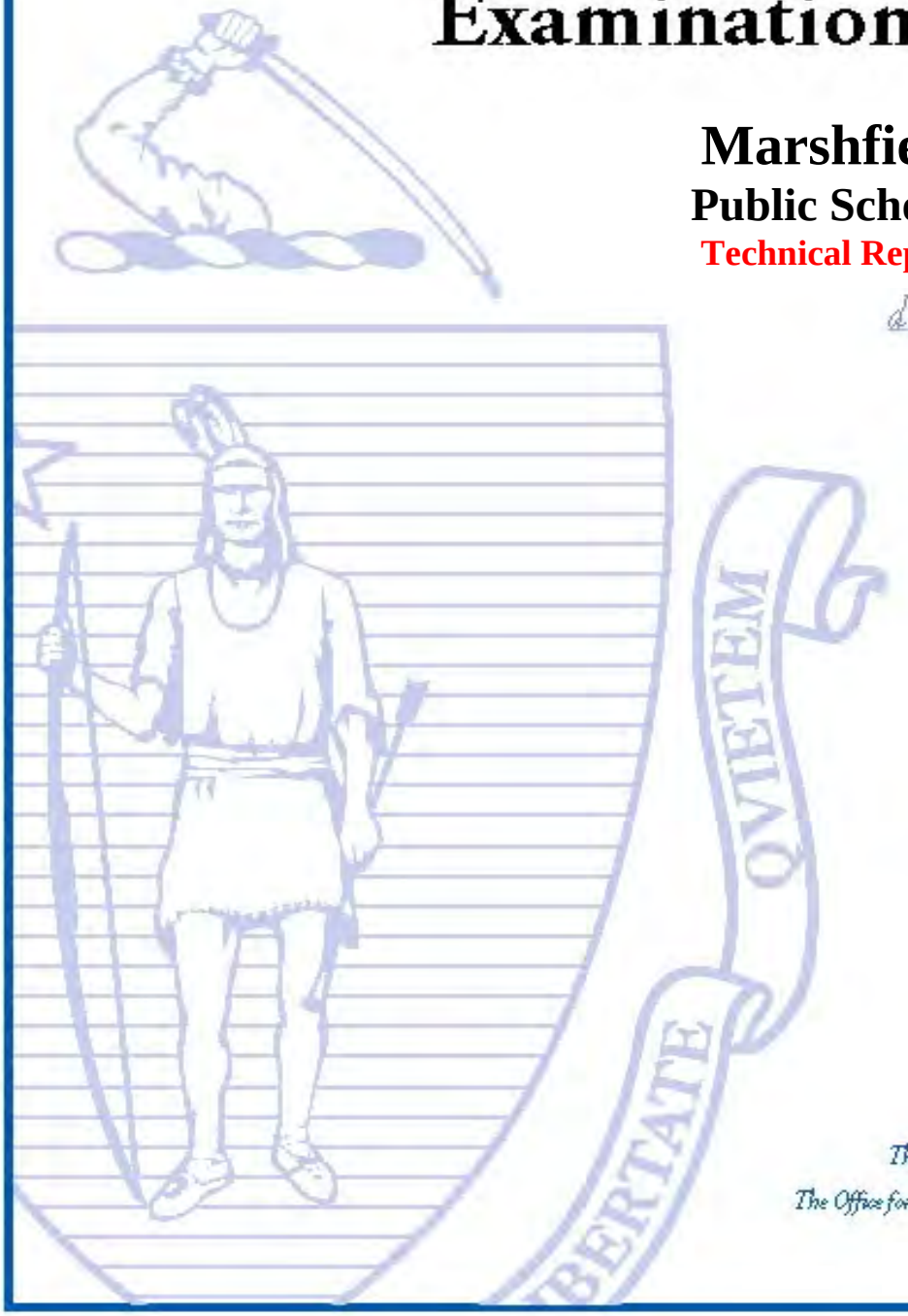
The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

School District Examination Report:

Marshfield
Public Schools
Technical Report

data driven
standards based
learner centered



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

2004 - 2006

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Office of Educational Quality and Accountability

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The Educational Management Audit Council accepted this report and its findings at their meeting of October 1, 2007.

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

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Executive Summary

The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA) examined the Marshfield Public Schools in February 2007. With an average proficiency index of 88 proficiency index (PI) points in 2006 (94 PI points in English language arts and 82 PI points in math), the district is considered a 'High' performing school system based on the Department of Education's rating system (found in Appendix A of this report), with achievement above the state average. More than two-thirds of Marshfield's students scored at or above the proficiency standard on the 2006 administration of the MCAS tests.

District Overview

The coastal town of Marshfield is located in Plymouth County in southeastern Massachusetts. Historically, Marshfield developed as a series of distinct villages, shaped by the coastal and riverine geography, and was noted for farming, fishing, and shipbuilding. Today the town is a seaside resort community. Its population is relatively wealthy and well educated. The largest sources of employment within the community are accommodation and food services, retail trade, and health care and social assistance. The town has a Board of Selectmen/Town Administrator/Open Town Meeting form of municipal government.

According to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR), Marshfield had a median family income of $76,541 in 1999, compared to the statewide median family income of $63,706, ranking it 85 out of the 351 cities and towns in the commonwealth. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the town had a total population of 24,324 with a population of 5,041 school-age children, or 21 percent of the total. Of the total households in Marshfield, 40 percent were households with children under 18 years of age, and 20 percent were households with individuals age 65 years or older. Thirty-six percent of the population age 25 years or older held a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 33 percent statewide.

According to the Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE), in 2005-2006 the Marshfield Public Schools had a total enrollment of 4,679. The demographic composition in the district was: 96.8 percent White, 1.2 percent Hispanic, 0.7 percent Asian, 0.6 percent African-American, 0.3 percent Native American, 0.3 percent multi-race, non-Hispanic; 0.2 percent limited English proficient (LEP), 7.2 percent low income, and 16.4 percent special education. Ninety-five

percent of school-age children in Marshfield attended public schools. The district offers school choice, and one student from another community attended school in Marshfield. A total of 62 students from Marshfield attended public schools elsewhere, including 41 students who attended charter schools.

The district has seven schools serving grades pre-kindergarten through 12, including five elementary schools serving grades pre-kindergarten through 5, one middle school serving grades 6 through 8, and one high school serving grades 9 through 12. Marshfield's administrative team consists of a superintendent, an assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, an assistant superintendent for business and finance, and a director of special education. Each school has a principal; the Eames Way Elementary School also has one teaching assistant principal, the other four elementary schools each have two teaching assistant principals, and both the middle school and high school each have two assistant principals. The district has a five-member school committee.

In FY 2006, Marshfield's per pupil expenditure (preliminary), based on appropriations from all funds, was $9,500, compared to $11,196 statewide, ranking it 246 out of 325 of 328 school districts reporting data. The district exceeded the state net school spending requirement in each year of the period under review. From FY 2004 to FY 2006, net school spending increased from $36,585,820 to $39,294,336; Chapter 70 aid increased from $11,635,063 to $12,057,258; the required local contribution increased from $18,759,633 to $20,214,215; and the foundation enrollment increased from 4,501 to 4,518. Chapter 70 aid as a percentage of actual net school spending decreased from 32 to 31 percent over this period. From FY 2004 to FY 2005, total curriculum and instruction expenditures as a percentage of total Schedule 1 net school spending reported in the End of Year Pupil and Financial Report decreased from 70 to 69 percent.

Context

The superintendent of schools in Marshfield is now completing his second year in that role. Prior to becoming superintendent, he was the assistant superintendent and became the superintendent in August 2005. The district has had a succession of superintendents, and his elevation is viewed as positive for the district by interviewees who said that a consistent message is now being delivered by the superintendent and the assistant superintendent for curriculum.

The superintendent discussed the need for "connectivity" in the district as exemplified by noting the need to ensure that the curriculum is similar in all five elementary schools, and that there is vertical articulation from pre-kindergarten to grade 12. According to him, the curricular motto of the district includes what he calls "the three Rs," rigor, relevance, and relationships.

The assistant superintendent for curriculum is working with the superintendent and others to implement many of the prioritized initiatives in the district. They have plans "in place," but explain that the district now needs time to implement them. One of the major curricular goals includes revisions to the existing curriculum format, which will include instructional strategies and outcome-based objectives as well as the implementation of assessment practices.

The Town of Marshfield has not adequately funded the district's budget in the past, and in 2005-2006 the per pupil expenditure was below the state average, yet students' scores in the district were higher than the state average. In the 2006-2007 school year, the school committee, the selectmen, and the advisory and finance committees recommended a $4.5 million override for a May 2007 vote to restore staff and services eliminated in FY 2007. This was later changed to two override proposals, one for $4 million to cover FY 2008 through FY 2010 and the other for $2 million to cover FY 2008 only. The $4 million override failed but the $2 million override passed.

Marshfield High School has infrastructure needs. The building is 40 years old, and both the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) evaluation and the Department of Education's Coordinated Program Review (CPR) have cited its major needs. The facilities deficiencies include areas of the locker room and the inability for handicap accessibility to those areas, as well as other "space and health and safety issues." In August 2006, a letter from NEASC to the high school principal stated, "Failure to resolve these issues in a timely manner may prompt the Commission to consider placing the school on Warning." The district intends to commission a study in the $50,000 range to determine whether to build a new high school or renovate the existing school.

The EQA Examination Process

The Massachusetts Legislature created the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability in July 2000 to provide independent and objective programmatic and financial audits of the 350-

plus school districts that serve the cities and towns of the commonwealth. The agency is the accountability component of the Education Reform Act of 1993, and was envisioned in that legislation. The EQA works under the direction of a five-person citizen council, appointed by the governor, known as the Educational Management Audit Council (EMAC).

From February 12-15, 2007, the EQA conducted an independent examination of the Marshfield Public Schools for the period 2004-2006, with a primary focus on 2006. This examination was based on the EQA's six major standards of inquiry that address the quality of educational management, which are: 1) Leadership, Governance, and Communication; 2) Curriculum and Instruction; 3) Assessment and Program Evaluation; 4) Human Resource Management and Professional Development; 5) Access, Participation, and Student Academic Support; and 6) Financial and Asset Management Effectiveness and Efficiency. The report is based on the source documents, correspondence sent prior to the on-site visit, interviews with the representatives from the school committee, the district leadership team, school administrators, and teachers, and additional documents submitted while in the district. The report does not consider documents, revised data, or comments that may have surfaced after the onsite visit.

For the period under examination, 2004-2006, this report finds Marshfield to be a 'High' performing school district with an average proficiency index of 88 proficiency index (PI) points in 2006, marked by student achievement that was 'Very High' in English language arts (ELA) and 'High' in math on the 2004-2006 MCAS tests. Over this period, student performance was flat in ELA and declined by one PI point in math, which widened the district's average proficiency gap by eight percent.

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

Summary of Analysis of MCAS Student Achievement Data

Are all eligible students participating in required state assessments?

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

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

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

- Marshfield's average proficiency index (API) on the MCAS tests in 2006 was 88 proficiency index (PI) points, 10 PI points greater than that statewide. Marshfield's average proficiency gap, the difference between its API and the target of 100, in 2006 was 12 PI points.
- In 2006, Marshfield's proficiency gap in ELA was six PI points, 10 PI points narrower than the state's average proficiency gap in ELA. This gap would require an average improvement in performance of less than one PI point annually to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP). Marshfield's proficiency gap in math was 18 PI points in 2006, 10 PI points narrower than the state's average proficiency gap in math. This gap would require an average improvement of more than two PI points per year to achieve AYP. Marshfield's proficiency gap in STE was also 18 PI points, 11 PI points narrower than that statewide.

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

Between 2003 and 2006, Marshfield's MCAS performance showed improvement overall and in ELA, math, and STE. However, most of the gains overall and in ELA and math were made between 2003 and 2004.

- The percentage of students scoring in the 'Advanced' and 'Proficient' categories rose by four percentage points between 2003 and 2006, while the percentage of students in the 'Warning/Failing' category decreased by two percentage points. The average proficiency gap in Marshfield narrowed from 15 PI points in 2003 to 13 PI points in 2006. This resulted in an improvement rate, or a closing of the proficiency gap, of 13 percent.
- Over the three-year period 2003-2006, ELA performance in Marshfield showed improvement, at an average of more than one-half PI point annually. This resulted in an improvement rate of 22 percent, a rate lower than that required to meet AYP.

- Math performance in Marshfield also improved during this period at an average of nearly one PI point annually. This resulted in an improvement rate of 13 percent, also a rate lower than that required to meet AYP.
- Between 2004 and 2006, Marshfield also had improved STE performance, increasing by approximately two PI points over the two-year period. This resulted in an improvement rate of nine percent.

Do MCAS test results vary among subgroups of students?

Of the six measurable subgroups in Marshfield in 2006, the gap in performance between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups was 16 PI points in ELA and 25 PI points in math (regular education students, students with disabilities, respectively).

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

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

The performance gap in Marshfield between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in ELA narrowed from 20 PI points in 2003 to 19 PI points in 2006, and the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in math narrowed from 29 to 27 PI points over this period.

- All student subgroups, with the exception of low-income students, had improved performance in ELA between 2003 and 2006. The most improved subgroups in ELA were students with disabilities and non low-income students.
- In math, all subgroups in Marshfield, again with the exception of low-income students, showed improved performance between 2003 and 2006. The most improved subgroup in math was students with disabilities.

Standard Summaries

Leadership, Governance, and Communication

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

At the time of the EQA review, the superintendent of the Marshfield Public Schools was in his second year of a three-year contract after having been elevated from the position of assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction. At the beginning of his tenure, he organized a meeting with the school committee to establish working relationships, identify expectations, and initiate guidelines for formalizing personnel policies.

School committee members were knowledgeable about their responsibilities through attendance at MASC training sessions and workshops. Information from related sources was also presented by the superintendent at scheduled school committee meetings.

The leadership team established communication as one of its primary goals. Student achievement data and other district-related information were routinely communicated to the school committee, staff, and community. Examples supplied by the central office included the annual town report, the superintendent's monthly newsletter, a "State of Our Schools" pamphlet, presentations to the school committee, and cable television broadcasts of school committee meetings. Examples of activities employed by principals included monthly newsletters to parents, presentations to parent teacher organizations (PTOs) and school councils, access to Connect Ed for immediate messaging, and use of the district's website for individual school updates.

A steering committee comprised of parents, school committee representatives, faculty, and administrators met in 2001 to develop and recommend a mission statement, core beliefs, and five goals, which focused on student achievement, school climate, facilities, finances, and public relations. The school committee approved the proposal which served as the District Improvement Plan (DIP) for 2002-2006. As the plan evolved, action planning teams for each goal were organized to focus on progress.

Other subcommittees which assisted with district planning included policy development, which was composed of two school committee members and the superintendent; budget, which was composed of two school committee members and central office administrators; and safety, which included principals who aligned school emergency plans with the district emergency plan. Correspondence with police, fire, and other town departments facilitated by the superintendent ensured that open lines of communication were maintained.

The superintendent recommended and the school committee voted to advocate for a tax override for May 2007. In FY 2006, the district experienced an increase in school enrollment; however, five teaching positions had to be eliminated and computer purchases and other expenses were reduced by $399,500 due to a level funded budget. The school committee, selectmen, and advisory and finance committees were united in recommending a $4.5 million override in order to address town-wide needs. This was later changed to two proposals, one a $4 million override to restore eliminated staff and services for FY 2008 through FY 2010, and the other a $2 million override to cover FY 2008 only. The $4 million override failed but the $2 million override passed.

Central office administrators and principals were evaluated by the superintendent. One of the objectives of each performance review was to promote student achievement as identified in the DIP and in School Improvement Plans (SIPs). All administrators received periodic retraining in evaluative procedures to ensure that their skills remained current.

The school committee evaluated the superintendent in a timely fashion. The process was goal oriented and incorporated the principles of school leadership. A summative evaluation was prepared, signed by the school committee, and appropriately filed. The MCAS results and other student achievement data, however, were not addressed.

Curriculum and Instruction

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

The Marshfield Public Schools had curriculum guides in the core content areas of ELA, math, and STE that aligned with the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks. These documents addressed learning objectives/content outcomes ("The learner should be able to…"), skills, resources, and assessment. However, instructional strategies and measurable student outcomes were not present in the documents. Additionally, teachers used curriculum maps, pacing documents, and clarification posters to ensure that essential skills for learning were covered both horizontally and vertically within the curriculum. These documents varied by elementary, middle, and high school level. They referenced teaching materials in use within the district that supported the various strands contained in the state frameworks.

The district provided for districtwide curriculum supervision/assessment by ensuring that the elementary school principals viewed themselves as the curriculum leaders of their respective buildings. Elementary principals received support from the director of elementary education. Their combined work ensured ongoing monitoring of the state curriculum frameworks and the vertical and horizontal alignment of the district curriculum. At the secondary level, each building had content curriculum coordinators or department heads who worked with either the building assistant principal or the principal to ensure compliance with the state frameworks. Thus, the district made a systemic effort across grades K-12 to ensure that the organizational structure had a positive impact upon ongoing curriculum revision.

Teacher professional development provided annual opportunities for teachers to participate in curriculum revision. District administrators reported that they led many of these curriculum alignment sessions through their monthly faculty meetings. In addition, teachers were encouraged, individually or in small groups, to write professional development proposals to perform curriculum work during out-of-school time, as part of the district's professional development plan.

Based on the district's analysis of the MCAS data, changes were made to math instruction at all levels in order to improve student scores. The time of math classes was changed and the amount of math instruction per week was increased at the elementary level, while struggling students were required to take additional math classes at the middle and high school levels. Math coaches were employed to assist classroom teachers. In addition, the director of elementary education and the coaches modeled best practices to teachers to improve their instruction in both math and ELA. The director of special education strategized with teachers in order to improve instructional techniques to improve the achievement of special needs students.

Although technology was available and included multiple resources for student use, the implementation of different technologies varied across grade levels. Access to technology instruction in the elementary grades was inconsistent. Different grade levels received varying amounts of instruction provided by technology specialists.

Classroom observations of 68 classes revealed positive, safe classroom climates. Students and teachers exhibited positive relationships and students treated peers with respect. Lesson planning based upon the state curriculum frameworks was clear to students in 99 percent of the classrooms observed. Lesson objectives were clear to students in 93 percent of observed classrooms. During those visitations, the examiners observed that teachers used questioning that encouraged elaboration, thought, and involvement by students in only 46 percent of the classrooms. Teacher use of a variety of instructional techniques such as differentiated instruction was observed in 25 percent. Teachers communicated expectations of high quality work of students in 72 percent of the observed classrooms, and classroom time was focused on challenging academic tasks in 75 percent..

Assessment and Program Evaluation

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

Although the Marshfield Public Schools administered various student assessments, the district lacked a system-wide assessment plan as well as policies regarding the analysis of assessment results. Practices were in place in each school in the district, however, to analyze the MCAS

data, and at least two staff members in each building were proficient in the use of TestWiz. In addition, the elementary curriculum coordinator prepared an MCAS item analysis and other useful information for all schools to aid in the analysis of data. The coordinator then met with appropriate staff members to discuss the data during release time.

The district used these data to make curricular and program changes, to adopt new textbooks, and to alter instructional time in the core content areas. For example, the district instituted the Math B program at the middle school which provided co-taught, small group instruction of the regular math curriculum at a slower pace to struggling special education and regular education students. Other examples included changes to instructional techniques for teaching poetry and for open-response questions.

Schools in the district used a variety of formative assessments including the DIBELS, the DRA, the Gates-MacGinitie, the San Diego Quick Reading Assessment, Addison Wesley end-of-chapter tests, and several other formative assessments. The district had no systemic approach to the use of these assessments, and this resulted in each school's leadership individually selecting assessments to administer. This also resulted in uneven teacher training regarding assessment. Some of the assessment data were used to impact instruction and for student placement.

District administrators were aware of the lack of a systemic approach, and in interviews said that they were in the process of developing a districtwide action plan to institute common assessments by April 2007. Further, the district's Strategic Planning Progress Report dated February 14, 2006 cited districtwide assessments as an ongoing objective.

In interviews, district and school administrators revealed that math portfolios were maintained at grades 1-8. The portfolios contained quarterly Addison Wesley tests, and principals examined the portfolios on a quarterly basis. Portfolios followed students from grade to grade, and there was an expectation that receiving teachers examined the portfolios.

Schools provided a variety of support programs to assist students who may be at risk. These ranged from the use of Title I funds to provide math and reading coaches and tutors at the elementary level to a number of math support programs at both the middle and high schools. Data showed that students at the high school scored high on the MCAS tests as well as on the

PSAT and SAT. As a result, the high school was increasing the number of AP courses available in an effort to introduce more rigor to the course of study.

No practices were in place that guided the district in performing external and internal audits on a voluntary basis. Rather, the audits conducted were generally mandated by the state. During the period under review, the district was evaluated by both NEASC and NELMS. The NEASC study at the high school highlighted the condition of the facility as a serious concern, and a January 2007 response by the district provided a plan of action to remedy this situation. The NELMS visit to the middle school in 2006 identified several areas of concern including staff morale as well a negative perception of the school by the community. The school was making progress in addressing these concerns.

Marshfield Public Schools did not routinely evaluate programs but instead used the MCAS test results as a way to judge the quality and efficacy of the programs. The discrepancy between MCAS ELA and math scores in the district was the motivating force behind the evaluation of these programs.

Human Resource Management and Professional Development

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

The district's hiring and employment practices included central office and site-based functions. The district recruited candidates through internal postings, media advertising outside the local area, and job fair participation. The district was a site for teacher internship programs. Principals and program administrators had responsibility for interviewing and recommending prospective candidates to the superintendent. District teachers participated in the interview process. The district supported new professional employees with trained mentors and a formal induction program. District personnel monitored licensure status and obtained waivers for staff without professional status. In 2005-2006, 97 percent of the district's professional staff held licenses and no licensed teacher taught out of field. The district supported and encouraged teacher retention with professional development offerings to fulfill recertification needs as well as professional growth and improvement. The district's course reimbursement rate was the average cost of a

graduate-level course at Bridgewater State College and the University of Massachusetts for up to three courses a year with no cap on the monies. Opportunities existed within the district for curriculum and instructional leadership positions and for professional advancement in stipended extracurricular or administrative roles, such as subject coordinators and assistant teaching principals.

The district had established procedures for professional development planning that involved teachers and administrators and resulted in a broad range of programs and activities at the district and school levels. The district's professional development committee, established by agreement with the teachers' bargaining unit, conducted annual surveys of staff needs and wants, and the committee's district administration representative surveyed central administration and principals' needs. The committee then made recommendations for proposed professional development programs and activities to the central administration, taking into consideration MCAS student achievement results and professional development goals in the DIP and SIPs in addition to the survey results.

The district funded requests for proposals (RFPs) from the professional staff for curriculum projects and development that supported district goals. The RFPs were competitive and the district's professional development committee reviewed and granted requests based on criteria, such as linkage to district goals and use of best practices in instruction and assessment.

The district contracted with in-service providers and area colleges for on-site graduate credit courses that furthered district initiatives while providing for professional staff recertification needs. The district funded teacher participation in approved conferences and out-of-district workshops that aligned with district and school goals or individual professional development plans.

The district included paraprofessionals in all its on-site professional development programs. The induction year calendar included workshops and meetings specific to beginning teachers and teachers new to the district; however, most professional development for new staff occurred in the district and school programs for all staff.

Although the district's human resources practices were found to be generally satisfactory, the district's professional teacher evaluation procedures did not meet the requirements of the Education Reform Act. In 2004-2005, although the district formally evaluated teachers annually, the evaluation tool did not reflect the Principles of Effective Teaching. The summative reports, while informative, did not provide feedback or guidance for continuous improvement. In 2005-2006, the district instituted a five-year evaluation system in which professional status teachers were formally evaluated according to the Principles of Effective Teaching once in five years, not once in two years as required by education reform. Under the new system, professional status teachers chose self-selected, self-directed projects, collaboration, or peer coaching and observation in the four years between formal summative evaluations. Principals reviewed reports of these activities prepared by the teacher and determined if the teacher met district standards. The district formally evaluated nonprofessional status teachers annually. The summative report included evidence of performance, based on the Principles of Effective Teaching, from at least two classroom observations. All professional staff collaborated with principals or other evaluators to develop annual goals.

The district provided two years of training for its principals and administrators to build capacity for effective supervision to implement the district's new teacher evaluation procedures. Supervision became more focused on the Principles of Effective Teaching and quality implementation of district curriculum initiatives. Supervision practices were more consistent among the schools, and teachers had clear knowledge of district expectations. The district placed a high priority on supervision to support improved instructional practices.

The superintendent evaluated administrators annually according to the Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership and attainment of progress toward annual goals. The district's evaluation document did not contain measurable evidence of performance or outcomes based on these principles. All summative evaluations were informative and most contained recommendations or guidance for improvement. The district linked compensation to the evaluator's numerical ratings of performance in each category of the Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership, but not to improved student achievement.

Access, Participation, and Student Academic Support

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

Marshfield Public Schools provided numerous services for at-risk populations and regular education students. In addition to special needs services at all levels, three elementary schools and the middle school provided Title I services. Teachers referred students experiencing academic difficulty to student teacher support teams (STATs) at all levels and developed individual curriculum accommodation plans (ICAPs) for students not identified for further testing. Guidance services offered student support, and at both the middle and high schools counselors assigned to a grade moved with the class as it progressed through the grades.

Students in subgroup populations participated in all MCAS tests, and their rates of participation exceeded the state requirement of 95 percent. Between 2003 and 2006, with the exception of the low-income student subgroup, all subgroups of Marshfield students had improved performance on the MCAS ELA and math tests. Marshfield's average performance gap between regular education students and students with disabilities narrowed by two proficiency index (PI) points over this period. The district did not keep formal records to determine the numbers of students in subgroup populations who participated in advanced and/or accelerated programs.

The district considered 10 absences per year to be excessive for students. All student handbooks referenced the district policy, and all schools had specific procedures to monitor attendance regularly and communicate with the parents of students whose absences caused concern. Marshfield's 2006 student attendance rate of 95.6 percent exceeded the state rate of 93.8 percent.

The staff attendance rate was 92.3 percent, which reflected an average of 13.8 days of absence per teacher for the 180-day student school year. Absences for teachers included not only short- and long-term illnesses, professional development outside of school, military service, and jury duty responsibilities, but also days for other reasons. In addition to sick leave benefits and a new longevity buy-back agreement, language in the 2004-2007 collective bargaining agreement with teachers indicated the kinds of absences that teachers could take for other reasons.

In 2005-2006, the district's in-school and out-of-school suspension rates were both nearly 2.5 percentage points lower than the respective state averages. Between the 2005 and 2006 school years, Marshfield's out-of-school suspension rate declined slightly. Adjustment counselors at the elementary level and grade 6 health teachers provided the Second Step program to students. In the 2006-2007 school year, the district collaborated with Bridgewater State College and the Massachusetts Aggression Resistance Council to assist with the implementation of the district's K-12 safe schools initiative. Both programs enhanced safe school climate.

Marshfield's average dropout rate across the three years under review was 1.8 percent, compared to 3.4 percent for the state. Student support services from preschool through grade 12, STATs, and school-based leadership teams regularly monitored the progress of at-risk students from grade to grade and provided intervention and services to address their academic, social, and emotional needs. At the high school level, the district offered students numerous options for credit retrieval. In addition to in-school alternative programming, other options for students included night and summer school courses in Marshfield, the Whitman/Hanson and Middleboro night school programs, and courses at Massasoit Community College which could be used for high school credit. These proactive procedures helped to prevent students from dropping out of school.

