some professional development initiatives suggested by the district since 2000. The district sent a team of four professional staff members to Nashville in 2000 and sent another group of administrators and vocational technical teachers to Association of Career and Technical Education conferences for professional development related

to their trade area. In January 2001, the district's superintendent received notification from the DOE that Greater Fall River was a candidate for a Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration Grant, because of low MCAS test scores. As part of the process, a representative sample of all staff members was asked to complete a district self-assessment guide. According to administrators, the selection of professional development offerings was a teacher-driven process. In June 2001, a site development workshop was conducted at which time the staff identified the active engagement of students in learning and academic/vocational technical integration as priorities. All staff members, including paraprofessionals, were invited to participate in this workshop. The Perkins plans shown to examiners contained general references to educational objectives but did not indicate how, when, and why professional development topics would be offered. A professional development plan for 2003-2004 was shown to examiners. It contained dates, providers, topics, locations, and outcomes.

During the reexamination period under review, the district had a document entitled Professional Development Plan in place as a part of its 2005-2006 District and School Improvement Plan. This plan had many of the features of a policy as well as a plan. In addition to the professional development plan, the district provided EQA examiners with a calendar of professional development events conducted during 2006-2007. Interviews with the professional development committee indicated that there was a plan in place making use of both the plan and the calendar to deliver effective professional development activities to the staff.

The professional development planning process showed evidence of an evolutionary practice that began with a faculty interest survey. Teachers completed a formal inventory that asked for suggestions. In addition, following each activity teachers evaluated the activity, and once again provided suggestions for further review. The committee discussed and further refined these suggestions using planning criteria. Committee members added internal requirements for the faculty suggestions that the proposed professional development activities were to be consistent with staff re-licensure requirements, and also that they last for at least 10 hours to be eligible for professional development points. In addition, the committee scheduled required staff training on topics such as sexual harassment, physical restraint, blood-borne pathogens, and other similar topics. A professional development calendar was prepared and distributed to staff, attendance was taken at all activities, and follow-up was conducted.

Activities in the plan fell into the categories of personal health and safety, the vocational curriculum frameworks, using technology, differentiated instruction, learning styles, and special education. There were no separate professional development activities for administrators, who were expected to participate in the same activities as other professional staff members. There was little evidence that the effectiveness of the professional development plan was monitored by increased or focused supervision or by administrative feedback. There was also little evidence that student achievement data or program analysis was a primary driving factor in the development of the plan or selection of the activities.

7.2. The district updates its Professional Development Plan annually and sets forth a budget for professional development within the confines of the foundation budget.

EQA Rating for 2004: Unsatisfactory

EQA Rating for 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

Although the district did not have a professional development plan during the initial period of review, funding for teacher workshops and other professional development activities was provided in the foundation budget. Examiners were shown a professional development calendar for the 2003 school year that included several workshops and activities.

During the reexamination period under review, the district had sufficient funds to conduct professional development activities. Professional development spending in the district was $102,904 in FY 2004, $99,625 in FY 2005, and $194,759 in FY 2006. Members of the professional development committee reported that there were no activities they requested for which funding was not available.

7.3. The district's Professional Development program is informed by the following:

a. analysis of student assessment data disaggregated by student subgroup populations,

b. evaluation results of programs and services, and

c. evaluations of professional staff and administrators.

EQA Rating for 2004: Unsatisfactory

EQA Rating for 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the initial period of EQA review, professional development programs were not informed by an analysis of student assessment data disaggregated by student subgroup, according to administrators in interviews. Some offerings, however, addressed diverse learning styles and other topics related to dealing with special populations. There was no indication that professional development was informed by the evaluation of programs and services. In interviews, administrators said that evaluation of vocational technical programs by advisory committees was inconsistent. Evaluation of professional staff or administrators did not inform professional development programs. In fact, few formal evaluations of administrators took place during the time under review.

During the reexamination period under review, there was little evidence that the analysis of student assessment data disaggregated by student subgroup populations was used in professional development planning, nor were evaluations of professional staff and administrators. Interviews with members of the professional development committee indicated that the primary sources of information on which to base professional development activities were staff interest surveys and changes in state program requirements. Some informal program evaluation results contributed to the results of the professional interest survey, however. For example, there were professional development activities related to the improvement of instruction provided to special education students. Administrators indicated that these activities were a "response to the increase in our population" of affected students. In addition, on the recommendation of the professional development committee, all staff members were to receive a copy of the book *The Special Education Student in the Regular Education Classroom*.

