

*How Is Your
School District
Performing?*



A look at
Marshfield
Public Schools

2004–2006



EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT AUDIT COUNCIL
Office of Educational Quality and Accountability

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The five-member Educational Management Audit Council (EMAC) and its agency, the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA), were established by the Massachusetts Legislature in July 2000 to examine public school districts in the commonwealth. The mission of the EMAC and EQA is to provide independent verification of schools' and districts' efforts to promote higher levels of academic achievement among their students, as measured by the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests.

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

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INTRODUCTION

Test scores provide one method of assessing student achievement, but a variety of factors affect student performance. The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA) was created to examine many of these additional factors by conducting independent audits of schools and districts across the commonwealth. The agency uses these audits to:

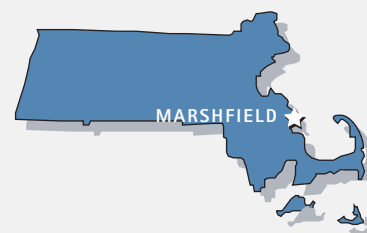
- Provide a comprehensive evaluation of each school district's performance;
- Publish annual reports on selected districts' performance;
- Monitor public education performance statewide to inform policy decisions; and
- Provide the public with information that helps the state hold districts and schools, including charter schools, accountable.

In February 2007, the EQA conducted an independent examination of the Marshfield Public Schools for the period of 2004–2006. The EQA analyzed Marshfield students' performance on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests and identified how students in general and in subgroups were performing. The EQA then examined critical factors that affected student performance in six major areas: leadership, governance, and communication; curriculum and instruction; assessment and evaluation; human resource management and professional development; access, participation, and student academic support; and financial and asset management effectiveness and efficiency.

The review was based on documents supplied by the Marshfield Public Schools and the Massachusetts Department of Education; correspondence sent prior to the EQA team's site visit; interviews with representatives from the school committee, the district leadership team, school administrators, and teachers; numerous classroom observations; and additional documents submitted while the EQA team visited the district. The report does not take into account documents, revised data, or events that may have occurred after June 2006. However, district leaders were invited to provide more current information.

Putting the Data in Perspective

Marshfield, MA



DISTRICT

Population: 24,324

Median family income: \$76,541

Largest sources of employment:

Accommodation and food services; retail trade; health care and social assistance

Local government: Board of Selectmen, Town Administrator, Open Town Meeting

SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS

School committee: 5 members

Number of schools: 7

Student-teacher ratio: 13.3 to 1

Per Pupil Expenditures: \$9,500

Student enrollment:

Total: 4,679

White: 96.8 percent

Hispanic: 1.2 percent

African-American: 0.6 percent

Asian-American: 0.7 percent

Native American: 0.3 percent

Limited English proficient:
0.2 percent

Low income: 7.2 percent

Special education: 16.4 percent

Sources: 2000 U.S. Census and
Massachusetts Department of Education.

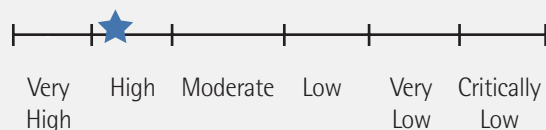
EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT AUDIT COUNCIL ACTION

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

MCAS Performance at a Glance, 2006

	DISTRICT	STATE
Average Proficiency Index	88	78
English Language Arts Proficiency Index	94	84
Math Proficiency Index	82	72

Performance Rating



The Average Proficiency Index is another way to look at MCAS scores. It is a weighted average of student performance that shows whether students have attained or are making progress toward proficiency, which means they have met the state's standards. A score of 100 indicates that all students are proficient. The Massachusetts DOE developed the categories presented to identify performance levels.

HOW DID STUDENTS PERFORM?

Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) Test Results

Students in grades 3–8 and grade 10 are required to take the MCAS tests each year in one or more specified subject areas, including English language arts (ELA), math, and science and technology/engineering (STE). Beginning with the class of 2003, students must pass the grade 10 math and ELA tests to graduate. Those who do not pass on the first try may retake the tests several more times.

The EQA analyzed current state and district MCAS results to determine how well district students as a whole and sub-groups of students performed compared to students throughout the commonwealth, and to the state goal of proficiency. The EQA analysis sought to answer the following five questions:

1. 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.

