The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

School District
Reexamination Report:
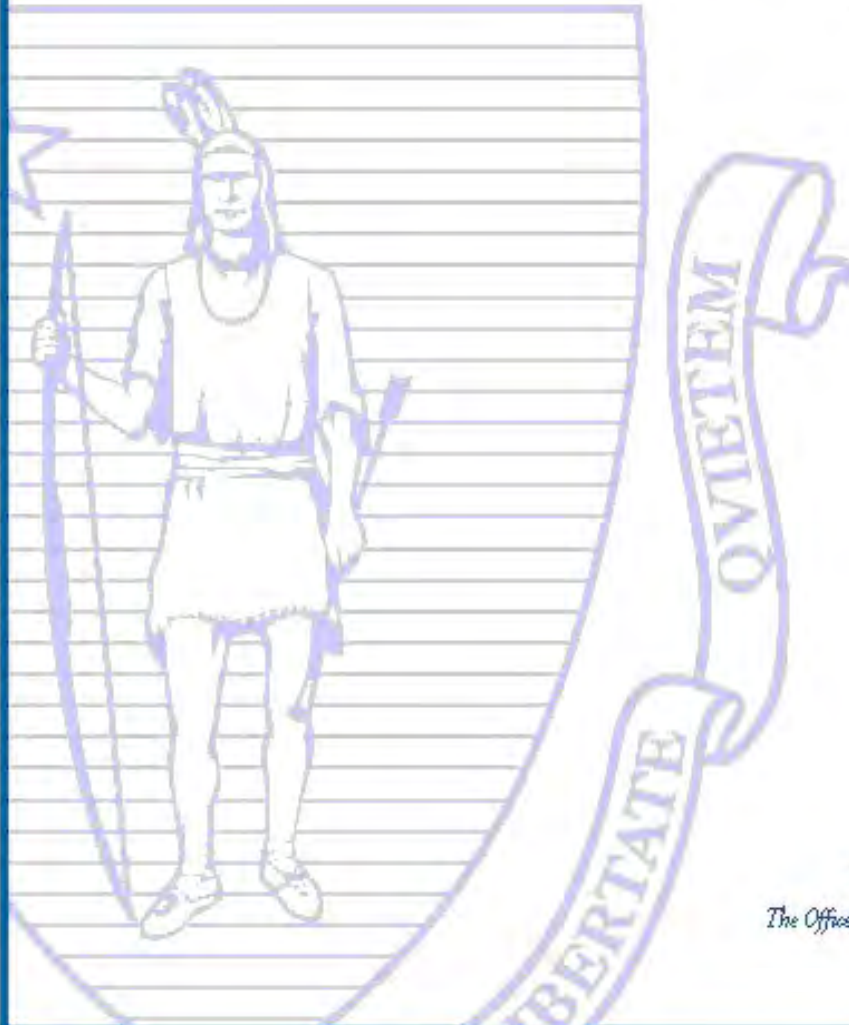
Springfield
Public Schools
Technical Report

data driven
   standards based
learner centered

QVIETEM

LIBERTATE

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 EMAC also voted to remove the District from 'Watch' status.

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Executive Summary

The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA) reexamined the Springfield Public Schools in March 2007. With an average proficiency index of 58 proficiency index (PI) points in 2006 (67 PI points in English language arts and 49 PI points in math), the district is considered a 'Very Low' performing school system based on the Department of Education's rating system (found in Appendix A of this report), with achievement well below the state average. Slightly more than one-fourth of Springfield's students scored at or above the proficiency standard on the 2006 administration of the MCAS tests.

District Overview

The city of Springfield, located on the Connecticut River, is the county seat in Hampden County in southwestern Massachusetts. Noted for its fame as the birthplace of basketball, the city developed as a center of manufacturing, taking advantage of the Connecticut River for transportation and water resources. For several decades the economy of the region has suffered as manufacturing in New England has declined. The largest sources of employment in the city are health care and social assistance, manufacturing, and retail trade. The city has a Mayor-Council form of municipal government. A fiscal crisis in 2004 prompted the city to seek financial assistance from the state; a state-legislated Finance Control Board now manages city finances.

According to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR), Springfield had a median family income of $36,285 in 1999, compared to the statewide median family income of $63,706, ranking it 345 out of the 351 cities and towns in the commonwealth. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the town had a total population of 152,082 with a population of 34,950 school-age children, or 23 percent of the total. Of the total households in Springfield, 38 percent were households with children under 18 years of age, and 25 percent were households with individuals age 65 years or older. Fifty percent of the housing stock is renter occupied. Fifteen 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 Springfield Public Schools had a total enrollment of 25,206. The demographic composition in the district

was: 50.8 percent Hispanic, 25.4 percent African-American, 17.6 percent White, 4.0 percent multi-race, non-Hispanic, 2.0 percent Asian, 0.1 percent Native American; 20.5 percent special education, 76.2 percent low income, 20.3 percent first language not English, and 13.7 percent limited English proficient (LEP). Ninety-one percent of school-age children in Springfield attended public schools. The district offers school choice, and 22 students from other school districts attended the Springfield schools in 2005-2006. A total of 2,741 Springfield students attended public schools outside the district, including 2,056 students who attended charter schools.

The district has 44 schools serving grades pre-kindergarten through 12, including 32 elementary schools serving grades pre-kindergarten through 8, six middle schools serving grades 6 through 8, one middle/high school serving grades 6 through 12, and five high schools serving grades 9 through 12. The district has a seven-member school committee, a superintendent, and five assistant superintendents.

In FY 2006, Springfield's per pupil expenditure (preliminary), based on appropriations from all funds, was $11,420, compared to $11,196 statewide, ranking it 118 out of 325 of 328 school districts reporting data. The district did not meet the state net school spending requirement in either FY 2004 or FY 2006, but the district did exceed it in FY 2005. From FY 2004 to FY 2006, net school spending increased from $232,735,849 to $243,004,829; Chapter 70 aid increased from $208,406,858 to $225,364,023; the required local contribution increased from $26,150,281 to $28,100,362; and the foundation enrollment decreased from 28,669 to 28,412. Chapter 70 aid as a percentage of actual net school spending increased from 90 to 93 percent over this period. From FY 2004 to FY 2005, total curriculum and instruction expenditures as a percentage of total net school spending decreased from 57 to 56 percent.

Context

School districts examined by the Massachusetts Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA) are placed in 'Watch' status if the EQA examination reveals several areas of poor or unsatisfactory performance. All 'Watch' districts are monitored by the EQA and its staff. In addition, districts may be placed in 'Watch' status if they were referred to the Board of Education for a "declaration of underperformance" but the board declined to make that

determination. For the next one to two years, an experienced and trained senior EQA examiner monitors a district in 'Watch' status. After a reexamination by the EQA, either the district is removed from 'Watch' status or an EQA report is forwarded to the Board of Education with a recommendation to declare the district underperforming. Underperforming districts receive additional support and services from the state to improve student achievement.

The EQA first examined the Springfield Public Schools in April 2004, and the district was subsequently placed in 'Watch' status. The district was monitored by an EQA examiner, Louis Perullo, and reexamined by a team of EQA examiners in March 2007. This reexamination report is the conclusion of the 'Watch' process, the purpose of which is to assess the progress the district has made since the prior examination.

In July 2004, the Massachusetts General Court created a state-run Finance Control Board to respond to Springfield's severe financial crisis. The legislation provided the city a loan of $52 million to be repaid with future tax receipts. The state's control board still has responsibility for making all financial decisions for the city, including the school department.

The control board's initiatives included addressing the teacher contract. It eliminated step increases and only allowed cost of living increases, and gave the superintendent the authority to assign staff according to the needs of the students. As a result of the protracted and lengthy contract negotiations, many teachers left the district. During the 2004-2006 reexamination period, 1,300 new teachers were hired in the district. In addition, 65 percent of the principals in the 2005-2006 school year had served as principals in their respective schools for less than three years. This, along with the hiring of 1,300 new teachers, contributed to concerns regarding classroom management. While the district has a mentoring program, there are not enough mentors available for every new teacher.

The superintendent and staff are committed to improving student achievement and have instituted many new initiatives. The control board allocated funds for creating and filling the position of chief academic officer. The district also hired four curriculum mangers and has organized a complete review and rewriting of the district's curricula. In an attempt to guarantee horizontal alignment of the curricula, this group designed a plan for the development of day-to-day lesson plans at all levels.

District leaders have developed and implemented programs to improve student attendance, and while some gains have been made student attendance continues to be a serious problem. Interviewees said that some of these gains could be attributable to boundary changes that resulted in the assignment of students to neighborhood schools.

The lack of improvement in student achievement since the initial EQA examination continues to be a concern, but the superintendent said that the district now needs time to see if the many new initiatives that have been successfully put into place will make a difference.

The EQA Reexamination Process

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

From March 5-8, 2007, the EQA conducted an independent reexamination of the Springfield Public Schools for the period 2004-2006, with a primary focus on 2006. This reexamination was based on the EQA's six major standards of inquiry that address the quality of educational management, which are: 1) Leadership, Governance, and Communication; 2) Curriculum and Instruction; 3) Assessment and Program Evaluation; 4) Human Resource Management and Professional Development; 5) Access, Participation, and Student Academic Support; and 6) Financial and Asset Management Effectiveness and Efficiency. The report is based on the source documents, correspondence sent prior to the on-site visit, interviews with the representatives from the school committee, the district leadership team, school administrators, and teachers, and additional documents submitted while in the district. The report does not consider documents, revised data, or comments that may have surfaced after the on-site visit.

For the period under reexamination, 2004-2006, this report finds Springfield to be a 'Very Low' performing school district with an average proficiency index of 58 proficiency index (PI) points, marked by student achievement that was 'Low' in English language arts (ELA) and 'Very Low' in math on the 2004-2006 MCAS tests. Over this period, student performance declined by two PI

points in ELA and was flat in math, which widened the district's average proficiency gap by two percent.

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

Summary of Analysis of MCAS Student Achievement Data

Are all eligible students participating in required state assessments?

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

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

On average, slightly more than one-fourth of all students in Springfield attained proficiency on the 2006 MCAS tests, considerably less than that statewide. Roughly one-third of Springfield students attained proficiency in English language arts (ELA), and less than one-fifth of Springfield students attained proficiency in math and in science and technology/engineering (STE). Eighty-six percent of the Class of 2006 attained a Competency Determination.

- Springfield's average proficiency index (API) on the MCAS tests in 2006 was 58 proficiency index (PI) points, 20 PI points less than that statewide. Springfield's average proficiency gap, the difference between its API and the target of 100, in 2006 was 42 PI points.

- In 2006, Springfield's proficiency gap in ELA was 33 PI points, 17 PI points wider than the state's average proficiency gap in ELA. This gap would require an average improvement in performance of more than four PI points annually to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP). Springfield's proficiency gap in math was 51 PI points in 2006, 23 PI points wider than the state's average proficiency gap in math. This gap would require an average improvement of more than six PI points per year to achieve AYP. Springfield's proficiency gap in STE was 48 PI points, 19 PI points wider than that statewide.

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

Between 2003 and 2006, Springfield's MCAS performance showed slight improvement overall and in ELA, math, and STE. However, the gains made in performance overall and in ELA and

math occurred between 2003 and 2004, and performance overall and in ELA subsequently declined from 2004 to 2006, and math performance was flat.

- The percentage of students scoring in the 'Advanced' and 'Proficient' categories rose by one percentage point between 2003 and 2006, while the percentage of students in the 'Warning/Failing' category decreased by three percentage points. The average proficiency gap in Springfield narrowed from 47 PI points in 2003 to 44 PI points in 2006. This resulted in an improvement rate, or a closing of the proficiency gap, of five percent.

- Over the three-year period 2003-2006, ELA performance in Springfield showed slight improvement, at an average of approximately one-third PI point annually. This resulted in an improvement rate of three percent, a rate lower than that required to meet AYP.

- Math performance in Springfield also showed slight improvement, at an average of one PI point annually. This resulted in an improvement rate of nearly six percent, also a rate lower than that required to meet AYP.

- Although the percentage of Springfield students attaining proficiency in STE was the same in 2004 and 2006, performance in STE improved at an average of two PI points annually over the two-year period. This resulted in an improvement rate of eight percent.

Do MCAS test results vary among subgroups of students?

MCAS performance in 2006 varied substantially among subgroups of Springfield students. Of the 10 measurable subgroups in Springfield in 2006, the gap in performance between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups was 34 PI points in ELA (White students, limited English proficient students, respectively) and 32 PI points in math (White students, students with disabilities, respectively).

- The proficiency gaps in Springfield in 2006 in both ELA and math were wider than the district average for students with disabilities, limited English proficient (LEP) students, Hispanic students, and low-income students (those participating in the free or reduced-cost lunch program). Less than one-quarter of the students in these subgroups attained proficiency. One-tenth or less of students with disabilities and LEP students attained proficiency, and roughly one-fifth of Hispanic and low-income students did so.

- The proficiency gaps in ELA and math were narrower than the district average for regular education students, White students, and non low-income students. Less than one-half of White and non low-income students attained proficiency, and roughly one-third of regular education students did so.

- The proficiency gap for male students was wider than the district average in ELA but narrower in math, while the proficiency gaps for African-American students and female students were wider than the district average in math but narrower in ELA. Roughly one-fourth of the students in each of these subgroups attained proficiency.

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

In Springfield, the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in ELA narrowed from 39 PI points in 2003 to 32 PI points in 2006, and the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in math narrowed from 34 PI points in 2003 to 32 PI points in 2006.

- All student subgroups in Springfield except non low-income students, White students, and African-American students had improved performance in ELA between 2003 and 2006, although the pattern of change varied among subgroups. The most improved subgroup in ELA was limited English proficient students.

- In math, all subgroups in Springfield showed improved performance between 2003 and 2006. The most improved subgroup in math was Hispanic students.

Standard Summaries

Leadership, Governance, and Communication

The superintendent and the school committee of the Springfield Public Schools have adopted a Mission and Goals 2005-2008 statement, subtitled "Culture of Achievement," that established a system-wide goal of maximizing opportunities to learn so that all students are able attain the state learning standards and that created a systemic focus on the improvement of student achievement. The mission of the district is "To build a Culture of Achievement in all schools and all classrooms that ensures the delivery of educational experiences in which all learners [students and adults] achieve success." The three goals established to pursue this mission are to maximize

the performance of all student learners in the Springfield Public Schools, to maximize the performance and productivity of all adult learners (teachers, administrators, and other staff) in the Springfield Public Schools, and to maximize the quality and delivery of support systems for student and adult learning. Within the context of high staff turnover and financial constraints, the superintendent has continued to implement timely and appropriate activities to address the indicators on which the district was rated 'Poor' or 'Unsatisfactory' in the initial EQA review.

The Corrective Action Plan 2007-2010, School Improvement Plans, and individual annual performance evaluations validate the focus on improved student achievement, although the Corrective Action Plan needs to be more comprehensive and the superintendent and his team are working to achieve this. Administrators, school committee members, principals and teachers all said that "getting all students to proficiency" was their highest priority goal. The district implemented some programs to improve student MCAS performance. These included the establishment of a Learning Center. The 2006-2008 goal of the Learning Center focused on developing a systemic protocol for teachers and administrators to develop, submit, and access lesson plans that are rigorous and that will lead to increased student learning.

The superintendent and the school committee, through the district's mission and goals, seek to maximize the performance of all students. By developing a systematic approach for documenting, managing, and measuring all work processes, the district has enhanced the quality and delivery of support systems. School Improvement Plans included professional development strategies to meet the instructional needs of students that shared a common focus on classroom management. Teachers perceived a need for professional development in this because of the high teacher turnover and the many new hires in the district. A new teacher's contract has given authority to principals to assign staff within their buildings without regard to seniority, and the needs of the students are the top priority. The superintendent may assign, transfer, or reassign teachers, voluntarily or involuntarily, to a position and to a school according to the operational needs of the school district and the educational needs of the students. The district has established practices to maintain stability of staff, decrease staff absences, ensure the fidelity of implementation of the written curriculum in the classroom, and improve instruction.

Curriculum and Instruction

During the period under review, the district created positions and allocated funds for curriculum development and oversight in an effort to improve student achievement. Within a short timeframe, administrators and teachers reviewed existing curricula to determine areas of need, and a plan of delivery dates and deliverables then drove curriculum development. At the same time, the district recruited and trained instructional leadership specialists who, as classroom teachers, had demonstrated improved student achievement in their own classrooms. These teacher specialists, armed with data from formative assessments, supported principals as they oversaw curriculum implementation in their buildings. However, the formative assessment data were limited in that the district did not disaggregate the data by subgroup.

The district was moving to a curriculum that provided teachers with day-to-day lesson plans because the content of teacher lessons varied from classroom to classroom and from school to school. These plans were in place at the elementary level for the 2006-2007 school year, were under development for the middle schools at the time of the EQA review, and were in the planning stages for the high schools. These developments were so recent that data were not available to determine whether the efforts led to improved student achievement.

Individual School Improvement Plans, based on the review of student achievement data, drove professional development in buildings on appropriate instructional strategies. The central office, through documents such as the Reading Plan and the Mathematics and Science Plan and through the day-by-day lesson plans, provided guidance concerning the expected elements of an instructionally sound lesson, whether in English language arts, math, or science. However, EQA examiners found limited evidence of strong instructional practices during classroom observations.

Assessment and Program Evaluation

Since the start of the 2004-2005 school year, the Springfield Public Schools made great strides in the use of student assessment results, local benchmarks, and the integration of daily and/or periodic assessment into the classroom. Following district guidelines and requirements, teachers used placement tests, such as the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), or other testing to assign students to groups, courses, or support programs.

To measure student progress on the curriculum taught and to determine student readiness for state tests, staff conducted periodic assessments throughout the year. The DRA, district formative assessments (DFAs), textbook or teacher-developed midyear and end-of-year tests, routine quizzes, tests, and exams, and rubric evaluations of student writing were examples of the assessments that teachers administered.

Teachers, collaborative professional development teachers (CPDTs), and administrators attended monthly or bimonthly extended day meetings to analyze state test results and classroom performance data to determine whether to make changes in the curriculum taught, in the instructional approaches used to teach the curriculum, and in the placement/grouping of students. Many schools also used team meetings and departmental meetings for this purpose.

During interviews, staff reported that all administrators and some teachers had the skills to use data analysis tools, such as TestWiz and Pearson Inform, which provided valuable information to review during extended day meetings. Central office staff shared that administrators and teachers were not yet using all of the features (such as disaggregation or other filtering) of the Inform software.

To assess instructional practices, administrators conducted "learning walks" in which they observed lessons for fidelity of implementation of the content, the model of instruction, and an appropriate learning environment. Using the district-developed learning walk forms, they provided feedback to teachers on the strengths and weaknesses of the lesson and recommended ways that the teacher could improve their instruction.

The EQA team found that classroom assessment practices and expectations aligned with the state curriculum and the district used analysis of assessment results to improve curriculum and instruction. District analyses of assessment results to improve support programs and services, professional development, and purchasing were less well developed. For example, the district reported no regular, systematic assessment of the English language learners program or the special education program to inform improvements to these programs. Starting with the 2006-2007 school year, special education staff used Easy IEP to input special education data to comply with statutory requirements, but not to assess the special education program.

Suggestions and requests for professional development and materials to purchase came from school-centered decision-making (SCDM) teams, according to administrators and teachers. Suggestions also came anecdotally from extended day meetings, from recurring themes observed in learning walks, and from director's suggestions. The EQA team found no regular, systematic assessment of the needs for professional development and purchasing in the district. These decisions appeared to be based more on perceived need or reaction rather than an analysis of assessment results.

For most of the period under reexamination, from fall 2004 through spring 2006, the Springfield Public Schools usually made modifications to district programs and services because of mandated external evaluations and not because of a systematic approach to program evaluation within the district. For example, during interviews central office administrators reported several changes made in the district's special education department as a result of the Coordinated Program Review (CPR) by the Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE) followed by an adequate yearly progress mid-cycle CPR. In addition, the district's special education department has contracted out for a program review for internal monitoring and program evaluation annually since 2003. As a result of these outside reviews, the special education department provided trainings on compliance issues, assessment practices, collaborative and inclusionary teaching practices and models, and best practices in accessing the general education curriculum for students with disabilities.

Program evaluation began to change after the superintendent created the position of chief academic officer. The chief academic officer organized the effort to improve all academic programs by completing an initial internal audit, exclusive of the district's science curriculum. As of January 2007, district staff partially completed the development or revision of instructional guides, pacing guides, learning-walk guides, unit plans, and daily lesson plans for some subjects at some grade levels, but much work remained. Assessment and Evaluation Concepts, Inc. completed an outside evaluation of the district's science program including a curriculum alignment study and a critique of the district's science assessments. Staff acknowledged that much work remained as they moved toward a more consistent academic program to meet all student needs across the district.

Human Resource Management and Professional Development

While the principals' evaluations during the reexamination period did not meet the requirement of yearly evaluations mandated by Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 38, the Springfield Public Schools held principals accountable for student achievement goals. The superintendent required principals and schools to analyze MCAS test results and develop measurable performance goals. The superintendent incorporated the performance goals into the principals' evaluation documents and made salary adjustments and principal assignments based on meeting or exceeding the performance goals.

The district's evaluation procedure for teachers, central office administrators, and assistant principals did not meet the requirements of the Education Reform Act. The teacher evaluation document lacked some components of the Principles of Effective Teaching. A review of teacher personnel files revealed that 36 percent had no evaluation on file. The district negotiated a new teacher evaluation instrument that interviewees indicated met all the requirements of M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 38. For 2004-2005 and 2005-2006, EQA examiners found no evaluations for central office administrators or for assistant principals.

During 2004-2006, the aggregate student assessment data drove professional development activities. For teachers, the district offered focused content-based professional development for the two-day districtwide program and the four-day school-based programs. In addition, the district offered courses to specific groups of staff such as a district-based licensure program and programs to license and support building administrators.

The Springfield Public Schools introduced Pearson Inform, a data analysis and decision support tool, to district and school administrators in May 2006. Training was mandatory for principals and instructional specialists. Teachers, in compliance with the teacher's contract, were offered Pearson Inform training during the extended day professional development program during the 2006-2007 academic year. The district also offered the staff a few formal data analysis courses but did not require mandatory participation.

During the summer of 2005, the district required all principals and other administrators to undergo training in district curriculum accommodation planning in order to present District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) information to building staff. Principals presented

and discussed the DCAP with all teachers, paraprofessionals, and nurses; and the district required all staff to acknowledge receipt of a copy of the DCAP document.

Access, Participation, and Student Academic Support

Both student and staff attendance were serious issues in the Springfield Public Schools during the period under reexamination. Many students were chronically absent in 2005-2006, and teachers were absent over 12 days, on average. In response to the student attendance issue, the district revised and strengthened the student attendance policy and used home/school attendance specialists and principals to monitor student attendance at all schools. The district also worked with the district court to modify the attendance behavior of students who were chronically absent. Regarding teacher attendance, the new teacher contract included a promotional incentive related to attendance; teachers are no longer eligible for higher-level teaching positions without meeting certain attendance benchmarks. Although the district collected and reviewed student and staff attendance data, it did not correlate student and staff attendance with student achievement. However, the district was in the process of creating a database that could measure, among other things, the relationship between staff attendance and student achievement. District leaders recognized attendance, behavior, and dropouts as serious problems and put policies and procedures in place to address them. Aside from attendance, however, the management of behavior and potential dropouts occurred mostly at individual school sites.

To support teachers with strategies to assist regular education students in attaining academic success, the district implemented initiatives to create a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) and an enhanced individual Student Success Plan. All staff received these documents as well as training in how to develop and utilize Student Success Plans. The district also had service teams and student teacher assistant teams (STATs) embedded in schools to deal with any issue, social or academic, that affected student success.

The percentage of grade 4 students who attained proficiency in 2005-2006, both in the aggregate and for most subgroups, was below the state average in spite of many early intervention efforts to improve their scores. The district had implemented a reading plan in 2002 and focused on phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency.

The district offered a gifted and talented program at a middle school during the period under reexamination and provided honors and Advanced Placement (AP) courses at the high schools. Although only three high schools offered AP courses, plans were in place to expand these offerings to more high schools in 2007-2008. The district had also expanded the International Baccalaureate program to all school levels during the period under reexamination. The district collected and disaggregated higher-level class enrollment data and created a report that predicted future AP course enrollments. The district also provided academic support programs for students, such as tutoring and summer school, and received a number of grants to provide academic support services, including academic support services for limited English proficient (LEP) students.

The district had substantial transience during the period under reexamination. Many students moved into, out of, or within the district. According to Department of Education (DOE) enrollment data, the district had over 1,500 fewer students enrolled in grade 12 in 2006 than were enrolled four years earlier in grade 9. Hundreds of students dropped out and hundreds were retained. The non-adjusted DOE four-year cohort dropout rate in the district for 2006 was approximately 33 percent and the graduation rate was approximately 51 percent. Most subgroups had higher dropout rates and lower graduation rates than did students in the aggregate. Many students lived in group homes within and outside of the district. The district provided educational services to approximately 1,100 homeless students and approximately 250 students who lived in foster homes, and the Department of Social Services (DSS) and the Department of Youth Services (DYS) placed a number of students in the district. The district had procedures and practices in place to assess and place transitioning students.

Financial and Asset Management Effectiveness and Efficiency

Rather than reexamine the district only on those 2003 indicators on which the district was rated 'Poor' or 'Unsatisfactory,' the EQA conducted a full examination of the district on Standard VI covering the period 2004-2006. The EQA examiners gave the Springfield Public Schools an overall rating of 'Needs Improvement' on this standard. They rated the district as 'Satisfactory' on six and 'Needs Improvement' on seven of the thirteen performance indicators in this standard.

The budget process during the period under reexamination involved all stakeholders. The Finance Control Board established all financial policies and procedures and approved all financial decisions. The teachers' contract determined staffing levels. Each school received from $75 to $100 per student for the purchase of supplies and materials. The school-centered decision-making (SCDM) team decided on all purchases. Requisitions required the signature of the school principal as well as a representative of the SCDM team. Title I requisitions also required an explanation stating the relationship of the purchase to student achievement. Budget documents presented a clear, complete, and comprehensive picture of revenues and expenditures, and the district's Legacy software supported the city software and the integration of all financial data. The school committee, administrators, and the Finance Control Board received timely financial reports. The school system enhanced financial reports with Excel and Lotus spreadsheets.

The school district met the minimum required net school spending in only one year (FY 2005) of the period under reexamination, and the budget did not provide adequate financial resources for this urban school system. The city experienced severe financial problems during these years and before, which required the establishment of a five-member Finance Control Board. This board included the mayor, the president of the city council, and three gubernatorial appointees. The five-member board appointed an executive director and a staff to handle day-to-day decisions. Since its inception July 1, 2004, the board met approximately 30 times. During the period under reexamination, the city did not attempt an operational override since the last such action in 1989 resulted in an erosion of the city tax base. Of the approximately 25,000 students enrolled, 76 percent qualified for the free or reduced-cost lunch program, and the district had significant numbers of English language learners and minority students. Attendance, dropouts, and retentions required additional financial support.