7.4. <u>The district's Professional Development programs include training in the teaching of the curriculum frameworks, participatory decision-making, community and parental involvement, and other skills required for the effective implementation of education reform.</u>

EQA Rating for 2004: Poor

EQA Rating for 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

At the time of the initial EQA site visit, administrators said in interviews that all teachers were given copies of the curriculum frameworks. An examination of curriculum guides showed that they did not align with the frameworks except in ELA and math. In the absence of a professional development plan, however, examiners could not confirm the inclusion of participatory decision-making or community and parental involvement in the professional development program.

During the reexamination period under review, the SIP included the district professional development plan. There was little evidence of training in participatory decision-making or in community and parental involvement, although there was ample evidence that both participatory decision-making and parental involvement were instrumental in the development of the SIP itself. Participatory decision-making was fostered by the use of the professional development committee, the integration committee, a grading committee, an evaluation committee, a portfolio committee, and the school improvement council. Each vocational program had the required program advisory committee, and the district had a general advisory committee that met annually with the school committee. Each of those committees required at least rudimentary training in participatory decision-making, but such training was informal and undocumented.

Also during the reexamination period, the Department of Education approved and released the 43 vocational curriculum frameworks. The district responded by arranging a three-credit course in using the new frameworks to be offered on-site through the services of a university.

7.5. <u>The district's Professional Development Plan and programs include: data analysis skills for staff, accommodations for diverse styles of learning, and are aligned with the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan.</u>

EQA Rating for 2004: Poor

EQA Rating for 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

At the time of the initial EQA review, administrators said in interviews that staff members were not trained in and most did not feel comfortable with data analysis. The grants administrator presented analysis of MCAS test data to administrators, teachers, and the school committee. Administrators said some professional development offerings addressed diverse learning styles.

There was no DCAP provided for the document review. However, at the time of the site visit the EQA examiners were shown a DCAP that the school committee approved in February 2004.

During the reexamination period under review, the district created and distributed a DCAP to the staff. A review of the professional development plan for the district provided little evidence of training in data analysis skills for staff. There was some evidence of training in learning styles. The proposed SIP for the 2007-2008 school year did, however, make reference to training for staff members both in data analysis and diverse learning styles that would align with the DCAP.

7.7. The district's Professional Development Plan is implemented to address and sustain the goals identified in the District Improvement Plan and individual School Improvement Plans.

EQA Rating for 2004: Unsatisfactory

EQA Rating for 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

At the time of the initial EQA sit visit, the School Improvement Plan made general references to professional development with goals such as "Stimulate increased participation in high level staff development and training" and "Computer accessibility for all staff and students with appropriate staff training on Internet and school network." Administrators agreed that they needed to strengthen the SIP and expand it to define professional development goals and other initiatives more clearly.

During the reexamination period under review, the district demonstrated that it had created a SIP that addressed weaknesses it identified from an analysis of the previous EQA report. The district presented evidence to the EQA examiners that it was actively engaged in implementing its SIP and continuing to try to improve the achievement of its students.

2007 Indicator

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

EQA Rating for 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The district developed its crisis management plan during the 2006-2007 school year with the intention of fully implementing it during the 2007-2008 school year. Both teachers and administrators indicated that they collaborated in the development of the plan, and involved the school resource officer and his supervisor in its development. While the plan was still in its draft stages, administrators planned for an opportunity to practice the implementation of the crisis part of the plan during the spring of 2007. Evacuation drills have been practiced annually as required.

In addition, for the reexamination period administrators reported that a disaster drill took place during the 2004-2005 school year in conjunction with Fall River EMS personnel and the police and fire departments. It was an activity conducted as a part of the health services program in the school training in first aid.

Standard V: Access, Participation, and Student Academic Support				
Ratings▼ Indicators►	**2.5**	**6.1**	**8.1**	**8.2**
Excellent				
Satisfactory	**2007**		**2007**	**2007**
Needs Improvement		**2007**		
Poor		**2004**		**2004**
Unsatisfactory	**2004**		**2004**	

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.

Findings:

- Greater Fall River initiated a teacher assistance team to provide intervention for students needing extraordinary help meeting academic and/or attendance standards.
- The district created three professional development committees, including one for vocational teachers, one for academic teachers, and one to look at integrated activities; there was little evidence of a systematic connection to either student achievement data or the SIP.
- The district provided support services for students who scored in the 'Warning/Failing' category on the middle school MCAS tests, or who were reading below grade level on the Stanford Achievement Test upon admission to the school.
- The district instituted an effective intervention to improve student attendance and measured the effect of the program using student attendance data.
- The school district discontinued an ineffective system of in-school suspension based upon student discipline data and planned a new disciplinary system for after the reexamination period.

Summary

Greater Fall River offered services to students needing additional help in attaining proficiency in ELA, mathematics, and science courses. Leveled classes, including honors sections, allowed

students to progress at appropriate levels for the students enrolled. The EXtra Time Educating & Nurturing Diman Students (EXTENDS) program provided a vehicle for additional tutoring and help with homework for students requiring it; the program operated on a voluntary basis. The Saturday MCAS support class provided four weeks of tutoring in ELA and mathematics as well as vocational skills support, with four hours per session. Title I services and preferential course placement were available for students who performed poorly on the grade 9 placement test.