Financial and Asset Management Effectiveness and Efficiency

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

The Marshfield Public Schools had experienced administrators and financial systems in place to provide an educational program with effective instructional resources for students. Although the per pupil expenditure for regular day students was below the state average, the students on average performed considerably higher than the state average on the MCAS tests.

Although the district's appropriated budget was level funded for the school years 2005 and 2006, because of negotiated agreements and inflation it provided fewer funds to operate programs in 2006 than was expended in 2005. A number of administrators, principals, and teachers were asked in interviews what effect this level funded budget had on the educational program. Most

interviewees stated that they did not see a depreciable effect in the operation of the schools. Examiners, when reviewing documents, observed that to implement this level funded budget, some positions were eliminated or reduced and the superintendent had to use funds such as state and federal grants and nonrecurring revenue sources for programs that were previously funded through the school committee budget. This practice, if continued, could result in budget deficits and insufficient available revenue to provide relief. The situation was addressed for FY 2008 with the $2 million override approved in May 2007.

Examiners reviewed numerous documents that were developed by the district from the beginning of the budget development process by the administration to the annual town meeting vote. This budget development process contained documents presenting a comprehensive financial picture complete with information such as comparative data and historical budget data displayed in graphs and charts. However, these data were not included in the district's final budget document, which resulted in a budget book that did not provide a table of the district's budget history, a description of the school committee's budget requests, or accurate information on all fund sources. The final budget book did not provide a clear understanding of the district's financial needs and plans to all stakeholders, and the average person who did not follow the development process would not be able to understand the district's budgetary needs. However, many of the types of documents used in the district's budget development process were contained in the budgets of school districts that receive commendations for their budget books.

As part of its budget development, the district performed evaluation-based reviews of its programs to determine their cost effectiveness. Examples included the special education and regular education transportation programs, the food service program, and the tuitioning-out program for special education students. The analysis of student achievement data also informed budget decisions, such as increased staffing in areas of need.

The district had an architectural firm complete a facilities need study in 2003 which identified over $40 million worth of repairs and rehabilitation upgrades needed in the district's schools over a five-year period. The town also had a capital improvement committee with a member who represented the school district. Almost every year an article was approved at the town meeting for repair or rehabilitation work in the schools. However, the amount of funds approved at each

annual town meeting was not approaching the architect's recommendation, and schools may be losing ground in their repair and rehabilitation projects. This will result in a higher cost to complete the projects. Some schools, especially the high school, had deficiencies of such a nature that an August 16, 2006 letter from NEASC to the high school principal stated, "Failure to resolve these issues in a timely manner may prompt the Commission to consider placing the school on warning." The district did not have a formal maintenance plan or a maintenance staff in place.

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 Marshfield 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 Marshfield; 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?

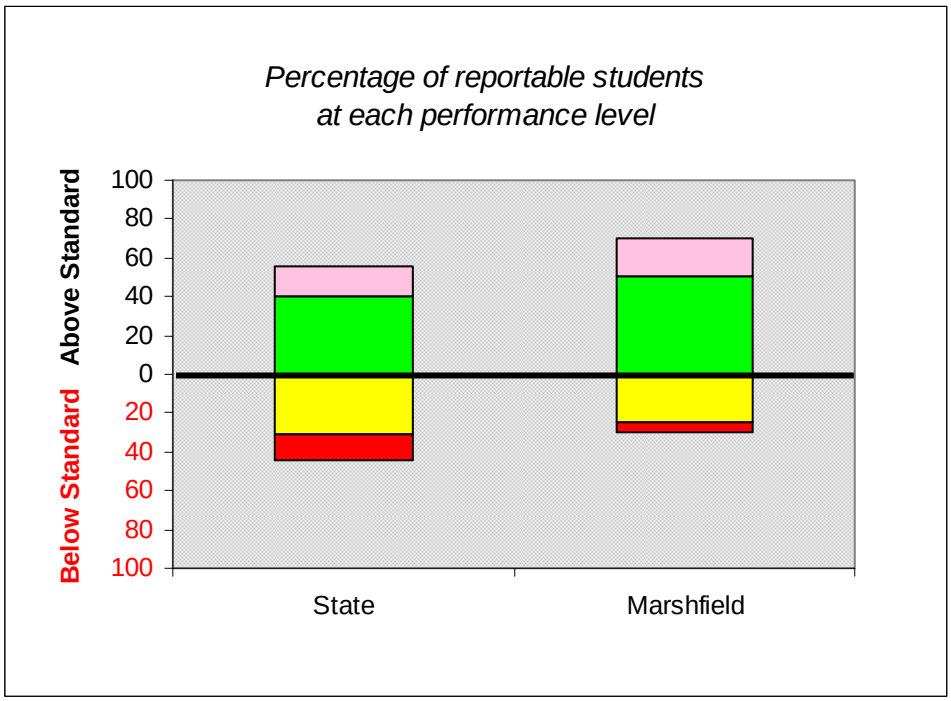
Findings:

- On average, more than two-thirds of all students in Marshfield attained proficiency on the 2006 MCAS tests, much more than that statewide. More than four-fifths of Marshfield students attained proficiency in English language arts (ELA) and more than half of Marshfield students attained proficiency in math and in science and technology/engineering (STE).

- Marshfield's average proficiency index (API) on the MCAS tests in 2006 was 88 proficiency index (PI) points, 10 PI points greater than that statewide. Marshfield's average proficiency gap, the difference between its API and the target of 100, in 2006 was 12 PI points.

- In 2006, Marshfield's proficiency gap in ELA was six PI points, 10 PI points narrower than the state's average proficiency gap in ELA. This gap would require an average improvement in performance of less than one PI point annually to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP). Marshfield's proficiency gap in math was 18 PI points in 2006, 10 PI points narrower than the state's average proficiency gap in math. This gap would require an average improvement of more than two PI points per year to achieve AYP. Marshfield's proficiency gap in STE was also 18 PI points, 11 PI points narrower than that statewide.

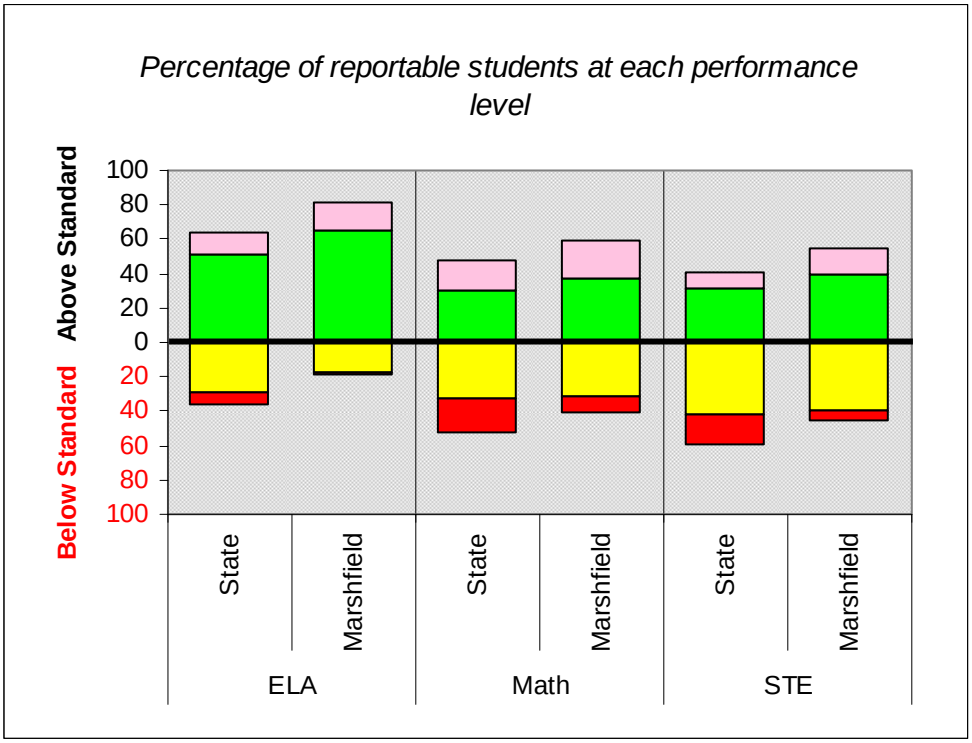
Figure/Table 1: Student MCAS Test Performance, All Students, 2006



	State	Marshfield
Advanced	15	20
Proficient	41	51
Needs Improvement	31	24
Warning/Failing	14	5
Percent Attaining Proficiency	56	71
Average Proficiency Index (API)	78.3	87.7

In 2006, 71 percent of Marshfield students attained proficiency on the MCAS tests overall, 15 percentage points more than that statewide. Five percent of Marshfield students scored in the 'Warning/Failing' category, nine percentage points less than that statewide. Marshfield's average proficiency index (API) on the MCAS tests in 2006 was 88 proficiency index (PI) points, 10 PI points greater than that statewide. Marshfield's average proficiency gap in 2006 was 12 PI points.

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



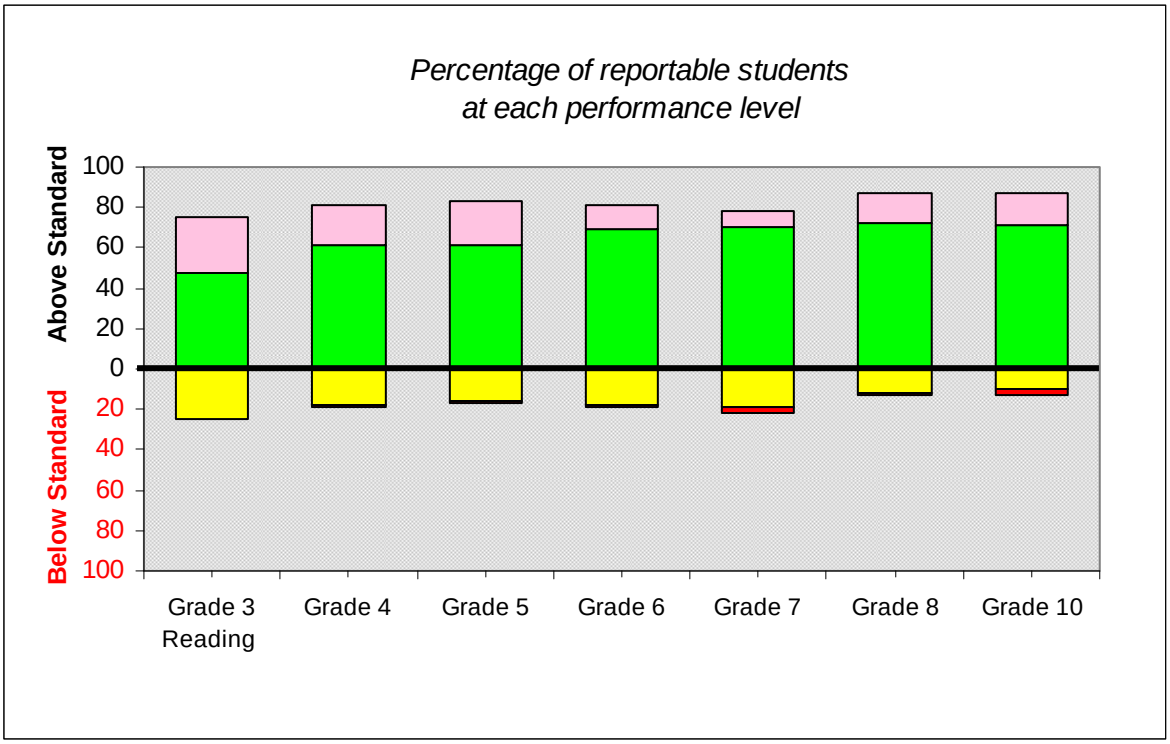
	ELA		Math		STE	
	State	Marshfield	State	Marshfield	State	Marshfield
Advanced	13	17	17	22	10	16
Proficient	51	65	30	37	31	40
Needs Improvement	29	17	33	32	42	39
Warning/Failing	7	1	20	9	17	6
Percent Attaining Proficiency	64	82	47	59	41	56
Proficiency Index (PI)	84.3	93.7	72.3	81.7	71.4	82.1

In 2006, achievement in English language arts (ELA), math, and science and technology/engineering (STE) was higher in Marshfield than statewide. In Marshfield, 82 percent of students attained proficiency in ELA, compared to 64 percent statewide; 59 percent attained proficiency in math, compared to 47 percent statewide; and 56 percent attained proficiency in STE, compared to 41 percent statewide.

Marshfield students had stronger performance on the 2006 MCAS tests in ELA than in math and STE. The proficiency index for Marshfield students in ELA was 94 PI points; in math it was 82 PI points; and in STE it was 82 PI points. These compare to the statewide figures of 84, 72, and 71 PI points, respectively.

The proficiency gap for Marshfield students was six PI points in ELA, 18 PI points in math, and 18 PI points in STE. These compare to the statewide figures of 16, 28, and 29 PI points, respectively. Marshfield's proficiency gaps would require an average annual improvement of less than one PI point in ELA and more than two PI points in math to meet AYP.

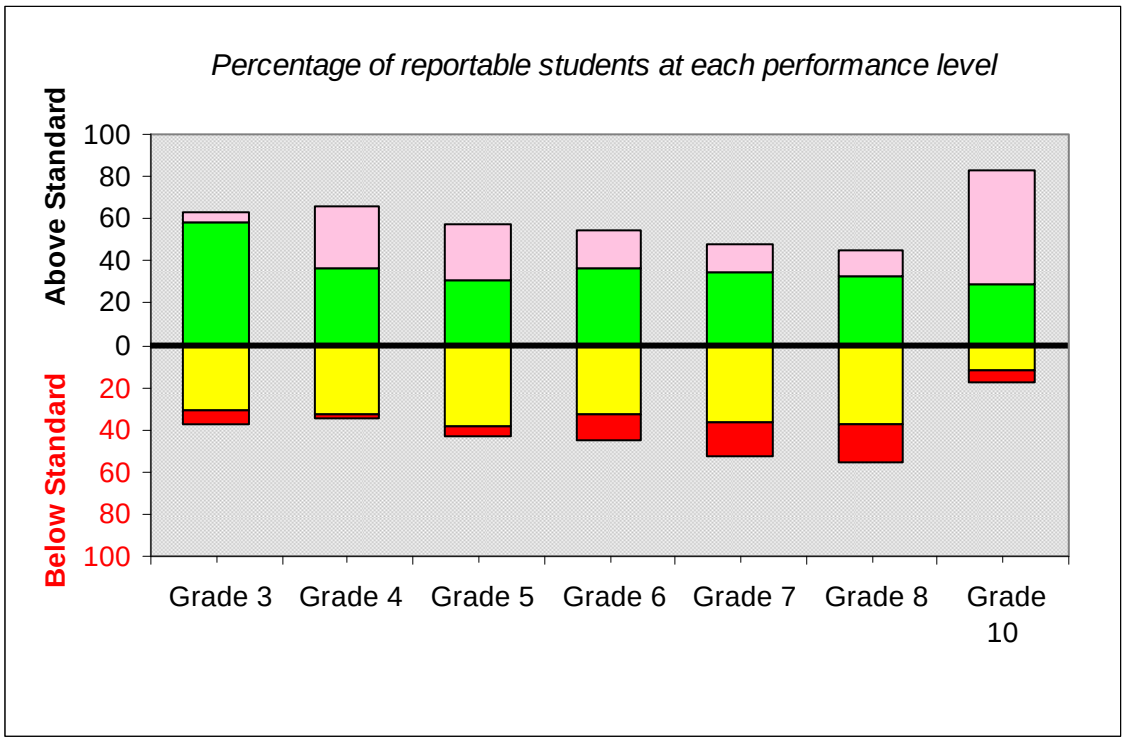
Figure/Table 3: Student MCAS English Language Arts (ELA) Test Performance, by Grade, 2006



	Grade 3 Reading	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 10
Advanced	28	20	22	11	8	15	17
Proficient	48	61	61	69	71	72	71
Needs Improvement	24	18	16	18	19	12	10
Warning/Failing	1	1	0	1	2	1	3
Percent Attaining Proficiency	76	81	83	80	79	87	88

The percentage of Marshfield students attaining proficiency in 2006 in ELA varied slightly by grade level, ranging from a low of 76 percent of grade 3 students to a high of 88 percent of grade 10 students.

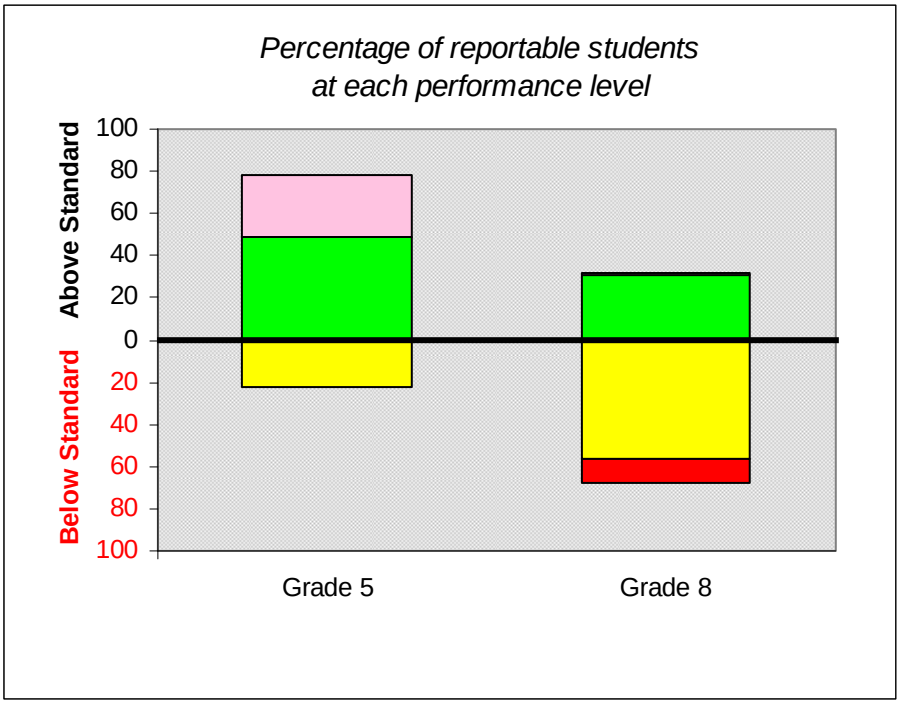
Figure/Table 4: Student MCAS Math Test Performance, by Grade, 2006



	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 10
Advanced	4	29	26	18	13	12	54
Proficient	59	37	31	36	34	33	29
Needs Improvement	31	33	38	32	36	38	12
Warning/Failing	6	2	4	13	16	17	5
Percent Attaining Proficiency	63	66	57	54	47	45	83

The percentage of Marshfield students attaining proficiency in 2006 in math varied somewhat by grade level, ranging from a low of 45 percent of grade 8 students to a high of 83 percent of grade 10 students.

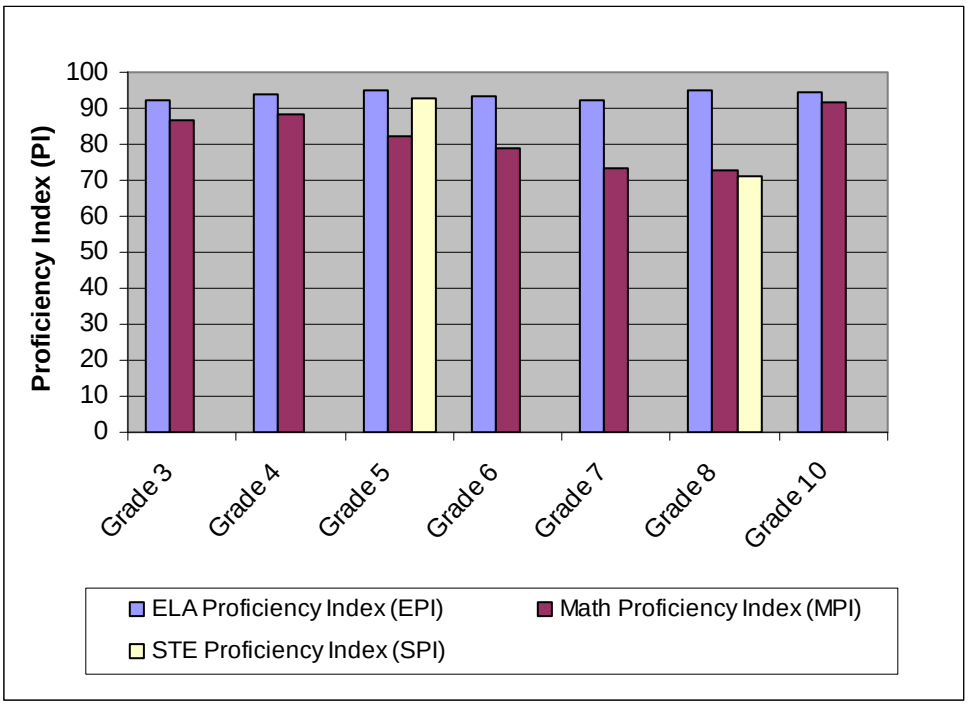
Figure/Table 5: Student MCAS Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) Test Performance, by Grade, 2006



	Grade 5	Grade 8
Advanced	29	2
Proficient	49	31
Needs Improvement	22	56
Warning/Failing	0	12
Percent Attaining Proficiency	78	33

In Marshfield in 2006, 78 percent of grade 5 students attained proficiency in STE, and 33 percent of grade 8 students did so.

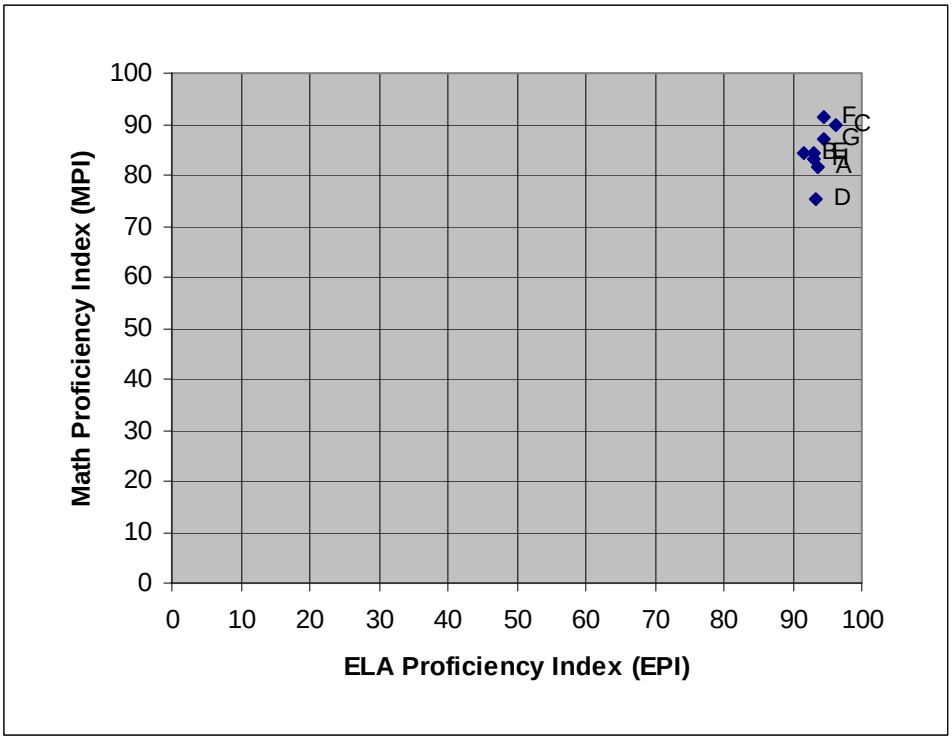
Figure/Table 6: Student MCAS Proficiency Indices, by Grade and Subject, 2006



	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 10
ELA Proficiency Index (EPI)	92.0	94.0	95.0	93.3	92.2	94.9	94.5
Math Proficiency Index (MPI)	86.5	88.1	82.4	78.7	73.6	72.6	91.4
STE Proficiency Index (SPI)			92.9			71.2	

By grade, Marshfield's ELA proficiency gap in 2006 ranged from a low of five PI points at grades 5, 8, and 10 to a high of eight PI points at grades 3 and 7. Marshfield's math proficiency gap ranged from a low of nine PI points at grade 10 to a high of 27 PI points at grade 8. Marshfield's STE proficiency gap was seven PI points at grade 5 and 29 PI points at grade 8.

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



		ELA PI	Math PI	Number of Tests
A	Marshfield	93.7	81.7	4,995
B	Daniel Webster Elementary	91.7	84.4	367
C	Eames Way Elementary	96.1	90.0	350
D	Furnace Brook Middle	93.4	75.1	2,195
E	Gov. Winslow Elementary	93.1	84.2	420
F	Marshfield High	94.5	91.4	633
G	Martinson Elementary	94.5	87.1	520
H	South River Elementary	92.9	83.3	510

Marshfield's ELA proficiency gap in 2006 ranged from a low of four PI points at Eames Way Elementary School to a high of eight PI points at Daniel Webster Elementary School. Marshfield's math proficiency gap ranged from a low of nine PI points at Marshfield High School to a high of 25 PI points at Furnace Brook Middle School.

Equity of Achievement

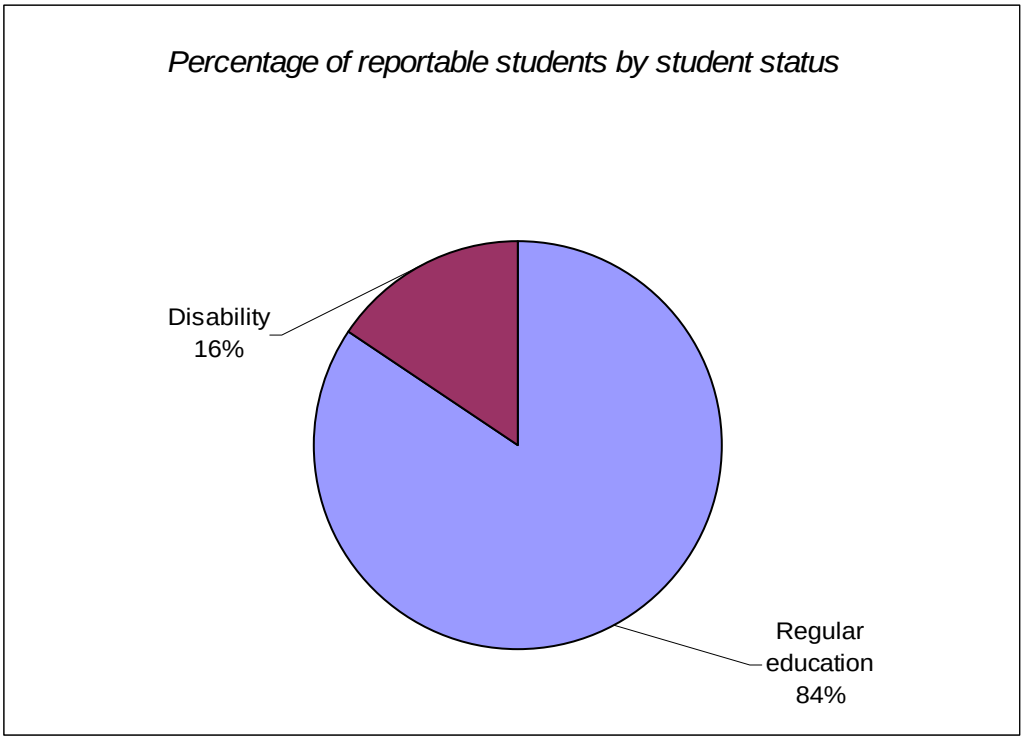
Do MCAS test results vary among subgroups of students?