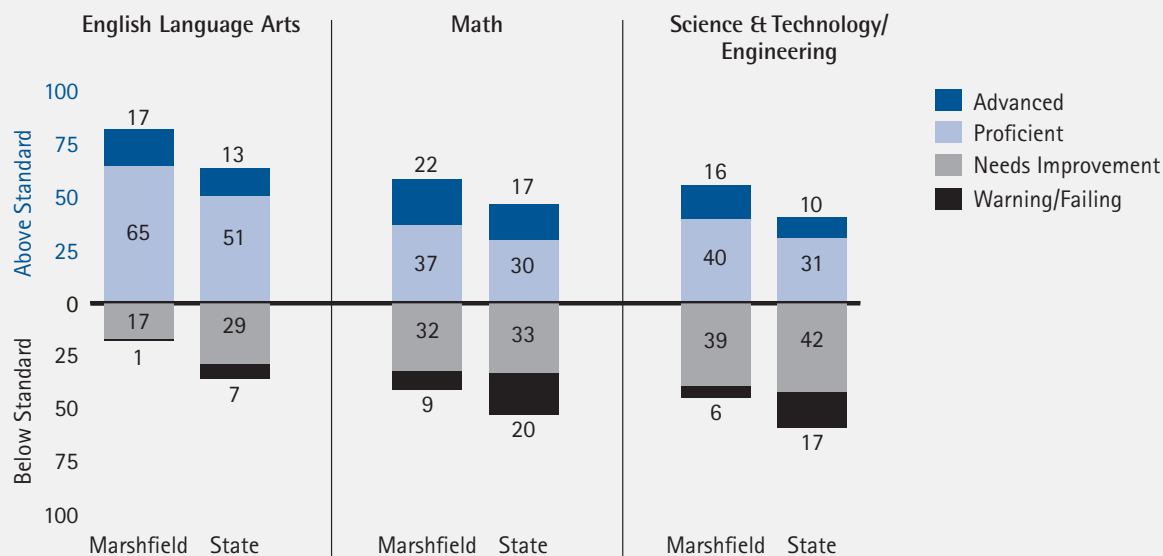
2. Are the district's students reaching proficiency levels on the MCAS examination?

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 2006 average proficiency gap, the difference between its API and the target of 100, 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.

MARSHFIELD SCORES COMPARED TO STATE AVERAGES, 2006

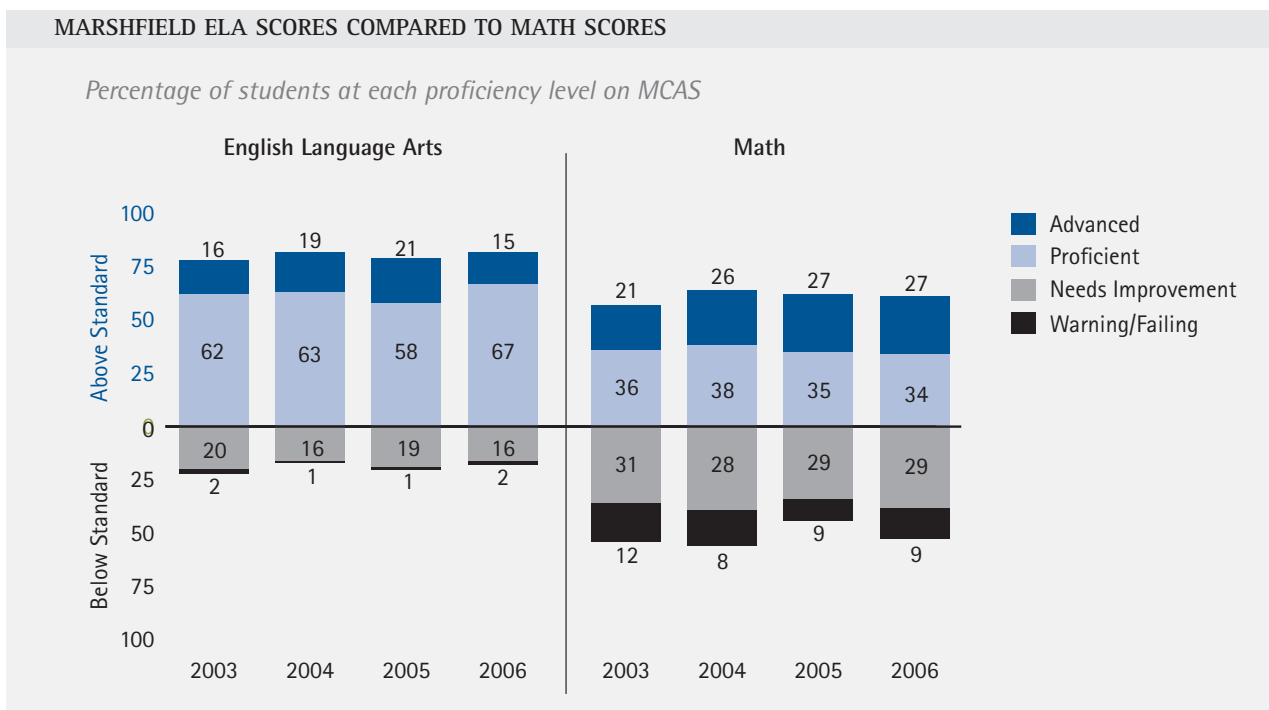
Percentage of students at each proficiency level on MCAS