The district did not use disaggregated data to plan services or activities for members of subgroup populations. With the exception of special education students, there was little differentiation between members of any subgroup population. When asked about subgroup participation, administrators and teachers repeated the equal access standard, "Anyone in this district can participate in any course or activity." Nonetheless, with the exception of students with special needs, it was not a district practice to encourage additional subgroup representation in courses or to provide additional programs or services for most subgroup members. Administrators and teachers reported that they chose to treat each student "as an individual."

The district attendance rates were similar to the statewide averages during the reexamination period. Despite this, the number of students categorized as chronically absent, according to data supplied by the district to the Department of Education, was 17.9, 20.6, and 18.3 percent during the school years 2004, 2005, and 2006, respectively. The district put into place a credit denial policy to attempt to control student absenteeism. The effectiveness of the program was unclear.

Administrators reported that student discipline was a concern during the reexamination period, with both in-school and out-of-school suspension rates approaching double the state averages. During 2005-2006 alone, for example, the district suspended 144 students from school for at least one day, yielding a rate of 11.0 percent compared to the state average of 5.8 percent. Further, 149 students received at least one day of in-school suspension during the same year, yielding a rate of 11.4 percent compared to the statewide rate of 3.4 percent. Administrators reported that the district was considering a new plan for student discipline for school year 2007-2008. Both retention rate and dropout rates were low in the district during the reexamination period, although the district had no mechanism in place for recovery of students who had previously dropped out of school.

2004 Indicators

2.5. The district collects and uses data on:

a. student attendance and evaluates the effects of student attendance on performance and achievement, and

b. staff attendance and evaluates the effects of staff attendance on staff performance and student achievement.

EQA Rating for 2004: Unsatisfactory

EQA Rating for 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the initial period under review (2000-2003), the district did not conduct data analyses related to either student or staff attendance, according to administrators in interviews and documentation submitted to the EQA.

During the reexamination period under review (2004-2007), the district had begun to track and monitor both student and staff attendance, and it had formalized procedures in place to do so. For students, the district used the Integrated Pupil Administrative Software System (IPass) student management system to maintain information on pupil demographics, student schedules, student discipline, and grade management, and to provide a portal allowing parents to monitor student progress. The student attendance policy was included in the student handbook provided to each student. It requires that any "student who exceeds four absences (excluding School Approved Absences) in shop or in an academic class that meets one (1) time per day or eight (8) absences in an academic class that meets two (2) times per day within one (1) trimester will receive a grade of no greater than a 60 percent for that trimester." The policy further differentiated between medical and parental excuses for student absence. In addition, dismissals and incidents of tardiness are counted in the mandatory attendance system. There was a due process system in place to ensure that students were not unfairly penalized.

Administrators reported that monitoring of staff attendance took place on three levels. The dean of students monitored staff attendance through the substitute teacher assignment system. A daily report was prepared and sent to the principal's office, which also maintained a record of teacher

attendance. According to the principal, he made the first contact with any teacher thought to be abusing contractual provisions for attendance. He also reported that, on occasion, he had elevated the case to the superintendent's office. The superintendent's office also tracked attendance, and maintained the official record of staff attendance.

6.1. District and school policies and practices require all staff and students to be in attendance.

EQA Rating for 2004: Poor

EQA Rating for 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the initial period of review, the district exhibited an attendance rate, except for the year 2000, of below the state average of 94.2 percent and significantly below the state expectation of 95 percent, based on a review of student attendance data from 1999-2002. The average number of days absent per student for those same years was significantly above the state average of 9.9. The student handbook for 2002-2003 included a revised attendance policy. That revision was reaffirmed by the administration in an August 2002 memo to the faculty regarding clarification of attendance procedures. The 2003-2004 handbook included a further revision of the district's attendance policy. In interviews, administrators pointed out that the district continued to monitor and review the effectiveness of the existing policy and made revisions accordingly for the upcoming year. As reported by the administration, the district intention was to engage the parents more fully in ensuring their children attend school. Attendance policy for staff was outlined in the teachers' contract. A review of the data revealed no significant teacher absences that would warrant further investigation.

During the reexamination period under review, the district improved its attendance rate to less than one percentage point below the state average. The first articulated goal in the 2006-2007 SIP was "The District and School Improvement Council recommends that all students enrolled at Diman have a 95 percent, or better, attendance rate.

During the prior review, the district reported a student attendance rate of 93.1 percent in 2003. In 2004, it improved to 93.3 percent. In 2005, it climbed once again to 93.4 percent, a figure that it matched in 2006. The statewide average for student attendance was 94.5 percent.