The city engaged in significant efforts and initiatives to upgrade school buildings that had suffered neglect of maintenance for many years, and the district put in place a formal preventative maintenance program to maximize and prolong the efficient and effective use of all schools. In 2005, the city centralized the maintenance of school buildings into the Department of Parks, Buildings, and Recreational Management. The department implemented procedures that focused on correcting building codes and cleanliness. The department also implemented a web-

based work order system that enabled schools to post online maintenance requests as needed and track the status of their work order requests on a daily basis. Springfield has committed in excess of $7 million to the maintenance of schools since FY 2005. In FY 2006, the city expended $1,258,932 for school maintenance and $530,753 in extraordinary maintenance. The city also performed an energy audit of all public buildings and developed energy savings projects expected to save $45 million over several years. In an attempt to improve the cleanliness of schools, the district privatized second shift custodians. Although the district made significant efforts to address maintenance and cleanliness issues, not all schools reflected an environment that supported student learning and achievement. Cleanliness, safety, and cramped quarters remain as issues.

The district employed a director of security. His responsibilities included ensuring that safety and security measures were in place at each school, such as locked doors, remote entry, and video cameras, and that the emergency operating procedures (EOP) document was in every school, reviewed and updated periodically by police and fire personnel, and disseminated as necessary. District staff had the responsibility to download the EOP from the district website, and building principals had the responsibility to train new teachers, substitute teachers, and volunteers. The director provided all schools with equipment to make identification badges, and all staff were required to wear badges as mandated by school committee policy. He was available to provide training at the request of principals, usually during the weekly extended day period at each school. Although the district went to great lengths to provide safety and security, not all schools visited by EQA examiners exhibited such efforts.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Achievement

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

Findings:

- On average, slightly more than one-fourth of all students in Springfield attained proficiency on the 2006 MCAS tests, considerably less than that statewide. Roughly one-third of Springfield students attained proficiency in English language arts (ELA), and less than one-fifth of Springfield students attained proficiency in math and in science and technology/engineering (STE). Eighty-six percent of the Class of 2006 attained a Competency Determination.

- Springfield's average proficiency index (API) on the MCAS tests in 2006 was 58 proficiency index (PI) points, 20 PI points less than that statewide. Springfield's average proficiency gap, the difference between its API and the target of 100, in 2006 was 42 PI points.

- In 2006, Springfield's proficiency gap in ELA was 33 PI points, 17 PI points wider than the state's average proficiency gap in ELA. This gap would require an average improvement in performance of more than four PI points annually to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP). Springfield's proficiency gap in math was 51 PI points in 2006, 23 PI points wider than the state's average proficiency gap in math. This gap would require an average improvement of more than six PI points per year to achieve AYP. Springfield's proficiency gap in STE was 48 PI points, 19 PI points wider than that statewide.

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

Percentage of reportable students at each performance level
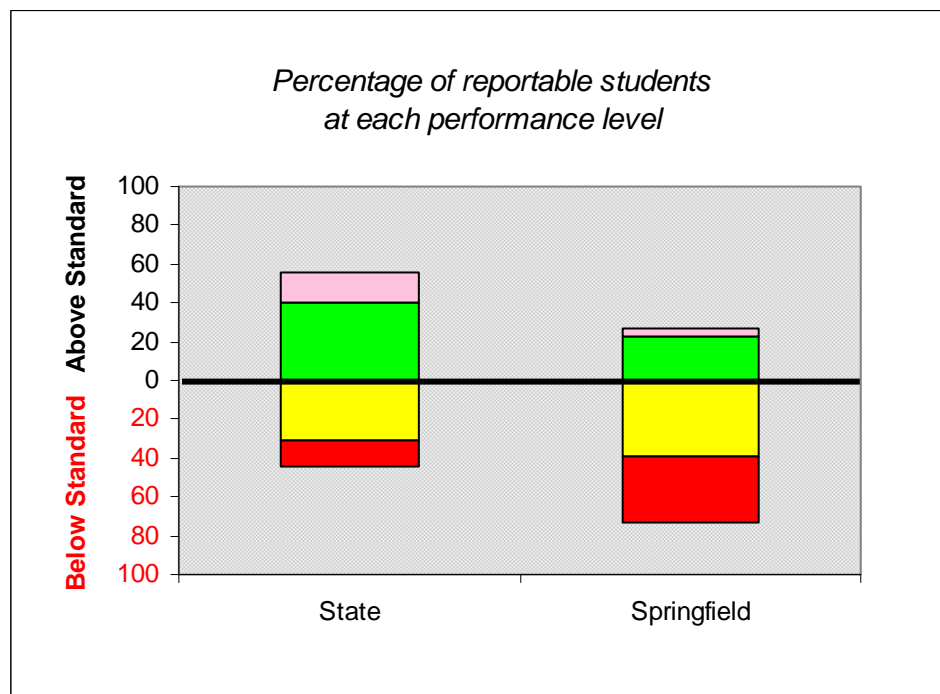
		State	Springfield
▉	Advanced	15	4
▉	Proficient	41	23
▉	Needs Improvement	31	40
▉	Warning/Failing	14	34
	Percent Attaining Proficiency	56	27
	Average Proficiency Index (API)	78.3	58.3

In 2006, 27 percent of Springfield students attained proficiency on the MCAS tests overall, 29 percentage points less than that statewide. Thirty-four percent of Springfield students scored in the 'Warning/Failing' category, 20 percentage points more than that statewide. Springfield's average proficiency index (API) on the MCAS tests in 2006 was 58 proficiency index (PI) points, 20 PI points less than that statewide. Springfield's average proficiency gap in 2006 was 42 PI points.

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

Percentage of reportable students at each performance level
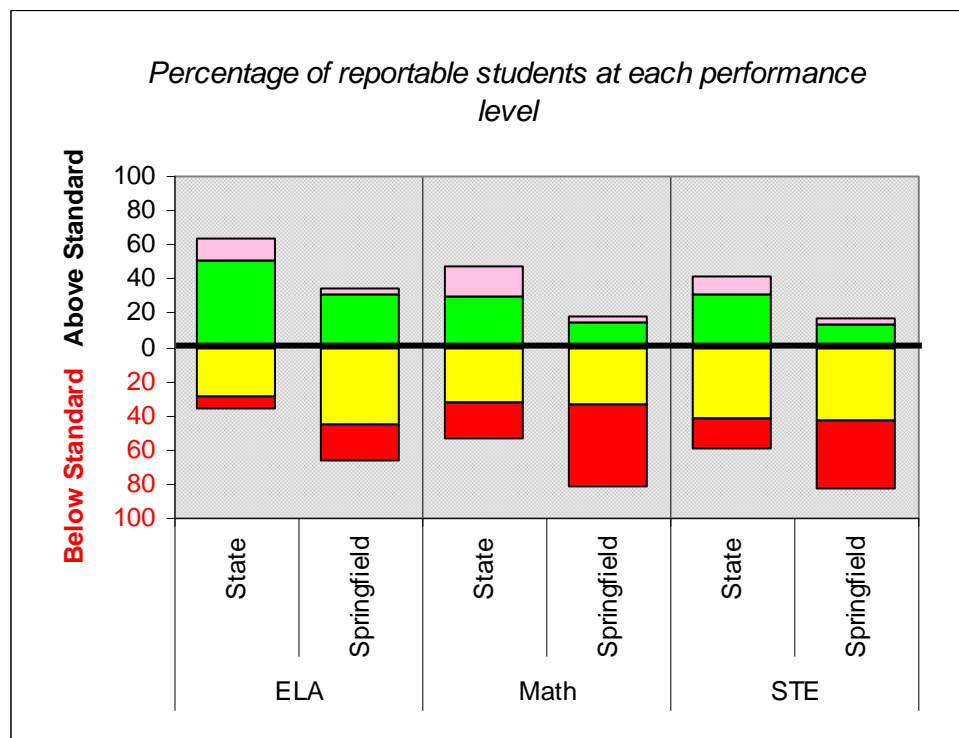
	ELA		Math		STE	
	State	**Springfield**	**State**	**Springfield**	**State**	**Springfield**
Advanced	13	4	17	4	10	3
Proficient	51	31	30	15	31	14
Needs Improvement	29	45	33	34	42	43
Warning/Failing	7	20	20	48	17	40
Percent Attaining Proficiency	64	35	47	19	41	17
Proficiency Index (PI)	84.3	67.4	72.3	49.2	71.4	52.2

In 2006, achievement in English language arts (ELA), math, and science and technology/engineering (STE) was much lower in Springfield than statewide. In Springfield, 35 percent of students attained proficiency in ELA, compared to 64 percent statewide; 19 percent attained proficiency in math, compared to 47 percent statewide; and 17 percent attained proficiency in STE, compared to 41 percent statewide.

Springfield students had stronger performance on the 2006 MCAS tests in ELA than in math and STE. The proficiency index for Springfield students in ELA was 67 PI points; in math, it was 49 PI points; and in STE, it was 52 PI points. These compare to the statewide figures of 84, 72, and 71 PI points, respectively.

The proficiency gap for Springfield students was 33 PI points in ELA, 51 PI points in math, and 48 PI points in STE. These compare to the statewide figures of 16, 28, and 29 PI points, respectively. Springfield's proficiency gaps would require an average annual improvement of approximately four PI points in ELA and more than six PI points in math to meet AYP.

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

Percentage of reportable students at each performance level
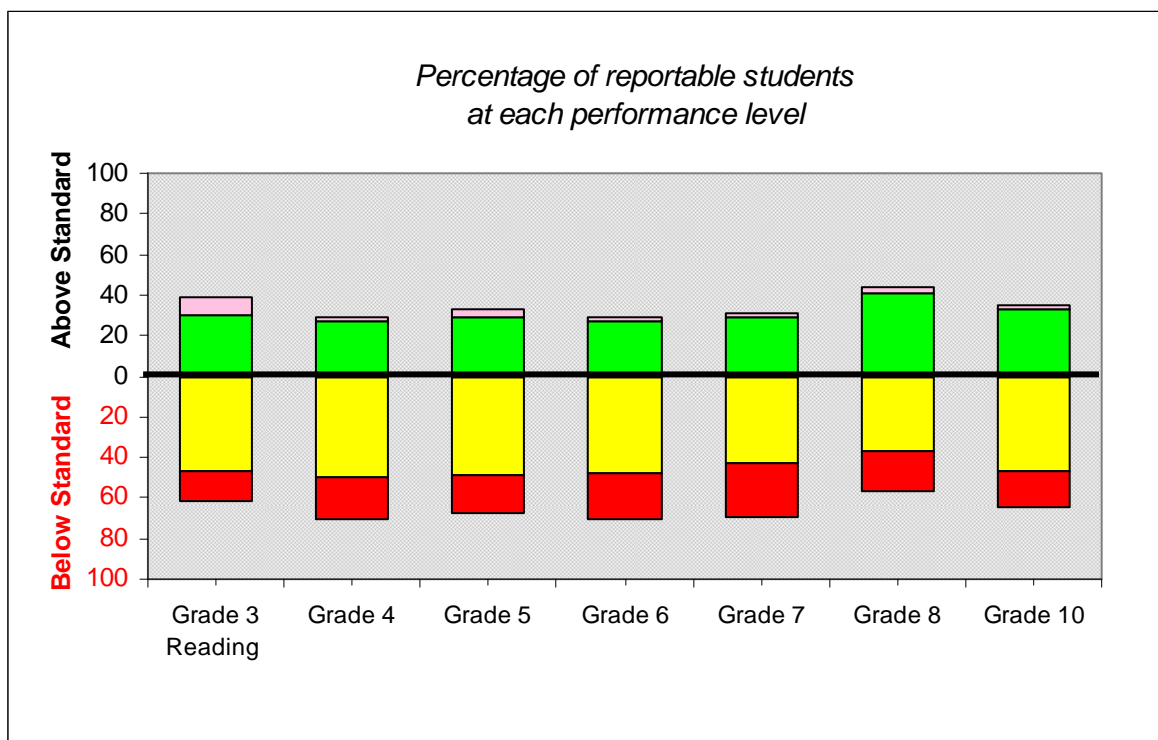
		Grade 3 Reading	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 10
	Advanced	9	2	4	2	2	3	3
	Proficient	30	27	29	27	29	40	33
	Needs Improvement	47	50	49	48	43	37	47
	Warning/Failing	14	20	19	23	27	20	18
Percent Attaining Proficiency		39	29	33	29	31	43	36

The percentage of Springfield students attaining proficiency in 2006 in ELA varied somewhat by grade level, ranging from a low of 29 percent of grade 4 and grade 6 students to a high of 43 percent of grade 8 students.

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

Percentage of reportable students at each performance level
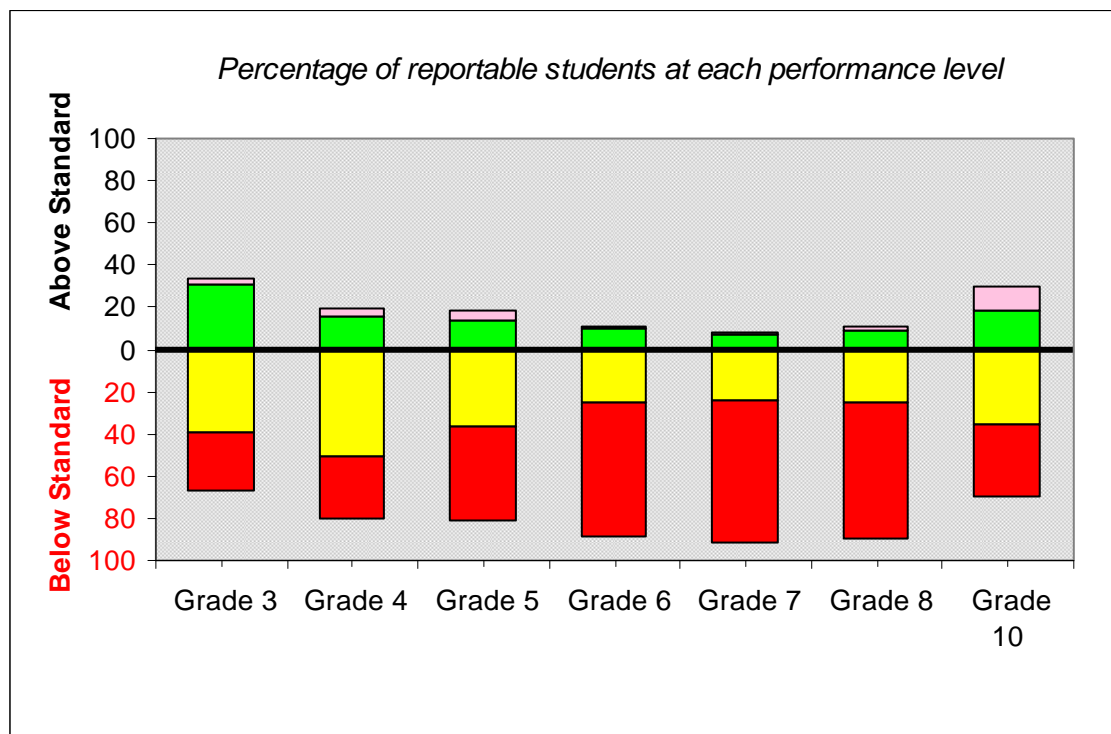
	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 10
Advanced	2	4	5	2	1	2	11
Proficient	31	16	14	9	7	9	19
Needs Improvement	39	51	37	25	24	25	35
Warning/Failing	28	29	44	64	67	64	35
Percent Attaining Proficiency	33	20	19	11	8	11	30

The percentage of Springfield students attaining proficiency in 2006 in math also varied somewhat by grade level, ranging from a low of eight percent of grade 7 students to a high of 33 percent of grade 3 students.

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

Percentage of reportable students at each performance level
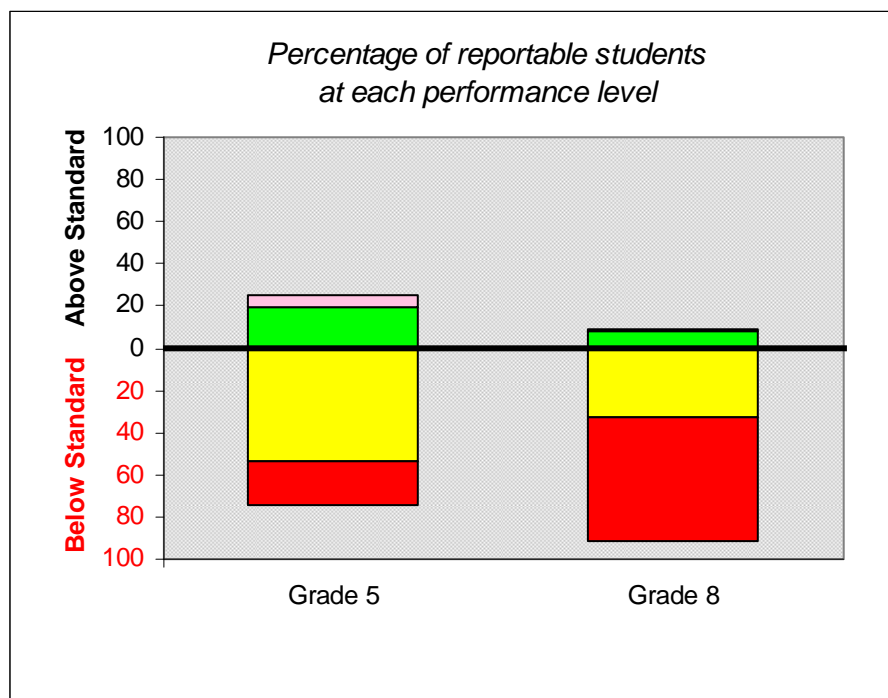
		Grade 5	Grade 8
	Advanced	6	1
	Proficient	20	8
	Needs Improvement	53	33
	Warning/Failing	22	58
	Percent Attaining Proficiency	26	9

In Springfield in 2006, 26 percent of grade 5 students attained proficiency in STE, and only nine percent of grade 8 students did so.

Figure/Table 6: Student MCAS Proficiency Indices, by Grade and Subject, 2006
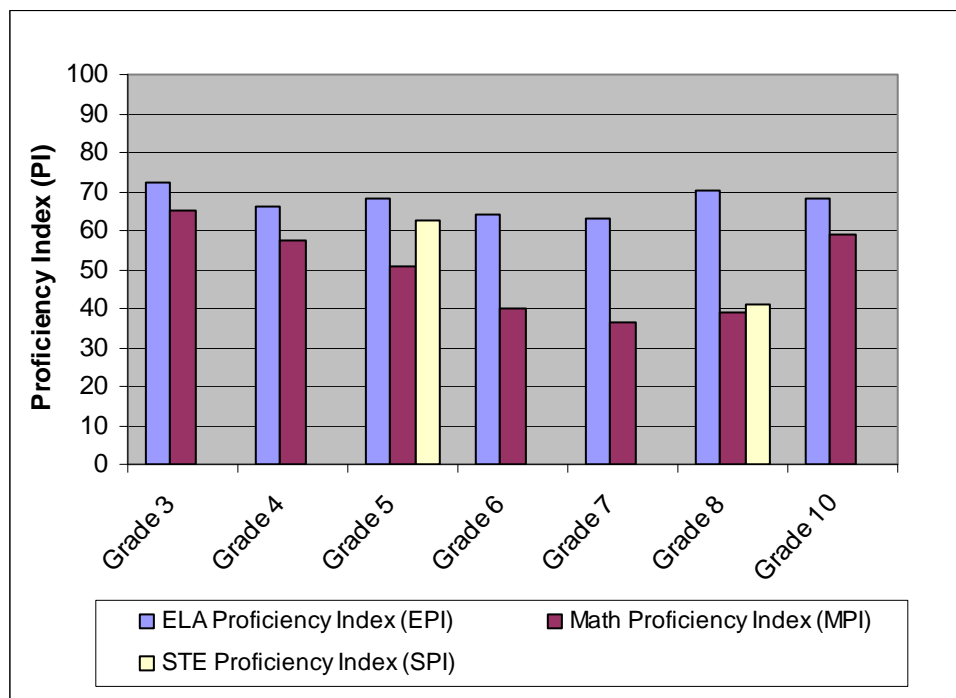
	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 10
ELA Proficiency Index (EPI)	72.4	66.3	68.1	63.9	62.9	70.1	68.4
Math Proficiency Index (MPI)	65.3	57.4	50.7	39.9	36.2	38.9	58.8
STE Proficiency Index (SPI)			62.8			41.2	

Among the grade levels tested, performance in Springfield in both ELA and math was strongest at grade 3 and weakest at grade 7. Springfield's ELA proficiency gap in 2006 ranged from a low of 28 PI points at grade 3 to a high of 37 PI points at grade 7. Springfield's math proficiency gap ranged from a low of 35 PI points at grade 3 to a high of 64 PI points at grade 7. Springfield's STE proficiency gap was 37 PI points at grade 5 and 59 PI points at grade 8.

Figures/Tables 7 A-D: Student MCAS ELA Proficiency Index vs. Math Proficiency Index, by School, 2006

A. Elementary Schools
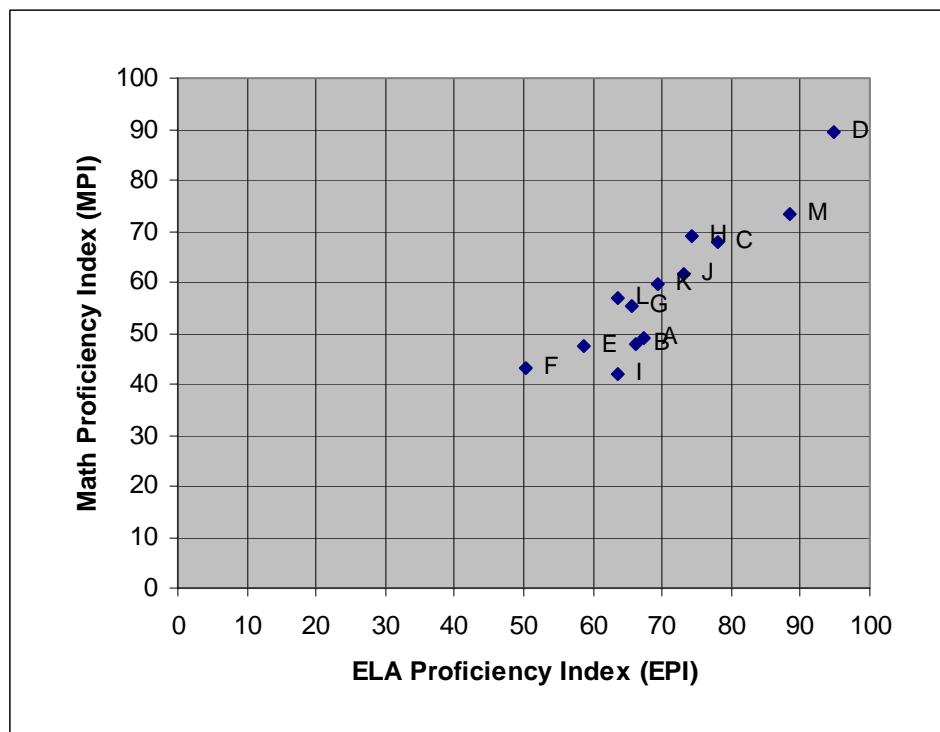
		ELA PI	Math PI	Number of Tests
A	Springfield	67.4	49.2	25,158
B	Alfred G. Zanetti Elem	66.3	48.0	368
C	Alice B. Beal Elementary	77.9	67.8	274
D	Arthur T. Talmadge Elem	94.7	89.3	294
E	Boland Elementary School	58.6	47.6	483
F	Brightwood Elementary	50.3	43.0	353
G	Daniel B. Brunton Elem	65.7	55.3	551
H	Dryden Memorial Elem	74.3	69.2	267
I	Elias Brookings Elem	63.6	42.0	630
J	Frank H. Freedman Elem	73.1	61.6	187
K	Frederick Harris Elem	69.3	59.8	519
L	Gerena Community Elem	63.7	56.8	523
M	Glenwood Elementary	88.4	73.4	376

B. Elementary Schools, continued
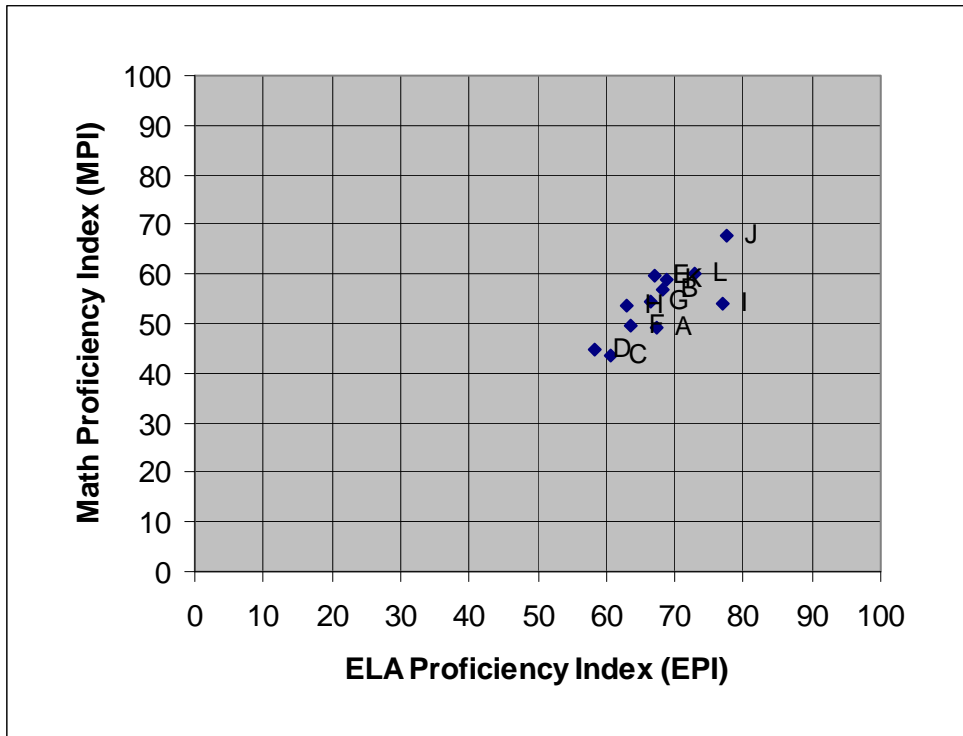
		ELA PI	Math PI	Number of Tests
A	Springfield	67.4	49.2	25,158
B	Glickman Elementary	68.3	56.9	253
C	Hiram L. Dorman Elementary	60.6	43.6	221
D	Homer Street Elementary	58.4	44.8	320
E	Indian Orchard Elementary	67.0	59.5	570
F	Kensington Avenue Elem	63.7	49.7	339
G	Liberty Elementary	66.5	54.6	260
H	Lincoln Elementary	63.1	53.6	352
I	Margaret C. Ells Elementary	76.9	54.2	108
J	Mary M. Lynch Elementary	77.6	67.9	253
K	Mary M. Walsh Elementary	68.8	58.7	431
L	Mary O. Pottenger Elem	72.9	60.2	406

C. Elementary Schools, continued
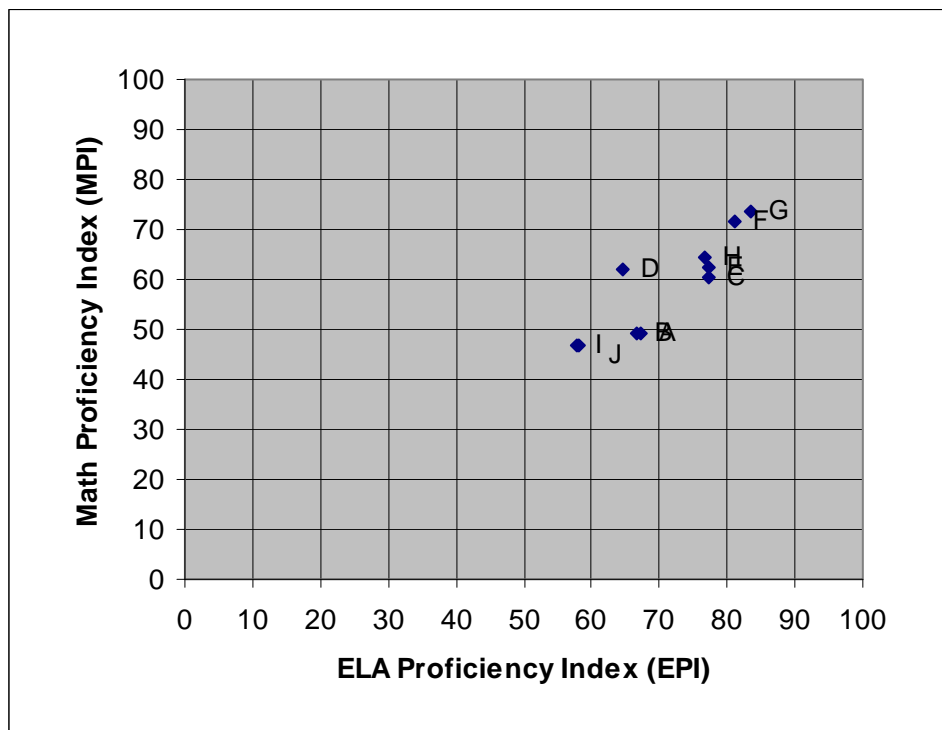
		ELA PI	Math PI	Number of Tests
A	Springfield	67.4	49.2	25,158
B	Milton Bradley Elementary	66.8	49.3	557
C	Rebecca M. Johnson Elem	77.3	60.3	533
D	Samuel Bowles Elementary	64.5	62.2	303
E	Sumner Avenue Elem	77.4	62.6	459
F	Thomas M. Balliet Elem	81.1	71.6	221
G	Warner Elementary	83.6	73.6	249
H	Washington Elementary	76.6	64.3	273
I	White Street Elementary	57.7	47.0	395
J	William N. DeBerry Elem	58.0	46.8	281

Among Springfield's elementary schools, the ELA proficiency gap in 2006 ranged from a low of five PI points at Arthur T. Talmadge Elementary School to a high of 50 PI points at Brightwood Elementary School. Springfield's math proficiency gap ranged from a low of 11 PI points at Arthur T. Talmadge Elementary School to a high of 58 PI points at Elias Brookings Elementary School.