3. 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.

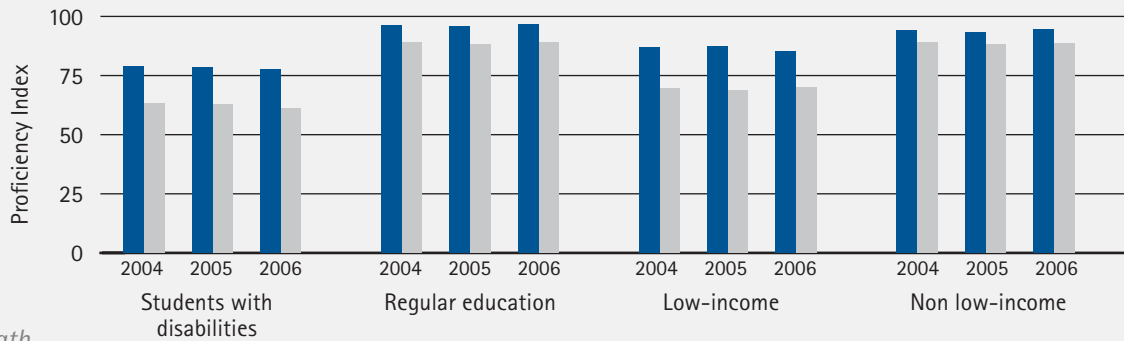
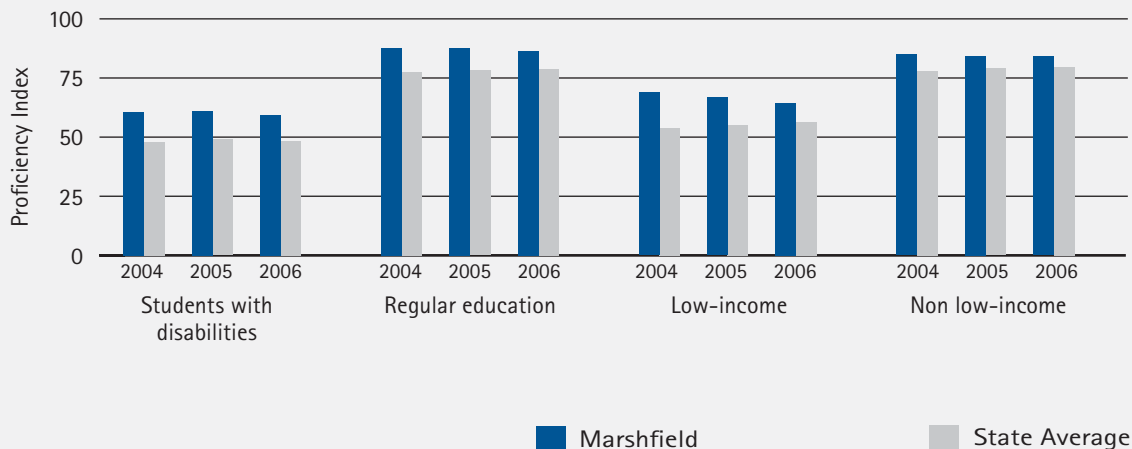


4. Do MCAS test results vary among subgroups of students?

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.

MARSHFIELD STUDENTS' IMPROVEMENT OVER TIME, COMPARED TO STATE AVERAGES

English Language Arts*Math*

5. *Has the MCAS test performance of 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.

Performance at a Glance

Management Quality Index

The Management Quality Index is a weighted average of the district's performance on 67 indicators that measure the effectiveness of a district's management system. Marshfield received the following rating:

Performance Rating:



WHAT FACTORS DRIVE STUDENT PERFORMANCE?