Findings:

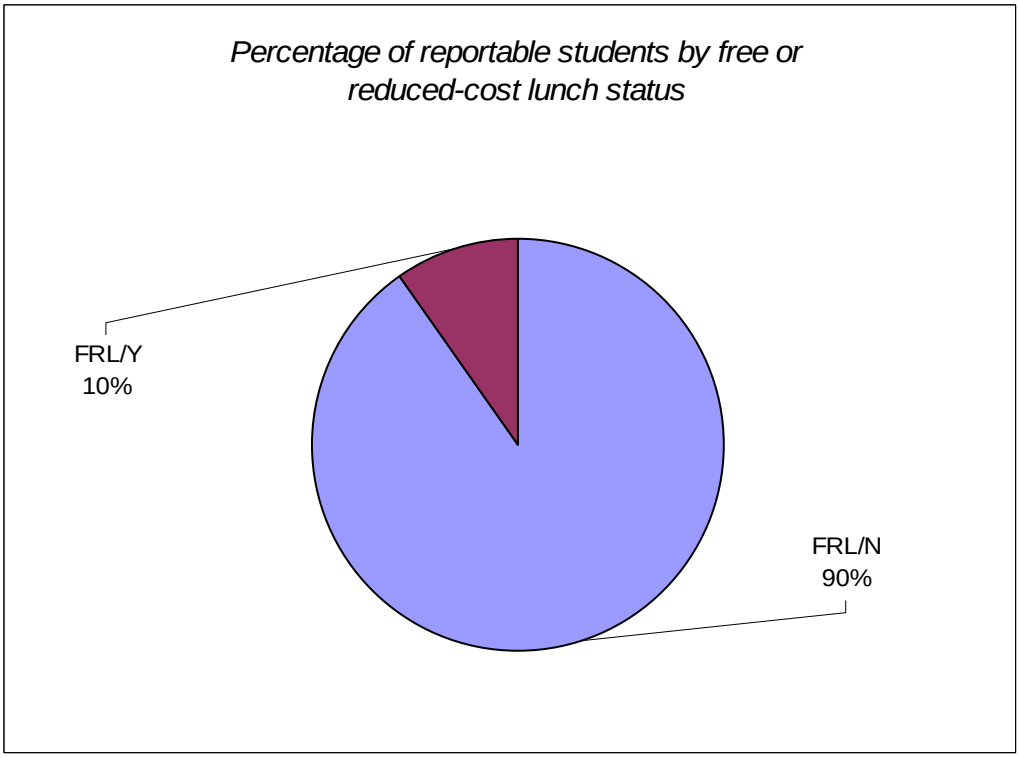
- Of the six measurable subgroups in Marshfield in 2006, the gap in performance between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups was 16 PI points in ELA and 25 PI points in math (regular education students, students with disabilities, respectively).
- The proficiency gaps in Marshfield in 2006 in both ELA and math were wider than the district average for students with disabilities and low-income students (those participating in the free or reduced-cost lunch program). For these subgroups, less than half of the students attained proficiency.
- The proficiency gaps in ELA and math were narrower than the district average for regular education students and non low-income students. For each of these subgroups, roughly three-quarters of the students attained proficiency.
- The proficiency gap for male students was wider than the district average in ELA but narrower in math, while the proficiency gap for female students was wider than the district average in math but narrower in ELA. More than two-thirds of the students in both subgroups attained proficiency.

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

A.



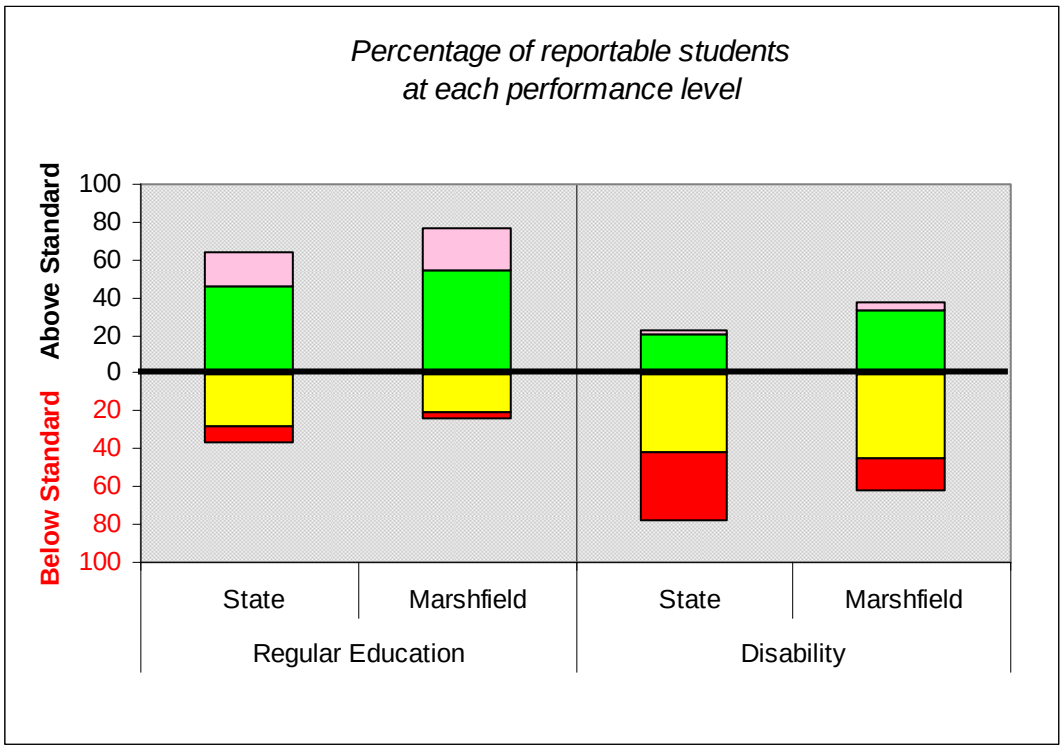
B.



	Subgroup	Number of Students
Student status	Regular education	2,112
	Disability	391
Free or reduced-cost lunch status	FRL/N	2,268
	FRL/Y	241

In 2006, Marshfield's percentage of students with disabilities was 16 percent and of students participating in the free or reduced-cost lunch program was 10 percent.

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

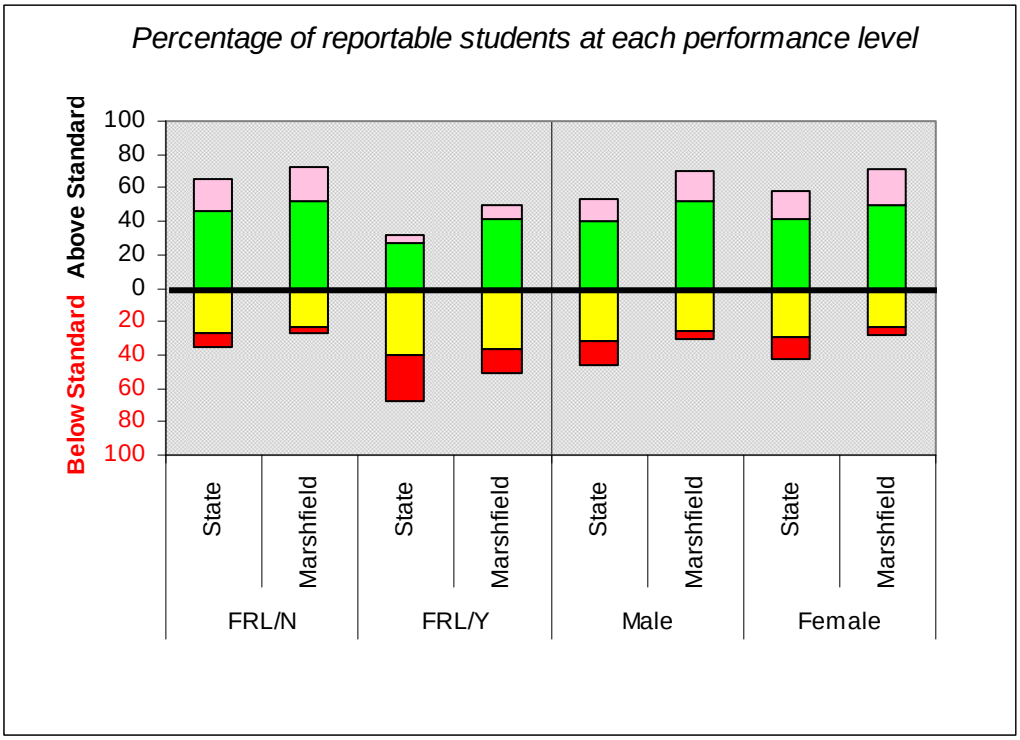


	Regular Education		Disability	
	State	Marshfield	State	Marshfield
Advanced	18	22	2	4
Proficient	46	54	20	34
Needs Improvement	28	21	41	45
Warning/Failing	8	3	36	17
Percent Attaining Proficiency	64	76	22	38
Average Proficiency Index (API)	84.0	90.9	55.9	70.3

In Marshfield in 2006, the proficiency rate of regular education students was two times greater than that of students with disabilities. Seventy-six percent of regular education students and 38 percent of students with disabilities attained overall proficiency on the MCAS tests.

Marshfield's average proficiency gap in 2006 was nine PI points for regular education students and 30 PI points for students with disabilities. The average performance gap between regular education students and students with disabilities was 21 PI points.

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

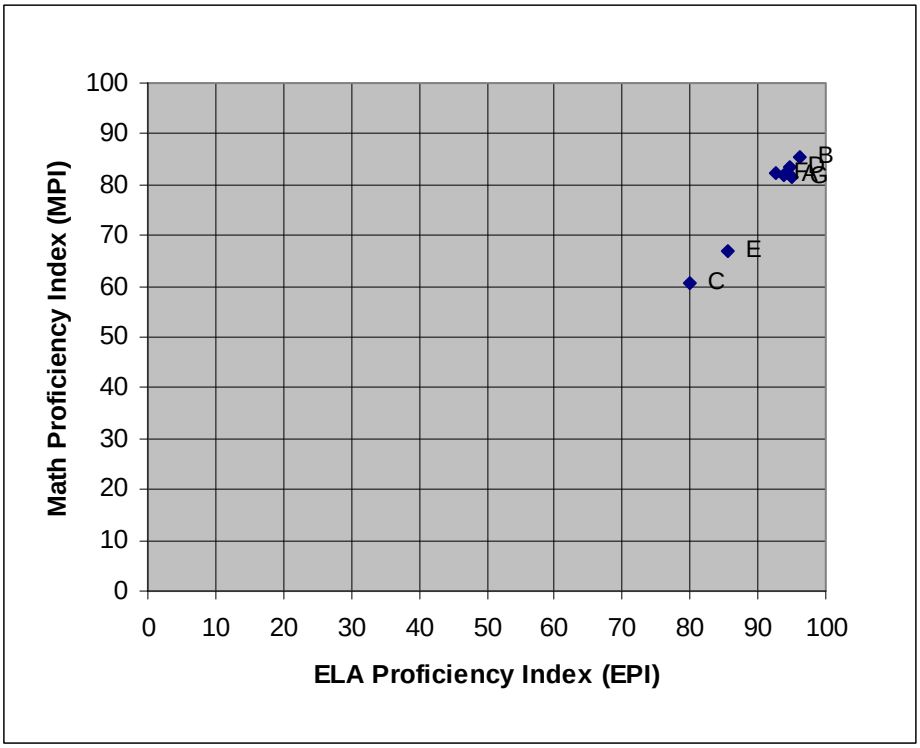


	FRL/N		FRL/Y		Male		Female	
	State	Marshfield	State	Marshfield	State	Marshfield	State	Marshfield
Advanced	19	21	5	8	13	17	17	22
Proficient	46	52	27	41	40	52	41	49
Needs Improvement	27	23	40	36	32	25	29	24
Warning/Failing	8	4	27	14	15	5	13	5
Percent Attaining Proficiency	65	73	32	49	53	69	58	71
Average Proficiency Index (API)	84.5	88.9	63.5	76.3	77.1	87.3	79.6	88.1

In Marshfield in 2006, 49 percent of low-income (FRL/Y) students attained overall proficiency on the MCAS tests, compared to 73 percent of non low-income (FRL/N) students. The average proficiency gap was 24 PI points for low-income students and 11 PI points for non low-income students, and the average performance gap between the two subgroups was 13 PI points.

Performance on the 2006 MCAS tests was comparable for male and female students in Marshfield, with 71 percent of female students and 69 percent of male students attaining overall proficiency. The average proficiency gap was 13 PI points for male students and 12 PI points for female students, and the average performance gap between the two subgroups was one PI point.

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

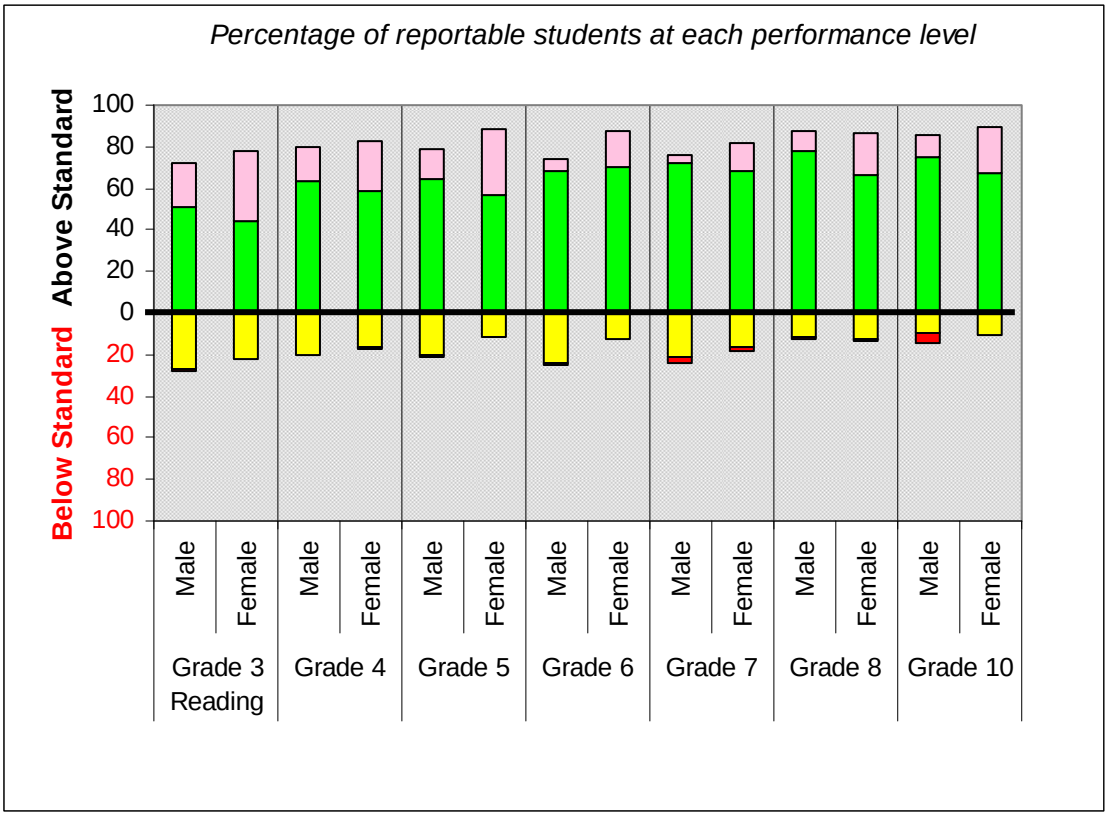


		ELA PI	Math PI	Number of Tests
A	Marshfield	93.7	81.7	4,995
B	Regular Education	96.2	85.6	4,225
C	Disability	79.8	60.7	758
D	FRL/N	94.6	83.3	4,516
E	FRL/Y	85.5	66.9	478
F	Male	92.5	82.2	2,577
G	Female	94.9	81.3	2,417

Of the six measurable subgroups in Marshfield in 2006, the gap in performance between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups was 16 PI points in ELA (regular education students, students with disabilities, respectively) and 25 PI points in math (regular education students, students with disabilities, respectively).

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

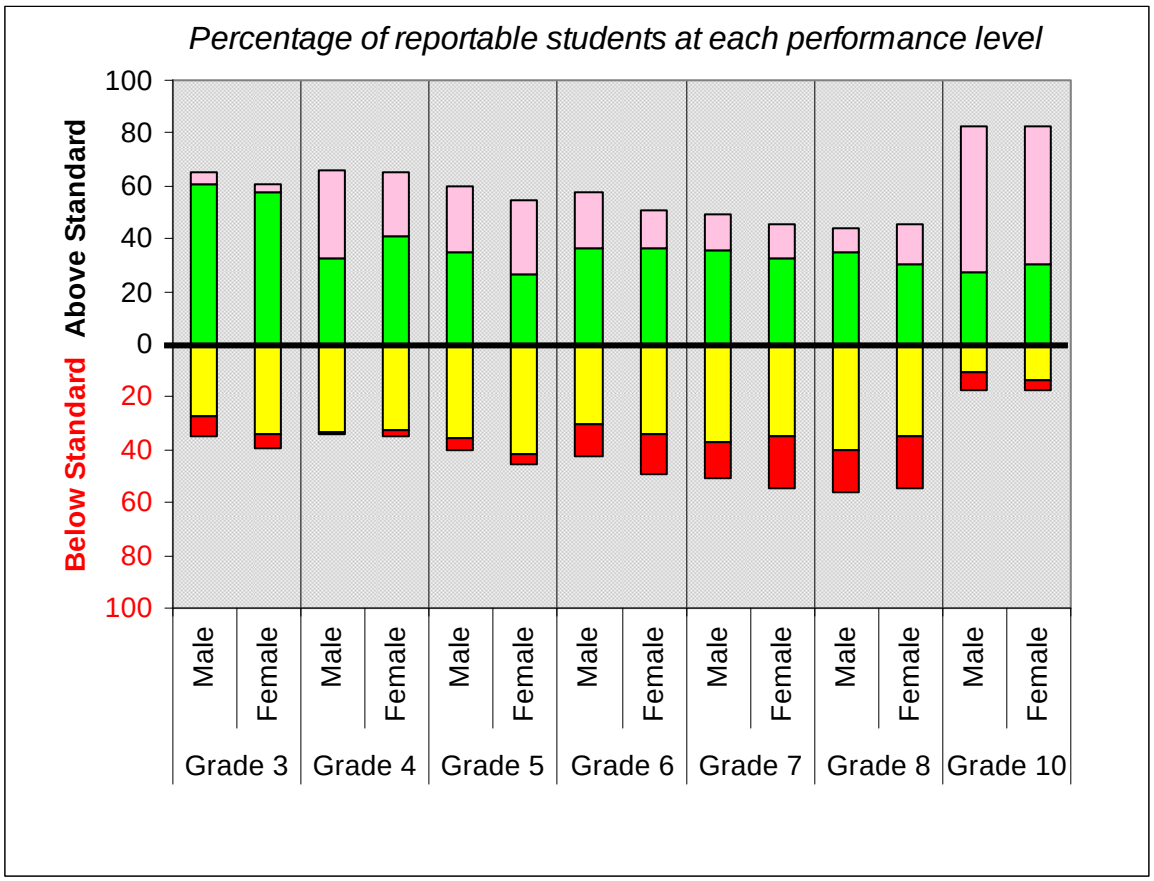
Figure/Table 12: Student MCAS English Language Arts (ELA) Test Performance, by Grade and Gender, 2006



	Grade 3 Reading		Grade 4		Grade 5		Grade 6		Grade 7		Grade 8		Grade 10	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Advanced	21	33	16	25	15	32	6	18	4	13	10	20	11	22
Proficient	51	45	64	58	65	57	69	70	72	69	77	67	75	67
Needs Improvement	27	23	20	16	21	11	24	12	21	17	12	12	9	10
Warning/ Failing	1	0	1	1	1	0	2	0	3	2	1	1	5	1
Percent Attaining Proficiency	72	78	80	83	80	89	75	88	76	82	87	87	86	89

In Marshfield in 2006, female students outperformed male students on all grade-level ELA tests except at grade 8, where both subgroups performed the same.

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



	Grade 3		Grade 4		Grade 5		Grade 6		Grade 7		Grade 8		Grade 10	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Advanced	5	4	34	24	25	28	21	15	13	13	9	15	56	52
Proficient	60	57	32	41	35	27	37	36	36	33	35	30	27	31
Needs Improvement	27	34	33	33	36	42	30	34	37	35	40	35	11	14
Warning/ Failing	8	5	1	2	5	4	12	14	13	20	15	19	6	4
Percent Attaining Proficiency	65	61	66	65	60	55	58	51	49	46	44	45	83	83

On the 2006 MCAS tests in math, male students outperformed female students at all grade levels except at grades 8 and 10.

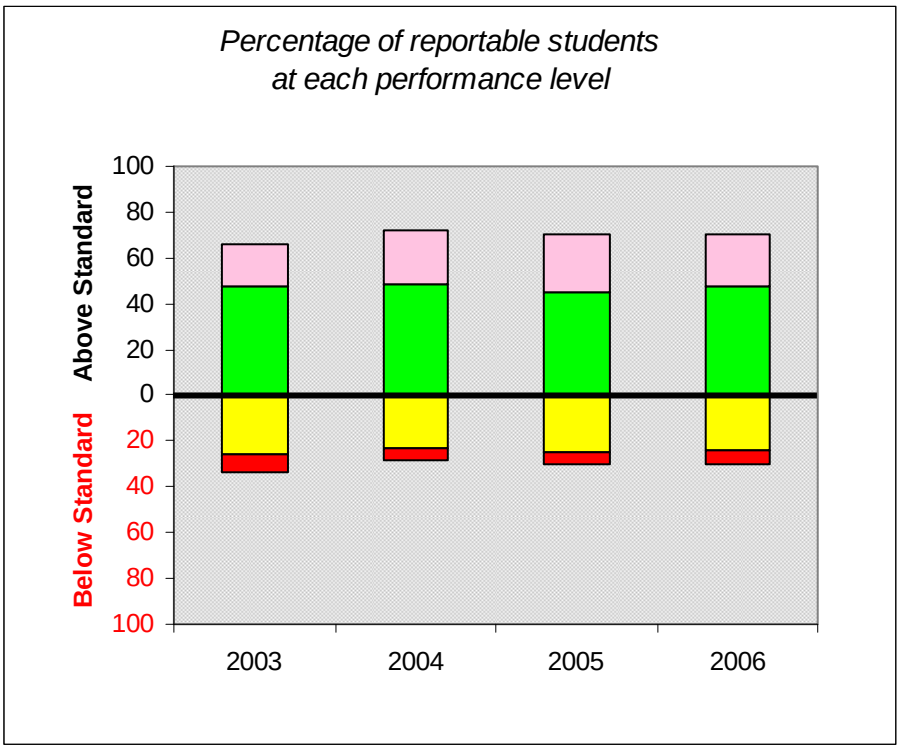
Improvement

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

Findings:

- Between 2003 and 2006, Marshfield's MCAS performance showed improvement overall and in ELA, math, and STE. However, most of the gains overall and in ELA and math were made between 2003 and 2004.
- The percentage of students scoring in the 'Advanced' and 'Proficient' categories rose by four percentage points between 2003 and 2006, while the percentage of students in the 'Warning/Failing' category decreased by two percentage points. The average proficiency gap in Marshfield narrowed from 15 PI points in 2003 to 13 PI points in 2006. This resulted in an improvement rate, or a closing of the proficiency gap, of 13 percent.
- Over the three-year period 2003-2006, ELA performance in Marshfield showed improvement, at an average of more than one-half PI point annually. This resulted in an improvement rate of 22 percent, a rate lower than that required to meet AYP.
- Math performance in Marshfield also improved during this period at an average of nearly one PI point annually. This resulted in an improvement rate of 13 percent, also a rate lower than that required to meet AYP.
- Between 2004 and 2006, Marshfield also had improved STE performance, increasing by approximately two PI points over the two-year period. This resulted in an improvement rate of nine percent.

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



A.

	2003	2004	2005	2006
Advanced	19	23	25	22
Proficient	47	49	45	48
Needs Improvement	26	23	25	24
Warning/Failing	8	5	5	6
Percent Attaining Proficiency	66	72	70	70
Average Proficiency Index (API)	84.8	87.9	87.4	87.0

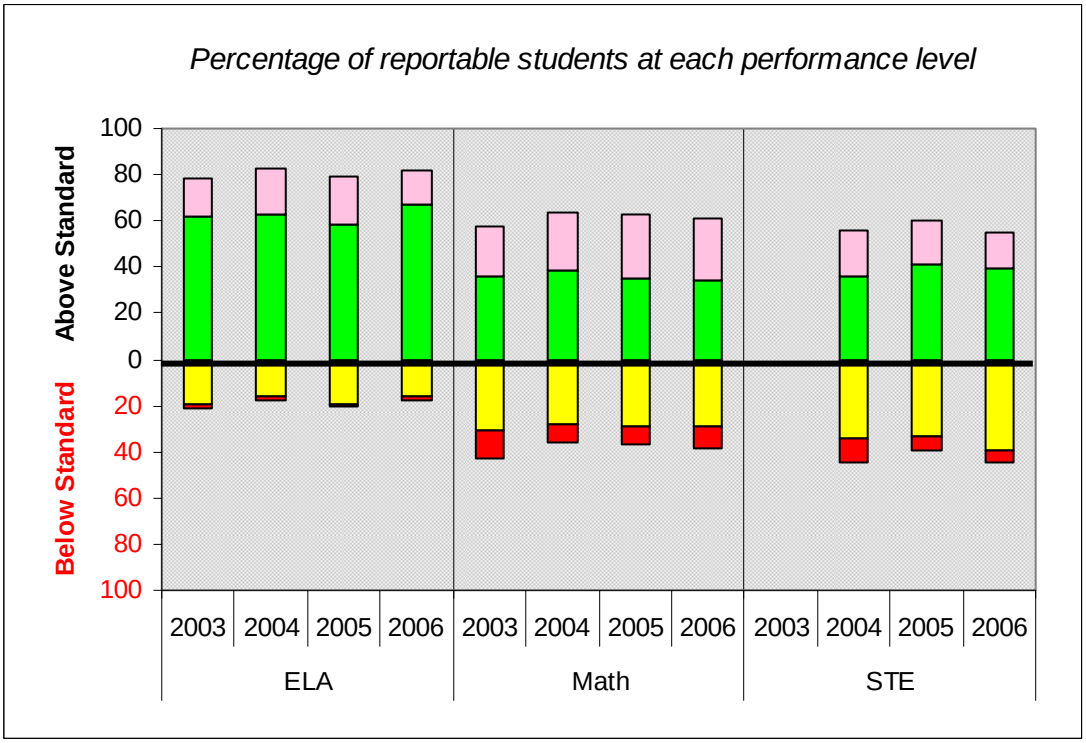
B. n-values

	2003	2004	2005	2006
Advanced	439	566	577	541
Proficient	1,086	1,199	1,059	1,172
Needs Improvement	596	564	574	583
Warning/Failing	177	130	124	154
Total	2,298	2,459	2,334	2,450

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 Marshfield students attaining overall proficiency on the MCAS tests increased from 66 percent in 2003 to 70 percent in 2006. Most of this gain was made between 2003 and 2004. The percentage of students in the 'Warning/Failing' category decreased from eight percent in 2003 to six percent in 2006. The average proficiency gap in Marshfield narrowed from 15 PI points in 2003 to 13 PI points in 2006, resulting in an improvement rate of 13 percent.

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



	ELA				Math				STE			
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2003	2004	2005	2006	2003	2004	2005	2006
Advanced	16	19	21	15	21	26	27	27		20	19	16
Proficient	62	63	58	67	36	38	35	34		36	42	40
Needs Improvement	20	16	19	16	31	28	29	29		35	33	39
Warning/ Failing	2	1	1	2	12	8	9	9		10	6	6
Percent Attaining Proficiency	78	82	79	82	57	64	62	61		56	61	56
Proficiency Index (PI)	91.7	93.7	92.8	93.5	79.7	83.6	83.3	82.4		80.4	83.5	82.1

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

The percentage of Marshfield students attaining proficiency in ELA increased from 78 percent in 2003 to 82 percent in 2006. The proficiency gap in ELA narrowed from eight PI points in 2003 to six PI points in 2006, resulting in an improvement rate of 22 percent, a rate lower than that required to meet AYP. Most of the gain was made between 2003 and 2004.