D. Middle and High Schools
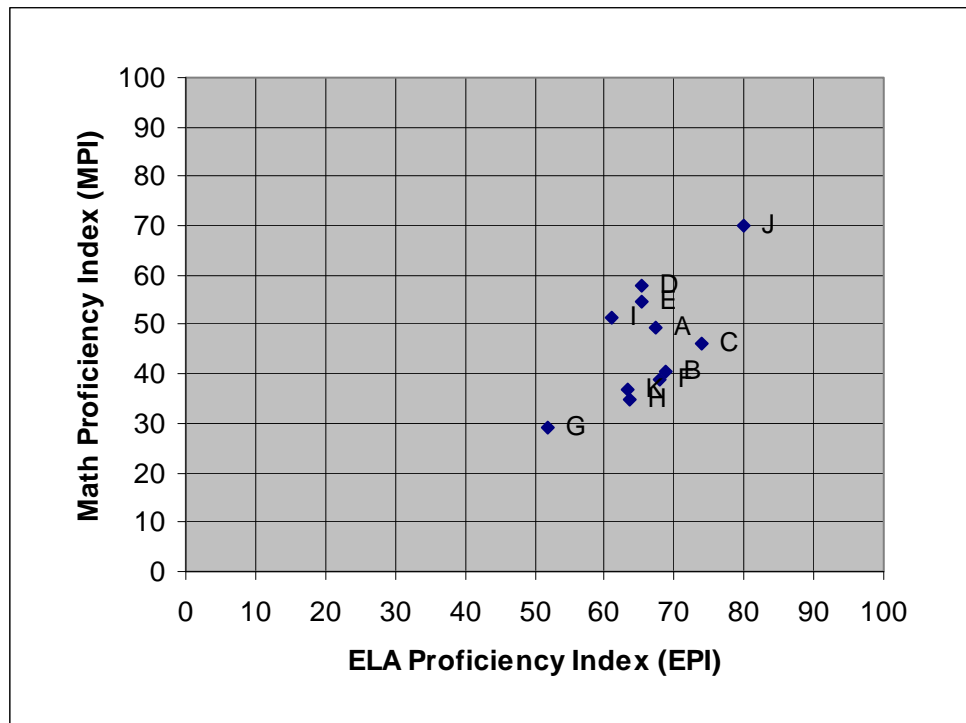
		ELA PI	Math PI	Number of Tests
A	Springfield	67.4	49.2	25,158
B	Chestnut Accelerated Middle	68.9	40.6	2,255
C	Forest Park Middle	73.9	46.0	1,939
D	High School of Commerce	65.2	57.9	627
E	High School of Science Tech	65.4	54.5	702
F	John F. Kennedy Middle	68.0	39.0	1,221
G	John J. Duggan Middle	51.9	29.3	1,385
H	M. Marcus Kiley Middle	63.6	34.8	1,788
I	Putnam Voc Tech High	61.1	51.3	714
J	Springfield Central High	79.9	69.9	806
K	Van Sickle Middle School	63.4	37.0	2,112

Among Springfield's middle and high schools, performance in both ELA and math was strongest at Springfield Central High School and weakest at John J. Duggan Middle School. The ELA proficiency gap in 2006 ranged from a low of 20 PI points at Springfield Central High School to a high of 48 PI points at John J. Duggan Middle School. Springfield's math proficiency gap ranged from a low of 30 PI points at Springfield Central High School to a high of 71 PI points at John J. Duggan Middle School.
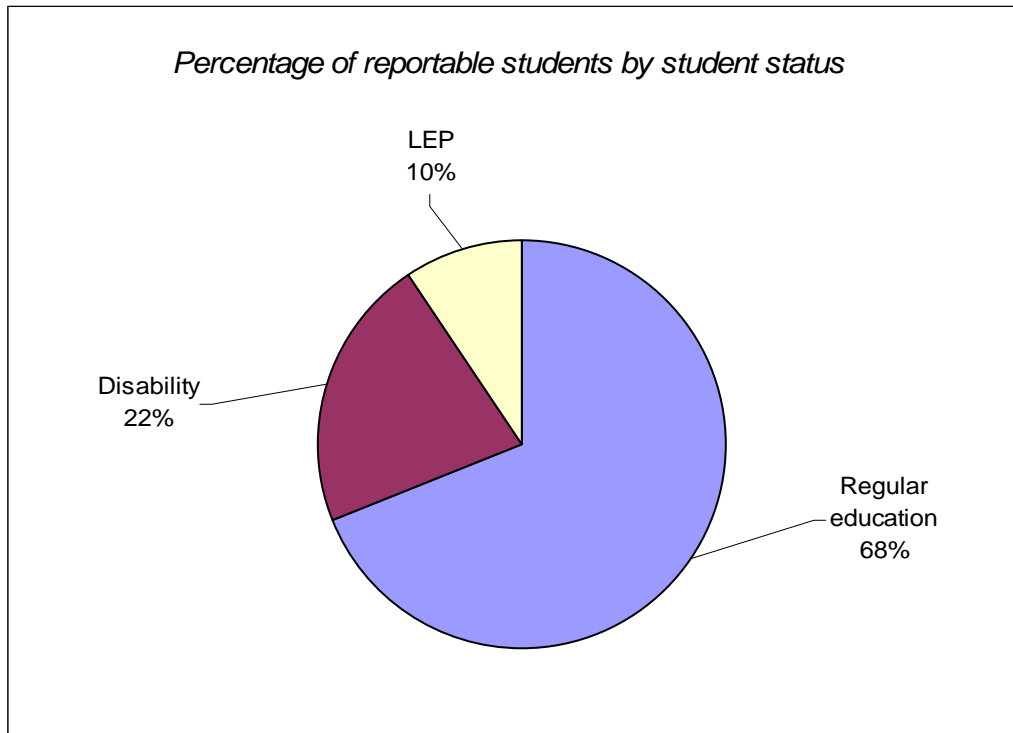
Equity of Achievement

Do MCAS test results vary among subgroups of students?

Findings:

- MCAS performance in 2006 varied substantially among subgroups of Springfield students. Of the 10 measurable subgroups in Springfield in 2006, the gap in performance between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups was 34 PI points in ELA (White students, limited English proficient students, respectively) and 32 PI points in math (White students, students with disabilities, respectively).

- The proficiency gaps in Springfield in 2006 in both ELA and math were wider than the district average for students with disabilities, limited English proficient (LEP) students, Hispanic students, and low-income students (those participating in the free or reduced-cost lunch program). Less than one-quarter of the students in these subgroups attained proficiency. One-tenth or less of students with disabilities and LEP students attained proficiency, and roughly one-fifth of Hispanic and low-income students did so.

- The proficiency gaps in ELA and math were narrower than the district average for regular education students, White students, and non low-income students. Less than one-half of White and non low-income students attained proficiency, and roughly one-third of regular education students did so.

- The proficiency gap for male students was wider than the district average in ELA but narrower in math, while the proficiency gaps for African-American students and female students were wider than the district average in math but narrower in ELA. Roughly one-fourth of the students in each of these subgroups attained proficiency.

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

A.

Percentage of reportable students by student status

- LEP 10%
- Disability 22%
- Regular education 68%

B.

Percentage of reportable students by race/ethnicity

- White 19%
- African-American 28%
- Hispanic 53%

C.

Percentage of reportable students by free or reduced-cost lunch status

FRL/N 18%

FRL/Y 82%
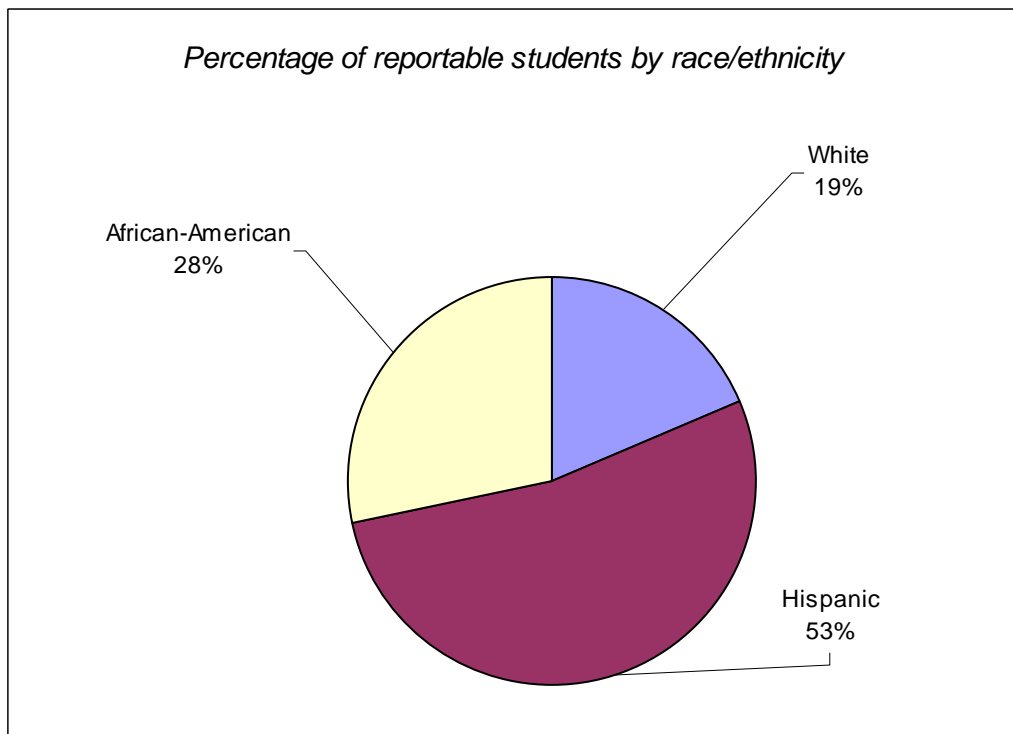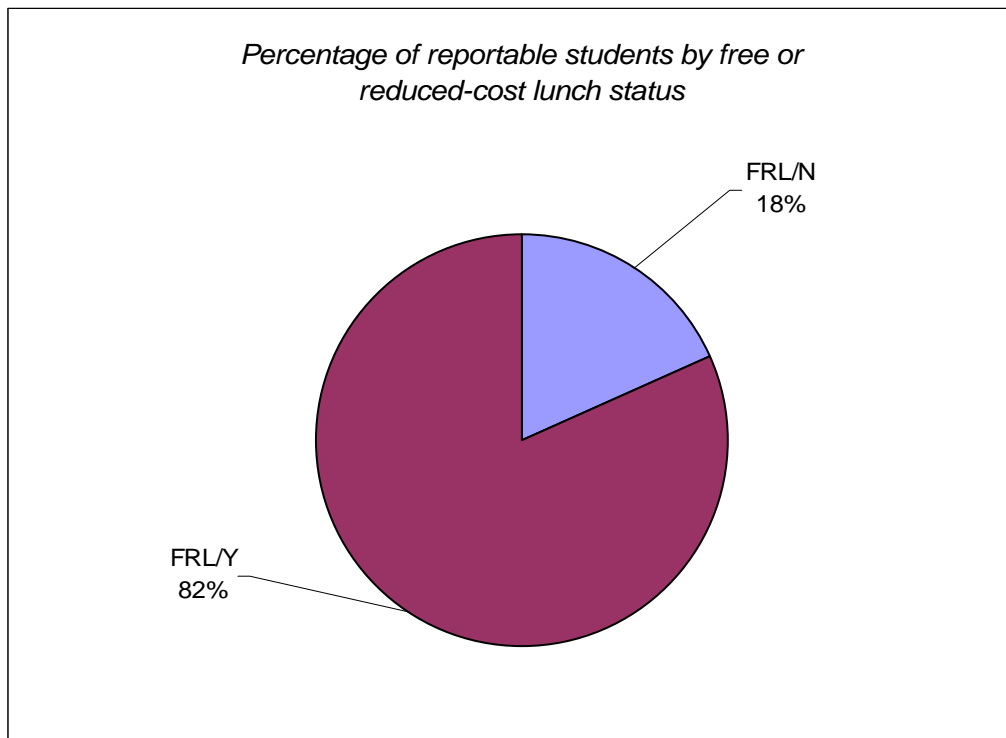
	Subgroup	Number of Students
Student status	Regular education	8,913
	Disability	2,803
	LEP	1,231
Race/ethnicity	White	2,331
	Hispanic	6,654
	African-American	3,575
Free or reduced-cost lunch status	FRL/N	2,391
	FRL/Y	10,556

In Springfield in 2006, 22 percent of the students were students with disabilities and 10 percent were limited English proficient (LEP) students. The majority (53 percent) of the student population was Hispanic; White students and African-American students constituted 19 and 28 percent, respectively, of the student population. Springfield had a high percentage of low-income students (82 percent).

Figure/Table 9: Student MCAS Test Performance, by Student Status Subgroup, 2006
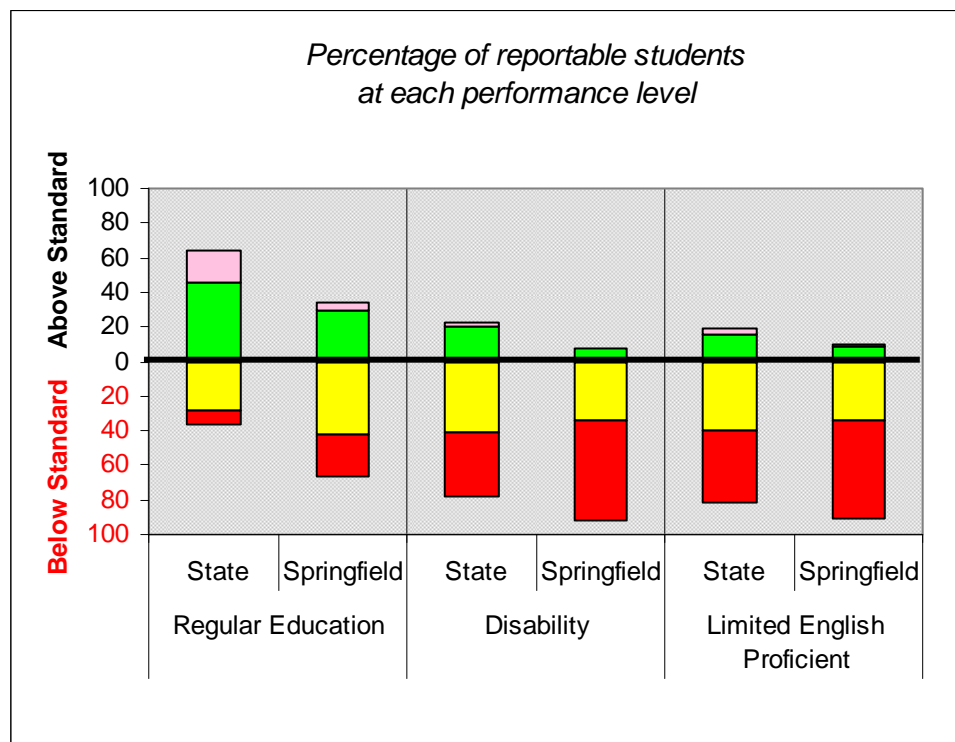
	Regular Education		Disability		Limited English Proficient	
	State	Springfield	State	Springfield	State	Springfield
Advanced	18	5	2	1	3	1
Proficient	46	29	20	7	16	9
Needs Improvement	28	42	41	34	40	34
Warning/Failing	8	24	36	58	42	57
Percent Attaining Proficiency	64	34	22	8	19	10
Average Proficiency Index (API)	84.0	65.6	55.9	40.7	52.0	41.3

In Springfield in 2006, the proficiency rate of regular education students was more than four times greater than that of students with disabilities and more than three times greater than that of students with limited English proficiency (LEP). Thirty-four percent of regular education students, eight percent of students with disabilities, and 10 percent of LEP students attained overall proficiency on the MCAS tests.

Springfield's average proficiency gap in 2006 was 34 PI points for regular education students, 59 PI points for students with disabilities, and 59 PI points for LEP students. The average performance gap between regular education students and both students with disabilities and LEP students was 25 PI points.

Figure/Table 10: Student MCAS Test Performance, by Race/Ethnicity Subgroup, 2006
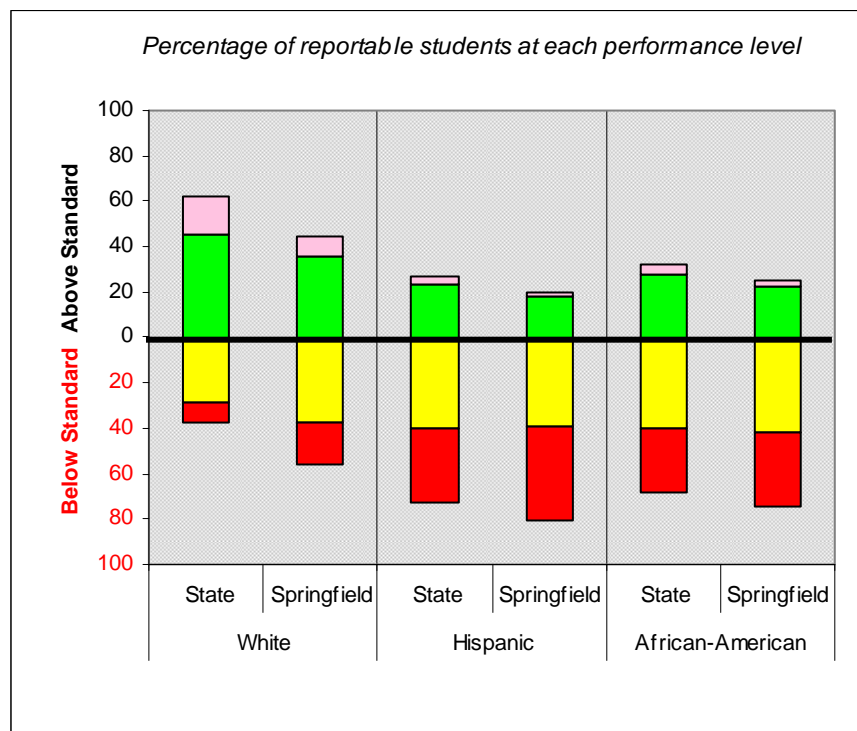
	White		Hispanic		African-American	
	State	**Springfield**	**State**	**Springfield**	**State**	**Springfield**
Advanced	17	9	4	2	4	3
Proficient	45	36	23	18	27	23
Needs Improvement	29	37	40	39	40	42
Warning/Failing	9	18	33	41	28	33
Percent Attaining Proficiency	62	45	27	20	31	26
Average Proficiency Index (API)	82.9	72.4	59.2	52.5	63.2	58.6

In Springfield in 2006, performance on the MCAS tests varied by race/ethnicity, as 45 percent of White students, 26 percent of African-American students, and 20 percent of Hispanic students attained overall proficiency.

Springfield's average proficiency gap in 2006 was 28 PI points for White students, 41 PI points for African-American students, and 47 PI points for Hispanic students. The average performance gap between White and African-American students was 13 PI points, and between White and Hispanic students it was 19 PI points.

Figure/Table 11: Student MCAS Test Performance, by Socioeconomic Status and Gender Subgroups, 2006

Percentage of reportable students at each performance level
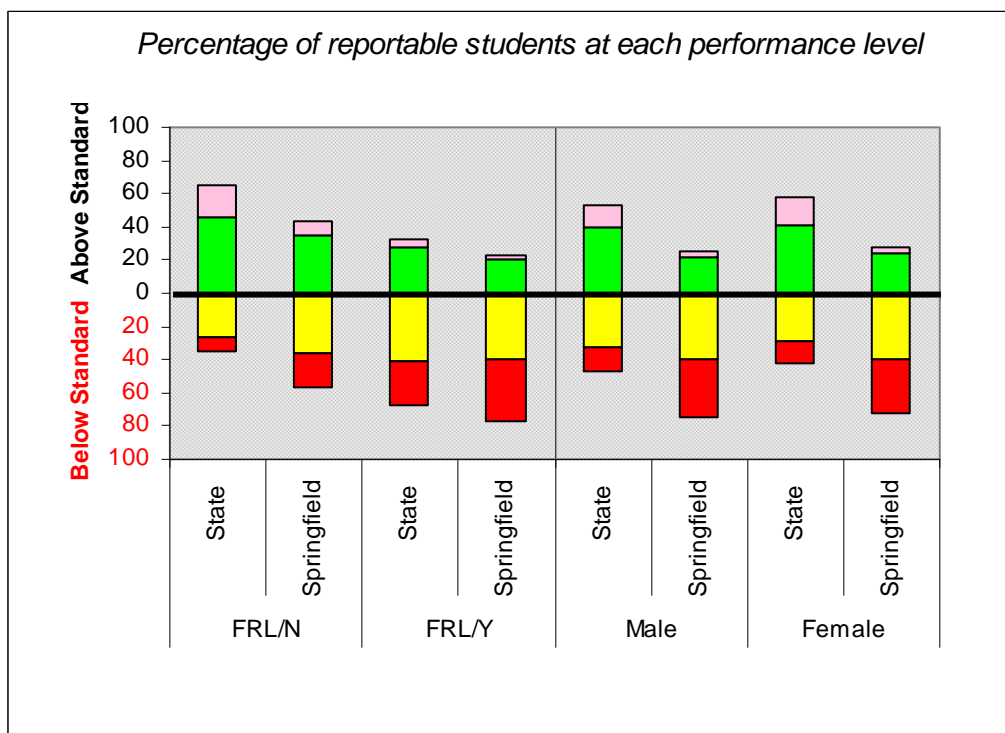
		FRL/N		FRL/Y		Male		Female	
		State	**Springfield**	**State**	**Springfield**	**State**	**Springfield**	**State**	**Springfield**
	Advanced	19	9	5	2	13	3	17	4
	Proficient	46	34	27	20	40	22	41	24
	Needs Improvement	27	36	40	40	32	40	29	39
	Warning/Failing	8	20	27	37	15	35	13	33
	Percent Attaining Proficiency	65	43	32	22	53	25	58	28
	Average Proficiency Index (API)	84.5	71.0	63.5	55.5	77.1	57.5	79.6	59.2

In Springfield in 2006, 22 percent of low-income (FRL/Y) students attained overall proficiency on the MCAS tests, compared to 43 percent of non low-income (FRL/N) students. The average proficiency gap was 44 PI points for low-income students and 29 PI points for non low-income students, and the average performance gap between the two subgroups was 15 PI points.

Performance on the 2006 MCAS tests was comparable for male and female students in Springfield, with 28 percent of female students and 25 percent of male students attaining overall proficiency. The average proficiency gap was 42 PI points for male students and was 41 PI points for female students, and the average performance gap between the two subgroups was one PI point.