Overall District Management

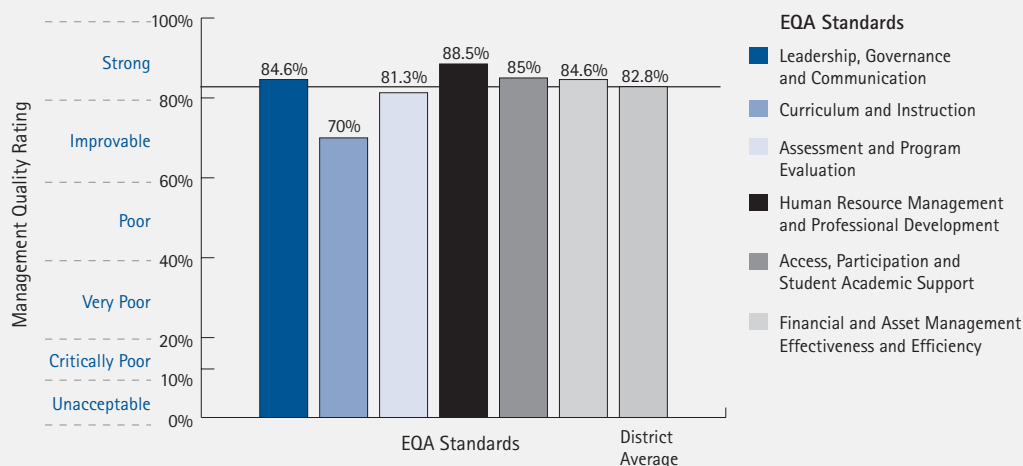
To better understand the factors affecting student scores on the MCAS tests, the EQA analyzes district performance on 67 indicators in six areas: leadership, governance, and communication; curriculum and instruction; assessment and program evaluation; human resource management and professional development; access, participation, and student academic support; and financial and asset management effectiveness and efficiency. Taken together, these factors are a

measure of the effectiveness – or quality – of a district's management system. A score of 100 percent on the Management Quality Index (MQI) means that the district meets the standard and performed at a satisfactory level on all indicators. However, it does not mean the district was perfect.

In 2006, Marshfield received an overall MQI score of 'Strong' (82.8 percent). The district performed strongest on the Human Resource Management standard, and weakest on the Curriculum and Instruction standard. Given these ratings, the district performed as expected on the MCAS tests during the review period. Student performance was flat in ELA and declined slightly in math, while the district narrowed most subgroup performance gaps. On the following pages, we take a closer look at the district's performance in each of the six standards.

A CLOSER LOOK AT MANAGEMENT QUALITY

Marshfield, 2004–2006



Leadership, Governance, and Communication

Ultimately, the success or failure of district leadership was determined by how well all students performed. As measured by MCAS test performance, Marshfield ranked among the 'High' performing school districts in the commonwealth, with scores that were 'Very High' in ELA and 'High' in math.

Leadership and Communication

The leadership of the Marshfield Public Schools consisted of the superintendent and the five-member school committee. 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.

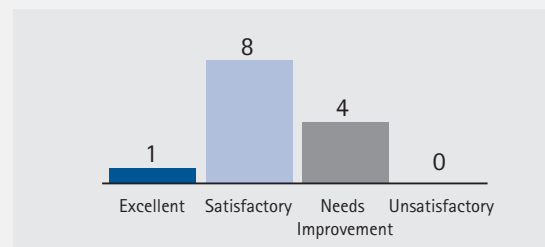
School committee members were knowledgeable about their responsibilities through attendance at Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) training sessions and workshops. Information from related sources was also presented by the superintendent at scheduled school committee meetings.

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 coun-

Performance at a Glance

Ratings on Performance Indicators

In this area, districts are rated on 13 performance indicators. Marshfield received the following ratings:



Areas of Strength

- 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.
- 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.

Areas for Improvement

- 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, no evidence indicated that the district used student achievement data to assess principals' success.

cils, access to Connect Ed for immediate messaging, and use of the district's website for individual school updates.

Governance and Planning

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 Marshfield Public Schools faced some challenges in the areas of effective curriculum development and instructional practice – essential elements of efforts to improve student performance.

Aligned Curricula

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.