8.1. The district has adopted and is implementing a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP), which may be a component of the District Improvement Plan (DIP), to assist principals in ensuring that all efforts have been made to meet students' needs in regular education.

EQA Rating for 2004: Unsatisfactory

EQA Rating for 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

At the time of initial EQA document review, the district had not submitted a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP). However, during the site visit the district submitted to the review team a school committee approved DCAP dated February 12, 2004. There was no evidence that the submitted plan was being implemented.

During the reexamination period under review, the district had developed a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP). Although the document submitted did not indicate a date for its completion or review, the EQA monitor's report for February-June 2006 stated that the district created it in January 2004 and expected to review it again in September 2005. Administrators told EQA examiners that they could not recall reviewing or revising elements in the DCAP, but that a DCAP utilization presentation to the Diman staff occurred on September 5, 2006. Further, the district implemented some components of the DCAP, including increased professional development, formalizing the teacher mentoring program, and incorporating the advisory boards in curriculum review. The district provided staff development in a variety of topics that included differentiated instructional strategies, the teacher assistant team (TAT) pre-referral process, and Wilson reading techniques. Additionally, a review of documents revealed that the district had incorporated elements from the DCAP related to the establishment of a process for the regular review and revision of the curriculum and the provision of additional professional development for faculty into the 2006-2007 District and School Improvement Plan.

8.2. The district has a DCAP that is designed to assist the regular classroom teacher in:

a. analyzing and accommodating diverse learning styles of all students in the regular classroom, and

b. providing appropriate services and support within the regular education program.

EQA Rating for 2004: Poor

EQA Rating for 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

At the time of the initial EQA review, there was no evidence of a DCAP in place to assist the regular classroom teacher in analyzing and accommodating diverse learning styles of all students in the regular classroom. However, there was evidence that the district had instituted several practices aimed at accomplishing some of the requirements of the DCAP. For example, there was documented evidence that the district had initiated a three-part professional development series for teachers in the district. The program, although not yet completed for all faculty members at the time of the initial review, focused on three main areas: classroom accommodation, standards for all students, and behavior management. In addition, according to the administration, samples of accommodation sheets were prepared for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Examples of those were shared with the visiting team. According to the administration, accommodations were prepared for each student whose IEP called for them.

Beginning in 2003-2004 documented evidence existed that a program for English language learners (ELLs) was initiated. A description of the service indicated that the district was providing three options for students who did not speak English or whose native language was not English. Evidence indicated that students had the option of a sheltered English immersion program, a mainstream program for English as a second language (ESL), or a fully mainstreamed program. Evidence existed in documentation that the district employed four guidance counselors, one of whom was a bilingual counselor. All guidance personnel also had a school adjustment background. In addition, the district had contracts with a school psychologist and social worker. Also, there was a guidance counselor who specifically dealt with issues surrounding the non-traditional student (female students enrolled in traditionally male occupations). Interviews with the administration revealed that the counselors were intervention

specialists who provided the link between the student and the administration. Their primary responsibility was to assist the student in staying in school. Other services described by the administration that supported students were peer tutoring, peer mediation for crisis intervention, MCAS test remediation, and tutoring.

During the reexamination period under review, regular classroom teachers received information about the DCAP from an outside consultant during a presentation on September 5, 2006. Submitted documents and interviews confirmed that the presentation included an overview of the DCAP, review of the school's pre-referral process through the teacher assistant team, and a disability awareness update. Additional resources provided to teachers included a list of regular classroom modifications, educational interventions for students with attention deficit disorder (ADD), and regulations pertaining to student records.

The TAT, established in the 2005-2006 school year, provided assistance to teachers experiencing a full range of problems with students in their classrooms. Members of the TAT received a stipend for their participation on the team and met regularly after school. Teachers completed forms and submitted them to the guidance department. Interviews with several members of the TAT indicated the number of referrals varied from one to four per meeting.

In 2005, the district developed a special education strategic plan that included goals to help regular education teachers analyze significant areas of weakness that selected students may be experiencing and to provide extra support services for all students. For teachers to gain more information about student skills, abilities, and progress, the special education department purchased specific assessments with compatible scoring software. Although the strategic plan identified a train-the-trainer approach with the intent to teach volunteer members from each academic department how to use the new testing materials, to date the district has not provided the training. To expand instructional support for students, in October 2005 the district implemented the EXTENDS after-school homework assistance program. Through the TAT process and the guidance and special education departments, teachers referred students for the program. Additionally, the school provided transportation for students at no cost.