Figure/Table 12: Student MCAS ELA Proficiency Index vs. Math Proficiency Index, by Subgroup, 2006
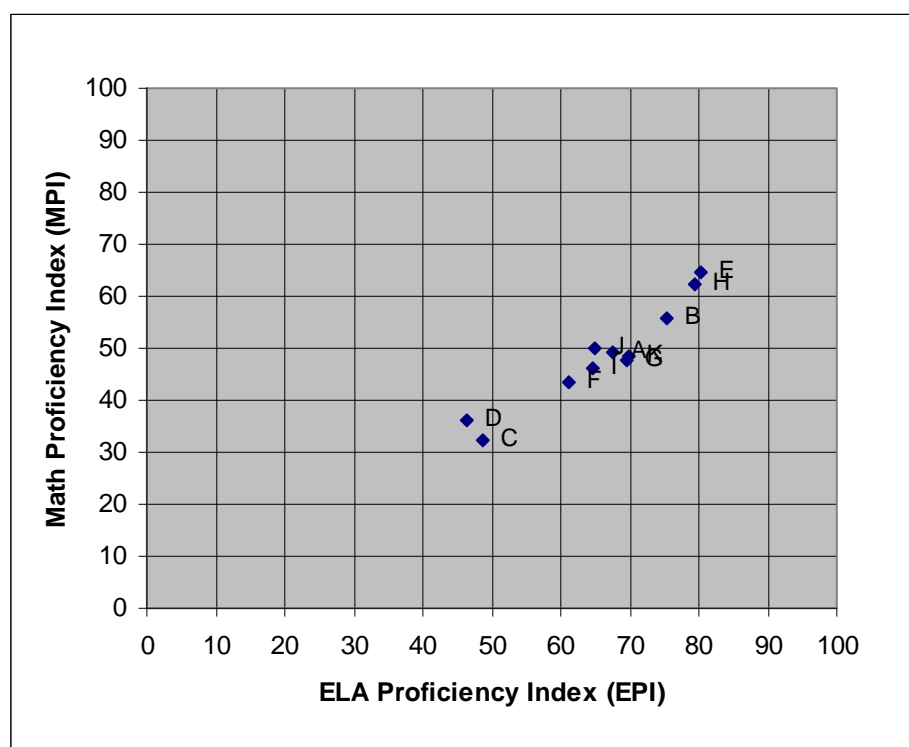
		ELA PI	Math PI	Number of Tests
A	Springfield	67.4	49.2	25,158
B	Regular Education	75.5	55.7	17,750
C	Disability	48.8	32.5	4,971
D	LEP	46.5	36.0	2,437
E	White	80.2	64.6	4,551
F	Hispanic	61.3	43.6	12,846
G	African-American	69.5	47.6	6,993
H	FRL/N	79.5	62.5	4,683
I	FRL/Y	64.7	46.2	20,452
J	Male	65.0	49.9	12,703
K	Female	69.9	48.5	12,432

Of the 10 measurable subgroups in Springfield in 2006, the gap in performance between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups was 34 PI points in ELA (White students, LEP students, respectively) and 32 PI points in math (White students, students with disabilities, respectively).

The proficiency gaps in Springfield in 2006 in both ELA and math were wider than the district average for students with disabilities, students with limited English proficiency, Hispanic students, and low-income students. The proficiency gaps in ELA and math were narrower than the district average for regular education students, White students, and non low-income students. The proficiency gap for male students was wider than the district average in ELA but narrower in math, while the proficiency gaps for African-American students and female students were wider than the district average in math but narrower in ELA.

Figure/Table 13: Student MCAS English Language Arts (ELA) Test Performance, by Grade and Gender, 2006
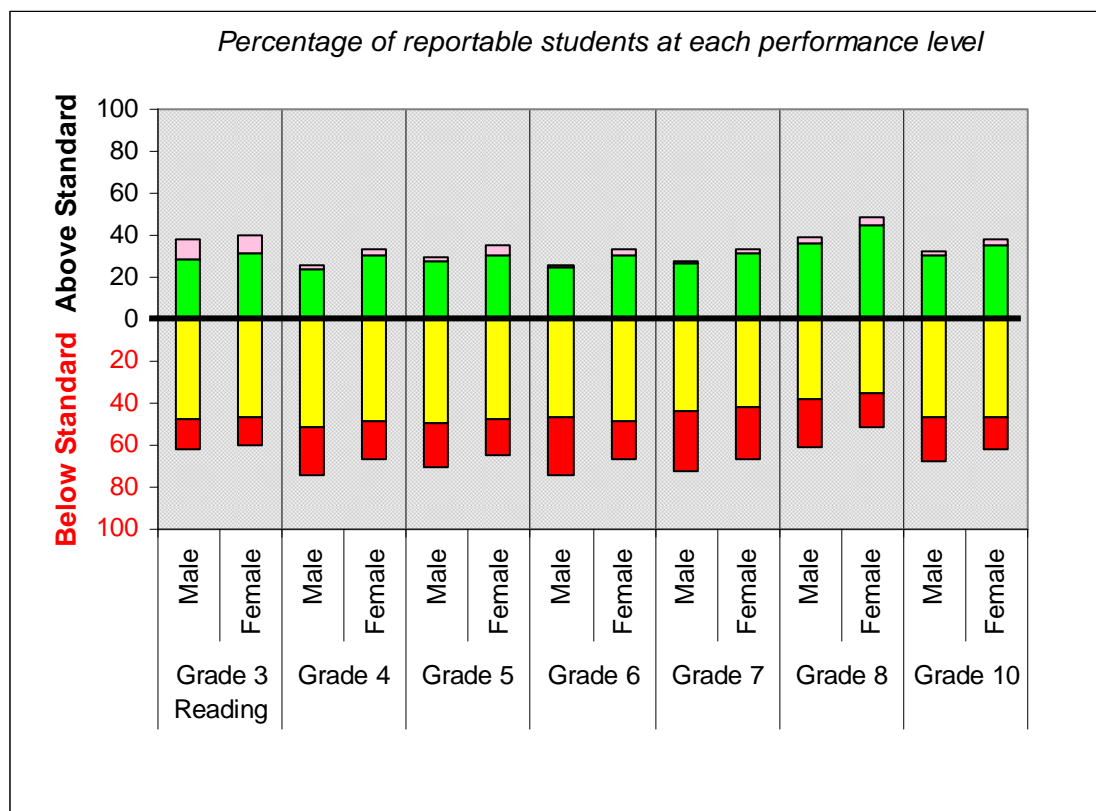
Percentage of reportable students at each performance level

		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	9	9	2	3	2	5	1	4	1	2	2	4	2	3
	Proficient	28	31	24	31	28	30	24	30	26	31	37	45	30	35
	Needs Improvement	47	46	51	49	49	48	47	48	44	42	38	35	47	47
	Warning/ Failing	15	14	23	17	21	17	28	18	29	25	23	17	21	15
Percent Attaining Proficiency		37	40	26	34	30	35	25	34	27	33	39	49	32	38

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

Figure/Table 14: Student MCAS Math Test Performance, by Grade and Gender, 2006
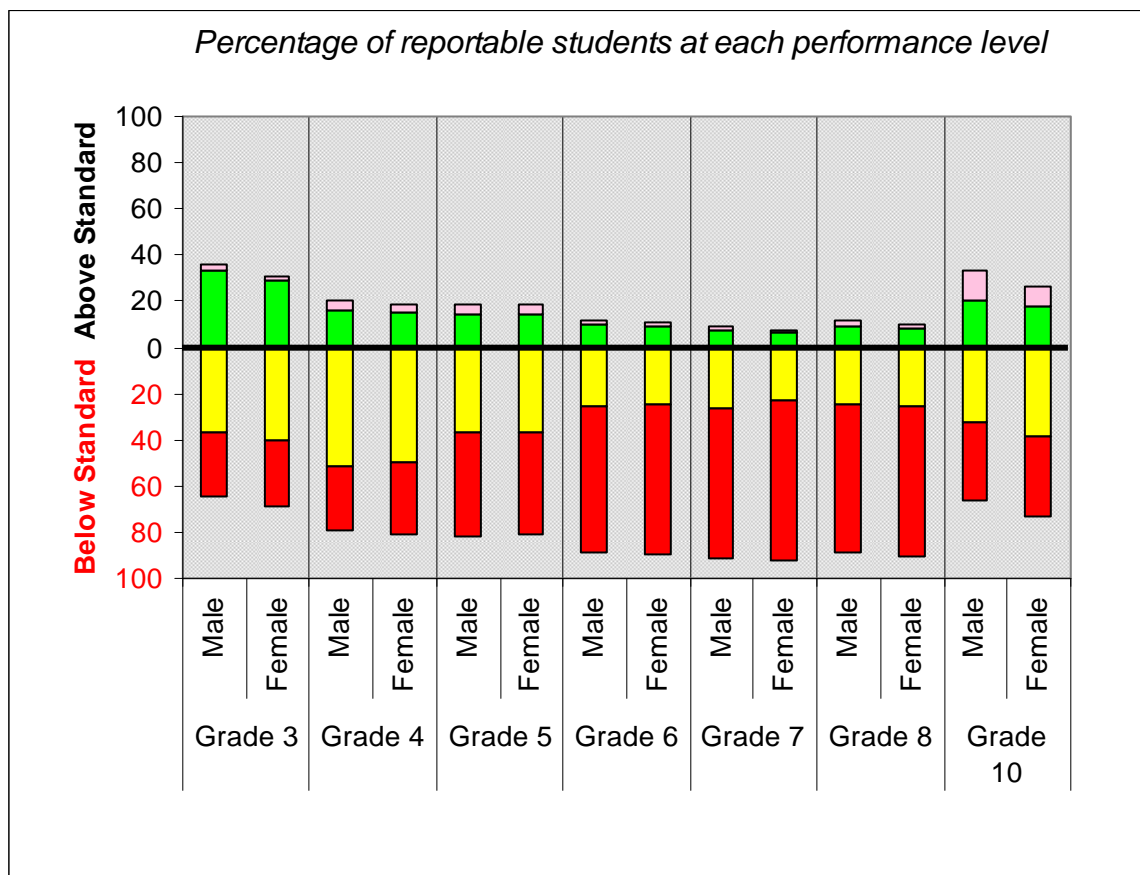
Percentage of reportable students at each performance level

| | 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	2	2	5	3	5	5	2	1	2	1	3	1	13	9
Proficient	33	29	16	15	14	14	10	9	7	7	9	8	20	17
Needs Improvement	37	41	52	50	36	37	25	25	26	23	25	26	33	38
Warning/ Failing	27	28	28	31	45	44	63	65	65	70	63	64	34	35
Percent Attaining Proficiency	35	31	21	18	19	19	12	10	9	8	12	9	33	26

On the 2006 MCAS tests in math, male students outperformed female students at all grade levels, except at grade 5, where both subgroups performed the same.
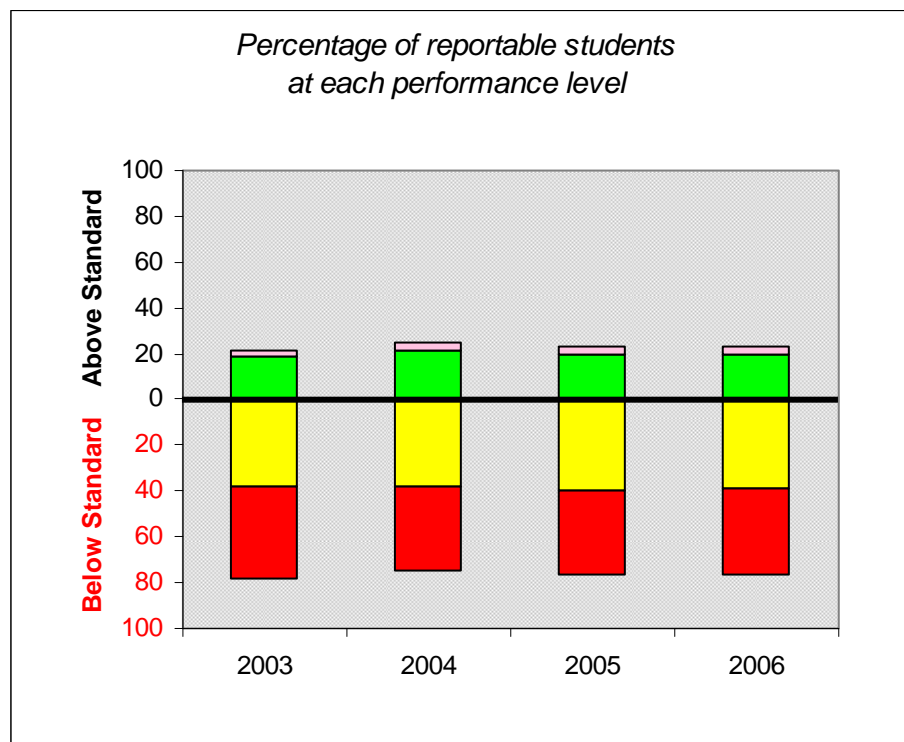
Improvement

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

Findings:

- Between 2003 and 2006, Springfield's MCAS performance showed slight improvement overall and in ELA, math, and STE. However, the gains made in performance overall and in ELA and math occurred between 2003 and 2004, and performance overall and in ELA subsequently declined from 2004 to 2006, and math performance was flat.

- The percentage of students scoring in the 'Advanced' and 'Proficient' categories rose by one percentage point between 2003 and 2006, while the percentage of students in the 'Warning/Failing' category decreased by three percentage points. The average proficiency gap in Springfield narrowed from 47 PI points in 2003 to 44 PI points in 2006. This resulted in an improvement rate, or a closing of the proficiency gap, of five percent.

- Over the three-year period 2003-2006, ELA performance in Springfield showed slight improvement, at an average of approximately one-third PI point annually. This resulted in an improvement rate of three percent, a rate lower than that required to meet AYP.

- Math performance in Springfield also showed slight improvement, at an average of one PI point annually. This resulted in an improvement rate of nearly six percent, also a rate lower than that required to meet AYP.

- Although the percentage of Springfield students attaining proficiency in STE was the same in 2004 and 2006, performance in STE improved at an average of two PI points annually over the two-year period. This resulted in an improvement rate of eight percent.

Figure 15/Tables 15 A-B: Student MCAS Test Performance, All Students, 2003-2006

Percentage of reportable students at each performance level

A.

		2003	2004	2005	2006
	Advanced	3	4	4	3
	Proficient	19	21	20	20
	Needs Improvement	38	38	40	39
	Warning/Failing	40	36	37	37
	Percent Attaining Proficiency	22	25	24	23
	Average Proficiency Index (API)	53.2	56.5	55.7	55.5

B. n-values

	2003	2004	2005	2006
Advanced	368	475	446	410
Proficient	2,381	2,635	2,408	2,397
Needs Improvement	4,762	4,732	4,887	4,738
Warning/Failing	5,085	4,495	4,526	4,523
Total	12,596	12,337	12,267	12,068

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 Springfield students attaining overall proficiency on the MCAS tests increased from 22 percent in 2003 to 23 percent in 2006. The percentage of students in the 'Warning/Failing' category decreased from 40 percent in 2003 to 37 percent in 2006. The average proficiency gap in Springfield narrowed from 47 PI points in 2003 to 44 PI points in 2006, resulting in an improvement rate of five percent.

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

Percentage of reportable students at each performance level
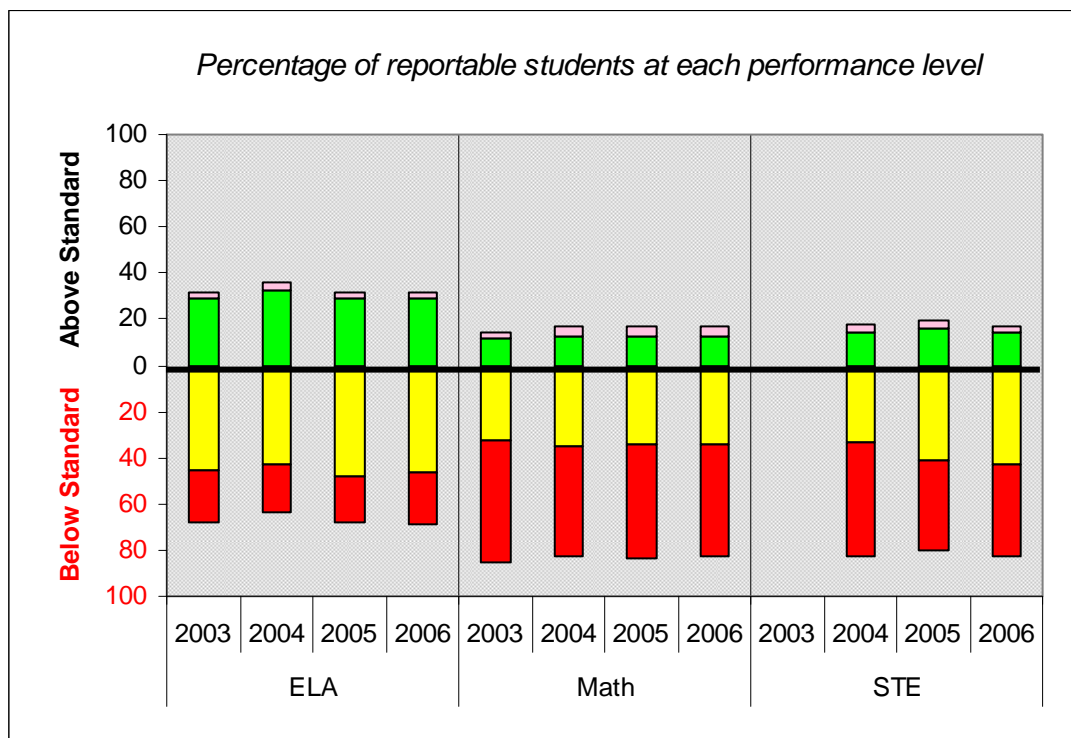
	ELA				Math				STE			
	2003	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**
Advanced	3	3	3	2	3	4	4	4		3	3	3
Proficient	29	33	29	29	12	13	13	13		14	16	14
Needs Improvement	45	43	48	46	32	35	34	34		33	42	43
Warning/ Failing	23	21	20	22	53	48	49	49		49	39	40
Percent Attaining Proficiency	32	36	32	31	15	17	17	17		17	19	17
Proficiency Index (PI)	64.5	67.7	66.3	65.6	44.9	48.2	47.9	48.0		48.0	53.4	52.2

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.

Although the percentage of Springfield students attaining proficiency in ELA decreased from 32 percent in 2003 to 31 percent in 2006, the proficiency gap in ELA narrowed from 35 PI points in 2003 to 34 PI points in 2006, resulting in an improvement rate of three percent, a rate lower than that required to meet AYP.

The percentage of Springfield students attaining proficiency in math increased from 15 percent in 2003 to 17 percent in 2006. The proficiency gap in math narrowed from 55 PI points in 2003 to 52 PI points in 2006, resulting in an improvement rate of nearly six percent, also a rate lower than that required to meet AYP.

Although the percentage of Springfield students attaining proficiency in STE was 17 percent in both 2004 and 2006, the proficiency gap in STE narrowed from 52 PI points in 2004 to 48 PI points in 2006, resulting in an improvement rate of eight percent.

Equity of Improvement

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

Findings:

- In Springfield, all student subgroups except non low-income students, White students, and African-American students had improved performance in ELA between 2003 and 2006, although the pattern of change varied among subgroups. The most improved subgroup in ELA was limited English proficient students.

- In math, all subgroups in Springfield showed improved performance between 2003 and 2006. The most improved subgroup in math was Hispanic students.

- The performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in ELA narrowed from 39 PI points in 2003 to 32 PI points in 2006, and the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in math narrowed from 34 PI points in 2003 to 32 PI points in 2006.

Figure/Table 17: Student Population by Reportable Subgroups, 2003-2006
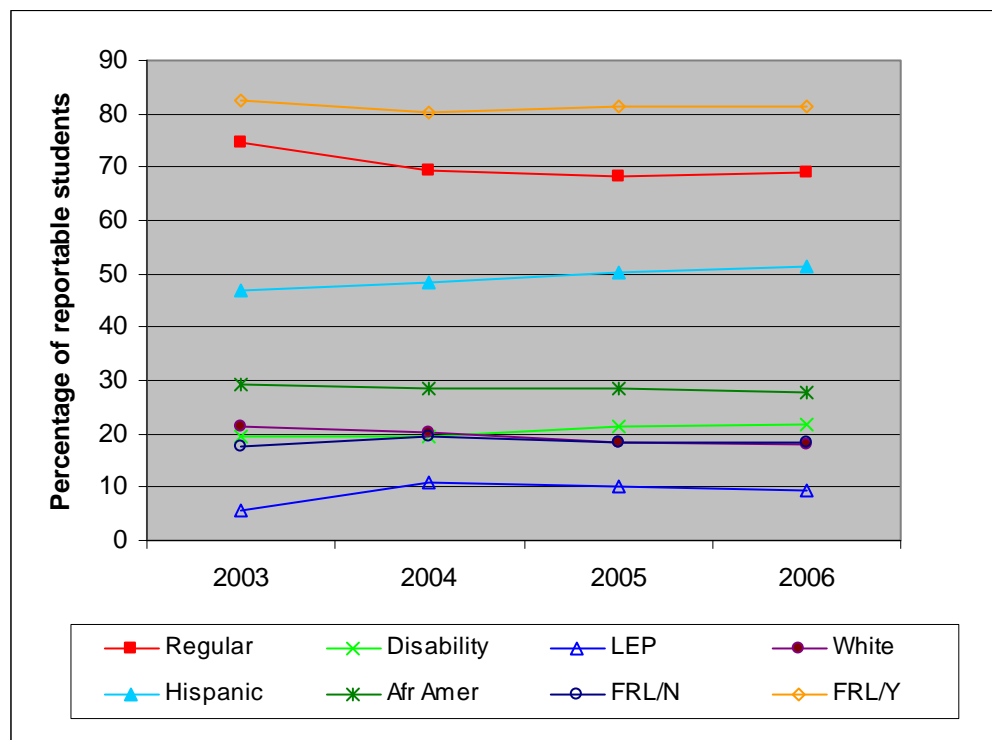
|	Number of Students				Percentage of students			
	2003	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**	**2003**	**2004**	**2005**	**2006**
Springfield	9,661	11,193	10,941	12,947	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Regular	7,207	7,763	7,481	8,913	74.6	69.4	68.4	68.8
Disability	1,897	2,195	2,337	2,803	19.6	19.6	21.4	21.6
LEP	557	1,235	1,123	1,231	5.8	11.0	10.3	9.5
White	2,048	2,280	2,028	2,331	21.2	20.4	18.5	18.0
Hispanic	4,523	5,411	5,484	6,654	46.8	48.3	50.1	51.4
Afr Amer	2,833	3,204	3,138	3,575	29.3	28.6	28.7	27.6
FRL/N	1,696	2,192	2,028	2,391	17.6	19.6	18.5	18.5
FRL/Y	7,965	9,001	8,913	10,556	82.4	80.4	81.5	81.5

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.

Between 2003 and 2006 in Springfield, the proportion of students with disabilities increased by two percentage points, and the proportion of students with limited English proficiency increased by nearly four percentage points. The proportion of Hispanic students increased by roughly four and one-half percentage points while the proportions of White and African-American students decreased by approximately three and two percentage points, respectively. The proportion of low-income students decreased by roughly one percentage point during this period.

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Figures 18 A-D/Table 18: MCAS Proficiency Indices, by Subgroup, 2003-2006

A. ELA Proficiency Index (EPI) by Student Status and Free or Reduced-Cost Lunch Subgroups
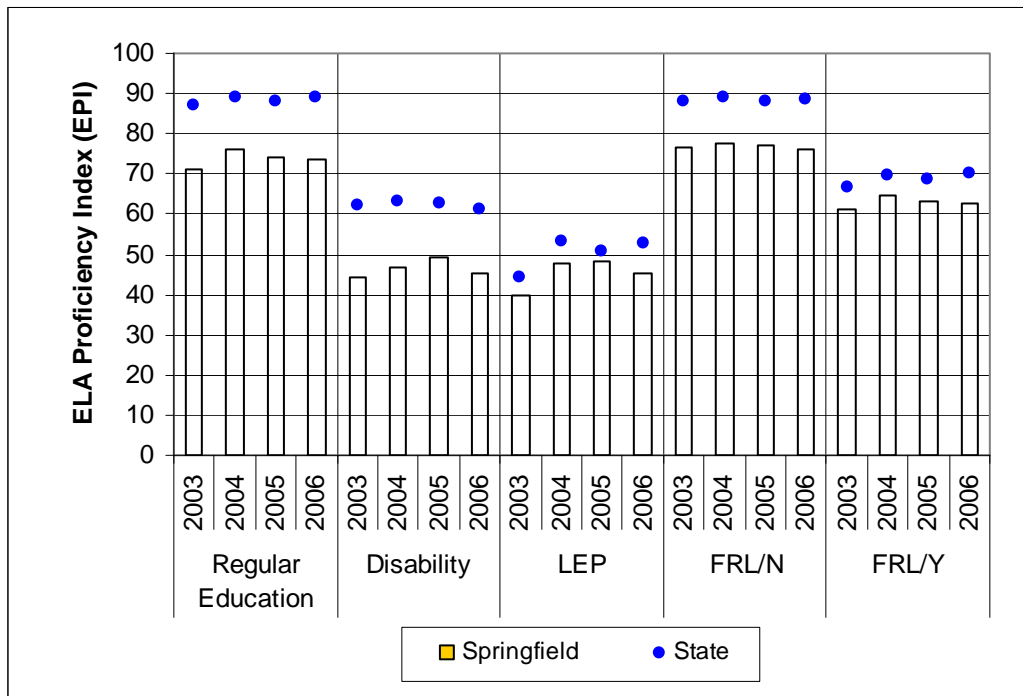
B. Math Proficiency Index (MPI) by Student Status and Free or Reduced-Cost Lunch Subgroups
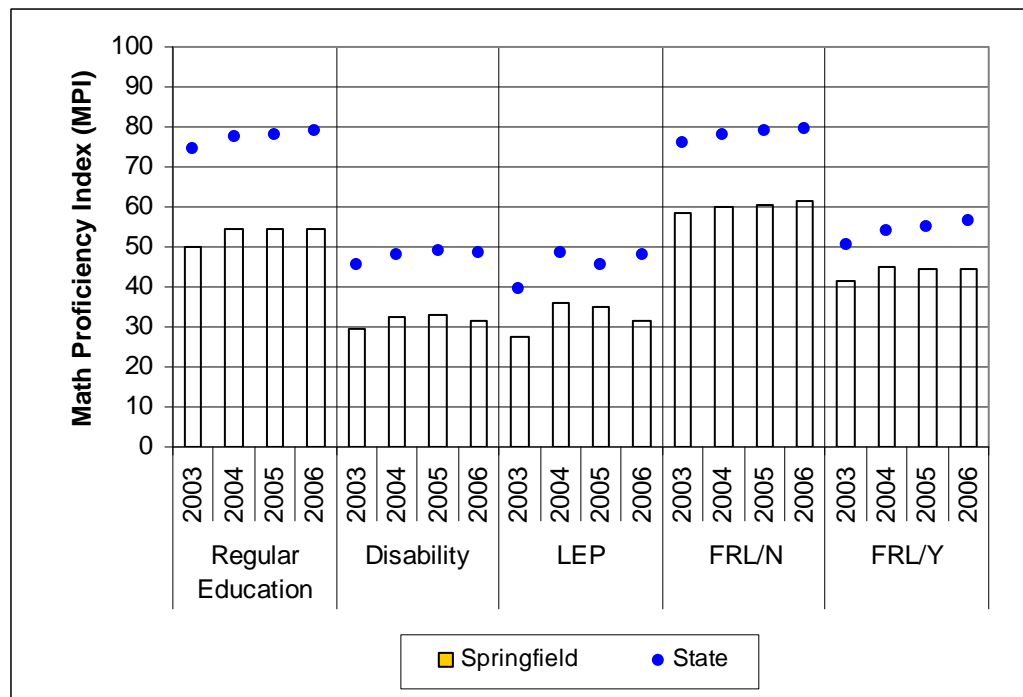
C. ELA Proficiency Index (EPI) by Race/Ethnicity Subgroup