Performance at a Glance

Ratings on Performance Indicators

In this area, districts are rated on 10 performance indicators. Marshfield received the following ratings:



Areas of Strength

- The district curriculum aligned with the state curriculum frameworks and was aligned vertically and horizontally.
- The district regularly revised the curriculum, and each school had a curriculum leader who provided support for curriculum revisions.

Areas for Improvement

- Classroom observations revealed that teachers did not use a variety of instructional techniques to address differences in student learning styles.
- Educational technology was available in the district, but sustained and consistent technology integration within the curriculum was lacking.
- 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.

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.

Effective Instruction

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

Student assessment data include a wealth of information for district and school leaders on strengths and weaknesses in the local system, providing valuable input on where they should target their efforts to improve achievement.

Student Assessment

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 Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), the Developmental Reading Assessment (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.

Performance at a Glance

Ratings on Performance Indicators

In this area, districts are rated on 8 performance indicators. Marshfield received the following ratings:



Areas of Strength

- 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 internal and external audits that included the New England League of Middle Schools' and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges' audits.

Areas for Improvement

- 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.

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 Advanced Placement (AP) courses available in an effort to introduce more rigor to the course of study.

Program Evaluation

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 New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) and New England League of Middle Schools (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

To improve student academic performance, school districts must recruit certified teaching staff, offer teacher mentoring programs and professional development opportunities, and evaluate instructional effectiveness on a regular basis in accordance with the provisions of the Education Reform Act of 1993.

Hiring Practices and Certification

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, and 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 and professional growth. 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. The district offered curriculum and instructional leadership opportunities and advancement in stipended extracurricular or administrative roles, such as subject coordinators and assistant teaching principals.

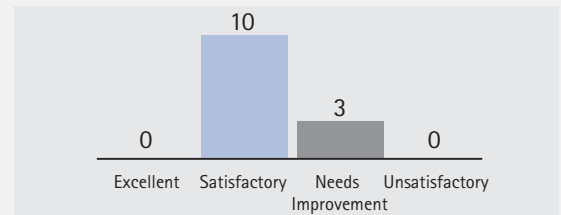
Professional Development

The district's professional development committee, established by agreement with the teachers' bargaining unit, conducted annual surveys of staff and administrative needs and wants.

Performance at a Glance

Ratings on Performance Indicators

In this area, districts are rated on 13 performance indicators. Marshfield received the following ratings:



Areas of Strength

- 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's current professional evaluation procedures included annual goal setting, reflection, and professional collaboration to promote professional growth and improved instruction.
- The district provided TestWiz training for administrators and offered that training to some teachers on a voluntary basis.

Areas for Improvement

- The district did not provide all staff with formal training in the development of aggregated and disaggregated data analysis skills for formative assessment and instructional planning.

It then made recommendations for proposed programs and activities to the central administration, taking into consideration MCAS student achievement results and professional development goals in the DIP and SIPs. The district's professional development committee reviewed and granted requests for proposals 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 plans.

Evaluation

Although the district's human resources practices were found to be generally satisfactory, the district's teacher evaluation procedures did not comply with the Education Reform Act in that the evaluation tool did not reflect the Principles of Effective Teaching. The summative reports, while informative, did not provide feedback 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 in accordance with the statute. 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 teacher-generated reports of these activities and determined they 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 developed annual goals with principals or other evaluators.

The district provided two years of training for principals and administrators for effective supervision practices 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. 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 based on these principles. All summative evaluations were informative and most contained recommendations for improvement. The district linked compensation to the evaluator's numerical performance ratings in each category of the Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership, but not to improved student achievement.

Access, Participation, and Student Academic Support

Students who are at risk of failing or dropping out need additional support to ensure that they stay in school and achieve proficiency.

Services

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 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.

Attendance

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

Performance at a Glance

Ratings on Performance Indicators

In this area, districts are rated on 10 performance indicators. Marshfield received the following ratings:



Areas of Strength

- Marshfield provided support programs at the primary level, and over 80 percent of its grade 4 students scored at the 'Proficient' level or higher on the 2006 MCAS ELA test.
- The use of aggregated and disaggregated MCAS test data led the district to implement additional math support programs. MCAS math test scores at the middle school level increased, and the special education subgroup attained AYP in 2006.
- The district increased the number of Advanced Placement course options for students in 2006 and required that all enrolled students take the AP exam.
- The district's homeless policy and practices provided extensive services for the affected families and children from preschool through high school.

Areas for Improvement

- Teachers in Marshfield were absent an average of 13.8 out of 180 days in the school year, for a 92.3 percent attendance rate.