The percentage of Marshfield students attaining proficiency in math increased from 57 percent in 2003 to 61 percent in 2006. The proficiency gap in math narrowed from 20 PI points in 2003 to 18 PI points in 2006, resulting in an improvement rate of 13 percent, also a rate lower than that required to meet AYP. Again, most of the gain was made between 2003 and 2004.

The percentage of Marshfield students attaining proficiency in STE remained the same at 56 percent in 2004 and 2006. The proficiency gap in STE narrowed from 20 PI points in 2004 to 18 PI points in 2006, resulting in an improvement rate of nine percent.

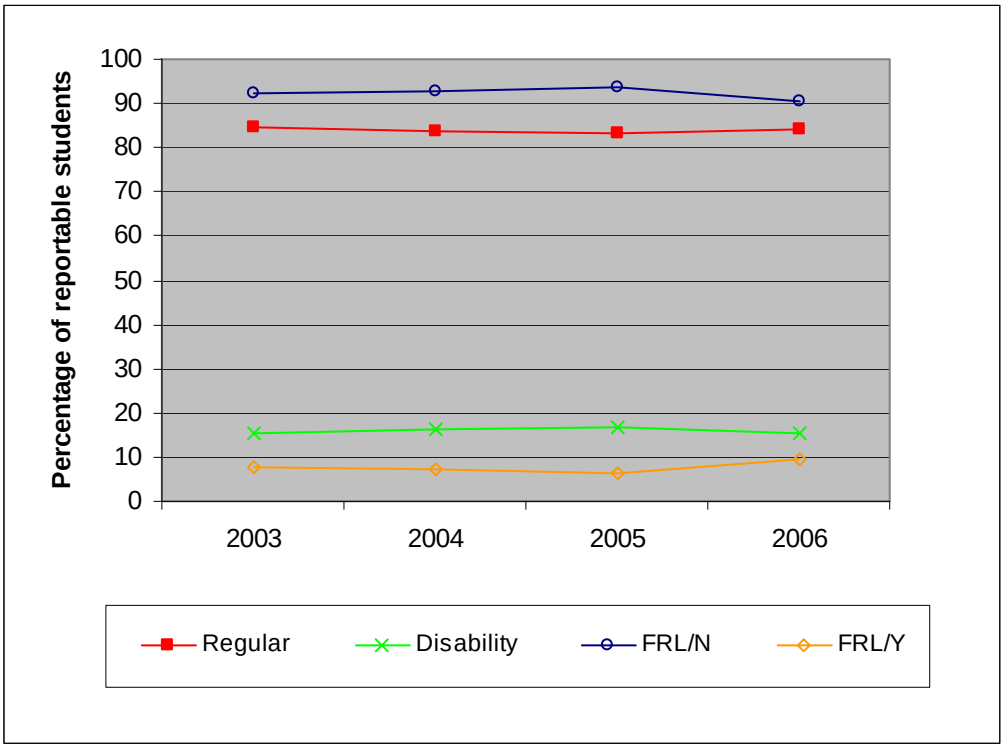
Equity of Improvement

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

Findings:

- In Marshfield, all student subgroups, with the exception of low-income students, had improved performance in ELA between 2003 and 2006. The most improved subgroups in ELA were students with disabilities and non low-income students.
- In math, all subgroups in Marshfield, again with the exception of low-income students, showed improved performance between 2003 and 2006. The most improved subgroup in math was students with disabilities.
- The performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in ELA narrowed from 20 PI points in 2003 to 19 PI points in 2006, and the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in math narrowed from 29 to 27 PI points over this period.

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



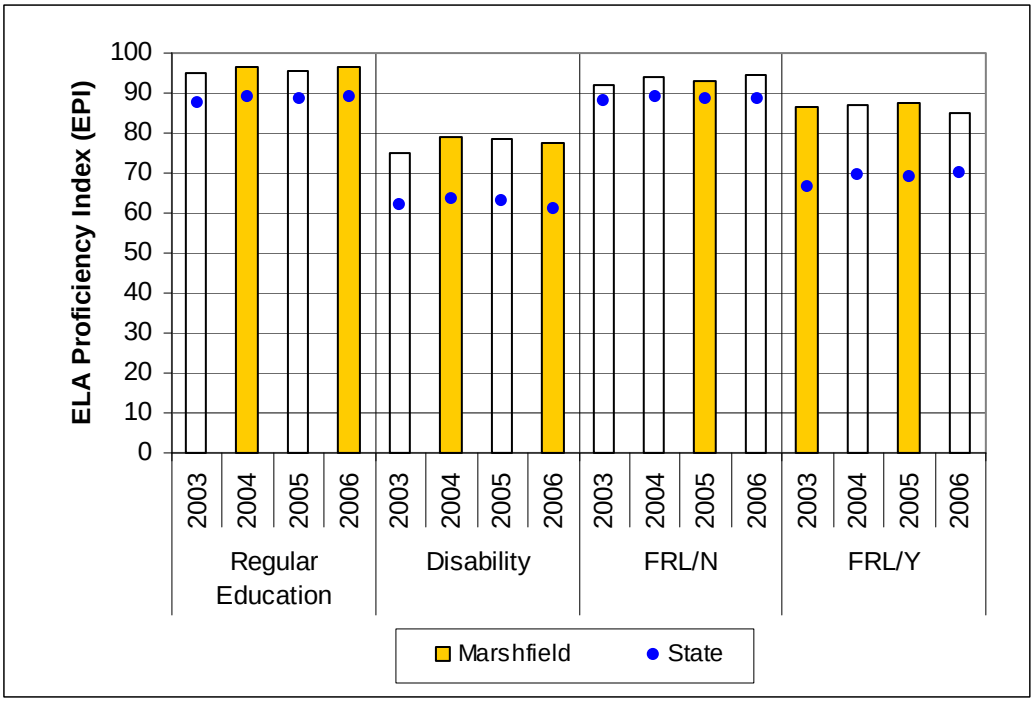
	Number of Students				Percentage of students			
	2003	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**
Marshfield	1,705	2,094	2,110	2,509	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Regular	1,439	1,751	1,753	2,112	84.4	83.6	83.1	84.2
Disability	265	343	356	391	15.5	16.4	16.9	15.6
FRL/N	1,572	1,944	1,978	2,268	92.2	92.8	93.7	90.4
FRL/Y	133	150	132	241	7.8	7.2	6.3	9.6

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

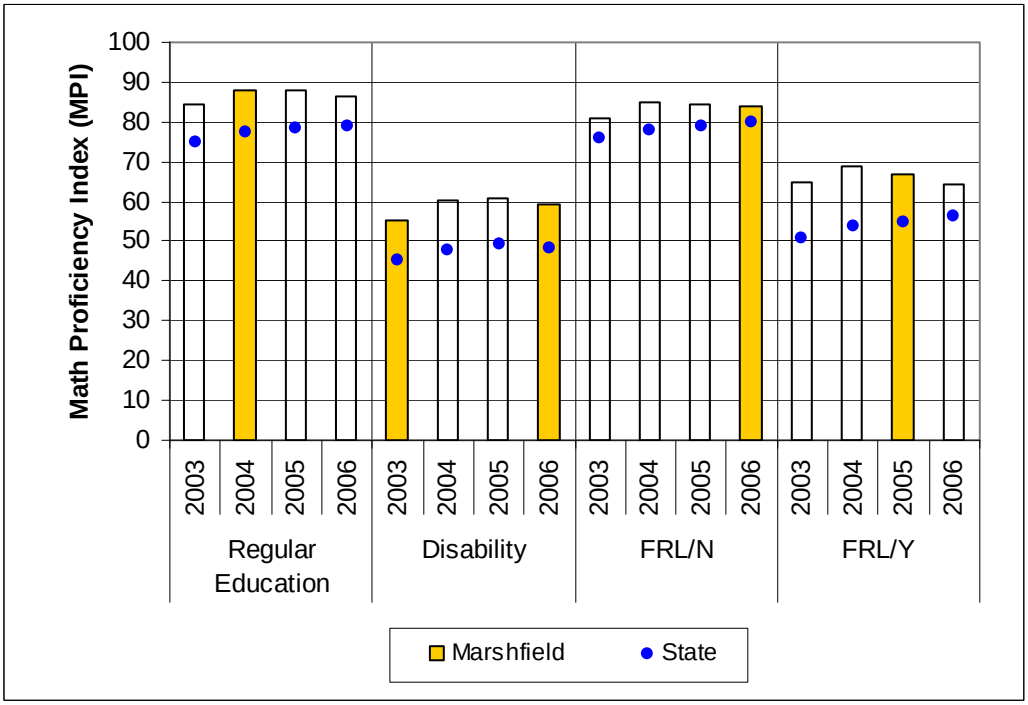
The makeup of the Marshfield student population did not change much between 2003 and 2006. The proportion of students with disabilities remained the same and that of low-income (FRL/Y) students increased by nearly two percentage points during this period.

Figures 17 A, B/Table 17: MCAS Proficiency Indices, by Subgroup, 2003-2006

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



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

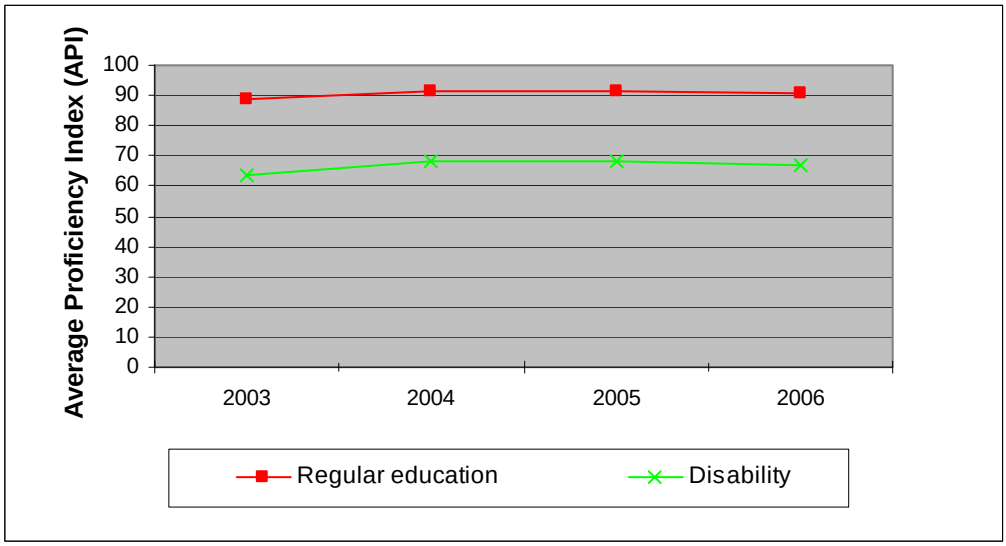


State				Marshfield			
Subgroup	**Year**	**EPI**	**MPI**	**Subgroup**	**Year**	**EPI**	**MPI**
Regular Education	2003	87.3	74.7	Regular Education	2003	94.8	84.5
	2004	89.2	77.4		2004	96.4	87.8
	2005	88.3	78.2		2005	95.6	87.8
	2006	89.0	78.9		2006	96.5	86.3
Disability	2003	62.1	45.3	Disability	2003	75.0	55.3
	2004	63.3	47.9		2004	78.8	60.5
	2005	62.9	49.0		2005	78.6	60.9
	2006	61.2	48.4		2006	77.5	59.4
FRL/N	2003	87.9	75.9	FRL/N	2003	92.2	80.9
	2004	88.9	78.1		2004	94.2	84.9
	2005	88.3	79.0		2005	93.1	84.3
	2006	88.6	79.7		2006	94.5	84.1
FRL/Y	2003	66.6	50.7	FRL/Y	2003	86.6	64.6
	2004	69.7	53.9		2004	87.0	68.9
	2005	68.8	55.0		2005	87.3	66.8
	2006	70.0	56.3		2006	85.0	64.3

In Marshfield, all student subgroups, with the exception of low-income (FRL/Y) students, had improved performance in ELA between 2003 and 2006. The most improved subgroups in ELA were students with disabilities and non low-income (FRL/N) students. In math, all subgroups in Marshfield, again with the exception of low-income (FRL/Y) students, showed improved performance between 2003 and 2006. The most improved subgroup in math was students with disabilities.

The performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in ELA narrowed from 20 PI points in 2003 to 19 PI points in 2006, and the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in math narrowed from 29 to 27 PI points over this period.

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

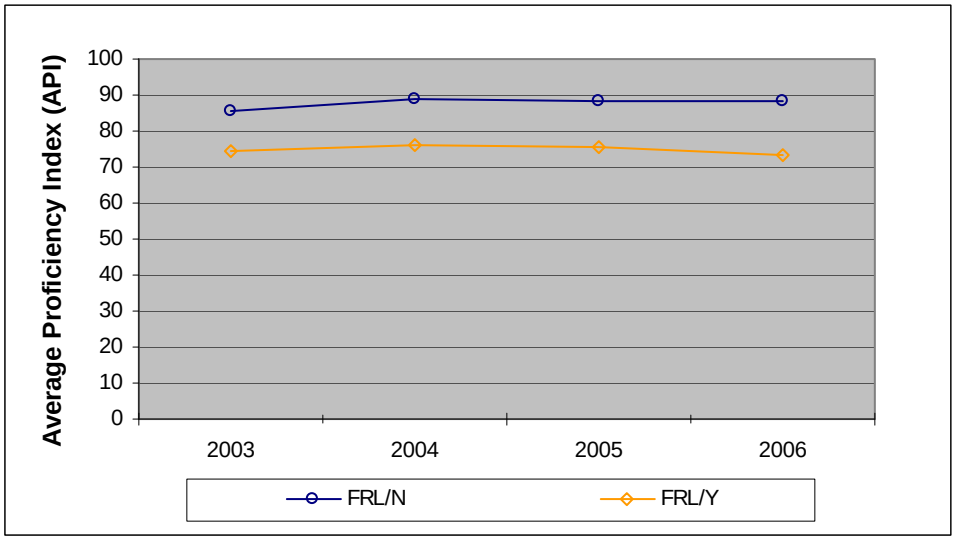


		API	EPI	MPI	Percent Attaining Proficiency ELA	Percent Attaining Proficiency Math
Regular education	2003	88.9	94.8	84.5	85	64
	2004	91.5	96.4	87.8	89	70
	2005	91.2	95.6	87.8	86	70
	2006	90.5	96.5	86.3	89	67
Disability	2003	63.4	75.0	55.3	42	22
	2004	68.4	78.8	60.5	48	29
	2005	68.5	78.6	60.9	47	26
	2006	67.2	77.5	59.4	47	28

Both students with disabilities and regular education students in Marshfield had improved overall performance on the MCAS tests between 2003 and 2006. The average proficiency gap for Marshfield's regular education students narrowed from 11 to nine PI points; for students with disabilities, it narrowed from 37 to 33 PI points.

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

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

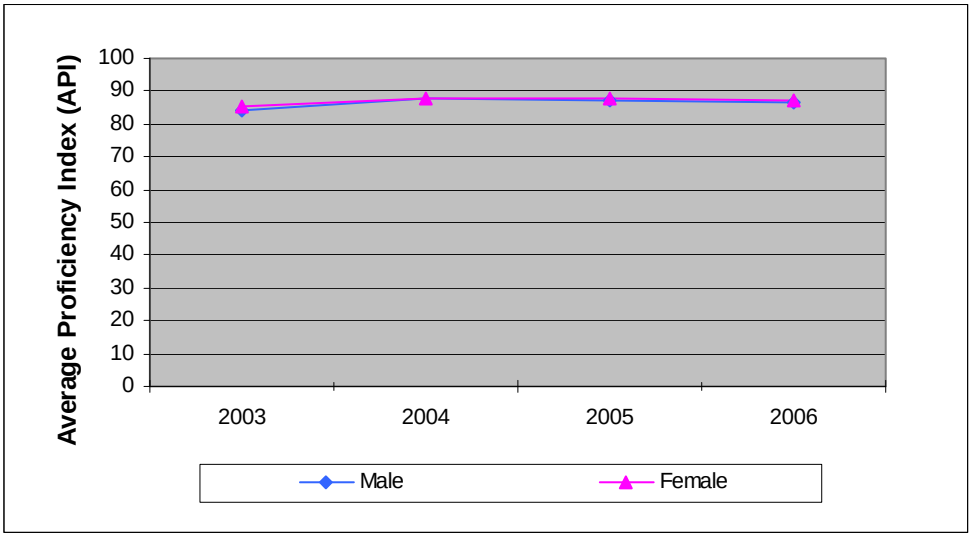


		API	EPI	MPI	Percent Attaining Proficiency ELA	Percent Attaining Proficiency Math
FRL/N	2003	85.7	92.2	80.9	79	59
	2004	88.9	94.2	84.9	84	66
	2005	88.1	93.1	84.3	80	64
	2006	88.4	94.5	84.1	84	64
FRL/Y	2003	74.6	86.6	64.6	67	34
	2004	76.0	87.0	68.9	68	40
	2005	75.4	87.3	66.8	64	37
	2006	73.6	85.0	64.3	65	33

Low-income (FRL/Y) students in Marshfield had slightly decreased overall performance on the MCAS tests between 2003 and 2006, while non low-income (FRL/N) students had improved overall performance during this period. The average proficiency gap for low-income students widened from 25 to 26 PI points, and for non low-income students it narrowed from 14 to 12 PI points.

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

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



		API	EPI	MPI	Percent Attaining Proficiency ELA	Percent Attaining Proficiency Math
Male	2003	84.4	90.3	80.0	75	58
	2004	88.0	92.3	84.7	78	65
	2005	87.4	91.9	84.0	77	64
	2006	86.7	92.4	82.6	80	62
Female	2003	85.2	93.3	79.3	82	57
	2004	87.8	95.2	82.5	87	63
	2005	87.5	93.8	82.6	82	62
	2006	87.3	94.7	82.1	84	61

Both male and female students in Marshfield had improved performance between 2003 and 2006. The average proficiency gap for male students narrowed from 16 to 13 PI points, and for female students it narrowed from 15 to 13 PI points.

Between 2003 and 2006, 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, math, and STE, eligible students in Marshfield participated at levels which met or exceeded the state's 95 percent requirement.

n-Values by Subgroup and Performance Level, 2006

Subgroup	Performance Level	ELA	Math	STE
Marshfield	ALL LEVELS	**2,496**	**2,499**	**721**
	Advanced	430	545	112
	Proficient	1,611	928	286
	Needs Improvement	425	796	281
	Warning/Failing	30	230	42
Regular Education	Advanced	417	524	97
	Proficient	1,435	846	257
	Needs Improvement	251	627	232
	Warning/Failing	8	117	20
Disability	Advanced	13	20	15
	Proficient	174	81	29
	Needs Improvement	171	167	48
	Warning/Failing	21	111	22
Limited English Proficient	Advanced	0	1	0
	Proficient	2	1	0
	Needs Improvement	3	2	1
	Warning/Failing	1	2	0
White	Advanced	422	532	110
	Proficient	1,579	918	284
	Needs Improvement	396	760	269
	Warning/Failing	26	217	39
Hispanic	Advanced	3	5	0
	Proficient	9	3	0
	Needs Improvement	13	11	4
	Warning/Failing	1	6	2
African-American	Advanced	1	1	0
	Proficient	7	2	2
	Needs Improvement	9	11	3
	Warning/Failing	2	6	0
Asian	Advanced	3	7	2
	Proficient	14	4	0
	Needs Improvement	3	9	4
	Warning/Failing	0	0	0
Free or Reduced-Cost Lunch/No	Advanced	413	523	107
	Proficient	1,474	867	269
	Needs Improvement	351	697	242
	Warning/Failing	16	175	32
Free or Reduced-Cost Lunch/Yes	Advanced	17	22	5
	Proficient	137	61	17
	Needs Improvement	74	99	39
	Warning/Failing	13	55	10
Male	Advanced	148	292	61
	Proficient	870	481	165
	Needs Improvement	248	402	144
	Warning/Failing	22	114	13
Female	Advanced	282	253	51
	Proficient	741	447	121
	Needs Improvement	177	394	137
	Warning/Failing	7	116	29

n-Values by Grade and Year, 2003-2006

Grade	Year	ELA	Math	STE
Grade 3	2003	383	0	0
	2004	344	0	0
	2005	369	0	0
	2006	360	361	0
Grade 4	2003	341	343	0
	2004	388	388	0
	2005	354	354	0
	2006	361	362	0
Grade 5	2003	0	0	0
	2004	0	0	338
	2005	0	0	385
	2006	362	361	361
Grade 6	2003	0	338	0
	2004	0	361	0
	2005	0	339	0
	2006	390	387	0
Grade 7	2003	341	0	0
	2004	334	0	0
	2005	363	0	0
	2006	348	351	0
Grade 8	2003	0	349	0
	2004	0	335	336
	2005	0	323	323
	2006	360	359	360
Grade 10	2003	293	293	0
	2004	324	329	0
	2005	301	300	0
	2006	315	318	0
All Grades	2003	1,358	1,323	0
	2004	1,390	1,413	674
	2005	1,387	1,316	708
	2006	2,496	2,499	721

Notes

Trend data include grades for which testing was administered for each subject in all four years. The following grades are included in the trend data for 2003-2006 reported in Figures/Tables 16-20 and in the table of n-values by grade and year:
English language arts (ELA): 3, 4, 7, 10
Math: 4, 6, 8, 10
Science and technology/engineering (STE): 5, 8

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

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

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

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

Rounded values may result in slight apparent discrepancies.

Standard Findings and Summaries

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

I. Leadership, Governance, and Communication

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

Standard Rating: Satisfactory

Findings:

- The district and school leaders had a clearly understood mission, core beliefs, and five goals that were included in the District Improvement Plan (DIP) and which incorporated an assessment component.
- School committee members were knowledgeable about their responsibilities through training sessions sponsored by the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC), and they relied upon data to foster decision-making while revising the mathematics program.
- The school committee voted on a School Improvement Plan (SIP) template that was recommended by the administration to ensure that the individual plans were aligned with the DIP and had consistent focus.
- The performance of the superintendent, administrators, and principals was annually evaluated; however, the MCAS test results and other student achievement data were not addressed in the narrative evaluations.

- The superintendent delegated educational and operational tasks to principals and program directors; however, the use of student achievement data to assess a principals' success was not documented.
- The superintendent created a comprehensive safety plan in collaboration with the police and fire departments, and it was reviewed annually.

Summary

At the time of the EQA review, the superintendent of the Marshfield Public Schools was in his second year of a three-year contract after having been elevated from the position of assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction. At the beginning of his tenure, he organized a meeting with the school committee to establish working relationships, identify expectations, and initiate guidelines for formalizing personnel policies.

School committee members were knowledgeable about their responsibilities through attendance at MASC training sessions and workshops. Information from related sources was also presented by the superintendent at scheduled school committee meetings.

The leadership team established communication as one of its primary goals. Student achievement data and other district-related information were routinely communicated to the school committee, staff, and community. Examples supplied by the central office included the annual town report, the superintendent's monthly newsletter, a "State of Our Schools" pamphlet, presentations to the school committee, and cable television broadcasts of school committee meetings. Examples of activities employed by principals included monthly newsletters to parents, presentations to parent teacher organizations (PTOs) and school councils, access to Connect Ed for immediate messaging, and use of the district's website for individual school updates.

A steering committee comprised of parents, school committee representatives, faculty, and administrators met in 2001 to develop and recommend a mission statement, core beliefs, and five goals, which focused on student achievement, school climate, facilities, finances, and public relations. The school committee approved the proposal which served as the District Improvement Plan (DIP) for 2002-2006. As the plan evolved, action planning teams for each goal were organized to focus on progress.

Other subcommittees which assisted with district planning included policy development, which was composed of two school committee members and the superintendent; budget, which was composed of two school committee members and central office administrators; and safety, which included principals who aligned school emergency plans with the district emergency plan. Correspondence with police, fire, and other town departments facilitated by the superintendent ensured that open lines of communication were maintained.

The superintendent recommended and the school committee voted to advocate for a tax override for May 2007. In FY 2006, the district experienced an increase in school enrollment; however, five teaching positions had to be eliminated and computer purchases and other expenses were reduced by $399,500 due to a level funded budget. The school committee, selectmen, and advisory and finance committees were united in recommending a $4.5 million override in order to address town-wide needs. This was later changed to two proposals, one a $4 million override to restore eliminated staff and services for FY 2008 through FY 2010, and the other a $2 million override to cover FY 2008 only. The $4 million override failed but the $2 million override passed.

Central office administrators and principals were evaluated by the superintendent. One of the objectives of each performance review was to promote student achievement as identified in the DIP and in School Improvement Plans (SIPs). All administrators received periodic retraining in evaluative procedures to ensure that their skills remained current.

The school committee evaluated the superintendent in a timely fashion. The process was goal oriented and incorporated the principles of school leadership. A summative evaluation was prepared, signed by the school committee, and appropriately filed. The MCAS results and other student achievement data, however, were not addressed.

Indicators

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

An interview with central office administrators and an analysis of related documentation revealed that a district steering committee composed of parents, school committee representatives, faculty, and principals convened in 2001. The steering committee developed a mission and core beliefs. Five goals were established, which focused on student achievement, school climate, facilities, finances, and public relations. An assessment component was also designed which included the focus area, funding recommendations, measurement, and status.

The steering committee formally presented its recommendation for the District Improvement Plan (DIP) to the full school committee. It was approved in 2002 and covered the years of 2002-2006. As the DIP evolved, action planning teams were organized, one for each of the five goals. Each planning team periodically reported to the school committee on the status of activities related to its goal. Each activity was documented as completed, in progress, or not attempted.

Following the school committee presentation by the action planning team, the status report was forwarded to principals who shared it with faculty and highlighted designated features in newsletters which were sent home to parents. The central office administration published a yearly brochure which was mailed to the homes of all parents.

As previously stated, one important feature of the DIP was the assessment component. Action planning teams directed attention to measurement, which was defined as the degree to which success was met. The measurement component was integral to the successor plan which was to be proposed and voted upon by the school committee in late spring 2007.

The DIP was standards based. The first strand identified improved student achievement as a primary goal. Student achievement was analyzed using the MCAS data as a foundation, and the state curriculum frameworks were used as a guide for documentation purposes.

The district's leadership stated that the DIP adhered to the Department of Education edict that the "DIP should be based on assessment results." Administrators were trained in TestWiz. Testing liaisons were identified in each building. They assisted teachers in the analysis of data by grade level for each of the elementary schools and by content area for the middle and high schools.

As a result of the analyses, mathematics instructional time was increased in the elementary schools, and an Essential Skills pamphlet for grades K-5 was developed to document curricular expectations. Instructional time in mathematics was also increased in the middle school during the 2005-2006 academic year. In September 2006, a co-taught mathematics class was introduced at the high school to address the needs of at-risk students who did not exhibit sufficient progress on the most recent MCAS tests.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

An interview with central office administrators and a review of related documents revealed that the current superintendent was promoted from the position of assistant superintendent in August 2005. In late August, the new superintendent organized a workshop with the school committee in order to establish working relationships, identify expectations, and initiate guidelines for formalizing personnel policies. This activity was supplemented by Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) trainings and attendance at MASC-sponsored workshops.

During the fall of 2005, the roles of school councils were redefined. In an interview with the superintendent, it was revealed that a member orientation was conducted, consistency was

reinforced, and, informally or indirectly, school committee members became more cognizant of their duties and responsibilities.