D. Math Proficiency Index (MPI) by Race/Ethnicity Subgroup

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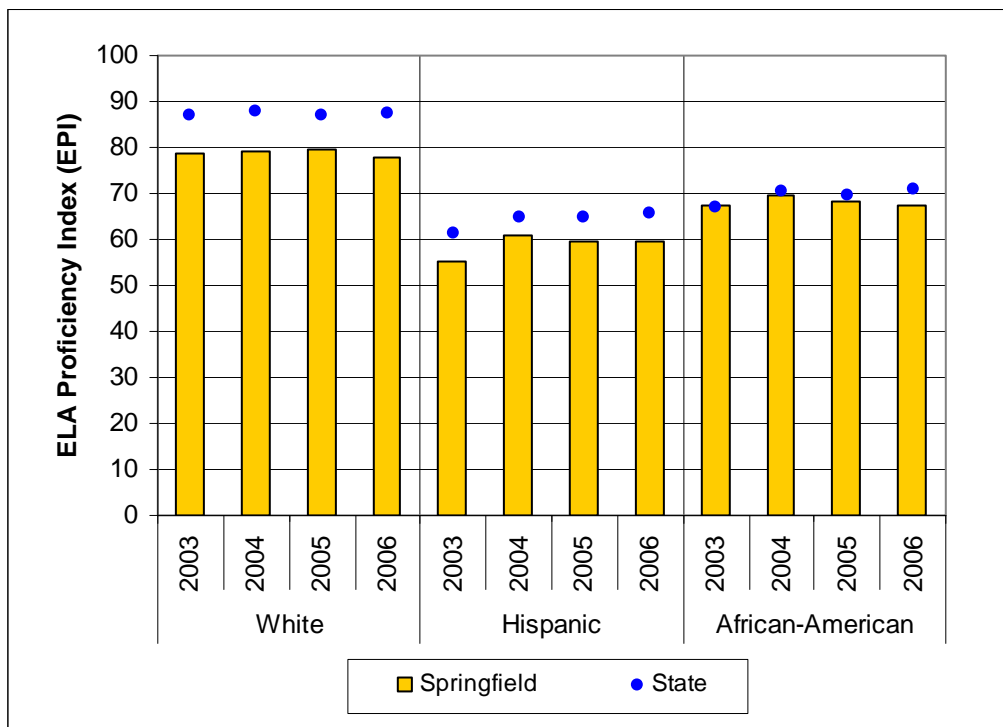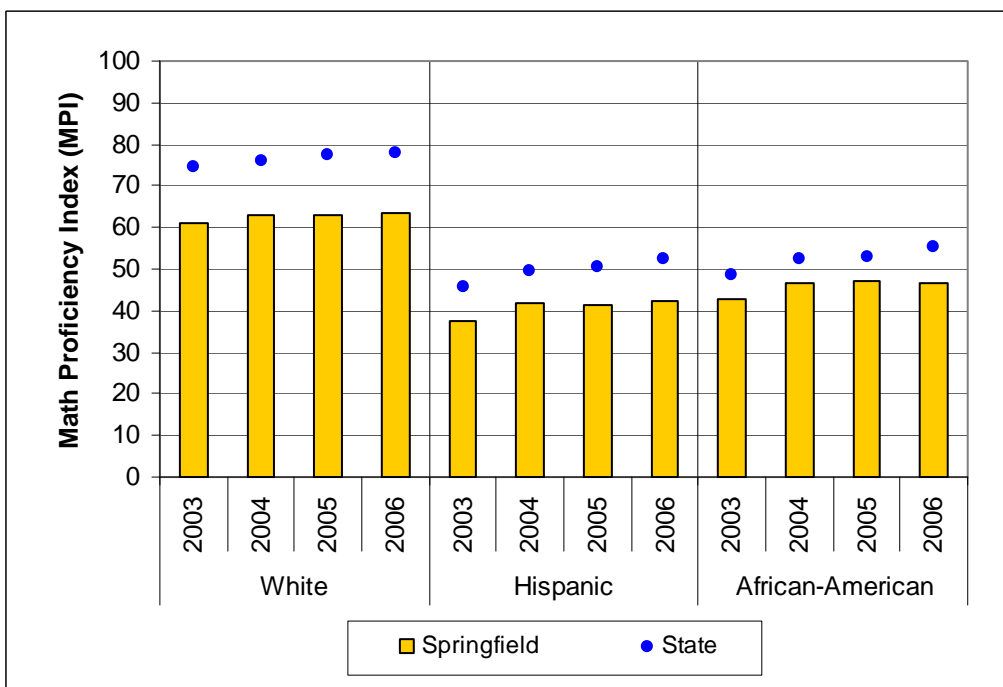| State				Springfield			
Subgroup	**Year**	**EPI**	**MPI**	**Subgroup**	**Year**	**EPI**	**MPI**
Regular Education	2003	87.3	74.7	Regular Education	2003	71.3	50.1
	2004	89.2	77.4		2004	76.0	54.7
	2005	88.3	78.2		2005	73.9	54.3
	2006	89.0	78.9		2006	73.6	54.6
Disability	2003	62.1	45.3	Disability	2003	44.3	29.7
	2004	63.3	47.9		2004	47.0	32.3
	2005	62.9	49.0		2005	49.5	33.1
	2006	61.2	48.4		2006	45.4	31.7
LEP	2003	44.4	39.6	LEP	2003	39.7	27.7
	2004	53.4	48.4		2004	47.9	35.9
	2005	50.9	45.6		2005	48.1	35.2
	2006	52.9	47.9		2006	45.4	31.7
FRL/N	2003	87.9	75.9	FRL/N	2003	76.7	58.3
	2004	88.9	78.1		2004	77.5	59.9
	2005	88.3	79.0		2005	77.3	60.6
	2006	88.6	79.7		2006	75.9	61.6
FRL/Y	2003	66.6	50.7	FRL/Y	2003	61.4	41.7
	2004	69.7	53.9		2004	64.8	45.0
	2005	68.8	55.0		2005	63.3	44.6
	2006	70.0	56.3		2006	62.7	44.6
White	2003	86.9	74.4	White	2003	78.7	61.2
	2004	87.7	76.2		2004	79.1	63.0
	2005	87.1	77.2		2005	79.6	63.2
	2006	87.4	77.8		2006	77.8	63.5
Hispanic	2003	61.4	45.7	Hispanic	2003	55.4	37.3
	2004	64.8	49.3		2004	60.7	41.8
	2005	64.6	50.6		2005	59.5	41.5
	2006	65.8	52.2		2006	59.5	42.3
African-American	2003	67.1	48.4	African-American	2003	67.4	42.7
	2004	70.5	52.3		2004	69.5	46.4
	2005	69.4	52.8		2005	68.2	47.1
	2006	70.9	55.2		2006	67.6	46.4

In Springfield, all student subgroups except non low-income students, White students, and African-American students had improved performance in ELA between 2003 and 2006, although the pattern of change varied among subgroups. The most improved subgroup in ELA was LEP students. In math, all subgroups in Springfield showed improved performance between 2003 and 2006. The most improved subgroup in math was Hispanic students.

The performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in ELA narrowed from 39 PI points in 2003 to 32 PI points in 2006, and the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in math narrowed from 34 PI points in 2003 to 32 PI points in 2006.

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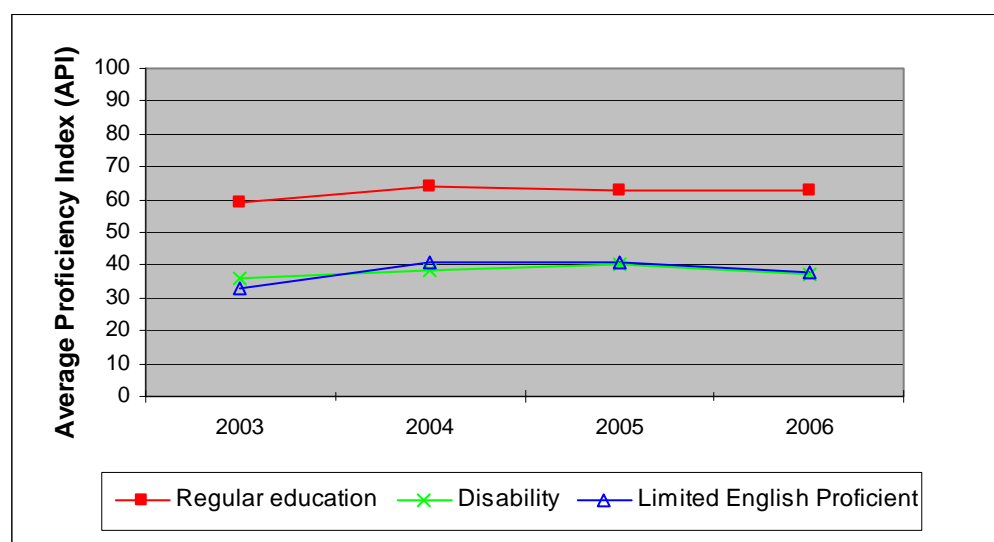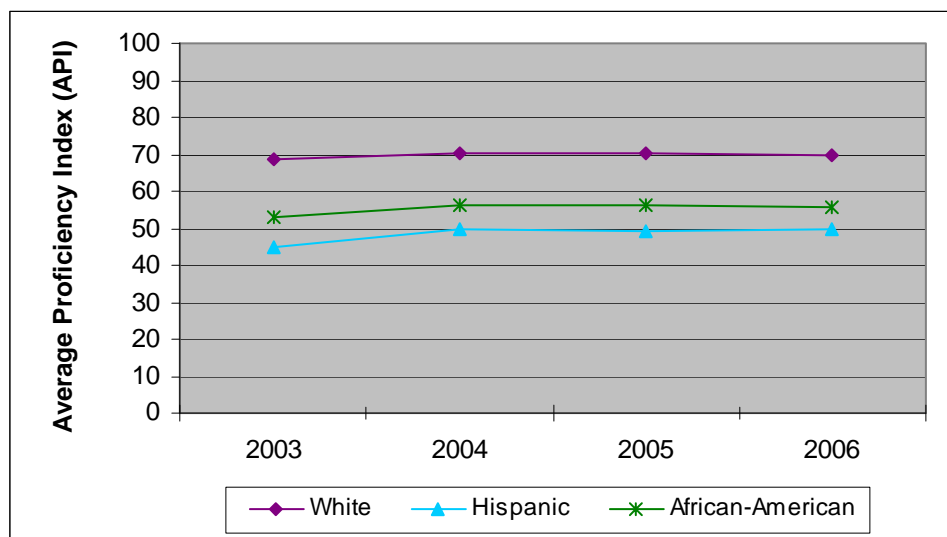

		API	EPI	MPI	Percent Attaining Proficiency ELA	Percent Attaining Proficiency Math
Regular education	2003	59.1	71.3	50.1	39	17
	2004	63.9	76.0	54.7	46	22
	2005	62.7	73.9	54.3	41	22
	2006	62.7	73.6	54.6	40	22
Disability	2003	35.7	44.3	29.7	9	6
	2004	38.3	47.0	32.3	11	5
	2005	40.1	49.5	33.1	10	5
	2006	37.4	45.4	31.7	9	4
Limited English Proficient	2003	32.8	39.7	27.7	8	6
	2004	41.0	47.9	35.9	13	9
	2005	40.6	48.1	35.2	10	7
	2006	37.6	45.4	31.7	9	5

Regular education students, students with disabilities, and LEP students in Springfield had improved overall performance on the MCAS tests between 2003 and 2006. The average proficiency gap for Springfield's regular education students narrowed from 41 to 37 PI points; for students with disabilities, it narrowed from 64 to 63 PI points; and for LEP students, it narrowed form 67 to 62 PI points. These gains resulted in improvement rates of nine percent for regular education students, three percent for students with disabilities, and seven percent for LEP students.

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

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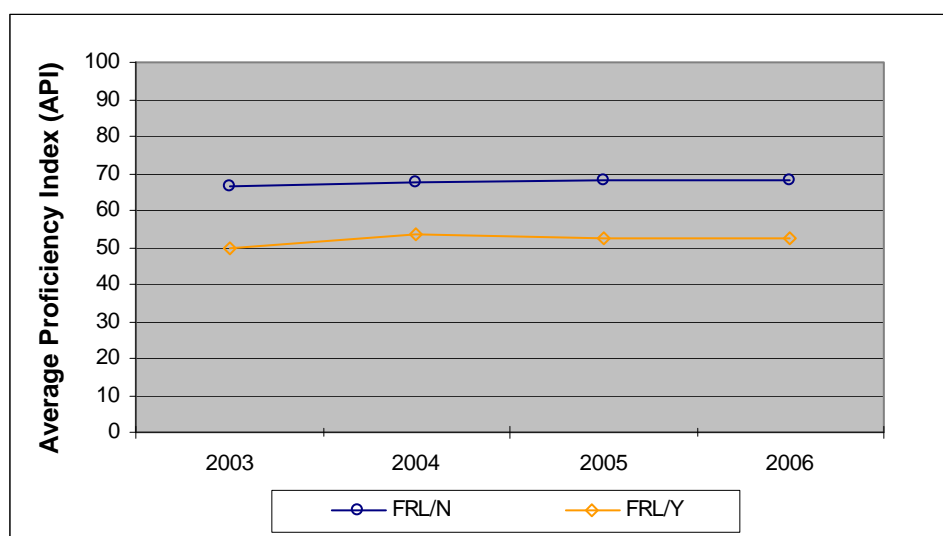

		API	EPI	MPI	Percent Attaining Proficiency ELA	Percent Attaining Proficiency Math
White	2003	68.5	78.7	61.2	54	31
	2004	70.0	79.1	63.0	54	32
	2005	70.2	79.6	63.2	53	34
	2006	69.5	77.8	63.5	50	33
Hispanic	2003	45.0	55.4	37.3	20	8
	2004	49.7	60.7	41.8	27	11
	2005	49.2	59.5	41.5	22	10
	2006	49.6	59.5	42.3	24	12
African-American	2003	53.2	67.4	42.7	32	11
	2004	56.2	69.5	46.4	36	14
	2005	56.1	68.2	47.1	33	16
	2006	55.5	67.6	46.4	32	15

All three racial subgroups in Springfield had improved overall performance on the MCAS tests between 2003 and 2006. The average proficiency gap for White students narrowed from 31 to 30 PI points; for Hispanic students, it narrowed from 55 to 50 PI points; and for African-American students, it narrowed from 47 to 44 PI points. These gains resulted in improvement rates of three percent for White students, eight percent for Hispanic students, and five percent for African-American students.

Between 2003 and 2006, the average performance gap between White students and Hispanic students narrowed by four PI points, and the average performance gap between White students and African-American students narrowed by one PI point.

Figure/Table 21: Student MCAS Test Performance, by Socioeconomic Status Subgroup, 2003-2006

		API	EPI	MPI	Percent Attaining Proficiency ELA	Percent Attaining Proficiency Math
FRL/N	2003	66.4	76.7	58.3	50	28
	2004	67.5	77.5	59.9	53	30
	2005	67.9	77.3	60.6	52	32
	2006	68.0	75.9	61.6	47	32
FRL/Y	2003	50.0	61.4	41.7	27	11
	2004	53.4	64.8	45.0	31	14
	2005	52.5	63.3	44.6	27	13
	2006	52.2	62.7	44.6	27	13

Both the low-income (FRL/Y) and non low-income (FRL/N) subgroups in Springfield had improved overall performance on the MCAS tests between 2003 and 2006. The average proficiency gap for low-income students narrowed from 50 to 48 PI points, and for non low-income students it narrowed from 34 to 32 PI points. These gains resulted in improvement rates of five percent for non low-income students and four percent for low-income students.

Between 2003 and 2006, the average performance gap between low-income students and non low-income students remained the same.

Figure/Table 22: Student MCAS Test Performance, by Gender Subgroup, 2003- 2006
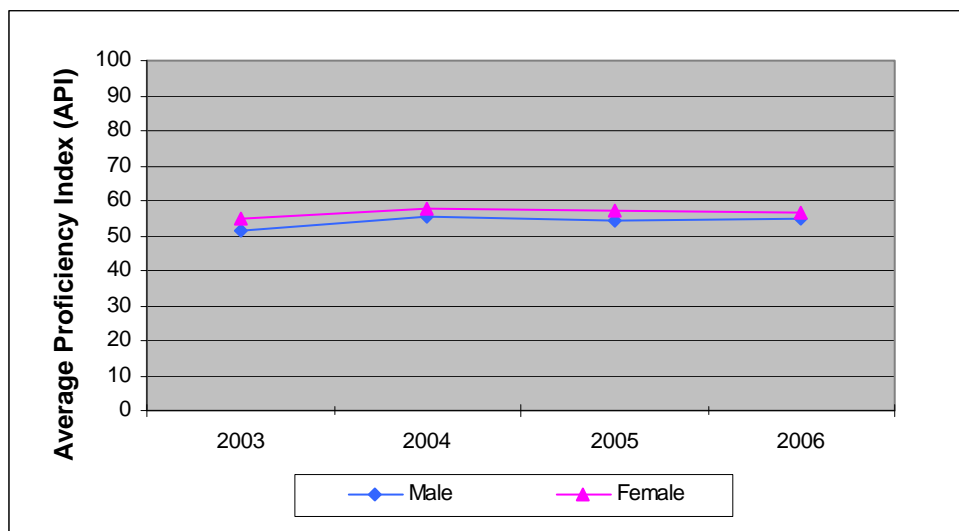
		API	EPI	MPI	Percent Attaining Proficiency ELA	Percent Attaining Proficiency Math
Male	2003	51.6	61.3	44.5	28	15
	2004	55.5	64.4	48.8	31	18
	2005	54.4	63.2	47.9	27	17
	2006	54.7	63.2	48.6	28	18
Female	2003	54.8	67.7	45.3	36	14
	2004	57.6	71.2	47.6	41	16
	2005	57.4	70.1	48.0	37	16
	2006	56.4	68.1	47.5	35	16

Both male and female students in Springfield had improved overall performance between 2003 and 2006. The average proficiency gap for male students narrowed from 48 to 45 PI points, and for female students it narrowed from 45 to 44 PI points. These gains resulted in improvement rates of six percent for male students and four percent for female students.

Between 2003 and 2006, the average performance gap between male and female students narrowed by two PI points.

Participation

Are all eligible students participating in required state assessments?

Findings:

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

n-Values by Subgroup and Performance Level, 2006

Subgroup	Performance Level	ELA	Math	STE
Springfield	ALL LEVELS	**12,617**	**12,541**	**3,757**
	Advanced	451	446	119
	Proficient	3,865	1,865	523
	Needs Improvement	5,740	4,229	1,623
	Warning/Failing	2,561	6,001	1,492
Regular Education	Advanced	418	425	112
	Proficient	3,486	1,670	449
	Needs Improvement	4,071	3,368	1,246
	Warning/Failing	933	3,379	778
Disability	Advanced	18	10	5
	Proficient	260	104	47
	Needs Improvement	1,158	553	273
	Warning/Failing	1,054	1,814	487
Limited English Proficient	Advanced	15	11	2
	Proficient	119	91	27
	Needs Improvement	511	308	104
	Warning/Failing	574	808	227
White	Advanced	191	206	60
	Proficient	1,030	597	180
	Needs Improvement	861	826	291
	Warning/Failing	201	639	145
Hispanic	Advanced	131	121	24
	Proficient	1,562	703	185
	Needs Improvement	3,019	2,023	805
	Warning/Failing	1,736	3,551	906
African-American	Advanced	97	80	28
	Proficient	1,131	466	127
	Needs Improvement	1,691	1,226	486
	Warning/Failing	579	1,723	408
Asian	Advanced	32	38	6
	Proficient	132	94	31
	Needs Improvement	142	139	38
	Warning/Failing	31	68	23
Free or Reduced-Cost Lunch/No	Advanced	208	219	53
	Proficient	1,053	556	174
	Needs Improvement	856	853	259
	Warning/Failing	232	706	150
Free or Reduced-Cost Lunch/Yes	Advanced	243	227	66
	Proficient	2,810	1,309	349
	Needs Improvement	4,877	3,375	1,364
	Warning/Failing	2,322	5,289	1,336
Male	Advanced	186	257	69
	Proficient	1,788	983	284
	Needs Improvement	2,940	2,121	850
	Warning/Failing	1,455	2,973	728
Female	Advanced	265	189	50
	Proficient	2,075	882	239
	Needs Improvement	2,793	2,107	773
	Warning/Failing	1,099	3,022	758

n-Values by Grade and Year, 2003-2006

Grade	Year	ELA	Math	STE
Grade 3	2003	2,135	0	0
	2004	2,035	0	0
	2005	1,869	0	0
	2006	1,849	1,832	0
Grade 4	2003	2,004	2,017	0
	2004	1,999	2,014	0
	2005	1,933	1,930	0
	2006	1,814	1,813	0
Grade 5	2003	0	0	0
	2004	0	0	1,960
	2005	0	0	1,985
	2006	1,908	1,909	1,909
Grade 6	2003	0	2,016	0
	2004	0	1,936	0
	2005	0	1,885	0
	2006	1,873	1,867	0
Grade 7	2003	1,995	0	0
	2004	2,013	0	0
	2005	1,969	0	0
	2006	1,870	1,862	0
Grade 8	2003	0	1,881	0
	2004	0	1,905	1,904
	2005	0	1,920	1,915
	2006	1,857	1,855	1,848
Grade 10	2003	1,337	1,346	0
	2004	1,240	1,230	0
	2005	1,330	1,300	0
	2006	1,446	1,403	0
All Grades	2003	7,471	7,260	0
	2004	7,287	7,085	3,864
	2005	7,101	7,035	3,900
	2006	12,617	12,541	3,757

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 15-22 and in the table of n-values by grade and year:

English language arts (ELA): 3, 4, 7
Math: 4, 6, 8
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.

Reexamination Findings

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

Standard I: Leadership, Governance, and Communication							
Ratings▼ Indicators►	9.1	9.2	9.3	9.4	9.7	9.8	10.1
Excellent							
Satisfactory							
Needs Improvement	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007
Poor		2004	2004	2004	2004	2004	2004
Unsatisfactory	2004						

I. Leadership, Governance, and Communication

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

Findings:

- Springfield Public Schools adopted a Mission and Goals 2005-2008 statement, subtitled "Culture of Achievement," which created a systemic focus on achievement. This was distributed to the school committee, central office, principals, teachers, parents, and the community.

- The focus of the mission and goals is for all students to attain proficiency. Professional development, resources, effective preschool programs, and programs in reading and mathematics at grades K-12 were all provisioned to lead to that goal.

- Contracts for central office administrators, principals, and curriculum directors contained job targets. New administrators completed an executive training program that includes addressing the 2005-2008 mission and goals.

- During the 2005-2008 period, all schools were expected to demonstrate uniform implementation of all school committee policies, and all students and their parents were expected to be aware of and experience uniform, system-wide policies for pupil progression and academic progress.

- Since 2004, 50 percent of the staff has been displaced and the district has hired 1,300 new teachers. Instructional initiatives have been developed and scripted for new staff.

- The school district has accelerated its efforts to monitor and ensure full and faithful implementation of new instructional plans.

- Improved management practices for the evaluation of senior leaders, principals, and assistant principals have been put into place.

- The district began to monitor and document chronic absences of staff to inform sound personnel actions.

- The district also began to address graduation rates and grade 9 retentions through small learning communities, twilight school, mandatory summer school, early college high school, and gateways to college.

Summary

The superintendent and the school committee of the Springfield Public Schools have adopted a Mission and Goals 2005-2008 statement, subtitled "Culture of Achievement," that established a system-wide goal of maximizing opportunities to learn so that all students are able attain the state learning standards and that created a systemic focus on the improvement of student achievement. The mission of the district is "To build a Culture of Achievement in all schools and all classrooms that ensures the delivery of educational experiences in which all learners [students and adults] achieve success." The three goals established to pursue this mission are to maximize

the performance of all student learners in the Springfield Public Schools, to maximize the performance and productivity of all adult learners (teachers, administrators, and other staff) in the Springfield Public Schools, and to maximize the quality and delivery of support systems for student and adult learning. Within the context of high staff turnover and financial constraints, the superintendent has continued to implement timely and appropriate activities to address the indicators on which the district was rated 'Poor' or 'Unsatisfactory' in the initial EQA review.

The Corrective Action Plan 2007-2010, School Improvement Plans, and individual annual performance evaluations validate the focus on improved student achievement, although the Corrective Action Plan needs to be more comprehensive and the superintendent and his team are working to achieve this. Administrators, school committee members, principals and teachers all said that "getting all students to proficiency" was their highest priority goal. The district implemented some programs to improve student MCAS performance. These included the establishment of a Learning Center. The 2006-2008 goal of the Learning Center focused on developing a systemic protocol for teachers and administrators to develop, submit, and access lesson plans that are rigorous and that will lead to increased student learning.

The superintendent and the school committee, through the district's mission and goals, seek to maximize the performance of all students. By developing a systematic approach for documenting, managing, and measuring all work processes, the district has enhanced the quality and delivery of support systems. School Improvement Plans included professional development strategies to meet the instructional needs of students that shared a common focus on classroom management. Teachers perceived a need for professional development in this because of the high teacher turnover and the many new hires in the district. A new teacher's contract has given authority to principals to assign staff within their buildings without regard to seniority, and the needs of the students are the top priority. The superintendent may assign, transfer, or reassign teachers, voluntarily or involuntarily, to a position and to a school according to the operational needs of the school district and the educational needs of the students. The district has established practices to maintain stability of staff, decrease staff absences, ensure the fidelity of implementation of the written curriculum in the classroom, and improve instruction.

2004 Indicators

9.1. The district provides and maintains thorough, complete, and informative documentation on past and current initiatives, practices, policies, procedures, and achievements of the district and its students. This documentation is accessible and well organized.

EQA Rating from 2004: Unsatisfactory

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Prior to 2001, the school committee had not consistently revised its policies to align with the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993. Interviewees indicated that archival information was not readily available or reliable for the period prior to 2000-2003, the initial period under examination. Local, persistent resistance to the MCAS tests had a negative impact on maintaining records and initiatives related to this aspect of education reform.