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.

Discipline and Dropout Prevention

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, student teacher support teams, 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

Effective districts develop budgets based on student needs, submit financial documentation in a timely fashion, employ staff with MCPPO credentials, and ensure that their facilities are well maintained.

Financial Support

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.

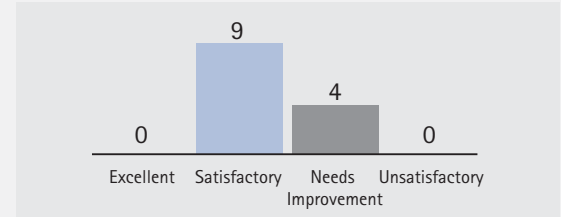
Budget Process

Examiners reviewed numerous documents that were developed by the district from the beginning of the budget development process by the administration

Performance at a Glance

Ratings on Performance Indicators

In this area, districts are rated on 13 performance indicators. Marshfield received the following ratings:



Areas of Strength

- The district developed its budget based on needs reflected in aggregated and disaggregated student achievement data, such as for additional special education teachers as well as math tutors and coaches.
- 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.
- Both the school district and the town used the same financial accounting software.

Areas for Improvement

- The district's appropriated budget was level funded from 2004 to 2005, and because of negotiated agreements and inflation, fewer funds were available to operate programs.
- 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.

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.

Facilities

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 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.

Safety

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.

CONCLUSION

The Marshfield Public Schools was a 'High' performing district, marked by student achievement that was 'Very High' in ELA and 'High' in math on the MCAS tests. More than two-thirds of Marshfield's students scored at or above the proficiency standard on the 2006 administration of the MCAS tests. The EQA gave the district a Management Quality Index rating of 'Strong,' with the highest rating in Human Resource Management and the lowest in Curriculum and Instruction.

During the site visit, the superintendent of schools in Marshfield was completing his second year in that role. He was the assistant superintendent prior to becoming the superintendent in August 2005. The district has had a succession of superintendents, and interviewees viewed his elevation as positive for the district, noting that the superintendent and the assistant superintendent for curriculum were delivering a consistent message.

The superintendent discussed the need for "connectivity" in the district, including ensuring 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 was working with him and others to implement many of the district's prioritized initiatives. They had plans "in place," but explained that the district needed time to implement them. One of the major curricular goals was revision of the existing curriculum format, which will include instructional strategies and outcome-based objectives as well as the implementation of assessment practices. At the time of the review, the use of assessments other than the MCAS tests varied from school to school.

Relying mostly on the MCAS data, the district analyzed student achievement results, made changes to the instructional program, and added remediation classes to improve student achievement. District leaders also attempted to improve instruction by modeling best practices and strategizing with teachers on instructional techniques for students in need.

The district leadership has emphasized the importance of communication with the school committee, town, and community. Student achievement data were routinely shared with stakeholders. The superintendent sent a monthly newsletter and a "State of Our Schools" pamphlet home to parents and also posted the pamphlet in public locations in the community. In addition, the steering committee for the district included parents, school committee representatives, faculty, and administrators.

Marshfield teachers were supported and encouraged through the induction program for teachers new to teaching or to the district and through the professional development program. The professional development program supported teachers' professional growth and district and school objectives through course reimbursement, curriculum projects, and courses such as Teachers as Scholars and differentiated instruction.

During 2005-2006, the school district, in collaboration with the teachers' union, implemented a new five-year cycle for the evaluation of professional and non-professional status teachers. However, the new cycle did not require a formal summative evaluation of professional status teachers every two years, as required by the Education Reform Act. Nearly all administrator evaluations were timely and followed the Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership. The administrator evaluations did not link compensation and continued employment to student achievement data.

The Town of Marshfield has not adequately funded the district's budget in the past; in FY 2005 and FY 2006 the budget was level funded. Some positions were eliminated, and the district had to use funds from state and federal grants and nonrecurring revenue sources to supplement funds that would have been provided in the school committee budget. 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 evaluation and the Department of Education's Coordinated Program Review 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, NEASC sent a warning letter to the high school principal. 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.

APPENDIX A: EQA'S DISTRICT EXAMINATION PROCESS

EQA's examination process provides successively deeper levels of information about student performance. All school districts receive an MCAS data review annually, but they do not all receive the full examination every year.