As a result of data analysis presented by central office administrators to the school committee at various meetings, the committee voted to increase instructional time in mathematics. They also voted to employ mathematics tutors at the Title I schools and to employ mathematics coaches to assist elementary and middle school teachers.

A review of the school committee's policy manual revealed that it was current and comprehensive. Central office administrators and two members of the school committee comprised a subcommittee which annually reviewed the manual. The policy review/development process encompassed an 11-step chronology which ensured that priorities were addressed, inclusiveness prevailed, dissemination incorporated, and evaluation was ongoing.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Interviews with school committee members, central office administrators, and principals indicated that various data were used to inform decision-making. The school committee emphasized that it was aware more attention was needed in mathematics. It subsequently voted to increase instructional time. It also stated that the NEASC accreditation report directed it to establish a remediation plan to address infrastructure needs at the high school. It has appealed to the town's capital planning committee to fund a $50,000 study for this purpose.

The high school principal and teachers in a focus group confirmed that a 2005-2006 analysis of Advanced Placement (AP) results revealed a need to expand the program and train more teachers. A cadre of teachers was trained in the summer of 2006, and four new courses were added to the program of studies for the 2006-2007 academic year.

Elementary principals also shared that student achievement data were reviewed in at least one of the four monthly in-service meetings. A testing liaison in each building was instrumental in

identifying individual school assessment trends and patterns which assisted schools in developing a valid focus.

Several sources of data were available to assist the leadership team in making decisions. For example, in addition to the NEASC report, there were data from the MCAS tests in 2006, the New England League of Middle Schools (NELMS) in February 2006, a CPR in March 2006, and information from an early childhood education accreditation review. Administrators also had access to diagnostics from the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI), Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), and the Gates-MacGinitie; however, selection and generation of these assessments were inconsistent system-wide.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

Interviews with school committee members and central office administrators, as well as a review of the SIPs, revealed that the SIPs were aligned with the DIP. The school committee voted on a template recommended by the administration to ensure that the school plans received consistent attention and focus. The vote reflected the community's desire to promote continuity among its schools and the community's culture of districtwide solidarity.

Each SIP embraced similar developmental features. School council members were trained and oriented to their duties and responsibilities. Parents were surveyed, the MCAS data were analyzed, and teachers provided input through their membership on the school councils. The elementary school councils proposed individual plans and presented them to the superintendent who forwarded the documents to the school committee in the form of an information item at regular school committee meetings. Co-chairs from the school councils at the middle and high schools appeared before the school committee and explained the respective school plans.

Student achievement received primary focus in each SIP. This was ensured by requiring each school council to adhere to a template. In interviews, principals endorsed this approach because it not only created continuity but also fostered accountability.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

Interviews with school committee members, central office administrators, and principals revealed that the allocation of resources was based on needs. During budget deliberations, aggregated and disaggregated analysis of student achievement data revealed that students in special education classes and mathematics programming were in need of attention. This observation was made over time and was not a one-year conclusion. As a result, resource rooms were established and Title I monies were directed to assist schools and students in mathematics and in English language arts. The director of elementary education was viewed as a trainer and a facilitator. His expertise and energy were directed at schools and teachers in need of model teaching to enhance teaching effectiveness. Tutors for students and coaches to assist teachers were also employed.

The EQA team observed that the use of disaggregated data was a collaborative effort among the director of elementary education, administrators, and regular and special education teachers. Support programs were implemented to benefit all students as well as those at risk. For example, low mathematics scores at the elementary and middle schools led to an increase in instructional time. In 2003, a Math B course was added to the middle school curriculum for regular and special education students. This co-taught course was characterized by a small class size, a slower pace, and aide support. A similar concept was introduced at the high school for grade 9 students.

The EQA examiners reviewed a district document entitled "Justification for Regular Education Staff Requests." This document used student assessment data to request additional staff in order to balance class sizes and to make the availability of technology more equitable.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Interviews with central office administrators and principals indicated that they provided guidance to the superintendent in the form of recommendations regarding instructional needs for the district.

As a direct result of this exchange of information, the superintendent recommended to the school committee a tax override for May 2007. The Marshfield Public Schools has not experienced a significant increase in its appropriations over the past few years. In FY 2006, the district experienced a small increase in school enrollment; however, five teaching positions amounting to $211,414 were eliminated and computers and other expenses were reduced by $399,500 due to a level funded budget.

At the time of the EQA review, the school committee, the selectmen, and the advisory and finance committees had recommended a $4.5 million general override for the town in order to address reductions. The school committee relayed in its interview with the EQA examiners that it was fully aware of the challenge which confronted it, but was obligated to advocate for students to sustain continued academic progress for the Marshfield Public Schools. The $4.5 million override was later changed to two override proposals, one for $4 million to cover FY 2008 through FY 2010 and the other for $2 million to cover FY 2008 only. The $4 million override failed but the $2 million override passed.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

Interviews with central office administrators and an analysis of related documents confirmed that student achievement was communicated to the school committee, staff, and community. The annual town report, the superintendent's monthly newsletter, and a "State of Our Schools" pamphlet each made reference to student achievement. The annual town report was made available to residents, the superintendent's monthly newsletter was sent home with each student, and the "State of Our Schools" was forwarded to parents and was placed in centers throughout the community. The MCAS results were presented at least annually at school committee meetings. These meetings were broadcast via cable television.

Presentations to the school committee were not limited to progress on the MCAS tests. PSAT, SAT, and AP achievement data were shared to inform all stakeholders and to assist them in future decision-making.

SIP progress also received primary attention. Since the focus of each SIP was student achievement, individual school summaries compared performance in the past to the present. Statistical data for each school were shared by the principal and/or testing liaison with constituents in the form of a monthly newsletter to parents as well as presentations to PTOs and school councils.

Principals employed Connect Ed for instant messaging to parents. They updated their individual school's website on a periodic basis.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

Interviews with central office administrators and principals indicated that aggregated and disaggregated student assessment data were used to improve progress and services. Principals were viewed as educational leaders and in accepting that role were obligated to focus on curriculum and instruction. Bi-monthly administrative council meetings directed attention to

student academic progress. Three themes evolved. Low-income and special education students were not meeting achievement expectations in middle school mathematics. As a result, the middle school student schedule was redesigned. At grade 6 there were five quarters and at grade 7 there were six quarters of mathematics instruction. The curriculum was rewritten in order to accommodate this additional time.

At the elementary schools, 75 minutes per week were added to the mathematics program and, where feasible, mathematics was taught in the morning. At the high school, AP data analysis and a student survey revealed a need for more AP class options. Offerings were expanded from seven to 11 courses for 2007. High school parents were informed of this change to publicize the district's desire to provide a more academically challenging program of studies.

Low-income and special education students were given individual or small group assistance via paraprofessionals and tutors. At the high school, the assistance took the form of introducing a co-taught (regular education teacher and special education teacher) mathematics class for grade 9 students with optimal teacher-student ratios.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

Interviews with central office administrators and principals revealed that student achievement data were monitored throughout the year. These data were articulated via formal assessments and informal/anecdotal observations. At the elementary schools the MCAS tests were supplemented by the DRA, Gates-MacGinitie, SRI, and DIBELS. At the middle school the MCAS tests were supplemented by the Gates-MacGinitie, a quarterly mathematics portfolio review, and anecdotal reviews of the recently revised science curriculum. At the high school, results of student progress were accessed from the co-taught mathematics program and from the English language arts writing lab.

A primary goal of the DIP, which filtered to the individual SIPs, was the emphasis on student achievement and essential skills. The middle school was the only school which did not meet adequate yearly progress (AYP) in mathematics. As a result, instructional time was increased. Also, vertical articulation was ensured in ELA, STE, and mathematics at grades preK-12 when a districtwide curriculum was adopted and similar resources were made available to each of the schools.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Interviews with the school committee and superintendent as well as an analysis of personnel files revealed that the superintendent was evaluated in a timely fashion. The process included superintendent goals, which were endorsed by the school committee, and an instrument which incorporated the principles of school leadership. The goals interfaced with the DIP which focused on student achievement. Status reports were presented at midterm and at the end of the year. Each school committee member rated the superintendent's performance by checklist and narrative. A summative was prepared, signed by the school committee chair, and appropriately filed.

Central office administrators were evaluated by the superintendent. Mutual goal setting prefaced the process. The objective of each performance review was to promote student achievement over time as identified in the DIP. The evaluative instrument was a product of the essentials of school leadership. It included a checklist with accompanying narrative.

The superintendent evaluated the seven principals. Student achievement was a factor as it was a focus of each school's improvement plan. The superintendent placed emphasis on professional staff evaluations, instructional leadership, and student learning. Principals received periodic retraining in evaluative procedures to ensure that their skills remained current. The teacher evaluation instrument was in its second year of implementation. Although in its infancy, both

administrators and teachers confirmed in separate interviews that the new instrument represented an improvement over past practice.

All administrators in the system were eligible for merit pay beyond their three percent automatic salary increase. Compensation and future employment were not based exclusively on the MCAS test results. Student achievement was, however, embedded in the DIP and SIPs. The incentive system operated on an accumulation of points, which translated to a stipend of approximately $2,500 to $4,000 for each administrator.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Interviews with the superintendent and principals revealed that the principals' roles as instructional leaders were prefaced by a need for connectivity. Connectivity was defined as the desire to ensure the curriculum was similar in all five elementary schools and to ensure there was vertical articulation at grades preK-12. The curricular motto was to personify the three Rs: rigor, relevance, and relationships.

Documentation was not available to confirm that the superintendent used student assessment data to ascertain the success of the principals' leadership. Although the district had plans to employ more similarity in administering formative assessments, there was inconsistency in application during the period under review.

The administrative council met twice a month and the superintendent held monthly meetings with individual principals. These sessions focused on the status of the SIPs, the hiring/firing of staff, and the MCAS item analyses. In addition, principals were responsible for developing and monitoring their respective budgets. They were also responsible for all phases of supervision of custodial staff.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

Interviews with central office administrators revealed that a number of collaborative agreements had been developed with area providers to ensure that students received optimal services. Some examples included: Pilgrim Area Collaborative, whose membership enabled low incidence special education populations to enroll in programs on a tuition basis; South Shore Collaborative, whose members were exposed to curriculum and professional development opportunities; Curriculum Leadership Center at Bridgewater State College, whose members attended workshops for administrators and school committees; and vocational training at a regional technical high school for students whose coursework was not offered at Marshfield High School.

In addition, consultants were contracted to provide in-service to teachers in mathematics and in the writing process. Agreements had also been developed with the NELMS for organizational assistance and with the College Board to facilitate vertical teaming and alignment of the curriculum.

Locally, relationships with Kiwanis and the Boys/Girls Club had been established to exhibit a visible presence in the community.

In interviews with the town administrator, town accountant, and town treasurer, the examiners learned that Marshfield's school system relationships were collegial and productive. Both the town and school departments were currently cooperating on the installation of a new database system which would refine communications between the two departments.

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

Rating: Excellent

Evidence

An interview with the superintendent and related documentation indicated that the district's safety plan was designed during the 2002-2003 academic year. It was reviewed each year with principals. A template had been provided for principals who were responsible for replicating the plan but adapting it to their individual school. Principals were also responsible for informing and implementing plans with faculty and staff. A communication chain and a specific duty chart outlined responsibilities for each member of the leadership team. The superintendent facilitated annual correspondence with representatives from the police and fire departments to ensure that open lines of communication were maintained.

All principals were trained by and had certificates from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The district supplemented this initiative with district training sessions to ensure consistency. Emergency drills were routinely practiced to ensure the efficacy of all plans.

Also, due to the district's proximity to the Pilgrim Nuclear Power Station, a separate evacuation plan was designed for the school in the immediate vicinity.

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

II. Curriculum and Instruction

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

Standard Rating: Needs Improvement

Findings:

- The district curriculum aligned with the state curriculum frameworks and was aligned vertically and horizontally.
- The district curriculum document did not include instructional strategies nor were measurable outcomes articulated as student benchmarks for learning.
- Curriculum documents for the elementary, middle, and high schools were in different stages of transition from the previous curriculum format to a newly updated format.
- The district had an established, documented process, consistent with school committee policy, which provided for the regular revision of curriculum. Each school had a curriculum leader who provided active leadership and support for curriculum revisions that focused on improved achievement for all students.
- Classroom observations revealed that teachers were not using a variety of instructional techniques to address differences in student learning styles.
- Educational technology was available in the district. However, sustained and consistent technology integration within the curriculum was lacking.
- The district conducted a review and analysis of aggregated and disaggregated student MCAS data.

Summary

The Marshfield Public Schools had curriculum guides in the core content areas of ELA, math, and STE that aligned with the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks. These documents addressed learning objectives/content outcomes ("The learner should be able to…"), skills, resources, and assessment. However, instructional strategies and measurable student outcomes were not present in the documents. Additionally, teachers used curriculum maps, pacing documents, and clarification posters to ensure that essential skills for learning were covered both horizontally and vertically within the curriculum. These documents varied by elementary, middle, and high school level. They referenced teaching materials in use within the district that supported the various strands contained in the state frameworks.

The district provided for districtwide curriculum supervision/assessment by ensuring that the elementary school principals viewed themselves as the curriculum leaders of their respective buildings. Elementary principals received support from the director of elementary education. Their combined work ensured ongoing monitoring of the state curriculum frameworks and the vertical and horizontal alignment of the district curriculum. At the secondary level, each building had content curriculum coordinators or department heads who worked with either the building assistant principal or the principal to ensure compliance with the state frameworks. Thus, the district made a systemic effort across grades K-12 to ensure that the organizational structure had a positive impact upon ongoing curriculum revision.

Teacher professional development provided annual opportunities for teachers to participate in curriculum revision. District administrators reported that they led many of these curriculum alignment sessions through their monthly faculty meetings. In addition, teachers were encouraged, individually or in small groups, to write professional development proposals to perform curriculum work during out-of-school time, as part of the district's professional development plan.

Based on the district's analysis of the MCAS data, changes were made to math instruction at all levels in order to improve student scores. The time of math classes was changed and the amount of math instruction per week was increased at the elementary level, while struggling students were required to take additional math classes at the middle and high school levels. Math coaches

were employed to assist classroom teachers. In addition, the director of elementary education and the coaches modeled best practices to teachers to improve their instruction in both math and ELA. The director of special education strategized with teachers in order to improve instructional techniques to improve the achievement of special needs students.

Although technology was available and included multiple resources for student use, the implementation of different technologies varied across grade levels. Access to technology instruction in the elementary grades was inconsistent. Different grade levels received varying amounts of instruction provided by technology specialists.

Classroom observations of 68 classes revealed positive, safe classroom climates. Students and teachers exhibited positive relationships and students treated peers with respect. Lesson planning based upon the state curriculum frameworks was clear to students in 99 percent of the classrooms observed. Lesson objectives were clear to students in 93 percent of observed classrooms. During those visitations, the examiners observed that teachers used questioning that encouraged elaboration, thought, and involvement by students in only 46 percent of the classrooms. Teacher use of a variety of instructional techniques such as differentiated instruction was observed in 25 percent. Teachers communicated expectations of high quality work of students in 72 percent of the observed classrooms, and classroom time was focused on challenging academic tasks in 75 percent..

Indicators

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The district's curricula aligned with the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks in the core content areas from kindergarten to grade 12. However, the curricula did not include measurable outcomes nor did it include instructional strategies. Some of the curriculum documents contained timelines and articulation maps. Districtwide administrators, building principals, and curriculum

coordinators reported to the EQA examiners that they were reviewing the components of measurable outcomes and instructional strategies for inclusion in the new curricula, and they planned to incorporate them into the new district curriculum document format. They also reported that the new format for all K-12 curricula was developed during the various curriculum professional development workshops conducted during the 2005-2006 school year.

In the 2006-2007 school year, the agreed upon curriculum format was being implemented at the middle school and high school levels. The elementary schools planned to implement the new format during the next scheduled elementary curriculum review beginning in the 2007-2008 school year. Thus, at the time of the EQA review, the curriculum existed in different formats, the former format and the newly revised format.

A review of the curriculum documents revealed that the minimum components were incomplete or absent. In separate interviews, school administrators and the assistant superintendent indicated that none of the present curriculum documents contained instructional strategies. The district began curriculum professional development workshops (on a voluntary participation basis for the faculty) in differentiated instruction during the period under review. All of the curriculum documents contained objectives for student accomplishment (what a learner should be able to do); however, the outcomes presented for satisfying those objectives were not in the curriculum documents as measurable outcomes. Outcome-based benchmarks were not written into the ELA curriculum. The curriculum referenced a "rubric" as the tool to measure benchmarks, without providing any guidance as to its use in establishing outcome-based assessment. No reference to assessment was found in reviewing the grade 3 ELA curriculum. The document, however, addressed "outcomes" globally.

Curriculum review was ongoing during the period under review. Administrators, teachers, and curriculum coordinators in separate interviews with the EQA examiners reported on building-level and districtwide initiatives offered through professional development, or required at the building level by principals. Additionally, curriculum was coordinated through the assistant superintendent and the director of elementary education as a result of data analysis of the MCAS student scores.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

Curricula in ELA, math, and science were aligned both horizontally and vertically. In separate interviews with the EQA examiners, principals, the assistant superintendent, and curriculum coordinators reported that the district's curricula in all tested areas aligned vertically and horizontally. Teachers in focus groups reported about their grade-level curriculum meetings that established horizontal alignment, as well as their vertical alignment building meetings. Administrators, curriculum coordinators, and teachers in separate interviews said that vertical articulation meetings took place between the elementary and middle school teachers, and between the middle school and high school teachers. Additionally, teachers said that they received professional development time as well as early release days to work with their colleagues on horizontal and vertical curriculum alignment.

Elementary teachers and the director of elementary education said that the district had developed grade-level clarification posters (referenced as benchmarks by the district) in the 2001-2002 school year. The posters addressed content area, essential skills, and teaching materials, and they served as a guide to the curriculum. Clarification posters for all MCAS-tested content were available for classroom use. Principals, curriculum coordinators, and the assistant superintendent reported that teachers developed grade-level tests as an additional tool to assess the effectiveness of horizontal alignment. Teachers also said that they participated in vertical alignment meetings which included the analysis of the state frameworks, materials, and texts used at each grade level. Curriculum teams checked for redundancies and omissions, especially as they related to the core content areas assessed by the MCAS tests.

A review of school committee policy revealed that curriculum review was targeted. Policy did provide for the ongoing review over a five-year cycle. Interviews with school administrators and teachers confirmed that policy requirement. During interviews with principals, the EQA examiners learned that curriculum changes and textbook adoptions were implemented according to defined school committee policy.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district had curriculum leaders who oversaw the use, alignment, consistency, and effectiveness of curriculum delivery. Principals said that they were the curriculum and instructional leaders of their buildings. Additionally, principals and teachers received support from the director of elementary education and the assistant superintendent. Teachers reported to the EQA examiners that principals met with them regularly to assess curriculum. The district placed emphasis upon analysis of data from the MCAS tests. Curriculum modifications were made using the data analyses. Principals used walk-throughs as an additional way to monitor the curriculum. The high school principal said that he collected teacher plan books and that the district required teachers to provide lesson objectives, teaching strategies, and method of assessment for each lesson taught. The EQA examiners learned that one principal addressed the various needs of learners by requiring the teaching modality to change approximately every 12 minutes within the teaching block. Observations made by the EQA examiners during classroom visitations did not support that expectation.

All principals reported that the analysis of both aggregated and disaggregated data drove decision-making. For example, at the elementary level low MCAS math scores resulted in an increase in time allocated to math. In addition, math instruction took place during a different time block during the day. Math coaches hired to support classroom teachers were in place. The director of elementary education modeled lessons in the various elementary schools. Title I teachers gave direct support in ELA and math. At the middle school, students received an additional MCAS math course instead of an elective for one semester. High school students were assigned additional math courses based on performance testing. Curriculum coordinators/department chairs at the middle school and at the high school supported faculty in curriculum disciplines. Curriculum leaders worked with the principal and the director of elementary education to provide extra math classes for the students across the district who received a 'Warning/Failing' or a 'Needs Improvement' score on the MCAS tests.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

Each school provided active leadership and support for effective instruction, techniques, and methods grounded in research and focused on improved achievement for all students. The district's administration used the opening meeting of the 2005 school year to review the importance of addressing the needs of subgroup populations. The assistant superintendent and principals reported that some of the topics included in this presentation were instructional support, curriculum accommodations plans, supervision of special needs students, teacher expectations to meet the individual needs of diverse learners, and strategies that ensure student learning success. As a result, professional development opportunities for that school year included offerings such as differentiated instruction. Disaggregated data analysis of the MCAS scores did occur for subgroup populations. Principals, assistant principals, and some curriculum coordinators received training in the use of TestWiz to disaggregate data for subgroup analysis.

Administrators reported that this effort was an attempt to address the gap between the MCAS scores of regular education students and the district's subgroup populations, low-income students (those participating in the free or reduced-cost lunch program) and special education students. A review of the district's 2006 MCAS test scores indicated that 24 percent of regular education students did not score at the 'Proficient' level or higher, while 77 percent of students with disabilities and 50 percent of low-income students did not score at that level. The director for special education reviewed the MCAS results for special needs students and met with special education teachers to share the data and strategize ways to improve student achievement.

Interviews with teachers, principals, and the assistant superintendent indicated that formal procedures for communication were in place at each building. Principals had regularly scheduled staff and grade-level meetings; departmental meetings took place at both the middle school and the high school. Administrators reported, and teachers concurred, that at grade-level or departmental meetings teachers were engaged in discussions focused upon issues relating to

curriculum, MCAS student performance analysis, and instructional approaches/strategies to improve student results. Such discussions included subgroup performance of special education and low-income students. One principal reported that at least once per month his building team reviewed curricula, MCAS test data, and methodologies to improve instruction. Building-based curriculum teams performed analysis of MCAS test scores, reviewed aggregated and disaggregated data, and made recommendations for implementation at the building level, among other duties. Principals reported that they brought the data analyses to the district administrators meeting and shared the data when there were implications that might affect the district as a whole. The director of elementary education and the math coach were in classrooms modeling best practices in support of ELA and mathematics at all elementary schools in the 2005-2006 school year.

A mentoring program was in place during the period under review. The district began the mentoring program with an orientation in the summer before the school year began. The program had a dual approach. It accommodated teachers new to the profession as well as professionals new to the Marshfield Public Schools. Trained mentors assisted new professionals throughout their first year. Teachers reported that other faculty informally supported the new faculty as well.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The district had an established, documented process for the regular and timely review and revision of curricula built upon valid research and analysis of the MCAS results. However, formative testing occurred to a lesser degree. Some principals reported using the DRA. The Title I program used formative tests for placement purposes. Some elementary principals administered the DIBELS, some did not. Students in grades 1-9 took the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test. The district did not use data in additional ways.

Building principals reported using other assessments. Principals reported that there was no uniformity in test selection or application of test results. The district focused on improving

achievement of all subgroups. The school committee had a policy in place which established a process providing for curriculum development and instructional program evaluation. Principals and the assistant superintendent were aware of the school committee policy. Central office and building administrators reported to the school committee on all major revisions. The middle school, for example, submitted completed curriculum reviews done by coordinators and faculty to the school committee for approval.

Administrators indicated that they were trained in the use of TestWiz. Principal meetings, curriculum coordinator meetings, and administrative team meetings were dedicated to MCAS data analysis. The building administration, the director of elementary education, and the faculty conducted the data analysis. The use of the MCAS data and other assessment data led to more support for subgroups. Special education inclusion programs were in place during the period under review. The MCAS data indicated that in Marshfield special needs students had improved performance in ELA between 2003 and 2006, while low-income students did not improve. In math, all subgroups in Marshfield with the exception of low-income showed improved performance between 2003 and 2006. The most improved subgroup in math was students with disabilities.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district analyzed student achievement data and allocated instructional time based on this analysis. The focus of the analysis was on improved rates of proficiency for all students. Elementary classroom teachers, principals, and the director of elementary education, as a direct result of the MCAS data analysis, determined that the elementary math placement within the daily period needed to change from the afternoon to the morning and that 75 minutes per week be added to the math curriculum. At the middle school, students who scored in the 'Needs Improvement' and 'Warning/Failing' categories were required to take an additional semester of math in lieu of an elective. Poor student performance on the MCAS tests resulted in assignment into a MCAS remedial class at the high school. The middle school principal reported that he

reassigned students in math who had not attained proficiency on the MCAS tests to a smaller class size, Math B, with paraprofessional support. Consequently, low-performing middle school and high school students in math received additional school time instruction.

A review of the time on learning revealed that the district grouped its elementary and middle schools as a K-8 structure. The district satisfied the academic learning time requirement of 900 instructional hours. The elementary schools scheduled approximately 942 instructional hours, while the middle school scheduled approximately 962 instructional hours, exclusive of directed studies. The high school used a block schedule that included directed study. All high school students received 990 instructional hours, exclusive of directed study, as reported by the assistant superintendent and the high school principal.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Appropriate technology was available to varying degrees within the Marshfield Public Schools. Principals reported to the EQA examiners that each elementary school had different access to technology. One elementary principal reported that he had a computer lab within his building. Another reported that he had "22 laptop computers" on a cart that went into the classrooms. In the current school year, 2006-2007, the district provided two additional technology specialists to provide technology support to the elementary classroom teachers. For example, at the Eames Way and Martinson Elementary Schools, grade 5 students received instruction for 18 weeks during 2006-2007 that focused on technology integration in the "regular classroom curriculum." Additionally, all grade 3 classrooms received 40 minutes of instruction per week by a technology specialist to "enhance student learning by incorporating technology."

The middle school had an updated computer lab adjacent to the library resource center. Teachers were able to schedule class time for their students. The high school had a computer lab, a writing lab, and a language lab as well as technology integrated into the vocational-technical courses. The district offered Computer Assisted Drawing (CAD). A print technology program was also available that used computer technology for graphic design. The EQA examiners learned that

throughout the district each classroom used for instruction had access to the Internet via at least one computer. During classroom observations, the EQA examiners observed that all classrooms had at least one computer for student use and most had an overhead projector and a television/VCR. At the high school, four SmartBoards were available for teacher use in the classroom. The EQA examiners further observed that students had access to hand-held calculators for their math classes. At the start of 2006-2007, an additional 63 computers were available for student use at the high school.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Principals and curriculum coordinators reported that they actively monitored teachers' instruction for evidence of practices that reflected high expectations for students' work and mastery. The EQA examiners conducted 68 classroom visitations. During classroom visitations, the examiners observed that teachers used questioning that encouraged elaboration, thought, and involvement by students in only 46 percent of observed classrooms. Teacher use of varied instructional techniques such as differentiated instruction was observed in 25 percent. Additionally, teachers planned multiple tasks that engaged all levels of learners in eight percent of observed classrooms. Principals reported that they monitored classroom instruction for evidence of high student expectations by looking for high levels of student participation, the use of open-ended questions in class work, problem solving, and the use of the Collins Writing Program. Administrators also reported to EQA examiners that they used the observation and evaluation process implemented at the start of the 2005-2006 school year to emphasize the ongoing need to have high student expectations. The high school principal reported that he monitored teachers' plan books to ensure that lessons aligned with the curriculum frameworks and reflected challenging lesson content.