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													✓	**1**
Satisfactory	✓		✓	✓	**NA**	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			**9**
Needs Improvement		✓										✓		**2**
Unsatisfactory														

Rather than reexamine the district only on those 2004 indicators on which the district was rated 'Poor' or 'Unsatisfactory,' the EQA conducted a full examination of the district on Standard VI covering the period 2004-2007.

VI. Financial and Asset Management Effectiveness and Efficiency

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

Standard Rating: Satisfactory

Findings:

- The district did not meet its net school spending requirement for any year of the period under reexamination. It did not meet requirements from FY 1998 through FY 2006.
- Because of high student enrollment and limited capacity of the student lunchroom, the district had four lunch periods, with the first lunch beginning at 10:49 a.m.
- A tour of the shops confirmed that they were well equipped with state of the art machinery and tools. However, in interviews with academic teachers, some expressed that there was an inequitable distribution of instructional resources.
- The district had invested in complete systems such as cameras, alarms, locking devices, and communications to ensure student safety.

Summary

The district developed its budget through a participatory process. Central administrators began the process in January by estimating Chapter 70 aid and member district assessments. Academic and vocational administrators then received preparation documents from the central administration. Beginning with the FY 2007 budget period, the preparation documents contained student achievement data to enable school administrators to develop their equipment, supplies, and materials requests based on the analysis of those data. When school administrators returned their budget requests, the central office combined the individual budgets to form a working document. School administrators then met with central administrators to discuss their requests. The superintendent presented the budget to the school committee in March, and it approved it after a series of meetings. Central staff and some school committee members met with the mayor, finance committee, and selectmen of the sending districts. The budgets were finally voted at the annual town meetings of all four sending districts.

The district's budget and supplemental funding were adequate to provide for effective instruction and operational resources. Chapter 70 aid to the district was level funded from FY 2002 to FY 2003 and decreased by $787,427, or 7.1 percent, from FY 2003 to FY 2004. Since FY 2004, Chapter 70 aid and assessments from sending districts have increased each year. Administrators, in interviews, stated that they have recovered from the level funding and decreased funding of the 2002-2004 period. The district's operating budget increased by 7.0 percent from FY 2004 to FY 2005 and by 11.2 percent from FY 2005 to FY 2006.

In interviews with school administrators and teachers, examiners learned that supplies and materials were adequate in most areas, textbooks were purchased when needed, funding for professional development was "not a problem," and instructional software was updated. A tour of the shops confirmed that they were well equipped with state of the art machinery and tools.

The district used current software programs for its budgeting, financial controls, and purchasing. Department heads had terminals on their desks with software that allowed them to submit requisitions and to monitor their budgets online. The EQA team examined the duties of the district treasurer and the school business manager and determined them to be in accordance with the regulations that separated their duties.

The district's facilities consisted of one building that was well maintained but was reaching its maximum enrollment. Student enrollment in the district in 2006 was 1,311 students, and maximum student capacity was listed at 1,380 students. Because of the student enrollment and the limited capacity of the student lunchroom, the district was required to have four lunch periods; despite this, the lunchroom appeared crowded. The facility had extensive security systems such as cameras, alarms, locking devices, and communications to assure student safety.

2007 Indicators

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district developed its budget through an open, participatory process. Central administrators stated that preparation began in January when the district received and then reviewed preliminary Chapter 70 aid from the state and the assessments from sending districts. The administration began to evaluate staffing and fixed costs such as insurance and utilities. In March, central office sent school administrators budget forms that enabled them to request funding for repairs, equipment maintenance contracts, and supplies. School administrators forwarded budget requests to central administration when they were completed.

In March, the superintendent met with school and central administrators to prepare the preliminary budget. In an interview, members of the school committee stated that they received a preliminary budget draft developed by the superintendent, assistant superintendent, and business manager, which they reviewed and discussed at an open meeting. The superintendent pointed out to them the new aspects of the budget. An interview with a parent focus group indicated that parents did not have any input into the budget. The school committee approved the budget in May. The committee also held a legally required public hearing during this period. In addition, during the budget process the superintendent and other central administrators met with officials of the sending communities, the mayor of Fall River, and the finance committees

and selectmen of the towns. One school committee member stated to examiners that he accompanied the superintendent to budget meetings in his community. During the late spring, each sending school district held an annual town meeting and approved the budget submitted by the superintendent. The district sent approved copies of the budget to each community.