Based on the MCAS results, Educational Management Audit Council (EMAC) policy, and random sampling, approximately 60 districts statewide received a site review. Still other districts – those that do not meet certain performance criteria set by the state Department of Education – received an even more detailed review.

Data-Driven Assessment

Annually, the DOE and EQA's staff assess each public school district's results on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) tests to find out how students are performing. This review seeks to answer five basic questions:

1. Are the district's students reaching proficiency levels on MCAS?
2. Do MCAS test results vary among subgroups of students (such as minority and low-income students and students with disabilities)?
3. Has the district's MCAS test performance improved over time?
4. Has the MCAS test performance of the district's student subgroups improved over time?
5. Are all eligible students participating in required state assessments?

Standards-Based Examination

Districts with MCAS results that fall within certain thresholds of performance, particularly districts that score below average, may be selected to receive a site review. This review seeks to provide a more complete picture of why the district is performing at that level, examining district management, planning, and actions and how they are implemented at the building level. It focuses in particular on whether the district uses data to inform its efforts.

The report analyzes district performance in six major areas: leadership, governance, and communication; curriculum and instruction; assessment and program evaluation; human resource management and professional development; access, participation, and student academic support; and financial and asset management effectiveness and efficiency. EQA examines a total of 67 indicators to assess whether the district is meeting the standards and provides a rating for each indicator.

APPENDIX B: EXPLANATION OF TERMS USED IN EQA REPORTS

ABA: Applied Behavioral Analysis

ADA: Average Daily Attendance

ALT: MCAS Alternative Assessment

API: Average Proficiency Index (of the English Language Arts Proficiency Index and Math Proficiency Index for all students)

ATA: Accountability and Targeted Assistance

AYP: Adequate Yearly Progress

CAP: Corrective Action Plan

CBM: Curriculum-Based Measures

CD: Competency Determination — the state's interim Adequate Yearly Progress indicator for high schools based on grade 10 MCAS test passing rates

CMP: Connected Math Program

CORI: Criminal Offender Record Information

CPI: Composite Proficiency Index — a 100-point index combining students' scores on the standard MCAS and MCAS Alternative Assessment (ALT)

CPR: Coordinated Program Review — conducted on Federal Education Acts by the DOE

CRT: Criterion-Referenced Test

CSR: Comprehensive School Reform

DCAP: District Curriculum Accommodation Plan

DIBELS: Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills

DIP: District Improvement Plan

DOE: Department of Education

DPDP: District Professional Development Plan

DRA: Developmental Reading Assessment

ELA: English Language Arts

ELL: English Language Learners

EPI: English Language Arts Proficiency Index

ESL: English as a Second Language

FLNE: First Language Not English

FRL/N: Free and Reduced-Price Lunch/No

FRL/Y: Free and Reduced-Price Lunch/Yes

FTE: Full-Time Equivalent

FY: Fiscal Year

Gap Analysis: A statistical method to analyze the relationships between and among district and subgroup performance and the standard of 100 percent proficiency

GASB: Government Accounting Standards Board

GMADE: Group Math Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation

GRADE: Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation

GRADU: The graduation yield rate for a class four years from entry

IEP: Individualized Education Program

Improvement Gap: A measure of change in a combination of the proficiency gap and performance gap between two points in time; a positive improvement gap will show improvement and convergence between subgroups' performance over time

IPDP: Individual Professional Development Plan

IRIP: Individual Reading Improvement Plan

ISSP: Individual Student Success Plan

LASW: Looking at Student Work

LEP: Limited English Proficient

MASBO: Massachusetts Association of School Business Officials

MASC: Massachusetts Association of School Committees

MASS: Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents

MAVA: Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators

MCAS: Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

MCAS-Alt: Alternative Assessment — a portfolio option for special needs students to demonstrate proficiency

MCPPPO: Massachusetts Certified Public Purchasing Official

MELA-O: Massachusetts English Language Assessment-Oral

MEPA: Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment

MPI: Math Proficiency Index

MQI: Management Quality Index — an indicator of the relative strength and effectiveness of a district's management system

MUNIS: Municipal Information System

NAEYC: National Association for the Education of Young Children

NCLB: No Child Left Behind

NEASC: New England Association of Schools and Colleges

NRT: Norm-Referenced Test

NSBA: National School Boards Association

NSS: Net School Spending

Performance Gap: A measure of the range of the difference of performance between any subgroup's Proficiency Index and another subgroup's in a given district