During the reexamination period under review (2004-2006), the district completed a Mission and Goals 2005-2008 document and a Corrective Action Plan 2007-2010 that the school committee has approved and adopted. Various groups in the system, including system administrators such as principals and curriculum directors, developed the Corrective Action Plan. The Culture Of Achievement – Mission and Goals 2005-2008, the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP), the School Handbook for Students & Parents, the Pupil Progression Plan, the Revised Elementary Pupil Progression Policy – June 2005, the Revisions to the Secondary Plan Pupil Progression Policy, the 2004-2007 Technology Plan, the August 2007 Professional Development Catalog, numerous plans addressing curriculum and instruction, and numerous policy documents are all posted on the district website.

In an interview, the superintendent said that the development team needs more time to make the Corrective Action Plan document as comprehensive as possible. Interviewees said the document needed more specific strategy descriptions. For example, according to the superintendent the district needs to include specific information in the plan about how to reduce retentions at the middle and high school levels.

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

EQA Rating from 2004: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

When a new superintendent arrived on May 1, 2001, he introduced the school committee to the culture of achievement concept. During July 2001, the school committee and the administration collaborated on a District Improvement Plan (DIP) that became known as the Culture of Achievement. During this same period, the previous superintendent and the mayor expressed opposition to the MCAS tests as the sole criterion for graduation of high school students. Prior to the 2002-2003 school year, an analysis of the MCAS test data was not the main impetus for decision-making and the implementation and modification of programs.

The superintendent developed and implemented a new School Improvement Plan (SIP) template that supported the use of student achievement data and the MCAS test results to implement new instructional strategies and program modifications. Administrators indicated that the new SIP template could not be completed without the input of student achievement data. The school committee established a data-driven process of having the SIPs reviewed and approved by the superintendent and his leadership team, which required the SIPs to address student achievement and focus on the MCAS test results for approval. The change in practices was an evolving process, because a vocal minority of teachers still harbored some resentment and opposition to the MCAS test, according to interviews.

During the reexamination period under review, the Springfield school district adopted a Mission and Goals 2005-2008 document and a Corrective Action Plan 2007-2010. The mission of the district is "To build a Culture of Achievement in all schools and in all classrooms that ensures the delivery of educational experiences in which all learners achieve success." The document includes three goals to support the mission: 1) "To maximize the performance of all student learners in the Springfield Public Schools"; 2) "To maximize the performance and productivity of all adult learners (teachers, administrators, and other staff) in the Springfield Public Schools";

and 3) "To maximize the quality and delivery of support systems for student and adult learning" by developing a systematic approach for documenting, managing, and measuring all work processes.

Administrators, school committee members, principals, and teachers said in interviews that "getting all students to proficiency" was the highest priority goal. In addition, interviewees agreed that a great deal of work remains for the immediate years ahead. Interviewees indicated that the district needed to focus on the mission and goals and the Corrective Action Plan to develop its capacity to respond effectively to the student achievement challenges and implement the specific programs and actions required to improve instructional delivery systems to promote the continuous improvement in academic achievement for all students.

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

EQA Rating from 2004: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

In Springfield, the School Improvement Plans (SIPs) aligned with the at the time of the initial EQA review. However, according to interviews with both the superintendent of schools and the school committee, the alignment of the DIP and SIPs took place late in the review period, since the 2001-2002 school year. Prior to 2001, according to interviewees, school improvement had focused on individual schools on a decentralized basis, i.e., 48 individual schools operating without coordination or common purposes. Interviewees stated that the Culture of Achievement initiated by the new superintendent placed a new emphasis on the alignment of the SIPs to a districtwide mission.

During the reexamination period under review, the district schools developed and adopted individual School Improvement Plans that aligned with the district's mission and goals and with the Corrective Action Plan. School Improvement Plans included professional development strategies to meet the instructional needs of the students. These strategies varied from school to school but shared a common focus on classroom management. In teacher focus groups, teachers

said that because of the high turnover in the district and the subsequent hiring of many new teachers, professional development was needed in this area. Professional development on accessing and interpreting data also was provided to administrators and school leadership teams, to whom the district's office of research, assessment, and accountability distributed all district, school, and individual student MCAS data.

A review of the School Improvement Plans showed that principals used a self-assessment rating form that assessed the school's use of curriculum, the use of district and state assessments and data, and the use of schoolwide interventions to support all students. Interviewees said that the merit incentives for principals were related to attainment of goals in the SIPs.

To ensure that curriculum delivery and instructional practices aligned with the state curriculum frameworks, district support team members, accompanied by the principals and assistant principals, conduct systematic "learning walks" to observe instructional practice and to provide teachers with timely feedback concerning their instruction and how to improve student performance.

The district developed an enhanced Student Success Plan and included it in the Pupil Progression Plan. The Springfield Public Schools Mission and Goals 2005-2008 included a section on monitoring Student Success Plans as a strategy to support pupil progression and the culture of achievement in the district as a means of improving student achievement. The MCAS results for the period under reexamination underscored the urgency and importance of the need for continuous improvements, particularly in the instructional support areas.

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

EQA Rating from 2004: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the initial review period (2000-2003), the school district had a change of leadership in the office of the superintendent that went beyond merely replacing personnel. The entire approach to

student achievement and use of the MCAS test data to drive instruction went through a transition from individual site-based initiatives at 48 individual schools to a more centralized focus with oversight by key districtwide administrators. The change resulted in development of a District Improvement Plan, released in May 2001. During the initial period under review, however, this transition from autonomous schools to a more centralized school district was a slow process.

From 2001 to 2003 the Springfield Public Schools changed its leadership model from a decentralized system to a centralized model exemplified by the Culture of Achievement. The district implemented the pupil progression plan, a scope and sequence chart designed to bring consistency to courses of study, and a program of collaborative professional development teachers (CPDTs) who spent the majority of their time working with classroom teachers. The use of classroom teachers as CPDTs was an effort to localize this collaboration from the earlier model of using consultants from the University of Pittsburgh, but it was met with resistance from teachers and the teachers' labor union. Therefore, the learning walks of 2000 were not an effective means of providing guidance to and monitoring classroom efforts to improve student achievement.

During the reexamination period, all schools used the academic goals of their respective School Improvement Plans as guidance in providing instruction and selecting professional development activities to enhance instructional efforts. Appropriate staff members continued to use the MCAS assessment results, particularly item analyses, and other student data to increase the effectiveness of instructional practices and professional development activities. CPDTs continuously collaborated with teachers, individually and collectively, to use student achievement data at the school and classroom levels to improve instructional focus and practices.

The Springfield Finance Control Board allocated funds in 2005 to create of the position of chief academic officer and to hire four curriculum managers. The managers used teams composed of teachers and principals and developed pacing guides for all content areas at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.

District personnel, principals, and teachers continued to receive training in the development and implementation of School Improvement Plans. Twelve schools have participated in the DOE Performance Improvement Mapping (PIM) process. This training heavily emphasizes the

collection, organization, analysis, and effective use of school and student achievement data to determine likely "school controllable causes" of poor achievement, e.g., ineffective instructional practices and inadequate instructional supervision. It explains how to develop and implement instructional and supervisory programs and practices that will more likely result in the desired improvements in student achievement.

The performance evaluation policy for principals in place at the time of the reexamination focused on accountability for results, including attainment of SIP goals and steady improvement in student achievement, particularly in ELA and mathematics.

The school district met, and for students in academic need exceeded, the state requirements for scheduled instructional time at the elementary and secondary levels. For example, middle school students received 275 minutes per week of ELA, mathematics, social studies, and science, and double blocks of ELA and mathematics were provided for at-risk students.

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

EQA Rating from 2004: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

In the initial examination, the EQA reviewed documentation that the district evaluated the superintendent on an annual basis. References in school committee minutes indicated that both the current and past superintendents for that period were evaluated based upon stated benchmarks or measurable goals. Each superintendent referred to areas in their evaluations that they felt should be improved upon.

During the reexamination period , the annual review of the superintendent was completed but was lost, and no record of its occurrence existed, according to four members of the school committee in interviews. During the EQA revisit, the superintendent's personnel file did not contain a copy of his annual review. At a final meeting with the superintendent, when told that evaluations of his performance for 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 could not be found, he called

central office and had copies of the 2005-2006 evaluation sent to the EQA team. The document revealed that six school committee members contributed to one copy, and one member added her evaluation late. The superintendent received the evaluation for the 2005-2006 school year six months late, and it was not signed by the school committee or superintendent. The superintendent informed the EQA team that his initial contract covered the period 2001 to 2004. The school committee voted a two-year extension through 2006, and then rolled the contract over for the 2006-2007 school year.

A six-page document entitled Exhibit I – District Objectives and Superintendent Incentive Compensation for FY06 detailed compensation sections as they pertained to student learning. Section I – Improved Student Learning contained 25 areas for consideration of added compensation for areas of student achievement. Section II – Increase Organizational Capabilities contained nine areas of additional compensation for work completed. Sections III, IV, V, and VI included performance pay for all items excluding adequate yearly progress (AYP) and best practices. The total incentive package was $36,000. The superintendent, the school committee, and the control board had not signed this document.

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

EQA Rating from 2004: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

For the initial review period, the district administration evaluated principals using an evaluation instrument that did not comply with the Education Reform Act regulations.

In its 2004-2006 reexamination, the EQA team reviewed 44 principal personnel files, of which 35 contained evaluations for the 2005-2006 school year, all of which were dated December 2006. The remaining nine were new hires in 2006 and evaluations had not yet been completed. Both the respective principal and the assistant superintendent of schools had signed all of the evaluations. When queried regarding the timeliness of the evaluations, the superintendent responded that the transition that was expected to take one year took over 12 months to

complete. He explained that he altered the evaluation cycle to a one-time 18-month evaluation cycle to align principal performance evaluations with MCAS results. All principal personnel files reviewed contained updated certification.

The contract of employment for each principal contained sections on employment, compensation, expectations, evaluation, termination, certificate, residency, consultation, reimbursement, vacation and sick leave, fringe benefits, performance, and indemnification. Each contract had signatures of both the superintendent and the principal, and each contained three measurable goals mutually agreed upon by the superintendent and the principal: 1) the principal will develop in the area of increasing student achievement; 2) the principal will develop in the area of increasing staff capacity; and 3) individual goals of the principal will support these efforts.

The Springfield Public Schools Mission and Goals 2005-2008 document has progress indicators for principals. All school principals will achieve at least 90 percent of job targets related to student achievement. All school principals will participate in comprehensive leadership development activities that support the Culture of Achievement. All performance evaluations will be assessed using uniform policies and practices. All work sites will successfully utilize an integrated data access system that allows access to all student data. All SIPs will contain components that "build a culture of achievement."

10.1. The superintendent, in regular meetings with administrators and members of the school committee, develops a coherent vision or mission statement and DIP designed to achieve it.

EQA Rating from 2004: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Prior to May 2001, the district embedded its vision for Springfield in an initiative to improve student achievement at the grassroots level of the school system. Essentially, Springfield operated 48 individual schools in an entirely decentralized system. The administrative leadership during 2000-2001 proposed collaboration with the University of Pittsburgh's Institute for Learning (IFL) to provide professional training, professional growth, and monitoring of

instruction. The learning walks were an integral element of this initiative, as well as of the DIP. This five-year initiative with the IFL encompassed the years 1999 through 2004.

The new administration, under the leadership of the superintendent hired in May 2001, had introduced the concept of the Culture of Achievement and established a system-wide focus on achievement. The vision of the Culture of Achievement was to maximize opportunities to learn so that all students could achieve the established state standards. Administrators claimed that the Culture of Achievement was the first time the schools had a systemic, committed focus to a data-driven approach to improve student achievement. Prior to May 2001, the open and vocal opposition of the district administration and the mayor against the MCAS tests damaged a districtwide vision for a data-driven approach to improve student achievement.

During the reexamination period under review, the superintendent established a system-wide goal to maximize opportunities to learn so that all students can achieve the state standards and to institutionalize a culture in which everyone behaves in accordance with the belief that all learners can achieve. The district developed a coherent mission statement and a DIP to pursue the mission. The principals used this document to develop and implement their respective SIPs.

Within the context of high turnover of staff and financial constraints, the superintendent has continued to implement timely and appropriate activities to address the indicators on which the district was rated 'Poor' or 'Unsatisfactory' in the earlier EQA review.

According to the superintendent, "Getting all students to proficiency is the highest priority goal." The superintendent stated he believes that in the years ahead the district must continue to develop the capacity to implement specific programs and actions necessary to improve the instructional delivery systems so that continuous academic improvement for all students is attained.

The District Improvement Plan incorporated the vision and mission statement and core values of the district as detailed in the Culture of Achievement document. In essence, the district strives to attain three long-term goals: to maximize student performance, to maximize staff performance and productivity, and to maximize delivery of support systems for students and staff. All SIPs aligned with the DIP.

Clearly, the district is engaged in setting achievement goals, providing instruction and needed support to the instructional process, conducting assessment and analysis, and revising and modifying instruction based upon achievement results to attain its student performance goals.

Standard II: Curriculum and Instruction							
Ratings▼ Indicators►	3.3	4.3	4.4	4.5	5.1	5.3	10
Excellent							
Satisfactory	2007				2007		
Needs Improvement		2007	2007	2007		2007	2007
Poor	2004	2004	2004	2004	2004	2004	
Unsatisfactory							

II. Curriculum and Instruction

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

Findings:

- The district made substantial progress in aligning its curricula horizontally, with day-by-day lessons for elementary English language arts (ELA) and math and unit-by-unit curricula at the middle school level. However, the district had not finalized the secondary ELA curriculum until late winter 2007, and the science curriculum was soon to follow.

- The district had not yet established a schedule for the regular review of its curricula.

- The district developed systems to monitor the effectiveness of curriculum, such as providing access to data from the MCAS tests, from district formative assessments, and from national formative assessments through workshops and districtwide technology pages.

- While a great deal of curriculum development and revision occurred in a short time during the period under review, it was too soon to determine whether the changes resulted in improved student achievement.

- While the district and individual schools had provided teachers with professional development on specific instructional strategies, in classroom observations EQA examiners found few instances of strong instructional practices, particularly in the middle and high schools.

- The district met the state requirement for instructional time at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.

Summary

During the period under review, the district created positions and allocated funds for curriculum development and oversight in an effort to improve student achievement. Within a short timeframe, administrators and teachers reviewed existing curricula to determine areas of need, and a plan of delivery dates and deliverables then drove curriculum development. At the same time, the district recruited and trained instructional leadership specialists who, as classroom teachers, had demonstrated improved student achievement in their own classrooms. These teacher specialists, armed with data from formative assessments, supported principals as they oversaw curriculum implementation in their buildings. However, the formative assessment data were limited in that the district did not disaggregate the data by subgroup.

The district was moving to a curriculum that provided teachers with day-to-day lesson plans because the content of teacher lessons varied from classroom to classroom and from school to school. These plans were in place at the elementary level for the 2006-2007 school year, were under development for the middle schools at the time of the EQA review, and were in the planning stages for the high schools. These developments were so recent that data were not available to determine whether the efforts led to improved student achievement.

Individual School Improvement Plans, based on the review of student achievement data, drove professional development in buildings on appropriate instructional strategies. The central office, through documents such as the Reading Plan and the Mathematics and Science Plan and through the day-by-day lesson plans, provided guidance concerning the expected elements of an instructionally sound lesson, whether in English language arts, math, or science. However, EQA examiners found limited evidence of strong instructional practices during classroom observations.

2004 Indicators

3.3. There is an ongoing process to:

    a. monitor,

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

EQA Rating from 2004: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the initial EQA examination period (2001-2003), the district did not consistently monitor the effectiveness of the curriculum.

During the reexamination period under review (2004-2006), the district implemented several systems for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the curriculum and instructional programs. In 2005, the control board allocated funds for the creation of the position of chief academic officer, who had the authority to hire four curriculum managers. These individuals, using teams composed of teachers and principals, developed pacing guides for all content areas at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. By the beginning of the 2006-2007 school year, day-by-day lesson plans were in place for elementary English language arts (ELA) and math, and unit plans were in place and day-by-day plans were under development for the middle schools. By March 2007, unit plans were in place for math and drafted for English for the high schools.

Some systems for monitoring the implementation of curriculum and instructional strategies were in place at the beginning of the period under reexamination. Each school had at least one math and one ELA collaborative professional development teacher (CPDT) who worked with teachers by modeling lessons and providing support. To move this coaching model forward, the district created instructional leadership specialists (ILSs) who were eventually to replace the CPDTs. A rigorous application process required that the candidates for instructional leadership training present evidence that achievement of their students had improved significantly. In their new roles, the ILSs assumed responsibility for reviewing data and communicating results to teachers

and the principal. Then, as the district produced pacing guides and detailed curricula, principals, CPDTs, and ILSs received regular professional development on monitoring their implementation. The district also developed "learning walk" protocols in every curricular area to guide the principals in this role.

Central office administrators, principals, ILSs, and classroom teachers had considerable data to determine how effectively they had implemented the curriculum and instructional programs. At all levels, schools administered district formative assessments (DFAs) three times a year to measure student progress. In addition, elementary teachers used the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) as well as program unit assessments. The middle and high schools had midyear and final exams in math and science. These data were available to administrators online in 2005-2006, and in 2006-2007 became available to classroom teachers. However, at the time of the EQA reexamination, the district had undertaken these changes so recently that it was too soon to determine whether they resulted in improved student achievement as there were no data available to analyze that.

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

EQA Rating from 2004: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the initial EQA examination period, there was no systematic annual review and annual evaluation of the curriculum. However, administrators stated that there was an ad hoc process for reviewing curriculum.

In 2005, during the reexamination period under review, the chief academic officer organized a complete review of the curriculum in place throughout the district. During this review, key content leaders assessed the curriculum in place as well as curricular areas in need of development. Based upon this review, the leaders developed a project-based plan for development and revision of curriculum complete with deadlines and deliverables. The school committee accepted this plan, and its curriculum subcommittee worked with the chief academic

officer to oversee its implementation. As part of this plan, the science department had an external audit done of its curriculum and assessments. This audit then drove the science curriculum revisions. Another example of the execution of the plan was the completion of the secondary English language arts curriculum in March 2007, as scheduled.

The assistant superintendent and the central office content specialists reported that curriculum revisions were made in light of MCAS and DFA results. The committees that conducted the curriculum revision work were composed of principals and teachers. The chief academic officer stated that curriculum review and revision would be a regular process since the Reading Plan and Mathematics and Science Plan called for closing the achievement gap through monitoring curriculum implementation and since the operating budget now had funds allocated for the activity. Grants had funded previous curriculum revisions.

However, in an update the superintendent provided to the EQA team, he said that "While the district has created significant foundational plans for improvement of curriculum … the district is now beginning to accelerate efforts to monitor and ensure full and faithful implementation of district plans."

4.4. Modifications and/or revisions to curricula are:

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

   b. revised as necessary and disseminated to staff.

EQA Rating from 2004: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the initial period of review, the MCAS test data showed wide disparities in achievement among Asian, African-American, Hispanic, and White students, according to administrators. They reviewed the math and Algebra 1 data to discern how to help students achieve at higher levels. In the district, Title I funds were allocated to grade 9 and double blocks were offered in both ELA and math in order to drive reform.

During the reexamination period under review, district administrators focused on improvement of aggregate student scores. None of the formative assessments in use yielded a breakdown of scores by student subgroup. In addition, the newly produced curriculum documents did not reference specific instructional strategies as effective for addressing the needs of particular subgroup populations. During interviews, administrators stated that principals did not always understand the four models for delivery of special education curriculum and that regular education teachers did not always know how to present content for English language learners (ELLs).

At the same time, central office administrators reported that revisions to curriculum during this period reflected knowledge of the achievement gap as measured by MCAS test results between White students and student subgroups such as special education, limited English proficient (LEP), Hispanic, and African-American. However, central office administrators did not disaggregate the DFA results by subgroup.

Central office administrators indicated that the Best Practices section of the secondary English instructional guides just completed contained instructional strategies appropriate for the improvement of subgroup achievement. They also pointed out that instructional guides for elementary ELA called for differentiated instruction using leveled readers according to reading levels determined by the DRA, although this did not directly address the needs of subgroup populations in particular. They indicated that research supported the implementation of Read 180 for English language learners and Fast Forward for special needs students. The district had introduced both programs during the period under reexamination. The district's implementation of its developing curriculum was so recent that it was not possible to evaluate its effectiveness in improving the achievement of subgroup populations.

The district had a process for "rolling out" curriculum revisions for staff. Principals received training in the changes during monthly professional development meetings, and CPDTs and ILTs received weekly training. Revisions were also available online for these individuals. It was the responsibility of the CPDTs and the ILSs to bring these changes to the teachers in regular meetings. Newly developed curricula were also available to teachers online, although teacher access to computers varied across the schools.

4.5. <u>The district regularly implements an established, well-documented process to ensure:</u>

    a. <u>Horizontal instructional program articulation throughout the system, and</u>

    b. <u>Sequencing and alignment of learning goals and expectations from one Grade to the next – K-12.</u>

    c. <u>Alignment with the state curriculum frameworks across all Grades PreK-12.</u>

EQA Rating from 2004: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Prior to 2002, Springfield's schools all acted independently from one another, according to administrators. The quality of the leadership, the expectations for achievement, academic rigor, and consistency of programming varied significantly from school to school. Each school was responsible for student achievement at each particular site.

During the reexamination period under review, the control board called for and the chief academic officer designed a plan for the development of day-to-day lesson plans at all levels in the tested content areas. While the district had established the overall plan and delivered sections of it on schedule, central office personnel and teachers did not complete the secondary English language arts curriculum until March 2007, and the K-12 science curriculum was still under development.

At the time of the EQA reexamination, day-to-day lessons were in place in math and ELA at the elementary level, which guaranteed horizontal alignment of the delivered curriculum if properly implemented. The middle schools had unit-by-unit plans, and the development of day-by-day lessons was underway. At the high schools, math unit plans were in place. The middle and high schools also had common final exams in math and science, which brought horizontal alignment of courses within and across schools in the district. Administration of district formative assessments and analysis of the results by teachers and school administrators also promoted horizontal alignment. As part of the plan, the district created instructional leadership specialist positions and trained principals to use "learning walk" protocols to facilitate monitoring of the implementation.

With regard to vertical alignment, interviewees reported that curriculum alignment as students moved from the elementary to the middle schools and the middle to the high schools was a particular challenge. Vertical teams created for that purpose were examining and addressing this. During the period under reexamination, however, the district produced pacing guides in math and ELA that laid out vertical alignment of the curricula during the course of a school year as well alignment from one year to the next.

Finally, curriculum alignment with the learning standards of the state frameworks was in place before and during the period under reexamination. The district incorporated the state standards as its curriculum objectives without change.

5.1. The district had implemented instructional programs that:

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

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

EQA Rating from 2004: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the initial period under review, there was inconsistent reading achievement across the individual schools, and a task force developed a plan to ensure literacy accountability across the district. According to administrators, professional development provided to the teachers did not always change instructional strategies in the classroom.

During the reexamination period under review, both central office staff and school site councils made decisions regarding particular instructional strategies to implement. The School Improvement Plans (SIPs) developed in buildings after a review of achievement results frequently called for professional development on specific instructional strategies. This professional development was embedded in teacher contract time, and teacher coaches followed up on it in classrooms. Specific instructional strategies that were supported varied from school to school, but several included classroom management and lesson planning.

Central office administrators made decisions concerning which instructional strategies to promote based on the assessed needs of students districtwide. Examples included comprehension strategies, inquiry in science, multi-step math problems, and guided reading in elementary ELA. The central office in its curriculum documents clearly laid out the elements of an instructionally strong lesson, whether in ELA or math.

The central office supported both district-promoted instructional strategies and those called for in individual SIPs through professional development for ILSs and principals. ILSs then brought the strategies to teachers in grade-level or department meetings. They continued their support for these strategies by modeling them in classrooms or by simply visiting classrooms. ILSs were permitted to visit all classrooms and did not need an invitation, as did the CPDTs.

However, EQA examiners in their classroom observations found instances of strong instructional practice in 79 percent of observed classrooms at the elementary level, 63 percent at the middle school level, and 60 percent at the high school level.

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

   a. meets state requirements at each level, and

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

EQA Rating from 2004: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

According to administrators, after a review of the MCAS test data, time allotments in ELA and math were increased to provide more time on learning in these subject areas, during the initial period under review. There had been an inconsistency in instructional time from school to school, and the district standardized time allotments. Despite these efforts, the district's MCAS test scores in both ELA and math did not meet state proficiency standards.

During the reexamination period under review, the elementary and middle schools met the state requirement for time on learning, including for students in academic need. For example, middle school students received 275 minutes per week of instruction in ELA, mathematics, social studies, and science. Double blocks of ELA and mathematics were provided for at-risk students. The high schools reported different amounts of time on learning, but all met the required 990 hours.

However, analysis of MCAS results by district staff revealed little improvement in ELA, math, and science, as well as scores that were generally low in comparison to those of students statewide. To address the performance of district students, the elementary schools had moved to a 2½ hour literacy block each day and had allocated 90 minutes daily for math instruction. The high schools moved to block scheduling during the period under reexamination. It remains to be seen whether the expansion of learning time at the elementary and high schools will lead to improved results on the 2007 MCAS tests.

2007 Indicator

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The EQA team visited classrooms as part of the reexamination in March 2007. 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.

During the site visit, the EQA examiners observed 105 randomly selected classrooms and recorded the presence or absence of 26 attributes reflected in the Principles of Effective Teaching grouped into five categories: classroom management, instructional practice, expectations, student activity and behavior, and climate. Observations were conducted at the district's schools as

follows: 39 at the elementary schools, 35 at the middle schools, and 31 at the high schools. In total, the EQA examiners observed 48 ELA classrooms, 33 math classrooms, and 24 classrooms of other subjects.

Classroom management refers to the maintenance of order and structure within the classroom. Positive indicators of classroom management were evident in 80 percent of the classrooms observed districtwide, with 94 percent at the elementary level, 73 percent at the middle school level, and 73 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 68 percent of the classrooms observed districtwide, with 79 percent at the elementary level, 63 percent at the middle school level, and 60 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 64 percent of the classrooms observed districtwide, with 85 percent at the elementary level, 58 percent at the middle school level, and 44 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 67 percent of the classrooms districtwide, with 76 percent at the elementary level, 64 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 70 percent of the classrooms observed districtwide, with 85 percent at the elementary school level, 66 percent at the middle school level, and 56 percent at the high school level.