The budget document was clear, comprehensive, complete, current, and understandable. Regulation 41.051(b) Regional School District Budget stated, "The budget shall identify each separate revenue source, and the amount estimated for each revenue." The document was a line item budget by Department of Education account codes and further by each specific shop budget. It contained two years of budget history. It also delineated the community assessment amounts, the number of students, and the foundation and transportation costs by sending district. In addition, the budget detailed every employee in the district by salary category, rate of pay, total wages, and all other entitlements such as longevity and degree stipends.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The district developed the budget and allocated resources to a limited degree based on the ongoing analysis of student assessment data. There was little evidence presented that the district used disaggregated data to assure the budget's effectiveness in supporting improved achievement of subgroups of students, such as special education and economically disadvantaged students; however, data were used to some extent in budgeting for the general student population. District administrators indicated that the staff continually reviewed data to make decisions related to funding. An example cited was that the grade 9 students entering the vocational school were not all at the same level because they entered from a number of schools. Math and English tests were developed and administered to grade 8 students to assess the level of each student. A summer reading program was established and books and packets were purchased for the program.

The budget form used by administrators when they prepared their budgets contained areas to enable them to request funding for repairs, equipment maintenance contracts, and supplies. The form also contained information about estimated enrollments and ELA and math data on their students and the school in general to assist them in their budget requests. The design of the form allowed administrators to analyze student assessment data when preparing their budget. However, examiners did not observe evidence that this addition to the budget preparation process began before the 2007 budget year

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The sources of funding for the financial operation of this district consisted mainly of Chapter 70 aid, assessments to member districts, and federal and state grants. The Chapter 70 aid as a percent of actual net school spending (NSS) for the period under review was 84.7 percent in 2004; 86.3 percent in 2005; and 79.5 percent in 2006. Chapter 70 aid to the district was level funded from 2002 to 2003. Chapter 70 aid was $10,259,130 in 2004, which was a decrease of $787,427 from 2003. Chapter 70 aid in 2005 was $11,222,243, an increase of 9.4 percent from 2004. Chapter 70 aid in 2006 was $11,587,076, an increase of 3.3 percent. Administrators stated that assessments received from member districts increased during the period under review.

The combination of Chapter 70 aid and local revenues did not exceed the NSS requirements of the education reform formula for the period under review. For FY 2004, NSS by the district was $140,091 under the requirement. For FY 2005, NSS by the district was $393,329 under the requirement. For FY 2006, the district NSS was $596,795 under the requirement. The district did not exceed NSS requirements from at least FY 1998 to FY 2006.

Administrators stated they have recovered from the level funded and decreased Chapter 70 aid reimbursements during the period 2002 to 2004. There was evidence that during the period

under review the district's budget and supplemental funding were adequate to provide for effective instructional practices and to provide for adequate operational resources. Operating budget expenditures in 2003 were $12,652,328 and in 2004 were $12,582,528. Operating budget expenditures in 2005 were $13,447,845, an increase of 7.0 percent. The operating budget for 2006 was $15,113,162, an increase of 11.2 percent.

In 2004 community assessments increased by $153,380. In 2005 community assessments increased by $456,822. In 2006 community assessments increased by $1,169,393. The district maintained an excess and deficiency during the period under review that exceeded $5 million and had no outstanding debt obligations.

Professional development spending in the district was $102,904 in 2004, $99,625 in 2005, and $194,759 in 2006. Textbook spending in the district was $80,216 in 2004, $162,638 in 2005, and $178,356 in 2006. Instructional equipment spending in the district was $119,525 in 2004, $159,501 in 2005, and $478,860 in 2006.

Special education expenditures averaged 3.5 percent of the operating budget during the period under review. The enrollment of special education students was 9.2 percent of the total student population in 2006.

The community annually provided sufficient financial resources to ensure educationally sound programs. School committee members stated that sending districts often complained but realized the state determines the assessments. One school committee member acknowledged, "Only if there was a dire need would I ask the sending districts for more money, but it has not been necessary to date."

In interviews, school administrators told examiners that, in general, supplies and materials were adequate and that no budget freezes had occurred during any operational period throughout the period under review. Teachers' association representatives stated in an interview that supplies and materials were adequate, textbooks were purchased when needed, and the software was updated. They reported that the machine shop was one of the best equipped in the state. Interviews with other school administrators revealed that neither the budget for professional development funds nor the ability to attend educational conferences was a problem. They stated

that money was a problem some time ago but that was no longer the case. At another administrative interview, members stated that on occasion surplus funds were made available to them to purchase supplies and materials. However, at an interview with teachers, a comment was made that some teachers bring in their own laptops and that there was some sense that the approval for the purchase of supplies and materials by staff was not always done in an equitable manner.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district, as part of its budget development, implemented an evaluation-based review process to determine the cost effectiveness of some of its programs. The district's Progress Report on Attainment of EQA Standards for February-June 2006 stated, "The district has allocated its resources by increasing the number of faculty, thus decreasing the average class size.

Administrators stated that they had accomplished an extensive review of their health insurance program and were able to offer the same amount of benefits at a reduced cost to the district.

The district used cooperative and state purchasing opportunities to purchase supplies and it had evaluated its student transportation program. It had installed energy efficient boilers, and participated in the National Grid energy program.