PI: Proficiency Index — a number between 0–100 representing the extent to which students are progressing toward proficiency

PIM: Performance Improvement Management

POA: Program Quality Assurance — a division of the DOE responsible for conducting the Coordinated Program Review process

Proficiency Gap: A measure of a district or subgroup's Proficiency Index and its distance from 100 percent proficiency

QRI: Qualitative Reading Inventory

Rate of Improvement: The result of dividing the gain (improvement in achievement as measured by Proficiency Index points) by the proficiency gap

SAT: A test administered by the Educational Testing Service to 11th and 12th graders

SEI: Sheltered English Immersion

SIMS: Student Information Management System

SIOP: Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol

SIP: School Improvement Plan

SPED: Special Education

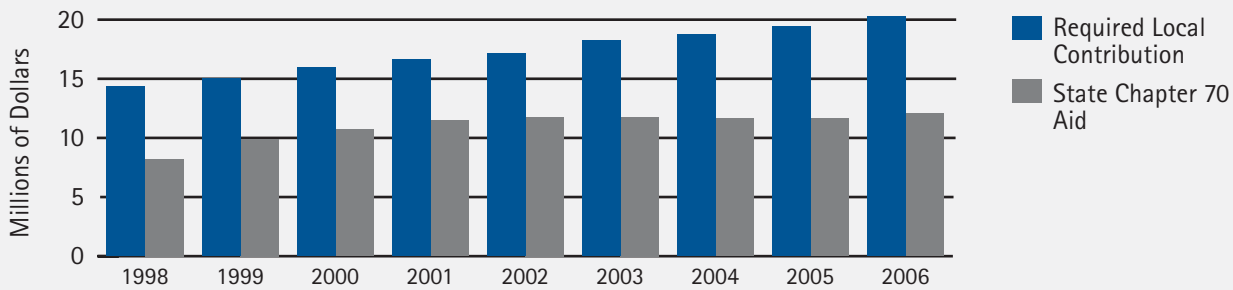
STE: Science and Technology/Engineering

TerraNova: K–12 norm-referenced test series published by CTB/McGraw-Hill

APPENDIX C: STATE AND LOCAL FUNDING, 1998–2006

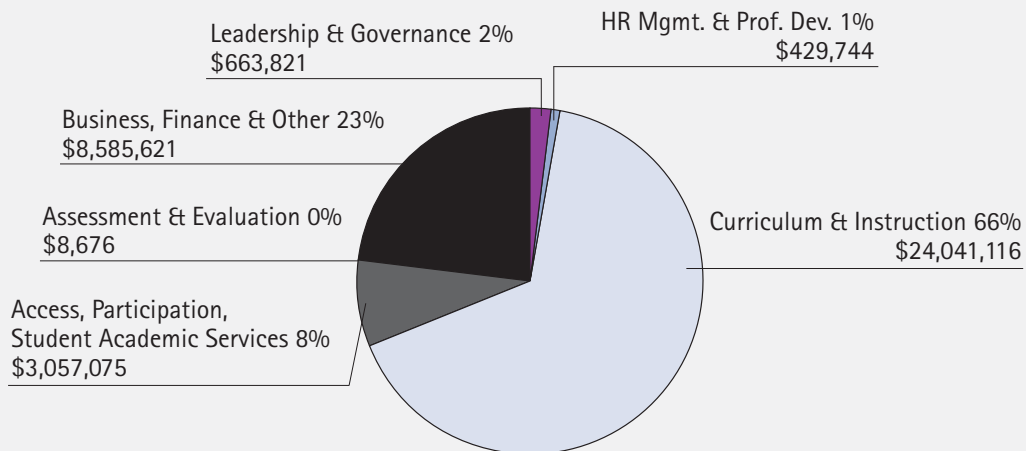
A school district's funding is determined in part by the Chapter 70 program – the major program of state aid to public elementary and secondary schools. In addition to supporting school operations, it also establishes minimum requirements for each municipality's share of school costs. The following chart shows the amount of Marshfield's funding that was derived from the state and the amount that the town was required to contribute. The district exceeded the state net school spending (NSS) requirement in each year of the review period. From FY 2004 to FY 2006, NSS 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 NSS 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 NSS decreased from 70 to 69 percent.

WHERE DOES THE FUNDING FOR MARSHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS COME FROM?



HOW IS THE FUNDING FOR MARSHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS ALLOCATED?

FY05 Expenditures By EQA Standards (With City/Town Charges)





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