A review of randomly selected teacher evaluations indicated that principals' assessments of teachers were timely. However, in the evaluation write-ups the examiners found little reference to recommendations for improving instructional strategies or suggestions for additional teaching

techniques. A further review of randomly selected teacher evaluations indicated that the instruments were informative. Teachers received positive reinforcement for their teaching. However, none of the evaluations provided instructive recommendations. The EQA examiners found little evidence of administrator suggestions or recommendations that informed instruction which would lead to higher expectations for teachers or higher order thinking skills for students. Lastly, none of the evaluations reviewed for teachers or administrators included identification of student academic progress as a standard for measurement of their professional performance. The superintendent's contract contained language in the goal-setting section that established student academic progress as an outcome for evaluation.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The effectiveness of instructional programs resulted from MCAS data analysis. However, the analysis and use of data from formative student assessment did not uniformly occur as it did for the MCAS tests. Principals reported that some of them used certain formative tests, such as the DRA, while other principals did not. The assistant superintendent was aware of the discrepancy that existed among schools and had been working to finalize a plan during 2006-2007 for implementation in the 2007-2008 school year.

Principals reported that they were trained in the use of TestWiz. Principals and the director of elementary education worked with teachers to disaggregate the test data. The director of elementary education and the principals reported that each elementary building completed the analysis of data. Additionally, teachers in focus groups reported to the EQA examiners that they received the data analyses.

Review of elementary school data occurred at the administrative team meetings. Principals and the director of elementary education reported that the following modifications were made to improve the effectiveness of teachers' instruction. The district created a template for open-

response questions modeled upon a Links template. The district developed key questions for teachers to use with students while studying and reading poetry. The district provided materials that dealt with "figurative language" (Core Knowledge series). The district provided training in differentiated instruction. The district had the director of elementary education model lessons for grade 2-3 classrooms on teaching good sentence structure. In addition, the math coach modeled best practice lessons in elementary classrooms.

Different schools collected additional data based upon their individual testing practices. Some principals reported using the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test at different grade levels and the DRA. Principals and the assistant superintendent reported that they hoped to formalize these testing practices and the use of other formative testing materials for the district in the 2007-2008 school year. Principals and district administrators reported that because of data analysis, curriculum programs were modified to reflect the district's commitment to ensuring student success. Teacher professional development focused upon curriculum revision and instructional strategies such as differentiating instruction. The EQA examiners learned that the district adopted a new comprehensive evaluation procedure as reported by the principals, teachers, and the assistant superintendent.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the site visit, the EQA examiners observed 68 randomly selected classrooms and recorded the presence or absence of 26 attributes reflected in the Principles of Effective Teaching. The attributes were grouped into five categories: classroom management, instructional practice, expectations, student activity and behavior, and climate. The EQA examiners checked the attributes that they observed in each of the five categories during their time spent in the classroom. Observations were conducted at the district's seven schools as follows: 35 at the elementary schools, 17 at the middle school, and 16 at the high school. In

total, the EQA examiners observed 28 ELA classrooms, 23 math classrooms, 17 science classrooms, and no social studies classrooms.

Classroom management refers to the maintenance of order and structure within the classroom. Positive indicators of classroom management were evident in 94 percent of the classrooms observed districtwide, with 94 percent at the elementary level, 96 percent at the middle school level, and 92 percent at the high school level.

Instructional practice was the largest category reviewed by the examiners. Effective instructional practice is considered evident when the teacher's questions transcend direct recall and include open-ended questions that require the use of higher order thinking skills. Students should be encouraged to go beyond their initial responses, to analyze, to synthesize, to compare and contrast, and to explain their own thinking. Class time should be focused on student learning. Students who have finished their work should be provided with other appropriate tasks; students who are off task should be redirected to their task. The work should engage all students; it should be age-appropriate, and attuned to many learning modalities, including auditory, visual, and kinesthetic. The pace of the class should be appropriate, challenging, and engaging for all students. Instruction should be differentiated so that all learners are challenged. The lesson should be clearly aligned with the state curriculum frameworks and either posted on the board or cited in the teacher's planner. The lesson's objectives should be clear and explicitly articulated. The teacher should use standards-based instruction to set objectives, to plan activities, to assess the effect of the lesson, and to measure progress for all learners. Positive indicators of instructional practice were evident in 73 percent of the classrooms observed districtwide, with 73 percent at the elementary level, 79 percent at the middle school level, and 67 percent at the high school level.

Expectations refer 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 69 percent of the classrooms observed districtwide, with 65 percent at the elementary level, 76 percent at the middle school level, and 70 percent at the high school level.

Positive student activity and behavior are considered evident when students are actively engaged in the learning process. They must show a clear understanding of the objective of the lesson and interact with the teacher and each other in accomplishing the tasks at hand. They should be attentive and responsive. While the environment may be busy and constructive, it must also be controlled and orderly. There should be few distractions, and the learning process must be clearly evident. Indicators of positive student activity and behavior were evident in 66 percent of the classrooms districtwide, with 66 percent at the elementary level, 74 percent at the middle school level, and 58 percent at the high school level.

Finally, the concept of *climate* is considered evident when the classroom is welcoming, and the teacher is an active listener and treats all students with respect. Students should listen attentively to and be respectful of all other students. Many resources and means beyond the textbook should be available for learning; these may include technology, manipulatives, cassettes, visuals, overhead projectors, and a classroom library. Positive indicators of climate were evident in 88 percent of the classrooms observed districtwide, with 89 percent at the elementary school level, 90 percent at the middle school level, and 85 percent at the high school level.

Summary of Classroom Observations

	Number of Classrooms						Computers		
	ELA	Math	Science	Total	Average Class Size	Average Paraprofs. per Class	Total Number	Number for Student Use	Average Students per Computer
Elementary	17	15	3	35	17.5	0.5	67	52	11.8
Middle	6	3	8	17	22.1	0.7	31	29	12.9
High	5	5	6	16	19.9	0.1	22	11	29.0
Total	28	23	17	68	19.2	0.4	120	92	14.2

	Classroom Management	Instructional Practice	Expectations	Student Activity & Behavior	Climate
Elementary					
Total checks	132	230	91	139	93
Maximum possible	140	315	140	210	105
Avg. percent of checks	94	73	65	66	89
Middle					
Total checks	65	121	52	75	46
Maximum possible	68	153	68	102	51
Avg. percent of checks	96	79	76	74	90
High					
Total checks	59	96	45	56	41
Maximum possible	64	144	64	96	48
Avg. percent of checks	92	67	70	58	85
Total					
Total checks	256	447	188	270	180
Maximum possible	272	612	272	408	204
Avg. percent of checks	94	73	69	66	88

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

III. Assessment and Program Evaluation

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

Standard Rating: Needs Improvement

Findings:

- The district's schools administered a number of assessments, but the district had no systemic assessment plan.
- Marshfield Public Schools had no policy regarding the analysis of student assessment results but had practices in place for the analysis of the MCAS data.
- Designated staff members at each school were responsible for the analysis of the MCAS data.
- All principals in the district were trained in TestWiz.
- The district communicated student achievement results through the "State of Our Schools" report and the town's annual report. In addition, results were communicated to the school committee and televised to the community.
- The district engaged in a number of both internal and external audits that included the NELMS audit at the middle school and the NEASC audit at the high school.
- The MCAS results were used to evaluate programs in the district, as it had no formal plan in place for the evaluation of programs.

Summary

Although the Marshfield Public Schools administered various student assessments, the district lacked a system-wide assessment plan as well as policies regarding the analysis of assessment results. Practices were in place in each school in the district, however, to analyze the MCAS data, and at least two staff members in each building were proficient in the use of TestWiz. In addition, the elementary curriculum coordinator prepared an MCAS item analysis and other useful information for all schools to aid in the analysis of data. The coordinator then met with appropriate staff members to discuss the data during release time.

The district used these data to make curricular and program changes, to adopt new textbooks, and to alter instructional time in the core content areas. For example, the district instituted the Math B program at the middle school which provided co-taught, small group instruction of the regular math curriculum at a slower pace to struggling special education and regular education students. Other examples included changes to instructional techniques for teaching poetry and for open-response questions.

Schools in the district used a variety of formative assessments including the DIBELS, the DRA, the Gates-MacGinitie, the San Diego Quick Reading Assessment, Addison Wesley end-of-chapter tests, and several other formative assessments. The district had no systemic approach to the use of these assessments, and this resulted in each school's leadership individually selecting assessments to administer. This also resulted in uneven teacher training regarding assessment. Some of the assessment data were used to impact instruction and for student placement.

District administrators were aware of the lack of a systemic approach, and in interviews said that they were in the process of developing a districtwide action plan to institute common assessments by April 2007. Further, the district's Strategic Planning Progress Report dated February 14, 2006 cited districtwide assessments as an ongoing objective.

In interviews, district and school administrators revealed that math portfolios were maintained at grades 1-8. The portfolios contained quarterly Addison Wesley tests, and principals examined the portfolios on a quarterly basis. Portfolios followed students from grade to grade, and there was an expectation that receiving teachers examined the portfolios.

Schools provided a variety of support programs to assist students who may be at risk. These ranged from the use of Title I funds to provide math and reading coaches and tutors at the elementary level to a number of math support programs at both the middle and high schools. Data showed that students at the high school scored high on the MCAS tests as well as on the PSAT and SAT. As a result, the high school was increasing the number of AP courses available in an effort to introduce more rigor to the course of study.

No practices were in place that guided the district in performing external and internal audits on a voluntary basis. Rather, the audits conducted were generally mandated by the state. During the period under review, the district was evaluated by both NEASC and NELMS. The NEASC study at the high school highlighted the condition of the facility as a serious concern, and a January 2007 response by the district provided a plan of action to remedy this situation. The NELMS visit to the middle school in 2006 identified several areas of concern including staff morale as well a negative perception of the school by the community. The school was making progress in addressing these concerns.

Marshfield Public Schools did not routinely evaluate programs but instead used the MCAS test results as a way to judge the quality and efficacy of the programs. The discrepancy between MCAS ELA and math scores in the district was the motivating force behind the evaluation of these programs.

Indicators

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The school committee policy book contained no policy regarding assessment, but there were assessment practices in place in the district. Also, in the superintendent's report in the Annual Town Report, 2005, he said, "It is important to recognize that annual end-of-year test results measure the growth of a different group or cohort of students each year, and are not a measure of the progress by the same group of students. Student performance information collected and studied throughout the school year is actually more useful in identifying both strengths and

weaknesses of our instructional program." At each elementary school building, a person other than the principal was trained in the analysis of data, and all principals in the district received training in TestWiz. At the middle school, the two assistant principals served as the data analysis team. At the high school, the assistant principal was in charge of data analysis. At the district level, the elementary curriculum director, a part-time, contracted position, provided data analyses of the MCAS results to staff in all the district's schools. These analyses resulted in curricular changes, new textbook adoptions, additional support programs, and changes in instructional times.

The curriculum director presented an item analysis of the MCAS data to all grade 3, 4, and 5 teachers during the regular school day. During document reviews, the EQA team reviewed a completed item analysis for grades 3-5. Schools provided substitutes so that teachers could attend the meetings that lasted throughout the day. Principals were always present at these meetings, as were grade 2 teachers. In interviews, building principals said that while most teachers did not have formal training in data analysis, informal training occurred during the monthly after-school meetings when data discussions took place among all staff. Additionally, during focus group interviews with teachers, some said they wanted training in data analysis.

As mentioned, at the middle school the two assistant principals were in charge of data analysis, but in addition each core subject had a coordinator who received the MCAS results. In turn, the coordinators met with teachers on a monthly basis to discuss these data. Interviewees said that the curriculum director's formal assignment was at the elementary level, but he worked at all levels, and according to them "his impact is felt at all levels." At the high school, the assistant principal who was in charge of data analysis and dissemination met with each department head to review all data including those for subgroups. Three of the department heads were proficient with TestWiz because of earlier training.

2. <u>District and school leadership required all students to participate in all appropriate assessments.</u>

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

Data showed that the student participation rate on the MCAS tests was almost 100 percent in the district. The participation rate on the 2006 MCAS ELA test was 99.3 percent for all students, for math the participation rate was 99.5 percent, and for STE it was 99.7 percent.

Interviewees said the district had no problem with participation on the MCAS tests and that few participation-motivating activities took place in the district. Principals said they sent letters to parents notifying them of the MCAS testing dates as well as encouragement to provide a good breakfast for their children. At the high school level, guidance counselors met with students who might be apprehensive about taking the MCAS tests, and all interviewees said they tried to keep the "stress level" down prior to the MCAS testing period.

Interviewees also said that they were not aware of a note from an administrative council meeting on March 21, 2006 that said, "A doctor's note is required for every absence during MCAS. If student can participate in make-ups, note not required."

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district used objectives developed in both the SIPs and the DIP to measure the attainment of goals, progress, and effectiveness. It also used data from the MCAS tests as well as formative assessments.

The district communicated student achievement results to the community through the annual "State of Our Schools" report which went home to all parents via students and was available on the district's website. The report was also available at the town's two libraries, the senior center, and town hall. The report included a general overview of school MCAS results as well as a review of the annual school council goals. In addition, an overview of the district results

compared to the state results was included. The superintendent also provided information regarding student achievement in a much abbreviated format in the town's annual report.

The assistant superintendent made an annual MCAS presentation to the school committee which was televised on the district's cable network and broadcast many times during a period. Student achievement information was also available on the district's website.

In addition, all academic levels sent home quarterly report cards and progress reports. However, the NELMS 2006 report cited the fact that middle school progress reports did not go home on a regular basis. According to the report, a warning notice rather than a "true" progress report went home. In interviews, both the middle school and high school principals said that language in the teachers' contract prevented the distribution of progress reports to all students, and only those students with certain grades received these reports.

Parent conferences took place at the elementary and middle schools and teachers at both levels communicated by e-mail and telephone with parents. Schools sent home monthly newsletters that sometimes contained student achievement data.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

While schools in the district used a variety of assessment tools to measure student progress, district administrators said that there was a need for not only more formative assessments, but also to "have the same measurements for elementary, middle, and high school." To accomplish this, the district leadership stated it would develop a plan of action to institute common assessments by April 2007. The district's Strategic Planning Progress Report dated February 14, 2006 cited districtwide assessments as an ongoing objective.

The DIBELS was used to assess all incoming kindergarten students. Two schools administered the DIBELS three times a year in kindergarten and grade 1, with one school planning to extend the assessment to grade 2. Another elementary school planned to begin administering the

DIBELS during the 2007-2008 school year. Another one used the DIBELS in kindergarten and also to identify students for Title I services. Focus group teachers said training was ongoing for staff.

At one school, the DRA was used for needy students in grades 1 and 2, in another school for all students in grade 2, and in another school for children new to the school and for those who needed reading support. In another school the reading specialist administered running records for students in grades K-2 on a daily basis.

An "Overview of Informal Reading Assessments" listed various student assessments on a one-to-one basis. The document provided information regarding what the assessment measures, examples of assessment questions, the age or grade tested, and what the component assesses.

The Gates-MacGinitie assessment determined group placement as well as deficits. All students in grades 1-5 were assessed twice a year. Grade 6 students at the middle school also received the assessment.

Other assessments administered among the schools in the district included: Scott Foresman end-of-chapter tests; Addison Wesley end-of-chapter tests; the San Diego Quick Reading Assessment; the Morrison McCall Spelling Assessment, the SRI; the Scott Foresman Fluency test; and a Basic Skills Math Test for grades 6-8.

The district required all grades at the elementary level to maintain a math portfolio for each student. This portfolio contained a record of Addison Wesley quarterly test results. At the end of the school year, the portfolio went to the student's new teacher for the next year. In interviews, principals said that they reviewed math portfolios during the school year.

The district required teacher plan books to contain the teaching objective, strategies (procedures), and assessments. Sample pages from plan books confirmed that teachers complied with the requirement. Principals said they generally did not collect plan books but might examine them as they visited classrooms during walk-throughs.

The district developed essential skills three years ago and mandated that all elementary classrooms post them. Many in the district referred to these essential skills as benchmarks.

However, many interviewees said the skills were more of a curriculum implementation aid rather than benchmarks.

Assessments used at the high school included the Gates-MacGinitie at grade 9 as well as the PSAT and the SAT. While not all departments administered common exams, common exams did exist in math and social studies and work was progressing on ELA common exams. Teachers maintained writing portfolios for students and provided an evaluation which the district referred to as a rubric, but one was not provided to the examiners.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The major assessment used to determine the effectiveness of instructional and support programs was the MCAS tests. At the middle school, changes in the academic program occurred as a result of the analysis of the MCAS data. These changes included the formation three years ago of an AYP committee. The committee included an elementary representative, middle school math teachers, coordinators, and a principal. The committee developed a Math B program at the middle school. Special and regular education students in grades 6-8 were enrolled in the program in small classes of 12 to 15 students. Two teachers, one regular and one special education teacher, plus an aide for additional support provided the standard curriculum used in the regular math program but at a slower pace.

Grade 6 Basic Skills math was available to all students who needed skill work and review. Tutorial worksheets were used. Students who participated did not attend a reading class during the first term of grade 6. The high school had a math skills program that began after the Christmas holiday. The program was for students who scored in the 214-228 range on the MCAS tests. These students did not attend specials on three days of the week. Instead, they studied math problem-solving and test-taking skills.

While support programs were in place for math, the 2006 MCAS data indicated that 56 percent of grade 7 students scored in the 'Needs Improvement' and 'Warning/Failing' categories, and 55

percent of grade 8 students scored at these levels. There was marked improvement at grade 10 with 17 percent of the students scoring in these categories.

Based on the MCAS data analysis, the high school English department identified a weakness in student achievement related to poetry. As a result, the department looked at the way poetry was taught and refined instructional techniques. MCAS analyses also revealed student weakness in responding to open-ended questions on the MCAS tests. Emphasis on improving this deficiency took place at all levels in the district.

The MCAS as well as the PSAT and SAT data for the high school revealed that the students scored high on these tests, which resulted in an effort to introduce more rigor to the course of study by including more AP courses. The high school SIP had a goal to increase the number of AP courses to 18. At the time of the review, the high school offered 11 AP courses. Prior to the 2006-2007 school year, students did not have to take the AP exam for the AP course in which they were enrolled, but the district reversed this policy.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

No practices were in place that guided the district in performing external and internal audits on a voluntary basis. Rather, the audits that took place were generally mandated by the state. The DOE conducted a CPR in December 2005. A review of the report showed that the Marshfield Public Schools had an extensive instructional support system. Also according to the report, "instruction is based on the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks for all students. However, the Program of Studies for the high school inappropriately has all special education classes in the back of the book rather than by subject areas as other courses were listed." The report further stated that the high school also clustered classrooms for students with disabilities on the second floor.

The high school participated in a NEASC review. The NEASC team's visit led it to view the condition of the high school facility as a major concern, according to documentation. The NEASC asked that the high school respond by January 2007 with plans for remedying the situation, and the response to that demand outlined the planning of several steps to take place during the rest of the year. However, none addressed specific building deficiencies.

The NELMS visit to the middle school took place in February 2006. According to the report, "the staff was a dysfunctional family with varying values, some mistrust of administration and negative feelings toward some of the teachers by the community." According to the middle school principal, improvement has been made as some teachers had "moved on" and there were new staff members. The principal added that he felt that the NELMS visit was "well worth it" and that the school was now a different school. This was confirmed by district administrators.

The district also participated in a mandated early childhood accreditation audit.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district used student assessment results to inform decisions regarding assignment of staff and allocation of time and resources. According to interviewees, a review of student assessment results caused the district to appoint math coaches as well as reading coaches. The district funded math coaches through Title I funds. At the preschool, district leaders transferred a teacher who was identified as strong in behavioral strategies to a class with students needing this kind of support.

Interviewees said that when they identified a student weakness in the long composition on the MCAS ELA tests, they considered it a weakness throughout the district. Thus, the district hired an assistant principal at the middle school who was strong in strategies to improve student performance on the long composition.

Two years ago, the district hired two new math teachers to provide support to its teachers. In addition, the district brought in a math consultant to work with teachers. Interviewees said that the director of elementary education as well as math coaches provided instructional modeling at all elementary schools. Math instruction was increased at all levels through the years. The district also mandated that math instruction at the elementary level take place in the morning rather than the afternoon.

In interviews, elementary principals said they were not hesitant to transfer teachers from one grade level to another if the student need was there. The middle and high school principals also echoed this statement. A review of the documents showed that the teachers' contract allowed the administration to transfer teachers to where the most need existed.

Interviewees said that they had the resources they needed to provide a sound educational program for all students. Yet, they expressed worry that the coming year might bring changes in resource allocation if the town did not pass the override in May 2007.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The Marshfield school district did not routinely evaluate programs but instead looked at the MCAS test results as a way to judge the quality of its programs. The school committee handbook contained no policy that addressed program evaluation. In interviews, the EQA team learned that the discrepancy between the MCAS scores in math and ELA was the motivating force in changing math instruction in the district.

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

IV. Human Resource Management and Professional Development

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

Standard Rating: Needs Improvement

Findings:

- The district's evaluation procedure for professional status teachers did not meet the 603 CMR 35.00 requirement of a formal summative evaluation every two years based on the Principles of Effective Teaching.
- The district did not link administrators' and principals' compensation, merit pay increases, or future employment to improved student achievement.
- The district had well established, coordinated procedures for professional development planning that resulted in a range of offerings which addressed curriculum, instruction, school climate, supervision, and professional responsibilities. The district's professional development plan considered the needs of the district, its schools, and professional staff.
- During the 2005-2006 level funded budget year, the district remained committed to professional growth of its staff by maintaining its level of professional development programs.
- The district had effective, documented procedures for the identification, recruitment, and selection of professional staff and supported new staff with trained mentors and a formal induction program.

- The district provided TestWiz training for administrators and offered that training to some teachers on a voluntary basis. The district did not provide all staff with formal training in the development of aggregated and disaggregated data collection and analysis skills for formative assessment and instructional planning.
- The district's current professional evaluation procedures included annual goal setting, reflection, and professional collaboration intended to promote professional growth and improved instructional practice.

Summary

The district's hiring and employment practices included central office and site-based functions. The district recruited candidates through internal postings, media advertising outside the local area, and job fair participation. The district was a site for teacher internship programs. Principals and program administrators had responsibility for interviewing and recommending prospective candidates to the superintendent. District teachers participated in the interview process. The district supported new professional employees with trained mentors and a formal induction program. District personnel monitored licensure status and obtained waivers for staff without professional status. In 2005-2006, 97 percent of the district's professional staff held licenses and no licensed teacher taught out of field. The district supported and encouraged teacher retention with professional development offerings to fulfill recertification needs as well as professional growth and improvement. The district's course reimbursement rate was the average cost of a graduate-level course at Bridgewater State College and the University of Massachusetts for up to three courses a year with no cap on the monies. Opportunities existed within the district for curriculum and instructional leadership positions and for professional advancement in stipended extracurricular or administrative roles, such as subject coordinators and assistant teaching principals.

The district had established procedures for professional development planning that involved teachers and administrators and resulted in a broad range of programs and activities at the district and school levels. The district's professional development committee, established by agreement with the teachers' bargaining unit, conducted annual surveys of staff needs and wants, and the committee's district administration representative surveyed central administration and principals' needs. The committee then made recommendations for proposed professional development

programs and activities to the central administration, taking into consideration MCAS student achievement results and professional development goals in the DIP and SIPs in addition to the survey results.

The district funded requests for proposals (RFPs) from the professional staff for curriculum projects and development that supported district goals. The RFPs were competitive and the district's professional development committee reviewed and granted requests based on criteria, such as linkage to district goals and use of best practices in instruction and assessment.

The district contracted with in-service providers and area colleges for on-site graduate credit courses that furthered district initiatives while providing for professional staff recertification needs. The district funded teacher participation in approved conferences and out-of-district workshops that aligned with district and school goals or individual professional development plans.

The district included paraprofessionals in all its on-site professional development programs. The induction year calendar included workshops and meetings specific to beginning teachers and teachers new to the district; however, most professional development for new staff occurred in the district and school programs for all staff.

Although the district's human resources practices were found to be generally satisfactory, the district's professional teacher evaluation procedures did not meet the requirements of the Education Reform Act. In 2004-2005, although the district formally evaluated teachers annually, the evaluation tool did not reflect the Principles of Effective Teaching. The summative reports, while informative, did not provide feedback or guidance for continuous improvement. In 2005-2006, the district instituted a five-year evaluation system in which professional status teachers were formally evaluated according to the Principles of Effective Teaching once in five years, not once in two years as required by education reform. Under the new system, professional status teachers chose self-selected, self-directed projects, collaboration, or peer coaching and observation in the four years between formal summative evaluations. Principals reviewed reports of these activities prepared by the teacher and determined if the teacher met district standards. The district formally evaluated nonprofessional status teachers annually. The summative report included evidence of performance, based on the Principles of Effective

Teaching, from at least two classroom observations. All professional staff collaborated with principals or other evaluators to develop annual goals.

The district provided two years of training for its principals and administrators to build capacity for effective supervision to implement the district's new teacher evaluation procedures. Supervision became more focused on the Principles of Effective Teaching and quality implementation of district curriculum initiatives. Supervision practices were more consistent among the schools, and teachers had clear knowledge of district expectations. The district placed a high priority on supervision to support improved instructional practices.

The superintendent evaluated administrators annually according to the Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership and attainment of progress toward annual goals. The district's evaluation document did not contain measurable evidence of performance or outcomes based on these principles. All summative evaluations were informative and most contained recommendations or guidance for improvement. The district linked compensation to the evaluator's numerical ratings of performance in each category of the Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership, but not to improved student achievement.

Indicators

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district had well established, documented practices and procedures for the identification, recruitment, and selection of professional staff. The district identified the number and type of staff openings based on yearly budget requests and available funding. Interviewees stated that the district did not place financial limitations on final candidate selection other than the contracted salary schedule. Moreover, in accordance with an agreement with the teachers' association bargaining unit, the district could hire a professional staff member above the stated step on the salary schedule in some circumstances, such as work experience in other fields. The

2002-2006 DIP included an action step to recruit, support, and retain professional staff that "contributes to a positive school atmosphere and student achievement."

The district, in addition to posting staff positions internally and on the district website, sought qualified candidates through the DOE website, advertisements in *The Boston Globe*, and participation in area job fairs. Interviewees noted that the district's participation in teacher intern programs with Lesley University, Boston University, and Bridgewater State College afforded administrators the opportunity to observe prospective candidates in daily practice.

The district used a "standard package" of forms and procedures for screening applications and interviewing candidates. Principals invited staff members to participate in the interview process. The interview committees used a common protocol for structuring questions based on the Principles of Effective Teaching categories. Principals then submitted the top two candidate packages to the superintendent for a final interview after reference checks and previous employer telephone contacts. Principals stated that they had sufficient authority in selecting and hiring prospective teachers for their respective schools and programs. Interviewees indicated that the district's procedures for transfers, assignments, and vacancies considered teacher qualifications and student need.

2. All professional staff had appropriate Massachusetts licensure.

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The School District Teacher Licensure Survey, completed by the district and submitted to the EQA for review, indicated that, of the 396 teachers employed in 2005-2006, 97 percent held professional licenses and taught in the subject area for which they were licensed. The remaining 11 teachers had approved waiver status. Interviewees stated that the district sought waivers for hard to fill positions, such as a high school chemistry teacher and special education teachers, after proper recruitment efforts and interviews of licensed applicants. In a review of 40 randomly selected personnel folders of teaching staff employed in 2005-2006, the EQA team found evidence of proper licensure in 39 and waiver status in one. Of the district's 23 administrators, all held licenses for their positions. All 12 administrator personnel files reviewed during the EQA visit included evidence of proper licensure. The district reported that all 26

paraprofessionals employed in Marshfield schools met the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) "highly qualified" federal standard.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

According to documents submitted to the EQA team, the district employed 11 teachers on waivers in 2005-2006 in hard to fill positions such as high school chemistry, special education, and speech and language therapy. Interviewees stated that the personnel secretary monitored licensure and kept teachers and their principals informed of their waiver status. Of the four teachers who had second year waivers, all had met the requirements for substantial continuous progress toward attaining licensure. The district provided trained mentors to all staff on waivers and facilitators (a category of mentor) to staff on second year waivers if needed. Staff on waivers participated fully in the district's induction program and had access to the district's professional development offerings. Moreover, teachers on waivers became eligible for course reimbursement during the summer of their first year of service.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the period under review, the district provided beginning teachers, experienced teachers new to the district, and new administrators with trained mentors. The district engaged retired administrators to mentor two principals new to their assignments during the period under review. The district paid mentors for beginning teachers a $900 stipend, and facilitators, mentors of experienced or second year beginning teachers, a $600 stipend. In 2005-2006, budget reductions prevented the district from providing a paid second year facilitator for beginning teachers unless recommended by the teacher's evaluator. During 2005-2006, the district provided 42 mentors.