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

Rating: Not applicable

Evidence

This requirement is not applicable to regional vocational technical school districts.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The sources of funding for the financial operation of the district consisted mainly of Chapter 70 aid, assessments to member districts, and federal and state grants. The Chapter 70 aid as a percentage of actual net school spending for the period under review was 84.7 percent in 2004; 86.3 percent in 2005; and 76.6 percent in 2006. Chapter 70 aid to the district was level funded from 2002 to 2003. Chapter 70 aid was $10,259,130 in 2004, which was a decrease of $787,427 from 2003. Chapter 70 aid in 2005 was $11,222,243, an increase of 9.4 percent from 2004. Chapter 70 aid in 2006 was $11,587,076, an increase of 3.3 percent. Administrators stated that assessments to member district increased during the period under review.

The combination of Chapter 70 aid and local revenues did not exceed the NSS requirements of the education reform formula for the period under review. In FY 2004, NSS by the district was $140,091 or 1.1 percent under requirements. In FY 2005, NSS by the district was $393,329 or 2.9 percent under requirements. In FY 2006, the NSS by the district was $47,529 or 0.3 percent under requirements. The district did not exceed NSS requirements from at least fiscal year 1998 to 2006.

Administrators stated they have recovered from the level funded and decreased Chapter 70 aid reimbursements during the period 2002 to 2004.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district made regular, timely, accurate, and complete financial reports to the school committee, appropriate administrators, the staff, and the public. Financial reports were prepared

and distributed monthly to all principals, directors, coordinators, and grant managers. School administrators had access online to the status of their budgets. Other financial reports were generated as needed. School finance administrators stated that they reconciled their budget status with the district treasurer every month. Examiners reviewed the appropriation detail reports prepared by the district and determined that they contained detailed information by DOE account codes and included the original budget, any adjustments, expenditures year to date, outstanding encumbrances, and unexpended balances. The district reviewed weekly cash balances maintained on an Excel spreadsheet developed by the district and determined that they were monitored in an effective manner. Records of deposits and withdrawals in all three banks used by the district were complete and detailed.

Examiners interviewed the district treasurer and determined that the duties of the treasurer were separate from the district's financial operations in accordance with regulations and that the treasurer reported directly to the school committee. The treasurer prepared quarterly cash reports for the school committee. Examiners reviewed a sample of federal and state required reports and determined that they were accurate and filed on time.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district used efficient accounting technology that integrated administrative and department level financial information. The district used the Fundsense software program for budget monitoring and requisition and purchase order placement. Requisitions were prepared on terminals at the various departments and transferred electronically to central administration to go through an approval process and conversion into purchase orders. Department heads had access to their budgets online but could not overdraw their accounts.

The district used forecast mechanisms and control procedures to ensure spending was within fiscal budget limits. Any budget transfers required central administration approval. Administrators monitored salary and utility expenditures and forecasts through the Fundsense software program.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district had a system in place to pursue, acquire, monitor, and coordinate grants. In fiscal year 2004, the district received $829,510 in federal and state grants. In fiscal year 2005, the district received $794,645 in federal and state grants. In fiscal year 2006, the district received $876,495 in federal and state grants. The major grants the district received were for the Title I program, Special Education 94-142, and the Perkins grant.

Grants were monitored in the same manner as the general budget. Each grant had its own account structure and an individual responsible to monitor its progress and expenditures. An administrator acknowledged that if not all funds in a budget could be used the balance was returned to the state.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district had a system in place to ensure compliance with state procurement laws. The school business manager had MCPPO credentials. Examiners sampled formal bids placed by the district during the period under review and found them to be in proper order. The district was a member of a purchasing collaborative for school supplies and materials. The district also used the state procurement process.

Examiners reviewed independent audit reports, single audit reports, and end of year compliance reports for all years of the period under review and determined that the district had addressed any findings. In interviews with school finance personnel it was stated that the present independent auditing company had been serving the district for over five years, but during that period a larger firm had acquired it.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district did not have a formal published preventative maintenance program to maximize and prolong the use of the district's facility assets, but interviews with district personnel indicated that the district was accomplishing the substance of a preventative maintenance program. The district had maintenance service contracts with outside vendors to provide service to the shops, such as examining all motors twice per year. The district had in-house capability to monitor exhaust fans, heating and ventilating equipment, and changing filters. It had an established e-mail-based maintenance repair program in which teachers could e-mail their maintenance needs to a central location in the school. The district had accomplished such maintenance improvements as the installation of beam deflection sensors to monitor roof load, and the implementation of a hazardous material emergency containment plan.

The Coordinated Program Review (CPR) of 2003 stated, "The facility is conducive to learning, the district has made extensive efforts to ensure building is handicapped accessible."