Summary of Classroom Observations

| | Number of Classrooms | | | | Average Class Size | Average Paraprofs. per Class | Computers | | |
							Total Number	Number for Student Use	Average Students per Computer
	ELA	Math	Other	Total					
Elementary	24	10	5	39	17.2	0.2	69	62	10.8
Middle	12	15	8	35	21.6	0.1	129	104	7.3
High	12	8	11	31	18.4	0.1	100	83	6.9
Total	48	33	24	105	19.0	0.2	298	249	8.0

	Classroom Management	Instructional Practice	Expectations	Student Activity & Behavior	Climate
Elementary					
Total observations	146	278	131	179	99
Maximum possible	156	351	155	234	117
Avg. percent of observations	94%	79%	85%	76%	85%
Middle					
Total observations	102	197	81	133	69
Maximum possible	140	315	140	209	105
Avg. percent of observations	73%	63%	58%	64%	66%
High					
Total observations	90	168	55	108	52
Maximum possible	124	279	124	185	93
Avg. percent of observations	73%	60%	44%	58%	56%
Total					
Total observations	338	643	267	420	220
Maximum possible	420	945	419	628	315
Avg. percent of observations	80%	68%	64%	67%	70%

Standard III: Assessment and Program Evaluation					
Ratings▼ Indicators►	1.4	1.6	1.7	1.8	3.2
Excellent					
Satisfactory					
Needs Improvement	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007
Poor	2004	2004		2004	2004
Unsatisfactory			2004		

III. Assessment and Program Evaluation

<u>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.</u>

Findings:

- The district implemented numerous strategies to support the ongoing analysis of assessment results to improve curriculum and instruction in regular classrooms and support programs, such as monthly or bimonthly extended day meetings for teachers and administrators to review data and make decisions, and "learning walks" in which administrators observed lessons and provided feedback to teachers.

- Administrators were just beginning to use assessment data to inform improvements in support programs, professional development, and purchasing to increase student achievement.

- The district trained all administrators and a core group of teachers in the use of data analysis tools during the reexamination period. The remaining teachers were dependent on this core group for their ability to analyze aggregate, subpopulation, and individual assessment results.

- The district completed an initial period of reorganization of the curriculum departments and created a chief academic officer position, which resulted in improvements to the alignment of classroom assessment practices and expectations with the state curriculum standards. The district planned to continue the curriculum improvements.

- The district responded to several internal and external program evaluation reports and made changes in order to comply with requirements and recommendations.

- There was little evidence of the use of a systematic approach for program evaluation across the district to discern the changes needed in programs and services to increase student achievement. However, the district's special education department has engaged an outside contractor to evaluate the program annually since 2003.

Summary

Since the start of the 2004-2005 school year, the Springfield Public Schools made great strides in the use of student assessment results, local benchmarks, and the integration of daily and/or periodic assessment into the classroom. Following district guidelines and requirements, teachers used placement tests, such as the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), or other testing to assign students to groups, courses, or support programs.

To measure student progress on the curriculum taught and to determine student readiness for state tests, staff conducted periodic assessments throughout the year. The DRA, district formative assessments (DFAs), textbook or teacher-developed midyear and end-of-year tests, routine quizzes, tests, and exams, and rubric evaluations of student writing were examples of the assessments that teachers administered.

Teachers, collaborative professional development teachers (CPDTs), and administrators attended monthly or bimonthly extended day meetings to analyze state test results and classroom performance data to determine whether to make changes in the curriculum taught, in the instructional approaches used to teach the curriculum, and in the placement/grouping of students. Many schools also used team meetings and departmental meetings for this purpose.

During interviews, staff reported that all administrators and some teachers had the skills to use data analysis tools, such as TestWiz and Pearson Inform, which provided valuable information to review during extended day meetings. Central office staff shared that administrators and teachers were not yet using all of the features (such as disaggregation or other filtering) of the Inform software.

To assess instructional practices, administrators conducted "learning walks" in which they observed lessons for fidelity of implementation of the content, the model of instruction, and an appropriate learning environment. Using the district-developed learning walk forms, they provided feedback to teachers on the strengths and weaknesses of the lesson and recommended ways that the teacher could improve their instruction.

The EQA team found that classroom assessment practices and expectations aligned with the state curriculum and the district used analysis of assessment results to improve curriculum and instruction. District analyses of assessment results to improve support programs and services, professional development, and purchasing were less well developed. For example, the district reported no regular, systematic assessment of the English language learners program or the special education program to inform improvements to these programs. Starting with the 2006-2007 school year, special education staff used Easy IEP to input special education data to comply with statutory requirements, but not to assess the special education program.

Suggestions and requests for professional development and materials to purchase came from school-centered decision-making (SCDM) teams, according to administrators and teachers. Suggestions also came anecdotally from extended day meetings, from recurring themes observed in learning walks, and from director's suggestions. The EQA team found no regular, systematic assessment of the needs for professional development and purchasing in the district. These decisions appeared to be based more on perceived need or reaction rather than an analysis of assessment results.

For most of the period under reexamination, from fall 2004 through spring 2006, the Springfield Public Schools usually made modifications to district programs and services because of mandated external evaluations and not because of a systematic approach to program evaluation within the district. For example, during interviews central office administrators reported several changes made in the district's special education department as a result of the Coordinated Program Review (CPR) by the Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE) followed by an adequate yearly progress mid-cycle CPR. In addition, the district's special education department has contracted out for a program review for internal monitoring and program evaluation annually since 2003. As a result of these outside reviews, the special education department provided

trainings on compliance issues, assessment practices, collaborative and inclusionary teaching practices and models, and best practices in accessing the general education curriculum for students with disabilities.

Program evaluation began to change after the superintendent created the position of chief academic officer. The chief academic officer organized the effort to improve all academic programs by completing an initial internal audit, exclusive of the district's science curriculum. As of January 2007, district staff partially completed the development or revision of instructional guides, pacing guides, learning-walk guides, unit plans, and daily lesson plans for some subjects at some grade levels, but much work remained. Assessment and Evaluation Concepts, Inc. completed an outside evaluation of the district's science program including a curriculum alignment study and a critique of the district's science assessments. Staff acknowledged that much work remained as they moved toward a more consistent academic program to meet all student needs across the district.

2004 Indicators

1.4. <u>Regular analysis of assessment results informs improvements to:</u>

    a. <u>curricula,</u>

    b. <u>instructional practices,</u>

    c. <u>supplementary and remedial programs and services,</u>

    d. <u>professional development,</u>

    e. <u>purchasing and provisioning for improved student achievement.</u>

EQA Rating from 2004: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

For the initial period under review (2001-2003), no evidence was provided that the district engaged in regular or systematic analysis of assessment results to inform improvements to raise student achievement across the district. Furthermore, interviews indicated that while the district analyzed some data, the depth of analysis varied from school to school and their use varied significantly.

During the first two years of the period under reexamination (2004-2006), district and school professionals made limited progress in using locally-developed assessments and other assessment tools to inform the improvement of curriculum to raise student achievement, according to documentation and interviews. Soon after the superintendent filled the chief academic officer position, district staff followed a timeline for the systematic development and/or revision of the preK-12 curriculum, with approximately one year of the timeline completed. The process involved an audit of all existing curricula including an analysis of recent state and local assessment results. At the time of the site visit, EQA team members reviewed substantially completed curricula for elementary English language arts and preK-12 mathematics. The district "rolled out" ELA instructional guides for grades 6-12 during the team's visit. The district revised its elementary pupil progression policy in June 2005, and it included specific curriculum benchmarks for reading, writing, and math for student promotion to the next grade level.

The district required the use of several assessments, both state and local, at prescribed grade levels and times to place students and to track progress in ELA and math. At the start of the period reexamined, Springfield Public Schools had collaborative professional development teachers (CPDTs) in place at some of its schools to support teachers in the routine analysis of these assessment data to determine if teachers needed to make changes to improve their instruction. In 2004-2005, the district expanded the use of CPDTs to all schools in the district to improve ELA and math instruction. CPDTs and/or administrators met with teaching teams and/or departments at least once a month during the extended day meetings after school to routinely review classroom assessment data and determine next steps to improve instruction.

During 2006-2007, the district began to install instructional leadership specialists (ILSs) in almost all of its schools. The ILS position was a promotion for effective teachers, and their role was similar to the CPDTs' role in supporting teachers with analyzing assessment data to improve instruction. Administrators, CPDTs, and ILSs used data analysis tools to produce reports for training teachers in the data analysis process. Most often school leaders used TestWiz as the tool for item analysis and disaggregation of scores by racial/ethnic, ELL, special education, and low income status. Starting in 2006, the district added Pearson Inform as another data analysis tool.

In a 2006 revision, the elementary pupil progression policy listed instructional time allotments of 2½ hours daily for the ELA block and 1½ hours daily for the math block. The pupil progression policy revisions to the secondary plan (implementation 2007-2008), approved by the school committee on December 7, 2006, included daily 90-minute blocks for ELA and math and 90-minute blocks every other day for science and social studies in the middle schools. The district decided to increase instructional time for ELA and math because teachers needed more instructional time to improve students' MCAS scores. Based on this need for additional ELA and math teaching time, the district increased the length of the school day for the 2006-2007 school year by 20 minutes in the middle schools and by 30 minutes in the elementary schools.

According to interviews and documents, the Springfield school district also used local and state assessments at prescribed grade levels and/or time periods to place students and to track ELA and math progress for special education students and English language learners (ELLs). Schools included special education and ELL teachers in extended day meetings with administrators, CPDTs, and ILSs at which these support program teachers received the same coaching as regular education classroom teachers in the analysis of assessment data to inform improvements in instruction.

As the district reorganized all curriculum, instruction, and support programs under the supervision of the chief academic officer, it also established a Professional Development Center to support the teacher training necessary to improve curriculum and instruction and to promote student success. School Improvement Plans (SIPs) not only showed evidence of the use of TestWiz analysis to assess areas of strength/weakness and to develop improvement goals for curriculum, instruction, and support services based on this analysis, but they also often listed professional development training needed to improve student achievement. For example, several schools listed goals of improving student ability to answer open-response questions and respond to writing prompts, or to improve student knowledge of a particular concept in a particular subject. In order to accomplish these goals, SIPs often listed specific training necessary to learn new curriculum or instructional approaches.

These student achievement goals not only had instructional strategies that teachers used to help students achieve those goals along with suggested professional development, but they often

indicated staffing and/or materials needed. During the reexamination period, there was no evidence that district staff analyzed school goals systematically to see if each school met its student performance targets, nor was there evidence that the district made changes in school budgets based on needs identified by student achievement results. According to most of the principals interviewed, the district continued to allocate money for purchasing materials and for assignment of staff primarily based on formula and not based on student achievement needs.

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

EQA Rating from 2004: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

District interviewees indicated that there was no formal training for teachers during the first part (2000-2001) of the initial review period. Further, the only training provided during the remainder of the period under review was the Program Improvement Mapping (PIM) process for members of the school-centered decision-making teams.

During the reexamination period, the Springfield Public Schools devoted additional time and resources to improving the ability of administrators and teachers to analyze student achievement data. Administrators and some teachers had used TestWiz as early as 2003 to produce reports disaggregating the MCAS ELA, math, and science data by racial/ethnic, low income, special education, and ELL subgroup. These staff also used TestWiz for item analysis by content area and type of question. Evidence that school administrators used these data analyses was also in School Improvement Plans (SIPs) in the form of student performance goals, student learning objectives, root causes for problem areas, improvement objectives, teaching strategies, and outcome benchmarks. The district Corrective Action Plan 2007-2010 contained goals for student performance, staff performance, and systems development for documenting, managing, measuring, and improving all work processes in the school system. District staff acknowledged that there was room for improvement in building the capacity of administrators and teachers to

become more systematic in applying aggregate and individual test data analyses to improve student achievement.

According to documentation and interviews, staff at the district's Office of Research, Assessment, and Accountability distributed all district, school, and student MCAS data to administrators and school leadership teams. They provided training to administrators, CPDTs, and ILSs on accessing, formulating queries, generating reports, and interpreting data using Test Wiz and, in 2006, the new web-based software program. Starting in 2006, training in Pearson Inform was provided to teachers during professional development extended days. These programs enabled analysis of school, grade-level, classroom, and individual student test results.

During interviews, district staff shared that professional development, including training in the use of data, took place up to twice each month during the extended day, a day once per week when teachers stayed after school to meet as a team or do other activities. During these extended days, school administrators, CPDTs, and ILSs taught teachers how to review state and periodic local assessment data reports to identify strengths and weaknesses, to identify students needing individual help or tutoring before or after school, and, in some cases, to improve instructional programs based on item analysis or some other tool. Middle school teachers expressed concerns about the high mobility of students affecting the accuracy of the data they reviewed.

District administrators were unsure as to whether students who moved out or arrived recently could be "filtered in or out" using the Inform software. They shared that they were still learning about all of the capabilities of the new data analysis tool, Inform. The department of special education added new software, Easy IEP, during 2006-2007 to improve the recording and tracking of special education demographic and assessment data and, ultimately, to improve the delivery of special education services to eligible students.

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

EQA Rating from 2004: Unsatisfactory

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the initial review period, according to the progress report on students attaining the Competency Determination (CD) released by the DOE in 2004, 80 percent of the Class of 2003 earned a Competency Determination, and 70.5 percent of the Class of 2004 did so.

During the reexamination period, the EQA reexamination team obtained Competency Determination data from the adequate yearly progress (AYP) reports for four of the high schools from the end of the 2004-2005 school year. Based on the high school seniors assessed at High School of Commerce, Springfield High School of Science and Technology, Springfield Central High School, and Springfield High School, 86 percent of the Class of 2005 earned a CD. By individual high school, 85 percent of the aggregate student population met the 2005 CD Attainment target in English language arts and mathematics at Commerce High School, 87 percent did so at High School of Science and Technology, 51 percent did so at Springfield High School, and 89 percent did so at Central High School. The 2005 Mid-cycle IV AYP Report listed the aggregate population and the low income, African-American, Hispanic, and White populations at High School of Commerce, High School of Science and Technology, and Central High School as having met the target for CD attainment in ELA and mathematics. Also, the limited English proficient subgroup at High School of Commerce and High School of Science and Technology met the target for CD attainment in ELA and mathematics. The 2005 Mid-cycle IV AYP Report indicated that the special education subgroup did not meet the target for CD attainment in 2005 in ELA and mathematics at High School of Commerce, High School of Science and Technology, and Central High School. The aggregate population did not meet the target for CD attainment in 2005 at Springfield High School.

During interviews, district staff shared that they had numerous programs in place to support students in meeting or exceeding the CD standard by their senior year. The basis of student support was the pupil progression plan that articulated the district's expectations that all students complete the requirements for each grade level, thus enabling promotion of each student to the next grade. If a student was not progressing, the student teacher assistance team (STAT) convened to determine why. After assessing the reasons why the student was struggling, options for interventions included classroom modifications, attendance or discipline strategies, Student

Success Plans, free after school or Saturday school tutoring and MCAS support, class size reduction teachers, and mandatory, free summer school.

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

EQA Rating from 2004: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

District interviews during the initial review indicated that prior to 2001, the prevailing view in the city was that the district was "a diverse inner city school system," and that, in order for students to achieve, benchmarks had to be set at a lower level than others in the commonwealth.

During the reexamination period, after hiring a chief academic officer the Springfield Public Schools completed a timeline for the development and revision of updated curricula for all subjects and grade levels, including assessments and instructional practices. About one year after starting this process, district staff finished almost the entire math curriculum and over half of the ELA curriculum. During the EQA reexamination visit, the district "rolled out" the ELA instructional guides for middle school and high school. Immediately prior to the EQA site visit, secondary teachers used the district's Reading Plan from June 2002 for ELA instructional guidance.

A review of the district curriculum documents showed that the initial work aligned with the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks.   K-5 teachers used standards-aligned placement assessments, such as the DRA and Dynamic Indicators of Basic Literacy Skills (DIBELS), to group students for reading. Teachers also embedded daily assessment into literacy instruction and utilized periodic assessment as prescribed by the reading program's units of instruction. In the completed curriculum, district administrators also provided clear expectations for the instructional model that teachers were to use for ELA and math, including specifics on the use of classroom time, such as the 150-minute elementary literacy block model. They also provided pacing guides and sample lessons for these subjects, which continued the alignment with state standards.

When Springfield staff used the texts and materials that the district adopted to support the implementation of the ELA and math curricula, the district also provided documents showing where these instructional materials aligned with the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks. An example of an alignment document for commercial materials was the Harcourt User's Link (HUL, June 2003). After the initial assessment of students, teachers of grades 1-5 consulted the HUL to refine the placement or grouping of students for differentiated instruction. The HUL provided teachers with the sequence for all Harcourt reading selections by grade level including genre and vocabulary, and it showed the leveled texts that went with each reading selection including DRA level, genre, and focus skill or strategy.

During lesson walks, principals, district administrators, CPDTs, and ILSs checked for alignment of curriculum and instruction implementation with local expectations and state standards, among other things. They provided feedback to preK-12 teachers as to how well they met the expectations of quality, standards-based instructional practices. Teacher implementation of the district's math curriculum was nearly complete, with clear preK-12 alignment with state standards, daily assessment embedded in the block of math instruction, periodic assessment specified by the math program utilized, and the use of lesson walk feedback for teachers.

3.2. <u>The results of the district's program evaluation are analyzed and used to inform needed changes or modifications in the district's programs and services that would most likely result in improved student achievement.</u>

EQA Rating from 2004: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

In an interview during the initial EQA review, a district administrator indicated that the school system was evolving in the area of evaluation and that the top priority was to look at data coming out of the schools. Other interviewees indicated that, for the time under review, the evaluation of programs was difficult because, prior to the appointment of the new superintendent in 2001, the district was composed of 48 autonomous schools and the evaluation of programs was not feasible.

For the reexamination period, there was no evidence of an internally generated, systematic approach for the analysis of program evaluation results, with the possible exception of an audit of the district's curriculum recently ordered by the chief academic officer. School district staff did most of the auditing of the curricular programs; however, the chief academic officer asked Assessment and Evaluation Concepts, Inc. to audit the science curriculum for alignment and assessment. The district was in the process of creating an entire science program, based on the results of the Assessment and Evaluation Concepts, Inc. study.

In interviews, district staff elaborated on their efforts over the last few years to promote consistency in the implementation of curriculum, instruction, and support programs across the district, concerns that evaluators often expressed. Goal three of the district's Corrective Action Plan 2007-2010 called for the development of "a systematic approach for documenting, managing, measuring, and improving all work processes." Staff shared that the Pearson Inform data system had the potential to improve the district's analysis and use of the results of evaluations. During interviews, most district and school administrators did not clearly describe how they currently used internal program evaluations to gather data about the changes needed in professional development and other areas of concern.

Organizations outside the district mandated that district staff participate in evaluations between 2004 and 2006. The Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE) conducted an initial Coordinated Program Review (CPR) in 2002. According to interviewees and documents, a CPR Mid-cycle report in 2005 led to a Corrective Action Plan (June 2006) for the special education department.

In response to the Corrective Action Plan, district staff developed a new policy and procedures manual for the special education department. Other special education department changes for the 2006-2007 school year included hiring a chief compliance officer to address compliance issues in the CPR report, lowered caseloads for special education staff, developing a database to track timelines, and implementing Easy IEP, a web-based software application to assist with analysis of special education data. The district established a special education high school to address the needs of these students as well as the high costs of out-of-district placements. The Springfield control board asked an out-of-state team to conduct a Springfield Public Schools

Internal Assessment in 2006. According to the superintendent, the recommendations from the Internal Assessment related more to business organizations than to school districts and, therefore, the district did not implement many of the recommendations from this assessment.

Standard IV: Human Resource Management and Professional Development					
Ratings▼ Indicators►	3.1	3.4	3.5	7.3	7.5
Excellent					
Satisfactory					
Needs Improvement	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007
Poor	2004			2004	2004
Unsatisfactory		2004	2004		

IV. Human Resource Management and Professional Development

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

Findings:

- The Springfield Public Schools held principals accountable for meeting the goals stated in their respective School Improvement Plans (SIPs).

- Central administrators' and assistant principals' evaluations did not meet the requirements of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 38 that required annual evaluations.

- Despite the lack of compliance with the requirements of M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 38, the principals' evaluations were informative, instructive, promoted personal growth, and were likely to enhance student performance.

- The district developed its professional development program using both aggregated and disaggregated student assessment data, but staff evaluations did not inform professional development.

- During the period under reexamination, the district trained all professional staff in district curriculum accommodation planning to assist with the development of a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) that included all the components required by statute.

Summary

While the principals' evaluations during the reexamination period did not meet the requirement of yearly evaluations mandated by Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 38, the Springfield Public Schools held principals accountable for student achievement goals. The

superintendent required principals and schools to analyze MCAS test results and develop measurable performance goals. The superintendent incorporated the performance goals into the principals' evaluation documents and made salary adjustments and principal assignments based on meeting or exceeding the performance goals.

The district's evaluation procedure for teachers, central office administrators, and assistant principals did not meet the requirements of the Education Reform Act. The teacher evaluation document lacked some components of the Principles of Effective Teaching. A review of teacher personnel files revealed that 36 percent had no evaluation on file. The district negotiated a new teacher evaluation instrument that interviewees indicated met all the requirements of M.G.L. Chapter 71, Section 38. For 2004-2005 and 2005-2006, EQA examiners found no evaluations for central office administrators or for assistant principals.

During 2004-2006, the aggregate student assessment data drove professional development activities. For teachers, the district offered focused content-based professional development for the two-day districtwide program and the four-day school-based programs. In addition, the district offered courses to specific groups of staff such as a district-based licensure program and programs to license and support building administrators.

The Springfield Public Schools introduced Pearson Inform, a data analysis and decision support tool, to district and school administrators in May 2006. Training was mandatory for principals and instructional specialists. Teachers, in compliance with the teacher's contract, were offered Pearson Inform training during the extended day professional development program during the 2006-2007 academic year. The district also offered the staff a few formal data analysis courses but did not require mandatory participation.

During the summer of 2005, the district required all principals and other administrators to undergo training in district curriculum accommodation planning in order to present District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) information to building staff. Principals presented and discussed the DCAP with all teachers, paraprofessionals, and nurses; and the district required all staff to acknowledge receipt of a copy of the DCAP document.

2004 Indicators

3.1. <u>The district employs a system of:</u>

    a. <u>school evaluation that focuses on accountability for administrators;</u>

    b. <u>program evaluation that focuses on accountability for administrators and staff;</u>

    c. <u>personnel evaluation that focuses on accountability for all administrators, teachers, and staff.</u>

EQA Rating from 2004: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the initial period of review (2001-2003), administrators were held accountable for meeting the goals stated in the respective School Improvement Plans (SIPs), but none of the SIPs were data driven. According to staff in interviews, principals worked with teachers to ensure growth. In a review of 98 teacher evaluations, 32 percent had no comments by the evaluator and only 72 percent were completed in a timely manner. The EQA review revealed that the teacher evaluation did not contain a student achievement component.

During the reexamination period under review (2004-2006), the district held principals and administrators accountable for meeting the goals stated in the School Improvement Plans, and student achievement data drove the SIPs, as determined in interviews. Each SIP contained a vision statement, mission statement, five goals aligned with No Child Left Behind (NCLB), and the district's Culture of Achievement initiative. Each SIP also contained a self-assessment rating form that required the principal to evaluate the school's use of curriculum, implementation of district and state assessments, use of disaggregated data, staff certifications and evaluations, and evaluation of its schoolwide academic support systems and interventions. The final component, an executive summary, addressed student performance goals.

Interviewees revealed the superintendent held principals, zone assistant superintendents, and other central office administrators accountable for performance based on MCAS results and SIPs goals. Interviewees indicated that data drove all SIPs, and that principals' merit incentives depended on schools meeting the SIP goals. They stated that principals could receive merit

increases of one percent for the successful completion of each of three goals. One middle school SIP executive summary listed performance goals for increasing the composite proficiency index (CPI) for grade 7 ELA from 73.9 percent in 2005 to 79 percent in 2006, and for grades 6 and 8 math from 45.6 percent in 2005 to 56 percent in 2006. The principal's summative evaluation contained the SIP goals and other individual goals. Interviewees stated that the district sometimes transferred principals based on MCAS test scores.

Interviewees indicated that the district continued to use learning walks to collect data to evaluate program implementation, inform professional development, and provide building assistance to principals. Learning walks were conducted by principals, zone assistant superintendents, directors, and school support specialists. Principals said that they used learning walks data to initiate dialogue between the principal and teachers as well as to inform professional development offerings for staff. For example, one principal indicated that learning walks provided information on classroom management issues. Using the learning walk data, the principal approached some teachers individually to offer classroom management strategies, and he discussed the classroom management data at faculty meetings. The district, aware of the data, recognized the need for additional professional development in this area and offered two sessions of Best Practices in Behavior Management during one of the four districtwide professional development days in August.

EQA examiners found no evaluations on file for central office administrators and assistant principals, but principals' evaluations focused on accountability. A review of 35 principals' evaluations indicated that the evaluations were informative, instructive, likely to enhance student achievement; promoted personal growth, and contained components of the Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership. In addition, interviewees indicated that the superintendent based merit pay on attainment of student performance goals in the SIPs.

Teacher evaluations did not contain a component addressing student performance. A review of teacher personnel files indicated that, excluding newly hired teachers for 2006, 36 percent of teachers had no evaluations on file. Interviewees indicated that for the 2005-2006 school year, the district did not renew 50 non-professional status teachers for performance issues and terminated one administrator for performance issues.

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

EQA Rating from 2004: Unsatisfactory

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

In Springfield, the evaluation instrument for the district's administrators did not align with the requirements of the Education Reform Act during the initial period of review.

During the reexamination period under review, the evaluation instrument for the district's administrators still did not align with the requirements of the Education Reform Act. Evaluations for the superintendent and for principals contained components of the Principles of Effective Leadership, but they were not timely.

The superintendent's evaluation document for 2005-2006, although completed, was neither dated nor signed. The superintendent's extension contract dated March 2006 stated that a performance review for FY 2005 by the school committee had not occurred as required by the first extension of the contract. The superintendent's contract extension dated March 2006 linked incentive compensation to meeting or exceeding performance goals incorporated in the Culture of Achievement document and the School Improvement Plans (SIPs).

At the time of review, the performance evaluation of administrators, principals, assistant principals, and the associate principal did not comply with Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 38, which requires annual evaluations for administrators. A review of 23 central administrators' personnel files indicted that the district hired four new administrators for the 2006-2007 school year. EQA examiners found no evaluations on file for the remaining central administrators for 2004-2005 or 2005-2006, other than that of the superintendent. In a review of 27 personnel files of assistant principals, EQA examiners found no evaluations on file for 2005-2006 or for 2004-2005.

Evaluations of principals for 2005-2006 had review dates after the 2005-2006 school year. When asked, the superintendent explained that he altered the evaluation cycle to a one-time 18-month evaluation cycle to align principal performance evaluations with MCAS results. A review of 44

principal personnel files indicated that the district hired nine new principals for 2006. Records submitted to the EQA indicated that of 35 principal evaluations, 83 percent (29 of 35) were timely and 73 percent (24 of 35) had signatures. . EQA examiners found no evidence of principals' evaluations for 2004-2005. They did determine that the principals' evaluations for 2005-2006 were informative, instructive, likely to enhance student achievement, and promoted personal growth.