Interviewees stated that the district expended $35,000 to $40,000 annually for mentor stipends. Documents and interviewees indicated that mentors had responsibility for keeping a log of contact hours and activities as evidence for new teachers obtaining a professional license.

The superintendent's goals for 2005-2006 included "improving the Comprehensive Induction Program to retain quality staff." During the period under review, the district provided beginning teachers opportunities to participate in district workshops and a two-day orientation program, a trained mentor, opportunities for observation of colleagues and peer coaching, and participation in the district induction program's new teacher meetings and networking activities. Agendas for the orientation did not include formal training in the importance of assessment and the use of student achievement data to inform instruction. However, interviewees maintained that new staff received professional development in the MCAS data analysis during meetings dedicated to MCAS performance review and improvement. Lastly, district principals scheduled informal new teacher meeting times periodically during the school year. Topics, activities, and number of meetings varied among schools.

The district sought feedback from mentors and protégés for program improvement. Review of surveys and teacher interviewees indicated that the district lacked sufficient training in past initiatives such as Project READ, LINKS, the DRA, and the John Collins Writing Program in the formal, year-long induction program.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The district's professional development calendar for staff in 2005-2006 and 2006-2007, which was planned in FY 2006, did not include system-wide training in developing or refining data analysis skills or in using item analyses and other disaggregated data. Review of consultants and contracted workshops indicated one training program in data analysis for principals. Interviewees said that the district required TestWiz training for principals and assistant

principals. Some elementary teaching assistant principals and other teachers underwent training voluntarily. In focus group discussions, teachers voiced a need for continued TestWiz training.

The district did not provide formal training for new teachers in using summative data, such as aggregated and disaggregated MCAS results, and formative data, such as the math portfolio, to inform instruction and measure the effectiveness of their teaching. Interviewees reported that the district scheduled a release half day at the middle school for teachers and subject coordinators to analyze the MCAS data. At the high school, department heads facilitated MCAS data analysis in departmental meetings. The district provided substitutes to release teachers in grades 3-5 from the classroom to work with the director of elementary education on MCAS item analysis.

Administrators reported that during 2005-2006, several teacher groups in the collaboration cycle of the teacher evaluation process worked on projects that focused on student assessment data and performance trends, which were disseminated to like grade levels or subject areas.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district's human resources policies encouraged professional growth through the current professional teacher evaluation process of annual goal setting and self-selected, self-directed (SSSD) cycles, course reimbursement benefits, and professional development courses, such as Teachers as Scholars and differentiated instruction. The district had a reimbursement rate of over $800 for up to three courses a year in an approved graduate program with no cap on the monies available. Administrators noted that the district recognized effective teachers at school committee meetings, and disseminated the curriculum work and exemplary practices of an outstanding teacher by downloading a PowerPoint document onto teachers' school computers. The district viewed the promotional opportunities, though limited, for leadership at the high school as department heads, at the middle school as subject coordinators and coaches, and at the elementary level as teaching assistant principals. Interviewees cited membership on student teacher assistance teams (STATs) and the district curriculum committee as professional

opportunities for effective teachers. The district also encouraged effective staff to teach mini-courses showcasing their skills and practices. In focus groups, elementary teachers commented on the quality and usefulness of the mini-courses offered in 2006-2007.

The district's exit interview form included only clerical information. Interviewees said that sometimes district administrators talked to resigning or retiring teachers about the district; however, the procedure was informal and did not generate data the district could use in improving its employment, supervision, and professional development practices in an effort to retain effective personnel. Central office administrators noted that the district had low turnover rates other than retirements, and contended that low class size, good MCAS test scores, and an array of professional development opportunities made the district attractive to teachers.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

Interviews and a review of documents showed that the district had a formal, institutionalized professional development program that provided a wide range of offerings planned and organized by the districtwide professional development committee (PDC) with input and guidance from central office administrators and principals. The teachers' collective bargaining agreement established the PDC and its membership. The teachers' association appointed one teacher from each district school to serve along with the association president and representative administrator. In interviews, administrators indicated a need to expand the committee to include principals as representatives as well as special education and special subject teachers. The district professional development calendars for 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 showed four release half days dedicated to districtwide initiatives and four release full days dedicated to building initiatives and profession development specified in the SIPs. The elementary school had early release days each Thursday, two of which the staff used for team planning. The district included paraprofessionals in its professional development activities.

The PDC surveyed teachers every spring for suggestions for mini-courses, system-wide release days, consultants, in-district graduate courses, and curriculum initiatives. In addition, the committee sought evaluative comments regarding the current offerings and curriculum projects. The PDC planned the professional development calendar using the information from teacher surveys; feedback about previous offerings; administrative input; and student, school, and district needs contained in the DIP and SIPs.

The PDC accepted and reviewed RFPs for curriculum projects and mini-courses. The committee rated each proposal in terms of relation to district initiatives, quality of proposed outcomes, and best practices in instruction and assessment. The committee required a minimum of 30 points of a possible 36 for the proposal to be funded.

Although the administration expressed a need to expand the membership of the PDC, the process resulted in the district providing professional development based on instructional content area needs, such as focus correction areas at the elementary level, vertical teaming in grades 6-12, and curriculum mapping at the middle school; and student and teacher needs, such as the Safe Schools districtwide initiative, culture and climate at the middle school, open-response graphic organizers at the elementary level, and differentiated instruction.

The district provided training for all administrators in analyzing teaching and the Principles of Effective Teaching in preparation for the implementation of the new teacher evaluation procedures. The district offered two-day workshops on Saturdays in the new professional evaluation procedures, including standards-based planning and writing mastery objectives.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district's teacher handbook stated that teachers and the quality of teaching "are the critical link to improving schools and student achievement unlike a decade ago when researchers attributed student achievement to family income or parental education" (p. 4-7). To effect that

change, the district worked with the teachers' association to design and implement a new professional staff evaluation program that resulted in changed supervision practices in the district. For example, principals checked teacher plan books for evidence of curriculum initiatives, such as extended math instruction time or Writing Across the Curriculum. The district expected teachers to engage in standards-based lesson planning including outcomes, instructional strategies, and assessment. Evaluators supported teachers in developing annual goals that identified desired student outcomes and ways to measure that student learning had occurred. The district provided two years of professional development for principals and other evaluators in Observing and Analyzing Teaching and the Principles of Effective Teaching in order to improve their capacity to supervise. The district expected principals to support and guide staff in the selection of projects and activities in the SSSD cycle of the professional evaluation procedures. Administrators indicated that their supervision was more focused on teaching and school/district initiatives and that all evaluators now "looked through the lens of effective teaching practices."

Interviewees reported that individual professional development plans (IPDPs) had been reviewed in 2005-2006, and some staff revised them based on changing needs. The district required staff to identify the DIP and the SIP goals consistent with their professional goals. Review of IPDPs submitted with the teacher evaluations showed that most stated generic objectives, such as "improve my teaching," "continue professional development," or "work on curriculum alignment." Many non-professional status teachers' IPDPs referred to working toward certification or obtaining a master's degree.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Review of employment contracts submitted to the EQA team indicated that the superintendent evaluated administrators annually. Review of administrator evaluations during the site visit confirmed that evaluations occurred annually. During the period under review, one evaluation was not timely. All administrator evaluations contained the components of education reform, including the Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership. All were informative and promoted growth and overall effectiveness through annual goal setting. Seventy-five percent of the evaluations included written recommendations that provided guidance for improved performance.

Administrators' contracts did not contain language basing compensation and continued employment on improved student performance or other school data. The superintendent rated principals' performance on each of the Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership categories on a scale of one to four, with four indicating the principle was achieved. Administrator evaluation procedures stipulated that a rating of one in one or more principles resulted in placement on a remediation plan. Failure to improve in the next cycle resulted in no advancement in base pay and no receipt of any merit payment. The district awarded merit payments of between one and three percent in increments with an average overall performance rating between three and four. In that way, the district linked compensation to the Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership but not directly to improved student performance. Review of principals' annual goals related to academic achievement indicated that principals set generic objectives, such as "process MCAS results in order to meet AYP" or "interpret MCAS to improve proficiency index and AYP," rather than set specific measurable goals in terms of student achievement or other school data for professional evaluation purposes.

Assistant principals did not have timely evaluations for the period under review, as indicated by the review of evaluation documents.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Review of 40 randomly selected professional and non-professional status teacher evaluations for 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 indicated that 36 were timely, in that teachers had been formally evaluated annually or biennially. All non-professional status teachers had annual evaluations that included a summative report based on a minimum of two formal classroom observations structured around the Principles of Effective Teaching, annual goal setting, and reflections. Of the 13 non-professional status teacher evaluations, 11 contained the components of education reform, 13 were informative, and 10 included annual goals. Four of the 13 included recommendations and guidance for improvement and professional growth. The EQA examiners found that the summative evaluation documents of professional status teachers in the 2004-2005 year were informative, and nine of the 27 evaluations included annual goals for professional growth. Examiners found evidence of performance pursuant to the Principles of Effective Teaching in three of the 27 evaluations and instructive recommendations in two of the 27.

During 2005-2006, the district implemented new evaluation procedures for professional status and non-professional status teachers, developed jointly by the administration and the teachers' collective bargaining unit. Interviewees stated that the procedures replaced the previous system "from the 1960s" of annual evaluations that did not meet the requirements of the effective teaching components of education reform. Review of the new evaluation documents and procedures manual, as well as interviews with administrators and teachers, indicated that the system did not provide for a formal summative evaluation of professional status teachers based on the Principles of Effective Teaching every two years. One cycle, the "formal evaluation" cycle, included at least one classroom observation and summative report based on progress toward annual teacher goals and performance pursuant to the Principles of Effective Teaching. However, the next four cycles, or four years, consisted of SSSD projects, collaboration and peer

observation, and self-reflection. Interviewees stated that the district required a yearly summative evaluation of this SSSD work by the evaluator and the submission of annual goals and a reflection, completed by the teacher being evaluated, of the project or collaboration.

Review of 27 randomly selected evaluations of professional status teachers indicated that the evaluator reports for the SSSD cycles provided no evidence of teacher performance pursuant to the Principles of Effective Teaching. Some, but not all, 2005-2006 evaluations of teachers in the SSSD cycles contained the evaluated teacher's self-reflection on the outcomes of the selected professional activity and its impact on student achievement as well as a copy of the teacher's annual goals. Most evaluations consisted of a single-page document signed by the evaluator that affirmed the evaluator had reviewed the documentation submitted by the teacher and determined that the teacher "has met the Marshfield Public Schools' District Standards." Few evaluations included copies of these documents.

In interviews, administrators and principals asserted that the district's professional teacher evaluation process, implemented in 2005-2006, surpassed the state requirements of a biennial evaluation because "we're doing something every year." Moreover, the district claimed to emphasize professional growth through supervision for improvement more than through summative evaluation. The new evaluation process did allow evaluators to place a teacher in need of improvement in the formal evaluation cycle at any time during the five-year cycle period. In focus group interviews, district teachers pointed out that the new professional evaluation system made them "feel more accountable for improving our own teaching."

Interviewees reported that, during the period under review, the district counseled, with the involvement of the teachers' association, one professional status teacher to leave the district. Additionally, the district, beginning in the 2006-2007 school year, placed one professional status teacher on a "growth plan" that identified improvement areas with resources, strategies, and timelines. Supports provided by the district included arranged peer observations of skilled and effective colleagues. During the period under review, the district invoked the 90-day rule in one instance and did not renew two non-professional status teachers for whom the district had provided mentors.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

Interviewees stated that district administrators refined and improved their supervision practices to effectively implement the district's new professional evaluation system. The district provided two years of professional development in teacher observation and effective teaching practices. Moreover, the district initiated training sessions for professional staff in the new evaluation procedures that included lesson planning with outcomes, strategies, and assessment; writing mastery objectives; and the role of the Principles of Effective Teaching in the supervision process. Principals noted that their supervision practices, such as walk-throughs, lesson plan reviews, conferences, and observations, were more focused on school and district needs and expectations. An administrator stated that in one year "the progress around professional growth has been incredible."

Interviewees reported that they used student achievement and performance data, particularly the MCAS test data, to determine the school year's supervision priorities, as well as staff needs and strengths. In focus group discussions, teachers commented that now they all know what is expected of them.

Administrators stated that they addressed the strengths and needs of assigned staff at the annual goal-setting meetings, through conversations about informal daily observations, and through feedback on the progress and outcome of teachers' self-selected projects and collaboration. Several principals focused their walk-throughs on priorities specific to professional roles, such as curriculum accommodations and modifications by special education teachers. Principals were able to move a teacher in need of improvement back into the formal evaluation cycle to address identified, significant needs. Interviewees stated that the district provided coaching and lesson modeling at the middle school level in mathematics. Schools in need of improving MCAS scores received support from the director of elementary education by means of modeling instruction and lessons to improve essay writing and open-response answers. Interviewees

commented that the district encouraged teachers who demonstrated strengths in particular areas to offer mini-courses through the district's professional development program to disseminate their effective practices.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district coordinated its employment, supervision, and professional development procedures to hire, develop, and retain effective staff. The district funded these functions without major personnel or professional development reductions despite a $36,747,205 level funded budget in 2005-2006.

The superintendent administered human resources services assisted by a secretary. Central office personnel services supported principals in the hiring of professional and support staff through the posting of vacancies, advertisement, application processing, licensure monitoring, and benefits information. The district's professional development functions funded an induction year program for new staff and provided mentors for beginning teachers and experienced teachers new to the system. Interviewees reported that the district expended $35,000 to $40,000 each year for mentors. The district personnel services maintained a file for each professional and support staff member that included an "Employee Status Form" (step/grade changes, appointments), professional evaluations, and certification status.

The district provided for the professional growth of its staff. For example, the district funded training for all administrators in order to effectively implement a new teacher evaluation system and improve supervision skills. Reimbursements of more than $800 per course averaged more than $100,000 a year, higher than the $65,000 budgeted. The district has used Title IIA funds to offset the cost. The district continued to support RFPs of curriculum projects, mini-courses, and attendance at workshops and conferences as well as contracted service providers for on-site courses and districtwide workshops.

Administrators stated that the $270,000 spent for professional development activities and programs in 2005-2006 did not represent an actual decrease in commitment to professional development from the previous year's $391,000 spent since the district had approximately $300,000 from professional development lines in grants that maintained professional development programming.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district provided and required that administrators and principals participate in Level 100 and Level 700 crisis management training courses from the National Incident Management System (NIMS). Interviewees indicated that the district and its principals trained staff in the district's Crisis Management Plan and provided each professional staff member with a red binder of written procedures for critical incident responses, such as building evacuations, lockdowns, and responses to medical emergencies. Interviewees reported that the district reviewed and upgraded the plan annually. Principals reviewed the procedures with staff at the beginning of the school year and provided new teachers with the emergency procedures binder during the August orientation. Interviewees stated that the district included permanent substitute teachers in the training. The district required teachers to include emergency procedures with the plans and other information provided for substitute teachers. Administrators expected student teachers to follow the lead of the classroom teacher in responding to emergencies and carrying out prescribed procedures. Classroom teachers had responsibility for volunteers since, working in classrooms with the teacher present, they were not left alone with students. The district required lockdown drills for grades 6-12 that included students and police, and they had taken place during the period under review. Although all elementary staff had training and practice in emergency procedures during the period under review, not every elementary school provided the opportunity to practice emergency procedures with students present. Interviewees stated that the district planned such practices in more elementary schools in 2006-2007.

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

V. Access, Participation, and Student Academic Support

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

Standard Rating: Satisfactory

Findings:

- The use of aggregated and disaggregated MCAS test data led the district to implement additional math support programs that resulted in improved math scores at the middle school level and the special education subgroup attaining AYP in 2006.
- Support programs at the primary level resulted in over 80 percent of grade 4 students in Marshfield scoring at the 'Proficient' level or higher on the 2006 MCAS ELA test.
- The district's homeless policy and practices provided extensive services for the affected families and children from preschool through high school.
- Marshfield's student attendance rate for 2005-2006 was 95.6 percent, compared to the statewide rate of 93.8 percent.
- Teachers in Marshfield were absent an average of 13.8 out of 180 days in the student school year, for a 92.3 percent attendance rate.
- The district increased the number of Advanced Placement (AP) course options for students in 2006 and required that all students enrolled in AP courses take the AP exam.

Summary

Marshfield Public Schools provided numerous services for at-risk populations and regular education students. In addition to special needs services at all levels, three elementary schools and the middle school provided Title I services. Teachers referred students experiencing academic difficulty to student teacher support teams (STATs) at all levels and developed individual curriculum accommodation plans (ICAPs) for students not identified for further testing. Guidance services offered student support, and at both the middle and high schools counselors assigned to a grade moved with the class as it progressed through the grades.

Students in subgroup populations participated in all MCAS tests, and their rates of participation exceeded the state requirement of 95 percent. Between 2003 and 2006, with the exception of the low-income student subgroup, all subgroups of Marshfield students had improved performance on the MCAS ELA and math tests. Marshfield's average performance gap between regular education students and students with disabilities narrowed by two proficiency index (PI) points over this period. The district did not keep formal records to determine the numbers of students in subgroup populations who participated in advanced and/or accelerated programs.

The district considered 10 absences per year to be excessive for students. All student handbooks referenced the district policy, and all schools had specific procedures to monitor attendance regularly and communicate with the parents of students whose absences caused concern. Marshfield's 2006 student attendance rate of 95.6 percent exceeded the state rate of 93.8 percent.

The staff attendance rate was 92.3 percent, which reflected an average of 13.8 days of absence per teacher for the 180-day student school year. Absences for teachers included not only short- and long-term illnesses, professional development outside of school, military service, and jury duty responsibilities, but also days for other reasons. In addition to sick leave benefits and a new longevity buy-back agreement, language in the 2004-2007 collective bargaining agreement with teachers indicated the kinds of absences that teachers could take for other reasons.

In 2005-2006, the district's in-school and out-of-school suspension rates were both nearly 2.5 percentage points lower than the respective state averages. Between the 2005 and 2006 school years, Marshfield's out-of-school suspension rate declined slightly. Adjustment counselors at the elementary level and grade 6 health teachers provided the Second Step program to students.

In the 2006-2007 school year, the district collaborated with Bridgewater State College and the Massachusetts Aggression Resistance Council to assist with the implementation of the district's K-12 safe schools initiative. Both programs enhanced safe school climate.

Marshfield's average dropout rate across the three years under review was 1.8 percent, compared to 3.4 percent for the state. Student support services from preschool through grade 12, STATs, and school-based leadership teams regularly monitored the progress of at-risk students from grade to grade and provided intervention and services to address their academic, social, and emotional needs. At the high school level, the district offered students numerous options for credit retrieval. In addition to in-school alternative programming, other options for students included night and summer school courses in Marshfield, the Whitman/Hanson and Middleboro night school programs, and courses at Massasoit Community College which could be used for high school credit. These proactive procedures helped to prevent students from dropping out of school.

Indicators

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district used aggregated and disaggregated MCAS student participation and achievement data and adjusted instruction and policies to provide additional programs and support for all students and at-risk student populations to assist their progress and academic achievement. To ensure high student participation in MCAS testing, interviewees reported that they sent letters home and used the Connect Ed parent notification system, classroom pep talks, and a grade-level meeting at the high school level. In advance of the testing, school personnel spoke individually to students with a history of attendance issues. In 2006, the student MCAS test participation rate for students with disabilities was 98.2 percent in ELA, 98.7 percent in math, and 100.0 percent in STE. All rates exceeded the state's 95 percent requirement.

The district had procedures in place to use aggregated and disaggregated MCAS achievement data. The director of elementary education worked with all levels to review the MCAS results. He held monthly meetings at the elementary level and collaborated with administrators and teachers to identify areas of weakness. The middle school used monthly meetings to review the MCAS data with the whole staff. Then coordinators for each core subject met with grade-level teams at their monthly meetings to share results and develop improvement strategies. Coordinators were full-time teachers who received a stipend for additional responsibilities. The assistant principal at the high school level was responsible for coordinating the MCAS data analysis and met with department heads to review the item analysis and subgroup data. All department heads with experience in TestWiz worked with their own departments to strategize ways to improve student achievement.

The EQA team found that the use of disaggregated data was a collaborative effort between the director of elementary education, administrators, regular and special education teachers, and support staff. To benefit all students as well as students at risk, the district implemented support programs. For example, low MCAS math scores at the middle school level led to an increase in instructional time for all students at the elementary and middle school levels, math instruction moved to the morning at all elementary schools, and math coaches were added to assist teachers with instruction at both levels. In 2003, the middle school added a Math B course for regular and special needs students in grades 6-8 in order to increase their math skills. The course, taught by two teachers, had a smaller class size of 12-15 students, slower pacing, and aide support. Teachers focused on increasing student understanding of basic skills using the regular math curriculum. An example of a specific support for targeted at-risk students in the middle school was an MCAS skills program, started in January 2006, for students whose math scores ranged from 214-228, most of whom received special needs or Title I services or were part of the low-income student subgroup. Instruction, scheduled during specials, placed emphasis on test taking and basic math skills. Another program, Project REACH, offered extra academic and homework assistance for homeless and other elementary students. Students participated one afternoon a week from October through May. At the high school level, an MCAS preparation class in math and ELA provided one-on-one tutoring for students who failed the grade 8 MCAS exam. Interviewees stated that although the district provided specific programs and services for at-risk

populations because of analysis of disaggregated data, most programmatic changes and additional supports put in place were to assist all students.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The district primarily used the MCAS summative data to identify students who did not meet expectations and provided these students with supplementary and/or remedial services that resulted in improved academic achievement and MCAS test proficiency, except in the case of the low-income subgroup. Although formative test data varied from school to school, the Gates-MacGinitie assessment, used by the district at grades 1-6 and grade 9, helped to determine reading progress and assisted with placement of students from grade to grade. In addition to the Gates-MacGinitie, interviewees said that the DIBELS was used to assess incoming kindergarten students and in some schools to screen students for Title I services and to monitor their progress within the program. However, they said that inconsistency existed among schools and that the district planned to develop a plan of action by April 2007 to institute common assessments across the district.

Interviewees stated that although the high school used PSAT and SAT test data to assist with placement of students, the MCAS was the major summative assessment used to make changes in programs and services. For example, MCAS math scores led to the development of a standards-based math class for grade 9 students who scored poorly on the MCAS math test. The head of the math department, together with a special education instructor, co-taught the class. Using the regular math curriculum, teachers made changes to the pacing of instruction, materials, and instructional strategies. The district used the John Collins Writing Program at various levels, with the director of elementary education modeling lessons for teachers to enhance their skills using the program. The district planned to institute the Collins Writing Folder Program in 2007. The middle school implemented bi-monthly open-response question practice. Between 2003 and

2006, Marshfield's MCAS performance showed overall improvement in math, ELA, and STE. Over this same period, all student subgroups, except low-income, had improved achievement in both math and ELA. Moreover, the most improved subgroup in math was students with disabilities. Further, between 2003 and 2006 the percentage of students who scored in the 'Advanced' and 'Proficient' categories rose by four percentage points, while the percentage of students in the 'Warning/Failing' category decreased by two percentage points.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district provided early intervention programs in literacy to ensure reading proficiency on the MCAS test by the end of grade 4. Programs and services, starting at the preschool level, provided literacy support for students. The early childhood coordinator managed Marshfield's preschool services that included integrated preschool day and summer programs, a comprehensive full-day preschool program for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), tutorial services for preschool special education, therapeutic services that included speech and language, literacy activities, and collaboration with South Shore Head Start and other community partnerships. Title I services were provided to students at the Daniel Webster, Governor Winslow, and Martinson Elementary Schools and the Furnace Brook Middle School. Each elementary school in the district had a reading specialist and used specialized reading programs that included Orton Gillingham, Wilson, and Project Read. Early intervention programs in literacy in Marshfield resulted in 81 percent of grade 4 students attaining proficiency in ELA in 2006. Additionally, 80 percent of males and 83 percent of females scored in the 'Advanced' and 'Proficient' categories in ELA in grade 4, and 20 percent of males and 16 percent of females scored in the 'Needs Improvement' category while only one percent of both male and female students scored in the 'Warning/Failing' category.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district provided transition support that focused on maintaining or improving levels of student performance. In 2006, families making the transition from preschool to kindergarten received a "Together Bag" at kindergarten screening that contained a range of informational and resource materials for parents and their children. In late spring, each elementary school held a kindergarten registration/orientation during which parents had the contents of the "Together Bag" reviewed. Students transitioning from the elementary schools to the middle school participated in numerous transition activities that included the middle school guidance counselors visiting each grade 5 classroom, a grade 5 student orientation and tour at the middle school, parent orientation night, and open house activities prior to the first day of school. Parents were given the opportunity to provide input on their child's placement with a form asking for information on their child's learning style. The transition between the middle and high schools started with high school guidance counselors visiting grade 8 classrooms and sharing the program of studies and other pertinent information with students. In the spring a pizza party, hosted by the high school student council, was held at the high school for incoming grade 9 students, and a parent/student orientation night was scheduled in March with the opportunity for students to sign up for clubs, sports, and other activities.

To facilitate grade-to-grade transitions, teachers and support staff used early release time to complete student placement sheets that were used to articulate information related to special needs, Title I services, students with 504s and/or ICAPs, and other academic, social, or emotional student needs. At both the middle and high schools, guidance counselors were assigned to the same groups of students and moved with them from grade to grade. For example, a guidance counselor assigned to all grade 9 students would remain with them through their four years at the high school.

The district facilitated program-to-program transitions through guidance departments and Individualized Education Program (IEP) team meetings with representation from the sending and receiving educators. During the summer, guidance counselors provided transition support for students with anxiety concerns, and a full-time autism specialist at the middle school helped students with ASD. Each year, the director of special education, guidance counselors, and/or assistant principals spoke to parents at Parent Advisory Council (PAC) meetings and distributed their business cards to provide parents with a known school contact.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district had fair and equitable policies, procedures, and practices to reduce discipline referrals, grade retention, suspension, and exclusion. The in-school suspension rate for 2005-2006 was 0.8 percent compared to 3.4 percent for the state, and the out-of-school suspension rate was 3.5 percent compared to 5.8 percent for the state. No exclusions were reported for the period under review. Between 2005 and 2006, the out-of-school suspension rate decreased from 3.7 to 3.5 percent. Principals at the elementary schools and assistant principals at the middle and high schools were primarily responsible for discipline referrals. They used the Rediker software program to record discipline information that included the reason for the referral and actions taken. No suspension room or supervisor existed at the middle school, so students given in-school suspension completed schoolwork in the main office with oversight from one of the assistant principals. The high school used Saturday detention, supervised by a member of the high school staff, as a sanction for students at that level. Although discipline procedures were in place at each building, interviews with middle school teachers indicated that inconsistency existed among administrators dealing with discipline referrals at their level.