Examiners reviewed the existing conditions report of the school completed by the Massachusetts School Building Authority in 2006. The district received a rating of '1,' which indicated "Building is in good condition, with few or no building systems needing attention."

However, the NEASC 2003 report recommended the hiring of additional maintenance personnel, which was also a recommendation NEASC made in its 1993 visit. Examiners, when visiting classrooms, noted a few instances where ceiling tiles needed replacement and surfaces required repainting.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The district did not have a formal long-term capital plan, but administrators expressed awareness of the district's physical needs in interviews, and said they were planning to address them.

The school was approaching its maximum student capacity of 1,380 students as stated in the NEASC report. The enrollment for the 2006 school year was 1,311 students, according to DOE information. The major problem associated with increased enrollment observed by examiners was that the school was required to have four lunch periods per day because of the size of the student lunch area. Interviews with examiners revealed that the district was planning to construct additional space and relocate adjacent programs to allow expansion of the lunchroom.

An interview with school committee members revealed, "The school population is getting too large for the facility. We are reviewing now for possible attention later in the year." The NEASC report of 2003 recommended "Expanding facilities to accommodate growth" and "Resolving space limitations."

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

Rating: Excellent

Evidence

The school was secure and had systems to ensure student safety. The Massachusetts School Building Authority report of May 2006 reported that the school had 63 interior and exterior surveillance cameras and a full complement of intrusion alarms. The NEASC report commended the school for "ongoing improvement of security by expanding use of scan cards, and additional cameras."

Examiners observed that district personnel monitored exteriors doors when students were entering before the beginning of school, and these doors were secure when school began. After school started, only security card swipes could open doors. District personnel who had a direct line of sight from their station to the main entrance monitored that entrance . A police officer in uniform and full equipment was assigned to the building. A second employee was also stationed in the school halls as a security observer. A number of interior doors were secured and access could only be obtained using a scan card.

Examiners also observed that district personnel constantly maintained communication through cell and two-way phones and a loudspeaker system that could alert all personnel.

The district had also installed other applications to have a secure system to ensure student safety, such as installation of beam deflection sensors to monitor roof load, installation of a fire suppression (sprinkler) system, upgrading of the generator, a computer monitoring system of the environmental control system, and implementation of a hazardous material emergency containment plan.

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	1,154	3.4	10,230,472	6.2	992,797	7,705,990	11.8	8,698,787	10.9	8,876,268	9.1	177,481	2.0
FY98	1,209	4.8	10,994,541	7.5	1,024,559	8,713,956	13.1	9,738,515	12.0	9,482,526	6.8	-255,989	-2.6
FY99	1,171	-3.1	11,031,248	0.3	1,325,741	9,037,368	3.7	10,363,109	6.4	10,203,006	7.6	-160,103	-1.5
FY00	1,200	2.5	11,298,002	2.4	1,286,870	10,324,787	14.2	11,611,657	12.0	11,456,761	12.3	-154,896	-1.3
FY01	1,221	1.8	11,898,371	5.3	1,470,042	10,583,225	2.5	12,053,267	3.8	11,789,091	2.9	-264,176	-2.2
FY02	1,222	0.1	12,410,053	4.3	1,654,450	11,046,557	4.4	12,701,007	5.4	12,440,349	5.5	-260,658	-2.1
FY03	1,189	-2.7	12,293,308	-0.9	1,715,263	11,046,557	0.0	12,761,820	0.5	12,225,470	-1.7	-536,350	-4.2
FY04	1,169	-1.7	11,716,773	-4.7	1,993,993	10,259,130	-7.1	12,253,123	-4.0	12,113,032	-0.9	-140,091	-1.1
FY05	1,231	5.3	13,254,188	13.1	2,172,036	11,222,243	9.4	13,394,279	9.3	13,000,950	7.3	-393,329	-2.9
FY06	1,306	6.1	14,786,630	11.6	3,592,883	11,587,076	3.3	15,179,959	13.3	14,583,164	12.2	-596,795	-3.9

	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	8,865	6,678	7,692	75.3	85.0	86.8	86.8
FY98	9,094	7,208	7,843	79.3	88.6	86.2	91.9
FY99	9,420	7,718	8,713	81.9	93.9	92.5	88.6
FY00	9,415	8,604	9,547	91.4	102.8	101.4	90.1
FY01	9,745	8,668	9,655	88.9	101.3	99.1	89.8
FY02	10,156	9,040	10,180	89.0	102.3	100.2	88.8
FY03	10,339	9,291	10,282	89.9	103.8	99.4	90.4
FY04	10,023	8,776	10,362	87.6	104.6	103.4	84.7
FY05	10,767	9,116	10,561	84.7	101.1	98.1	86.3
FY06	11,322	8,872	11,166	78.4	102.7	98.6	79.5

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.