The district's average retention rate for 2003-2005 was 1.0 percent compared to the state rate of 2.6 percent for the same period. According to the middle school student handbook, students at the middle school attended summer school if they failed two courses, and those failing three or more courses were not promoted. At the high school level, students needed to earn 96 credits for

graduation and had continuing education options available to make up for failed courses. Interviewees stated that STATs at all buildings, as well as regularly scheduled building-based leadership team meetings, facilitated the reduction of academic and behavioral issues.

The district had programs and practices to enhance a safe school climate. In addition to the Second Step program used at the elementary levels and in grade 6 health classes, in the fall of 2006 the district implemented a K-12 safe schools initiative in collaboration with Bridgewater State College and the Massachusetts Aggression Resistance Council (MARC). Monthly Good Citizenship themes, like honesty, responsibility, and trustworthiness, also provided elementary students the opportunity to discuss, write about, and practice good character traits.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district's average dropout rate for the three-year period 2002-2004 was 1.8 percent compared to 3.4 percent for the state. Further, a review of documents and site visit interviews revealed that the district had procedures and practices to prevent or minimize students from dropping out of school. Some of the practices included monitoring attendance and taking action with excessive student absenteeism from elementary through high school; STATs at all levels providing support for at-risk students; providing in-school and off-site academic alternatives; and an early intervention preschool program addressing issues affecting at-risk students prior to starting kindergarten. At the high school level, the district provided continuing education night and summer programs to assist students with credit recovery. Night programs at both Whitman/Hanson and Middleboro school districts provided additional alternatives for students at the district's expense when appropriate, and credits earned by students attending Massasoit Community College could be applied to those required for graduation from Marshfield High School. The district's proactive processes and practices that helped sustain students' participation in school, together with the low dropout rate, led to no dropout recovery procedures.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district implemented policies and programs that addressed the needs of transient and homeless students and provided them with timely and equitable access to quality programs. According to documents provided to the EQA team, Marshfield had over 100 homeless students system-wide. School committee policy entitled "Policy for McKinney-Vento Homeless Educational Assistance Act" had been in place since 1991 and included the components of purpose, definition, liaisons, enrollment, transportation, access to comparable services, access to preschool, dispute resolution, unaccompanied youth and children, and youth in state care or custody. The district employed a coordinator who was responsible for the coordination between homeless shelters, motels in town, the Department of Social Services (DSS), and the school district. Procedures in place involved preliminary assessment of the student, communication with the appropriate school administrator, collaboration with the Marshfield Head Start program, screening by the elementary reading specialist for homeless students in grades K-5, and coordination of guidance and transportation services. The McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Grant provided funding for the homeless program.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district had policies and practices that promoted good student attendance. Interviewees stated that the district continuously monitored, reported, and acted upon excessive absenteeism. The EQA examiners found that Marshfield's student attendance rate for 2005-2006 was 95.6 percent compared to 94.5 percent for the state. Within the district, the rate varied from 94.8 percent at the high school to 96.3 percent at both the Eames and South River Elementary Schools. The school committee attendance policy, reflected in all student handbooks, stated that 10 days of absence were considered excessive for the year at all levels and that five at the half-year mark were excessive for middle and high school students. The handbooks provided a list of

definitions for absences that counted toward excessive absenteeism, including vacations that families went on during the school year. Although handbooks stated "no school work will be provided during a trip" and that students could get make-up work when they returned, middle school teachers shared the "Advance Assignment Request for Family Vacation" form they received through the middle school guidance department. Interviewees stated that although some teachers adhered to the handbook language, the form inferred that teachers should provide assignments for students prior to their going on family vacations.

Each school had processes in place to monitor student attendance regularly and communicate in writing to parents when their student's absenteeism record revealed a concern. At the high school level, students earned credit for courses only if they did not exceed the 10-day absence requirement for the year. In addition, students who achieved a 'B+' in a specific course and were absent less than five days were exempted from taking the final exam. The district also employed an attendance officer who made home visits and represented the school in court actions. At all levels, parents were able to report their child's absence to the school through the Safe to School program. In the event that the parents neglected to call when their child was absent, the school nurse or adjustment counselor would call the parents. Finally, students at all levels received recognition for perfect attendance through award ceremonies held at the end of each year.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Although the district and schools had procedures to record and report staff attendance, the EQA team could find no evidence that the monitoring of staff attendance or actions taken for excessive absenteeism had an effect on reducing staff absences or ensuring continuity of the instructional program. Documents submitted by the district substantiated that teachers were absent an average of 13.8 days, for an attendance rate of 92.4 percent, out of the 180-day student school year, and that the teachers' contract contained language associated with sick leave, temporary leaves of

absence, and retirement linked to accumulated sick leave. Absences in submitted documents included long- and short-term illness, professional development, jury duty, military service, and days for other reasons. Days for other reasons included religious holidays, graduation, union business, bereavement, and personal days. Teachers with professional status received 15 sick days per year, accumulating to 165 days. In addition, each teacher could use two personal days per year for which the teacher was not required to submit a reason. "One day to be deducted from sick leave or at the option of the teacher, to be without pay, and the second day requested to be without pay" (Article XVI, 16.2i). The superintendent approved or disapproved other personal day requests, submitted five days in advance, for "pressing personal or family business." The contract did not reflect a specific number of personal days that required the superintendent's approval. Prior to September 2004, teachers who retired from Marshfield under the terms of the Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement System received in cash 50 percent of all accumulated unused sick leave not to exceed 165 days. After September 2004, an alternative longevity plan was negotiated into the collective bargaining agreement that gave teachers a choice between the prior retirement incentive or a longevity buy-back payment of at least $4,500 for three consecutive years. In order to receive the longevity buy-back benefit, teachers had to have been in the system for at least 20 years and attained the maximum allowable sick leave accumulation of 165 days. Interviewees stated that the district had not kept records too determine the effect that the new longevity buy-back benefit had on staff attendance. Funding for substitutes increased over a three-year period from $404,428 in 2003, to $435,061 in 2004, to $438,140 in 2005.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Interviewees stated that practices and procedures imbedded in programs and support services from preschool through high school helped the district to increase subgroup participation in advanced and/or accelerated programs. First, the Early Childhood Outreach program identified at-risk preschool students for participation in the preschool program. The district had five

integrated language-based preschool classrooms across the district supported by behavioral specialists and adjustment counselors at each school. Second, at the elementary level a six-week tuition-based, after-school enrichment program, in place since 2000, offered interest-based courses for all students. Identification of at-risk students for participation in the enrichment program occurred through Project REACH, a free after-school program for homeless students and those with academic needs. Third, in addition to various clubs and music opportunities, at the middle school level a program called Kids Connections, developed in collaboration with area schools and the Pilgrim Area Collaborative, provided after-school activities for high-functioning students with Asperger's syndrome. In addition, the middle school offered two algebra courses at the grade 8 level. Pacing varied between the courses, but students from either were able to take honors math in grade 9 based on their MCAS math test results and teacher recommendation centered on performance, work ethic, and readiness of the student. Lastly, at the high school level two initiatives began in 2006 to increase participation in advanced programs: vertical teaming and additional AP offerings. Eight to 12 teachers from multiple grade levels selected for vertical teaming worked with a College Board consultant to address student preparation for more rigorous coursework. Selected teachers received training at St. Johnsbury to increase their skills in teaching AP courses. As a result, in 2006 the high school offered AP Art, French, and Spanish. Moreover, the district required all students enrolled in AP courses to take the AP exam in beginning in 2006. The high school SIP for 2006-2007 reflected a goal to increase the number of AP courses from 11 to 18.

Interviewees stated that data collection for at-risk students occurred through STATs, MCAS testing, and building-based leadership teams at all levels. They said that not only did these processes identify students, but also helped schools to monitor student progress through ICAPs (developed at STAT meetings), the special needs team, and test scores. Test scores led to the development of writing templates and pullout writing groups at grade 4 to help improve writing skills for the long composition. In 2005, the special needs subgroup at the middle school did not make AYP in math, so the district implemented an MCAS skills program in January 2006 scheduled during specials for students in that subgroup. The purpose of the program was to reinforce basis math skills and test-taking strategies. At the high school level, the high school assistant principal stated that PSAT scores helped the school to identify and encourage students for participation in advanced coursework. Although the district had practices embedded in

programs and services to assist at-risk students and to increase subgroup representation in advanced and/or accelerated programs, it did not provide specific data to substantiate increased participation of subgroups in advanced and/or accelerated programs, including AP coursework.

According to Merrimack Education Center (MEC) data, between 2003 and 2006 Marshfield's average performance gap between regular education students and those with disabilities narrowed by two proficiency index points. For students with disabilities the proficiency gap narrowed from 37 to 33 PI points. In ELA and math, all subgroups in Marshfield, with the exception of low-income students, had improved performance between 2003 and 2006. The most improved subgroups in ELA were students with disabilities and non low-income students. The most improved subgroup in math was students with disabilities. The performance gap between the highest and lowest-performing subgroups in ELA narrowed from 20 PI points in 2003 to 19 PI points in 2006, and the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in math narrowed from 29 to 27 PI points over this period.

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

VI. Financial and Asset Management Effectiveness and Efficiency

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

Standard Rating: Needs Improvement

Findings:

- Marshfield students generally performed above the state averages on the MCAS tests despite the fact that the district's per pupil expenditure was below the state average.
- The district's appropriated budget was level funded from the 2004-2005 school year to the 2005-2006 school year, which in fact, because of negotiated agreements and inflation, provided fewer funds to operate programs in 2006 than was expended in 2005.
- The district developed its budget based on needs reflected in aggregated and disaggregated student achievement data, such as the need for additional special education teachers and for math tutors and coaches.
- The district had a facilities need study completed in 2003 which identified over $40 million worth of repairs and rehabilitation upgrades needed in the district's schools over a five-year period.
- Both the school district and the town used the same financial accounting software.

Summary

The Marshfield Public Schools had experienced administrators and financial systems in place to provide an educational program with effective instructional resources for students. Although the per pupil expenditure for regular day students was below the state average, the students on average performed considerably higher than the state average on the MCAS tests.

Although the district's appropriated budget was level funded for the school years 2005 and 2006, because of negotiated agreements and inflation it provided fewer funds to operate programs in 2006 than was expended in 2005. A number of administrators, principals, and teachers were asked in interviews what effect this level funded budget had on the educational program. Most interviewees stated that they did not see a depreciable effect in the operation of the schools. Examiners, when reviewing documents, observed that to implement this level funded budget, some positions were eliminated or reduced and the superintendent had to use funds such as state and federal grants and nonrecurring revenue sources for programs that were previously funded through the school committee budget. This practice, if continued, could result in budget deficits and insufficient available revenue to provide relief. The situation was addressed for FY 2008 with the $2 million override approved in May 2007.

Examiners reviewed numerous documents that were developed by the district from the beginning of the budget development process by the administration to the annual town meeting vote. This budget development process contained documents presenting a comprehensive financial picture complete with information such as comparative data and historical budget data displayed in graphs and charts. However, these data were not included in the district's final budget document, which resulted in a budget book that did not provide a table of the district's budget history, a description of the school committee's budget requests, or accurate information on all fund sources. The final budget book did not provide a clear understanding of the district's financial needs and plans to all stakeholders, and the average person who did not follow the development process would not be able to understand the district's budgetary needs. However, many of the types of documents used in the district's budget development process were contained in the budgets of school districts that receive commendations for their budget books.

As part of its budget development, the district performed evaluation-based reviews of its programs to determine their cost effectiveness. Examples included the special education and regular education transportation programs, the food service program, and the tuitioning-out program for special education students. The analysis of student achievement data also informed budget decisions, such as increased staffing in areas of need.

The district had an architectural firm complete a facilities need study in 2003 which identified over $40 million worth of repairs and rehabilitation upgrades needed in the district's schools over a five-year period. The town also had a capital improvement committee with a member who represented the school district. Almost every year an article was approved at the town meeting for repair or rehabilitation work in the schools. However, the amount of funds approved at each annual town meeting was not approaching the architect's recommendation, and schools may be losing ground in their repair and rehabilitation projects. This will result in a higher cost to complete the projects. Some schools, especially the high school, had deficiencies of such a nature that an August 16, 2006 letter from NEASC to the high school principal stated, "Failure to resolve these issues in a timely manner may prompt the Commission to consider placing the school on warning." The district did not have a formal maintenance plan or a maintenance staff in place.

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: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The district developed the budget through an open, participatory process. Examiners reviewed budget documents that indicated the budget preparation process began in early fall when the budget subcommittee met to develop a budget timeline. This subcommittee reviewed such data as class sizes across the district, attrition factors, special education costs, and utility costs.

Principals were forwarded budget preparation documents developed by the administration. They were requested to prepare budgets for instructional supplies and equipment, general office

supplies, and a priority staff list request with proposed curriculum and justification for staff changes and additions. This budget request also contained a general message from the superintendent relative to proposed available funds for the school budget. Principals stated in interviews that they discussed their proposed budget with staff and their site councils. They also stated that although they were required to prepare line item budgets, they had wide latitude in their expenditures as long as they did not over expend the bottom line. However, they could not unilaterally add or change staff without the prior approval of the administration.

The principals then returned their budget requests to central administration and subsequently met with the central team to discuss their requests. Special education requests were prepared by the special education director and discussed with the administrative team.

Administrators informed the examiners that they then began to summarize the budget requests and communicated with the budget subcommittee and with town boards, such as the finance committee and the board of selectmen. Examiners reviewed comprehensive financial documents prepared by the administration for submission to the school committee and town officials.

In interviews with the school committee, members stated that there was a subcommittee of two members of the school committee who worked on budget matters with the superintendent to develop goals and work within financial constraints. They stated it was a "fluid" process back and forth between the subcommittee and the administration.

The subcommittee and the administration discussed the requested budget with the full committee in late December. The administration and school committee subsequently met with town officials and also held a legally required public hearing.

Examiners reviewed formal budget presentation documents and PowerPoint presentations prepared by town and school administrators relative to budget requests and the financial condition of the town. Documents contained detailed and comprehensive data in the form of financial charts and graphs. A document prepared for the public hearing described school department goals, accomplishments, budget trends, per pupil budget expenditure comparisons, and requested personnel changes. The administration also prepared a document titled "State of Our Schools" that contained detailed information relative to school operations. Town officials

stated in interviews that there was a good working relationship between the schools and other town departments and committees. They further stated that when school budgets were presented at the town meeting, there was little public discussion and the school committee, finance committee, and selectmen were in agreement with the school budget total. Town administrators stated that they believed there was support in the community for the school budget. The school budget was posted on the town's website.

However, the final budget document prepared by the district contained only one year of budget history, did not include information on all fund sources, did not contain a letter of explanation prepared by the superintendent or school committee, and did not contain any of the explanatory graphs, charts, per pupil comparisons, or PowerPoint presentations that had been prepared by the district during the budget preparation process. It was stated to examiners that the final budget document was not widely distributed to the public and was available only upon request.

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: Satisfactory

Evidence

The budget was developed and resources were allocated in part based on the analysis of aggregated and disaggregated student assessment data. Examiners reviewed a district document titled "Justification for Regular Education Staff Requests" in which analysis of student assessment data was used to request additional staff to increase time on learning hours, align the master schedule by balancing class sizes, and balance educational offerings in technology within the five elementary schools. Principals in their written budget requests were required to justify their personnel increases or changes. Examiners reviewed budget requests from principals that addressed the need to increase special education staffing to meet increasing caseloads. District administrators also stated in interviews that math tutors and coaches were hired at the middle school as a result of the analysis of the MCAS math results. Administrators stated in interviews that they identified 72 students entering grade 9 at the high school as not meeting the state

standard, and they hired a teacher to increase the course cycle. They also explained how a subgroup was pulled out of music for additional MCAS tutoring.

In an interview with the school committee, members acknowledged that they were provided with the MCAS data during budget meetings and they understood the data.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The district's operating budget during the period under review from FY 2005 to FY 2006 was level funded at $36,747,205. The budget for FY 2004 was $35,080,864. From FY 2005 to FY 2006, Chapter 70 receipts increased by $422,195, from $11,635,063 to $12,057,258. Chapter 70 aid comprised approximately 30 percent of net school spending (NSS).

In FY 2005 the district exceeded its NSS requirement by $7,306,567 or 23.5 percent. In FY 2006 the district exceeded its NSS requirement by $7,022,863 or 21.8 percent.

According to the district's End of Year Pupil and Financial Report for FY 2006, from FY 2004 to FY 2005 the purchase of textbooks decreased by approximately $100,000 and of equipment by an additional $100,000 from FY 2005 to FY 2006. Instructional equipment expenditures for the district were $322,000 in FY 2004, $185,000 in FY 2005, and $220,000 in FY 2006. Professional development expenditures were $247,000 in FY 2004, $391,000 in FY 2005, and $270,000 in FY 2006. The district also expended $328,720 for professional development from federal and state grants in FY 2006.

The school district's annual expenditures were approximately 58 percent of the town's total operating budget expenditures. There had not been an attempt to have an operational override for the schools in a considerable number of years. In the 2006-2007 school year, the school committee, the selectmen, and the advisory and finance committees recommended a $4.5 million

override for a May 2007 vote to restore staff and services eliminated in FY 2007. This was later changed to two override proposals, one for $4 million to cover FY 2008 through FY 2010 and the other for $2 million to cover FY 2008 only. The $4 million override failed but the $2 million override passed.

Principals stated in interviews that their budget had never been "frozen" during an operational year. Administrators, principals, and teachers stated that they had adequate supplies to do their jobs. In a focus group interview, teachers said that during the two years when the budget was level funded, they did not experience a decline in budget needs. Principals also stated that when unforeseen circumstances arose during a budget period, the administration could generally accommodate them.

The town had certified free cash in FY 2005 of $2.6 million and in FY 2006 of $2.3 million. Town administrators stated that this free cash was used for subsequent years' budgets for the school district and town.

For a number of years articles were included in the town meeting warrant for repairs and renovations to the schools, generally in the areas of roofs, windows, and ventilation. A facilities study performed by an architectural firm in FY 2003 identified needed repairs and renovations to the Marshfield schools in excess of $40 million over a five-year period. The annual spending for repairs and renovations by the community was not near the level recommended in the architects' report. Building conditions, especially at the high school, were identified in the NEASC and CPR reports. The NEASC letter of August 18, 2006 stated, "Failure to resolve these issues in a timely manner may prompt the Commission to consider placing the school on warning." When the examiners discussed this letter with administrators they were told that the district was planning to spend $50,000 on a study to determine whether it is more feasible to rehabilitate the existing high school or build a new one.

4. <u>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.</u>

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district, as part of its budget development, implemented an evaluation-based review process to determine the cost effectiveness of its programs. Examiners were told in interviews with district administrators that based on the MCAS scores at the elementary school a subgroup was moved from music class to mathematics for additional MCAS tutoring. At the high school, incoming freshmen who had not received a passing score on the MCAS tests had to give up an elective to take a support program in academic remediation.

District administrators told the examiners that they routinely analyzed the special education programs of students who were tuitioned out to determine if they could develop a more cost effective program in the district. They also reviewed both special education and regular transportation for cost effectiveness. The district provided its own yellow bus transportation that it determined to be the most cost effective practice. It has analyzed its food service program and installed Point of Sale software that allowed it to have more control over daily financial operations.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district and community had appropriate written agreements related to 603 CMR 10.0. The examiners reviewed this document and determined that it was properly executed by the requisite parties and met all requirements of the regulations. The district elected to use the administrative cost average as published annually by the DOE for administrative services.

The agreement also stated that document would be reviewed on an annual basis by the town and school district. Administrators stated in interviews that they annually reviewed the assessed costs and determined them to be fair and accurate.

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 combination of Chapter 70 aid and local revenues exceeded the NSS requirements of the education reform formula for the period under review. For FY 2004, the NSS exceeded requirements by $6,191,124 or 20.4 percent. For FY 2005, the NSS exceeded requirements by $7,306,567 or 23.5 percent. For FY 2006, the NSS exceeded requirements by 7,022,863 or 21.8 percent. The district had exceeded the NSS requirements from FY 2001 to FY 2006.

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

Regular, timely, accurate, and complete financial reports were made to the school committee, appropriate administrators, and staff. Financial reports to the public were generally presented through televised town meetings, school committee meetings, and other board meetings, such as those of the finance board and the board of selectmen.

The school district generated financial reports through the Data National computerized general ledger system and through Excel spreadsheets developed from the Data National system and manually entered into Excel. Financial status reports were prepared at central office accounting for administrators, principals, and other district supervisors. Interviews with principals confirmed that they received these financial reports.

Examiners reviewed independent audit reports and findings and did not see findings or non-compliance remarks relative to lateness of submittals. There were some comments relative to End of Year Pupil and Financial Reports, and the district submitted amendments to correct these findings.

One person in the central business office was responsible for grants management, tracking receipts and expenditures on spreadsheets, and preparing grants budgets, amendments, purchase orders, and timesheets. The assistant superintendent for business signed all requests for funds and final reports.

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 the Data National accounting technology. This technology was used by a number of school districts. The school district and municipal government stated that they had recently solicited proposals to jointly upgrade their accounting technology and to engage a different firm.

Municipal finance personnel could access the financial data online from the school district and data could be transferred from the school district to the municipality. Both entities used Data National. School principals could not send or receive data from this system on terminals in their offices. All financial reports were transferred both ways between the administration and the schools by paper copy.

District administrators stated in interviews that through the Data National and other financial software, primarily Excel, they had developed forecasting mechanisms to monitor expenditures of the school budget.

A June 30, 2005 independent auditor's report recommended that school management "monitor encumbrances in accordance with established laws, regulations, policies, and procedures." District administrators stated that they complied with those regulations.

In interviews with school district and town administrators, the examiners learned that transfers in the school budget were not made during the fiscal year and the school committee did not require

that they be made. The school district administrators and town administrators believed that the fact that the school budget was voted as a single line at the annual town meeting was a reason for not transferring expenditures between accounts during the budget year operation.

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 all grants and special revenue funds. Examiners reviewed district receipts and expenditures relative to grants including a budget worksheet listing all personnel, the salary charged, and the specific grant to which the expense was charged.

The independent audit agreed upon procedures report stated that the secretary in the central business office was responsible for grants management, tracking receipts and expenditures on spreadsheets, and preparing grants budgets, amendments, purchase orders, and timesheets. The assistant superintendent for business signed all requests for funds and final reports.

Examiners inquired as to the manner in which the district pursued private competitive grants and were told that Marshfield does not qualify for many competitive grants due to its students' high MCAS test scores, its population's lack of diversity, and other student demographics.

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 state procurement laws were followed. Administrators at the town hall had MCPPO credentials. Examiners reviewed sample formal bid documents and contracts and found them to be in order.

The procedure for purchasing other than formal bid procurement was that blank pre-numbered purchase orders were issued from central accounting to principals and departments. Purchase orders were generated at the school level and contained all required information. When completed, the purchase order was initialed by the building principal and forwarded to central administration where it was reviewed by bookkeeping and accounts payable personnel. The assistant superintendent for business signed all purchase orders and the vendor copy was mailed from that office. Copies were returned to the originator. Invoices were matched with receiving sheets before payment was made.

The district has had the same independent auditing firm in place for approximately eight years. In an interview with town administrators, the examiners learned that they planned to issue an RFP for auditing services next year.

Examiners reviewed all independent audits completed during the period under review and discussed the findings with administrators. Administrators stated that all findings had been addressed or were in the process of being addressed.

11. <u>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.</u>

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The district did not have a formal maintenance program and it did not have a maintenance director or supervisor. The district did not have any maintenance positions. Examiners learned in interviews with administrators that when small maintenance repairs were required in the

schools, some custodians, who chose to, would address the repair. Outside contractors performed most repairs.

In general, the school buildings visited by the examiners were clean and conducive to promoting student learning and achievement. Examiners were told in interviews that some classes, particularly special education classes, were held in less desirable spaces.

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 town had a long-term capital planning committee consisting of five members, one of whom served as the liaison to the school committee. In FY 2003 the district engaged an architectural and engineering firm to develop a five-year capital improvement plan. The plan proposed repairs and renovations to school buildings over a five-year period at a total cost in excess of $40 million.

The district, through articles at the annual town meetings, had done some repairs and renovations, particularly in the areas of roof replacement, window replacement, exterior doors, and heating and ventilating repairs.

The NEASC and CPR reports had cited facility deficiencies at the high school including the areas of the locker rooms and the lack of handicap accessibility to those areas as well as other "space and health and safety issues." The district has not addressed these deficiencies. An August 16, 2006 letter from NEASC to the high school principal stated, "Failure to resolve these issues in a timely manner may prompt the Commission to consider placing the school on warning." The district leaders stated to the examiners that they intended to commission a study in the $50,000 range to determine whether to build a new high school or renovate the existing school.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

Examiners toured the schools and learned that all schools had cameras that displayed multiple areas in the buildings. Doors in all buildings were secured except for front entrance doors, which were monitored by school personnel. Increased exterior lighting had been installed at school buildings.

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, FY 1997 – FY2006

	Foundation Enrollment	Pct Chg	Foundation Budget	Pct Chg	Required Local Contribution	Chapter 70 Aid	Pct Chg	Required Net School Spending (NSS)	Pct Chg	Actual Net School Spending	Pct Chg	Dollars Over/Under Requirement	Percent Over/ Under
FY97	4,101	2.2	23,038,285	4.4	13,640,134	7,367,663	18.6	21,007,797	6.6	21,362,619	7.2	354,822	1.7
FY98	4,216	2.8	24,248,854	5.3	14,332,106	8,212,720	11.5	22,544,826	7.3	22,649,307	6.0	104,481	0.5
FY99	4,319	2.4	25,634,104	5.7	14,982,784	9,901,216	20.6	24,884,000	10.4	24,783,628	9.4	-100,372	-0.4
FY00	4,397	1.8	26,146,972	2.0	15,914,701	10,688,009	7.9	26,602,710	6.9	26,261,867	6.0	-340,843	-1.3
FY01	4,427	0.7	27,278,965	4.3	16,624,858	11,462,734	7.2	28,087,592	5.6	29,207,543	11.2	1,119,951	4.0
FY02	4,446	0.4	28,684,633	5.2	17,106,358	11,768,546	2.7	28,874,904	2.8	31,421,153	7.6	2,546,249	8.8
FY03	4,469	0.5	29,317,966	2.2	18,259,327	11,768,546	0.0	30,027,873	4.0	34,531,705	9.9	4,503,832	15.0
FY04	4,501	0.7	30,394,696	3.7	18,759,633	11,635,063	-1.1	30,394,696	1.2	36,585,820	5.9	6,191,124	20.4
FY05	4,460	-0.9	30,757,528	1.2	19,414,344	11,635,063	0.0	31,049,407	2.2	38,355,974	4.8	7,306,567	23.5
FY06	4,518	1.3	32,271,473	4.9	20,214,215	12,057,258	3.6	32,271,473	3.9	39,294,336	2.4	7,022,863	21.8

	Dollars Per Foundation Enrollment			Percentage of Foundation			
	Foundation Budget	Ch 70 Aid	Actual NSS	Ch 70	Required NSS	Actual NSS	Chapter 70 Aid as Percent of Actual NSS
FY97	5,618	1,797	5,209	32.0	91.2	92.7	34.5
FY98	5,752	1,948	5,372	33.9	93.0	93.4	36.3
FY99	5,935	2,292	5,738	38.6	97.1	96.7	40.0
FY00	5,947	2,431	5,973	40.9	101.7	100.4	40.7
FY01	6,162	2,589	6,598	42.0	103.0	107.1	39.2
FY02	6,452	2,647	7,067	41.0	100.7	109.5	37.5
FY03	6,560	2,633	7,727	40.1	102.4	117.8	34.1
FY04	6,753	2,585	8,128	38.3	100.0	120.4	31.8
FY05	6,896	2,609	8,600	37.8	100.9	124.7	30.3
FY06	7,143	2,669	8,697	37.4	100.0	121.8	30.7

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.