Most but not all central administration staff had appropriate Massachusetts licensure. Review of the administrators' personnel files indicated that two supervisors'/directors' personnel files contained no evidence of licensure.

Most but not all principals had appropriate Massachusetts licensure. Of the 44 principals employed in the district, 94 percent (41 of 44) of the principals' personnel records contained principal licensure. Two elementary principals' and one K-12 principal's personnel files did not contain evidence of licensure.

Of the 27 assistant principals and the associate principal employed by the district, 89 percent (24 of 27) had licensure for the positions they held. Review of the personnel files of the assistant principals and the associate principal revealed that one assistant principal had a license application pending from 2003, and personnel files for two assistant principals contained no evidence of certification.

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

EQA Rating from 2004: Unsatisfactory

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

At the time of the initial EQA review, the teachers' evaluation instrument had some elements of the required components established by the Education Reform Act, but the instrument had not changed significantly since 1993.

During the reexamination period under review, the teachers' evaluation procedure did not comply with the Education Reform Act in that they were not timely. The teachers' evaluation

instrument had some elements of the required components established by the Education Reform Act, but the instrument still had not changed significantly since 1993. The teachers' evaluations did not contain a student achievement component. In a review of 56 randomly selected teacher personnel files, EQA examiners found 21 percent (12 of 56) were for teachers newly hired for 2006-2007. Of the remaining 44 teacher personnel files, 36 percent (16 of 44) had no evaluations on file. Of the teacher evaluations reviewed, the EQA team considered 86 percent (24 of 28) informative, 18 percent (5 of 28) instructive, and four percent (1 of 28) conducive to professional growth or overall effectiveness.

Interviewees indicated that at the time of reexamination, the district employed 14 percent (359 of 2,648) of professional staff on waiver. EQA examination of the 56 randomly selected professional staff personnel files indicated that for 2006, 30 percent (17 of 56) had no licensure for the positions they held. Interviewees stated that for the 2005-2006 school year, the district did not renew 130 non-professional status teachers for failure to make substantial progress toward licensure.

Interviewees stated the Springfield School Committee and the Springfield Education Association negotiated a new teacher evaluation instrument. Article 21 of the teachers' contract stated that the district would negotiate and settle the new evaluation model by January 2007 and implement it in 2007-2008. Interviewees stated the new evaluation instrument and procedures met the requirements of Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 71, Section 38 for both professional status and non-professional status teachers, as well as all the requirements of the Principles of Effective Teaching.

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

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

   b. evaluation results of programs and services, and

   c. evaluations of professional staff and administrators.

EQA Rating from 2004: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

At the time of the initial EQA review, staff said in interviews that while the district disaggregated student assessment data by student subgroup, it did not present the data in a "user friendly" format. As a result, analysis of subgroup data was not always comprehensive. According to professional development staff in interviews, the evaluation of teachers and administrators did not directly inform the district's offerings for professional development. Instead, these evaluations were "individually prescriptive." However, an informal procedure already in place allowed staff to contact the professional development office if they wished to request specific professional development.

During the reexamination period under review, the district used the analysis of student assessment data disaggregated by student subgroup as well as evaluation results of programs and services to inform its professional development program. However, the evaluations of professional staff did not inform the district's professional development plan.

In interviews, district staff stated that directors, principals, and teachers disaggregated student assessment data and used this data analysis to drive school-based and district-based professional development activities. The Springfield Public Schools' generic rubrics for writing SIPs required examination of achievement data by subgroup, including gender, race, special education, and limited English proficiency, for significant differences in achievement requiring specific student performance goals. Additionally, school self-assessment forms contained in each SIP indicated that the district disaggregated data from a variety of sources including state tests, standardized tests, special education tests, English language proficiency assessments, teacher assessments, dropout and attendance data, and retention data.

District administrator interviewees indicated that due to the results of the MCAS tests, the district evaluated its program for English language learners (ELLs). As a result, interviewees stated, the district provided Massachusetts English Language Assessment-Oral (MELA-O) training to all ELL teachers during the four districtwide professional development days. A review of the 2006 professional development catalog of coursework, Academic Learning Time (ALT), indicated the district offered three courses for the ELL program: English Language Learning Program Policy & Procedures, MELA-O Assessment, and Second Language Learning

and Teaching. Additionally, interviewees stated that district ELL staff provided school-based ELL professional development during some of the weekly 75-minute extended day periods. District administrators also stated that the district and the University of Massachusetts entered into a three-year federally funded professional development partnership to provide Access to Critical Content and English Language Acquisition (ACCELA). ACCELA provided support to teachers and administrators to develop literacy practices for ELL students. ACCELA provided on-site coursework in ELL and reading for 2004-2007.

In Springfield, during the four scheduled professional development days, the Academic Learning Time (ALT) catalog indicated 12 schools developed site-specific in-house professional development programs. These programs required 80 percent approval from the School Centered Decision Making team (SCDM). For example, for 2006 the Lincoln Elementary School voted to receive in-house professional develop training on Sheltering Content Instruction. Interviewees stated that the district designed this course to provide teachers with skills to implement instructional strategies and approaches for English language learners. Interviewees further indicated that the district professional development resulted from data analyses of the subgroup populations and addressed the SIPs. Administrators interviewed stated that they used learning walks to observe teacher implementation of the professional development received and reviewed district formative assessment (DFA) and MCAS data to evaluate the success of the professional development offerings.

A review of the professional development activities offered during the four professional development days in 2005-2006 indicated that the district scheduled 92 different activities related to districtwide content areas in grades preK-12. In addition, the district offered courses through Project Lead, courses for the district-based licensure program, as well as 12 four-day school-based professional development courses. Further, during the school year the district provided a variety of building-based professional development programs during the extended day time. The district aligned the professional development with the Culture of Achievement document to increase student achievement through comprehension. Paraprofessionals attended two of the four professional days as well. Interviewees indicated that the district used learning walks as a method of evaluating programs and instructional content delivery.

According to administrators interviewed, during the four-day districtwide professional development program, the district required that attendees evaluate each professional development activity they attended. District administrators said they read all evaluation documents, pulled samples of positive and negative comments, and sent copies of the evaluation results to all directors and to the Springfield Education Association professional development committee. Central office interviewees indicated that because of poor evaluations, the district terminated two presenters for poor performance. Additionally, the district required all program presenters in the four-day professional development program to attend a two-hour training session on ALT. Interviewees indicated that the district required this training to ensure that ALT became embedded into all professional development offerings.

According to professional development staff interviewed, the evaluation of teachers and administrators informed the professional development program. However, in a review of teachers' personnel files, EQA examiners found that 36 percent (16 of 44) were missing evaluations. Of the remaining evaluations, the EQA determined that only one teacher evaluation contained references to professional development. Additionally, with the exception of the personnel file for the superintendent, at the time of the reexamination the EQA examiners found no evaluations on file for central administrators or for assistant principals for 2005-2006 or for 2004-2005.

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

EQA Rating from 2004: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the period of the initial EQA review, there were a few formal data analysis courses offered to staff through the professional development program, but these were not mandatory. Some other informal training in the analysis of data was accomplished through staff meetings and team meetings, but these were not systematic in the district.

During the reexamination period, the district continued to offer the staff a few formal data analysis courses, but the district still did not require mandatory participation. The district did offer some other informal training in the analysis of data through extended day meetings, but not in all schools.

Interviewees indicated that all professional staff received District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) training. During the summer of 2005, the district required all principals and other administrators to undergo professional development training in order to present DCAP information to building staff. During one of the two school-based professional development days in August 2005, the district required all staff members to attend a two-hour presentation on the DCAP. During this professional development day, principals presented a PowerPoint presentation and discussed the DCAP with the staff. Interviewees indicated that all teachers, paraprofessionals, and nurses received this professional development. Additionally, the district required all staff to acknowledge receipt of a copy of the DCAP document. For 2006, the district required all newly hired staff and staff who had missed the 2005 presentation to attend DCAP training and acknowledge receipt of the DCAP.

The format of the professional development school-based plan required each school to show how it would address the need to analyze school data. The district offered a few districtwide formal data analysis courses to staff but did not have a districtwide program for data analysis. Rather, documents indicated that the individual schools offered professional development in data analysis. For example, Forest Park Middle School indicated that it analyzed test data from a variety of sources including DFAs and the MCAS tests. CPDTs presented data analysis workshops. Central High School focused on data from DFA exams, midterms, and PSATs. The Springfield Academy for Excellence professional development school-based plan for 2005-2006 indicated that the MCAS data were analyzed. Mining the Data was presented to math teachers, and CPDTs worked with teachers to understand the data from the GRADE and GMADE diagnostic tests at all grade levels. Individual school-based plans indicated that professional development offerings were evaluated through learning walks, DFAs, observations of teaching strategies, improved performance of students in measurable assessments, SIP implementation reflection sheets, and staff feedback.

District interviewees indicated that a special education compliance officer regularly participated in learning walks. Based on data received from the learning walks, the special education department planned to develop guides for principals in what to look for in curriculum modifications. A review of the districtwide professional development catalog for 2006 showed one offering for general education teachers, Practical Strategies for Inclusion: High School, for implementing inclusion and providing access to the general education curriculum at the high school level. The course was not mandatory and was limited to 40 participants.

The catalog also listed one offering on data analysis, SPS Toolkit: MS Office Excel and Access Focus. The course was not mandatory and was limited to 15 participants.

Standard V: Access, Participation, and Student Academic Support										
Ratings▼ Indicators►	2.2	2.3	2.5	6.2	6.3	6.5	8.1	8.3	8.6	8.7
Excellent										
Satisfactory						2007	2007	2007		2007
Needs Improvement	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007				2007	
Poor	2004	2004	2004	2004	2004	2004	2004	2004		
Unsatisfactory									2004	2004

V. Access, Participation, and Student Academic Support

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

Findings:

- The district revised the student attendance policy during the period under reexamination to reduce student absenteeism; however, chronic student absenteeism remained a major issue, as over 7,000 students missed at least 18 days of school in 2005-2006.

- Staff absenteeism was high in the district, but the new teacher contract included an attendance criterion for teachers to be eligible for promotional opportunities.

- The district did not evaluate the effect of student and staff absenteeism on performance or achievement; however, the district was in the process of creating a database to measure these relationships.

- The district lacked a centralized and institutionalized process to manage dropouts, which was primarily a school-based responsibility of principals and counselors.

- Despite providing early intervention programs to assist students in attaining proficiency in grade 3 reading, the MCAS test results for 2005-2006 showed that the percentage of grade 3 students attaining proficiency decreased in the aggregate and for most subgroups and was consistently below the state average for most subgroups.

- The district implemented a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan during the period under reexamination that included all of the components required by statute, and the district made it available to all teachers.

- The district implemented an initiative to develop and enhance Student Success Plans during the period under reexamination and provided training to all staff regarding the development and use of the plans.

- The district provided AP, honors, and gifted and talented programs to its students, although it did not offer AP courses at all high schools.

- The district collected AP and honors enrollment data and analyzed the data disaggregated by subgroup, and it planned to expand offerings in district high schools.

Summary

Both student and staff attendance were serious issues in the Springfield Public Schools during the period under reexamination. Many students were chronically absent in 2005-2006, and teachers were absent over 12 days, on average. In response to the student attendance issue, the district revised and strengthened the student attendance policy and used home/school attendance specialists and principals to monitor student attendance at all schools. The district also worked with the district court to modify the attendance behavior of students who were chronically absent. Regarding teacher attendance, the new teacher contract included a promotional incentive related to attendance; teachers are no longer eligible for higher-level teaching positions without meeting certain attendance benchmarks. Although the district collected and reviewed student and staff attendance data, it did not correlate student and staff attendance with student achievement. However, the district was in the process of creating a database that could measure, among other things, the relationship between staff attendance and student achievement. District leaders recognized attendance, behavior, and dropouts as serious problems and put policies and procedures in place to address them. Aside from attendance, however, the management of behavior and potential dropouts occurred mostly at individual school sites.

To support teachers with strategies to assist regular education students in attaining academic success, the district implemented initiatives to create a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) and an enhanced individual Student Success Plan. All staff received these documents as

well as training in how to develop and utilize Student Success Plans. The district also had service teams and student teacher assistant teams (STATs) embedded in schools to deal with any issue, social or academic, that affected student success.

The percentage of grade 4 students who attained proficiency in 2005-2006, both in the aggregate and for most subgroups, was below the state average in spite of many early intervention efforts to improve their scores. The district had implemented a reading plan in 2002 and focused on phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency.

The district offered a gifted and talented program at a middle school during the period under reexamination and provided honors and Advanced Placement (AP) courses at the high schools. Although only three high schools offered AP courses, plans were in place to expand these offerings to more high schools in 2007-2008. The district had also expanded the International Baccalaureate program to all school levels during the period under reexamination. The district collected and disaggregated higher-level class enrollment data and created a report that predicted future AP course enrollments. The district also provided academic support programs for students, such as tutoring and summer school, and received a number of grants to provide academic support services, including academic support services for limited English proficient (LEP) students.

The district had substantial transience during the period under reexamination. Many students moved into, out of, or within the district. According to Department of Education (DOE) enrollment data, the district had over 1,500 fewer students enrolled in grade 12 in 2006 than were enrolled four years earlier in grade 9. Hundreds of students dropped out and hundreds were retained. The non-adjusted DOE four-year cohort dropout rate in the district for 2006 was approximately 33 percent and the graduation rate was approximately 51 percent. Most subgroups had higher dropout rates and lower graduation rates than did students in the aggregate. Many students lived in group homes within and outside of the district. The district provided educational services to approximately 1,100 homeless students and approximately 250 students who lived in foster homes, and the Department of Social Services (DSS) and the Department of Youth Services (DYS) placed a number of students in the district. The district had procedures and practices in place to assess and place transitioning students.

2004 Indicators

2.2. <u>The district and all of its schools regularly monitor and evaluate data on student and staff attendance.</u>

EQA Rating from 2004: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the early part of the initial review period (2001-2003), data collection, management, and analysis was a cumbersome and inefficient process that reportedly restrained effective responses to attendance problems. The teacher absenteeism rate in the district was high. For example, Dorman Elementary School, with 28 teachers, reported 396 teacher days of absence; Commerce High School, with 137 teachers, reported 1,409 teacher days of absence.

During the reexamination period under review (2004-2006), the district had written attendance and truancy policies and procedures in place, as well as practices to monitor student and staff attendance, as revealed in the student/parent handbook, the school committee policy manual, a sample of individual school student handbooks, the district website, and other district documents such as the teacher contract. While the district has made some gains in reducing student absenteeism through the implementation of several initiatives, teacher absenteeism remained high.

In an effort to emphasize the importance of attending school, the district had revised and strengthened the district attendance policy in the spring of 2006, and included a section on attendance and the consequences of absenteeism at the elementary, secondary, and alternative school levels in the pupil progression policy. The revised attendance policy emphasized the consequences of missing school, explained the relationship between attending school and being eligible to file an MCAS appeal, and described the responsibility of principals relative to attendance, such as recordkeeping and imposing disciplinary consequences on truant students. The policy manual of the school committee included multiple policies related to student attendance, as well as a policy on graduation requirements.

Operationally, the district had a number of systems in place to control absenteeism. During the period under reexamination, the district employed 11 home/school attendance specialists for the elementary, middle, and high schools, as well as a district director of attendance. Home/school specialists had backgrounds in human resources, law enforcement, or corrections, and all had bachelors or masters degrees, according to interviewees. Approximately 75 percent held the DOE supervisor of attendance certification. The district assigned a home/school specialist to each of the six middle schools and the four high schools. One specialist, with support from other specialists, assisted with attendance issues at the elementary and alternative schools.

The district spent $357,000 for home/school attendance specialists in 2005-2006. Specialists were stationed at tardy desks in the schools and received a list of absent students daily. Examples of specialist duties and responsibilities included working with school counselors, making home visits, calling and writing letters to parents and guardians, investigating false addresses submitted by parents, analyzing attendance data, and working with other city departments and organizations to reduce absenteeism.

The supervisor of attendance was the representative of the district in court and filed approximately 50 to 100 Child in Need of Services (CHINS) petitions related to attendance in 2005-2006. Interviewees indicated the court typically assigned a probation officer to the student and assigned a date to reappear in court with an attendance update. The district entered into an agreement with the juvenile court to pilot a program with the 50 middle school students with the worst truancy/attendance records, which included a more timely review of school attendance by the court.

An interviewee indicated the attendance officers had open lines of communications with principals and attended service team and counselor staff meetings. The central office provided the supervisor of attendance, principals, and counselors with attendance data. The supervisor of attendance met with the superintendent approximately twice a year and made presentations to the school committee twice a year. Interviewees indicated that the district shared with all principals the revised attendance policy that outlined their specific responsibilities related to reducing absenteeism, and that schools collected and entered daily attendance data into the SASI student information data system. The district had the ConnectEd telephone system in place to call

students' homes when a student did not arrive at school. In October 2005, the district had 100 problem-solving service teams in place at 22 schools to support and solve student problems, including problems associated with attendance.

A review of 2006 attendance data provided by the district and the DOE showed that the district attendance rate had increased in 2005-2006 while the state average rate decreased slightly, and on average each student missed 16 days of school, down from 16.8 days in 2004-2005. A comparison of October 2005 and October 2006 attendance rates showed attendance increased at 38 schools which had data for both years. In speculation, interviewees attributed some of the attendance gains to the assignment of students to neighborhood schools. Despite these gains, student attendance continued to be a major problem in the district during the period under reexamination. According to DOE data, the district had a chronic absenteeism rate in 2005-2006 of 31.8 percent, and well over 7,000 students missed at least 18 days of school.

School-specific teacher attendance data provided by the district on EQA Attachment B, which included attendance data on long-term illness, short-term illness, military and jury duty, professional development, and days absent for other reasons, showed that 2,310 classroom teachers averaged approximately 13 days absent. Excluding professional development days, teachers averaged approximately 12.2 days absent. According to information provided by the superintendent, the district will continue to monitor and document poor teacher attendance.

In an effort to reduce teacher absenteeism, the district established in the new teacher contract a 97 percent attendance rate as a criterion for teachers who applied for higher-level teaching positions, such as teacher leader and instructional leadership specialist (ILS) positions. Interviewees stated that the human resource department and the principals reviewed teacher attendance data and patterns and that the district had procedures in place to address the issue, such as warning letters for teachers who abused attendance. Information provided to the EQA by the district showed that the human resource department provided staff attendance data to principals on the principal webpage. The report included a staff member listing, cumulative attendance for the year, and the reasons for the absences. The district used substitute teachers as the principle method of ensuring continuity of instruction when a teacher was out sick or was

absent for another reason and had an automated system in place to call substitute teachers after a teacher called in sick.

Interviewees indicated the district had some district-level and zone-level substitute teachers, and the human resource department held orientation sessions each Tuesday for substitute teachers. The district held separate training for special education substitute teachers. Interviewees indicated that the schools received a daily list of teachers who had called in sick. The district conducted a criminal offender record information (CORI) check for all substitutes, and the district paid substitute teachers approximately $75 to $85 per day, according to interviewees. In 2005-2006, the district budgeted approximately $2.3 million for substitute teachers. Interviewees indicated the district was in the process of collecting a myriad of data associated with teachers, including student achievement and teacher attendance data, to develop a relational database that would measure the relationship student achievement and teacher attendance.

2.3. <u>The district maintains accurate records on attendance, suspensions, discipline, and dropouts by student subgroup populations and frequently:</u>

    a. <u>analyzes these records;</u>

    b. <u>uses the analyses to improve participation and involvement of all students;</u>

    c. <u>tracks students who have ceased to participate in school programs</u>

EQA Rating from 2004: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

At the time of the initial EQA review, central office administrators indicated that there were discrepancies regarding the interpretation and usefulness of the historical data. Record keeping during the period under review had improved significantly. The EQA team found no evidence of the analysis of data to improve student participation.

During the reexamination period, although the district had policies, procedures, and practices in place to increase student participation and had made some gains, chronic attendance rates were high, and the district had no formal or structured program to track students who had left school. Interviewees indicated that issues related to attendance, discipline, suspensions, and dropouts

were recognized as serious problems in the district. This was evidenced by the development and implementation by district leaders of various programs and policy initiatives related to these issues, such as a truancy policy, a code of conduct, a policy on special needs discipline, a pupil progression policy, and a revision of district attendance policies included in student and district handbooks. The district also had policies and an administrative structure and data systems in place to collect and review student data, although it was unclear whether the implementation and execution of district policies and procedures was consistent across the district during the period under reexamination.

Interviewees indicated that the district had made significant progress in collecting and providing data on student behavior and discipline to principals and other administrators and staff. Interviewees indicated the district had a SASI student information data system that housed all student data entered by district personnel. The district office of research, assessment, and accountability analyzed and distributed student data to principals and other administrators, such as zone and school improvement administrators, who reviewed and analyzed the data.

Although the district had not assigned an administrator to manage student discipline and dropout prevention, interviewees reported the district created initiatives and allocated resources in response to student attendance and dropout rates, as substantiated in a review of documents. For example, the district hired home/school attendance specialists and created alternative and flexible school settings to reduce absenteeism and make it easier for students to attend school. In addition, the revised attendance policy conveyed the importance of attendance in relation to the MCAS test appeals. The district had service teams, student teacher assistant teams (STATs), and police officers in place at schools to deal with multiple issues, such as discipline, behavior, and attendance. Interviewees indicated that the parent information center (PIC) had recently initiated an effort to track dropouts and make efforts to get students back in school.

The policy manual of the school committee revealed that during the period under reexamination the district had policies in place on student conduct and discipline, school bus conduct, detention, suspension, promotion, and retention. A review of the student and district handbooks showed that the schools had policies on discipline, special needs discipline, school bus conduct, suspension, behavior, and detention. A review of DOE suspension and dropout data showed the

district had rates substantially above the state average for out-of-school suspensions in 2005-2006. That year the district had an out-of-school suspension rate of 13.4 percent with 3,366 incidents of out-of-school suspension, compared to the state average of 5.8 percent, and grades 6-12 had an average out-of-school suspension rate of approximately 21.2 percent. Also in 2005-2006, the district had an in-school suspension rate of 8.7 percent with 2198 incidences of in-school suspension, compared to the state average of 3.4 percent, and grades 6-12 had an average in-school suspension rate of approximately 14.6 percent. The latest DOE dropout data showed the district had 861 dropouts in 2004-2005. According to the DOE 2006 cohort graduation rates, the district had an aggregate non-adjusted dropout rate of 33.9 percent. The special needs cohort had a non-adjusted dropout rate of 42.7 percent, and the LEP cohort had a dropout rate of 43.2 percent.

2.5. The district collects and uses data on:

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

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

EQA Rating from 2004: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the initial period under review, the use of attendance data and the examination of its relationship to student achievement was not systematic or quantitatively valid. No information, other than anecdotal descriptions, was available regarding the effect of staff absences on student achievement.

Although the district did collect and review student and staff attendance data during the reexamination period, the district did not have a systemic institutionalized process in place in 2005-2006 to evaluate the effect of student and staff attendance on performance or achievement. Interviewees indicated the district was in the process of collecting data, including student achievement and teacher attendance data, to develop a "value added" relational database that would measure, among other things, the relationship between student achievement and teacher

attendance. The human resource department provided principals with staff attendance data on the principal webpage, including how often the staff person was absent and for what reasons. Information from the human resource department indicated that the district was in the process of having all principals trained in progressive discipline, which included chronic staff absenteeism. It indicated that by June 30, 2007 all principals will have completed the course entitled Effectively Supervising and Evaluating the Unsatisfactory and Barely Satisfactory Professional Teacher Status.

For the school year 2006-2007, the district hired ILS personnel who received differentiated pay based on improving student achievement. ILS personnel created portfolios and worked with the research and accountability office to measure how they had improved student achievement.

Although the district collected data on student attendance and recognized that to learn a student had to be in school, the district did not perform any explicit analysis of the relationship between student achievement and student attendance. Student attendance data and other data related to lack of attendance, such as dropout and retention data, were so onerous that the district did create and revise policies and establish support programs to keep students in school.

6.2. The district has well-documented policies and practices that support equitable participation in quality educational programs for all students. The policies, procedures, and practices address:

   a. transition management,

   b. dropout prevention.

EQA Rating from 2004: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence
During the initial period of review, the district managed some student transitions between grade levels and schools through both individual school orientation programs and the pupil progression policy. However, the transitioning of students between grade levels and schools was a district weakness. Dropout rates in the district's schools were high. Efforts to target and reduce dropout

rates, particularly the disproportionately high dropout rate of Hispanic students, were applied on an ad hoc basis through various programs and anti-truancy initiatives.

During the reexamination period under review, the district had some transition procedures and practices in place for transitions from level to level and school to school, but interviewees indicated that the process of managing, preventing, and minimizing dropouts was decentralized and mostly the responsibility of individual school principals and counselors. The high school student/parent handbook noted that high school counselors were the primary persons responsible for managing dropout prevention. Although the described process of tracking, preventing, and minimizing dropouts was typical for a smaller district, the administration recognized the dropout pattern as a major problem in the district. Interviewees indicated that all levels of district administration and the community were concerned and reviewing ways to reduce dropouts.

Interviewees named some of the programs the district implemented to manage the dropout rate, including the Springfield Expeditionary School, tutors for students with limited English speaking capabilities (such as Somali tutors), twilight programs, flexible scheduling, nursery services for students with children, transportation services, and student mentors. The district began trying to identify students at risk of dropping out earlier and worked with service teams, STAT teams, and home/school attendance specialists to keep students in school. The most recent DOE dropout data showed the district had 861 dropouts in 2004-2005. According to the DOE 2006 cohort graduation rates, the district had an aggregate non-adjusted dropout rate of 33.9 percent. The special needs cohort had a non-adjusted dropout rate of 42.7 percent, and the LEP cohort had a dropout rate of 43.2 percent.

With multiple schools and school alternatives, the transitioning of students from grade to grade and school to school was a complex issue in the district. Interviewees indicated that schools had the traditional orientation and student "move up" days in place, although interviewees indicated the district did not set orientation procedures from school to school. The district provided information that showed it had implemented transition nights for all incoming kindergarten students through collaborative efforts between the Springfield Public Schools, the Springfield Public Library, the Springfield Health Department, Community Partnership participants, and school parent organizations.

The district had also implemented, in 2004, a significant districtwide counseling plan, which integrated a counseling model with grade level learning objectives. The special education department conducted transition meetings for students with IEPs transitioning from preschool to kindergarten, grade 5 to grade 6, and grade 8 to grade 9. The district information indicated that school adjustment counselors and evaluation team leaders from the sending schools met with counterparts from receiving schools and shared information. In addition, all teachers had access to student literacy profiles, which included student academic data and assessment results. According to the pupil progression plan, the parent information center (PIC) registered and assigned all preK-12 students to a school and provided parent or guardian services. The district implemented a student placement system oriented toward placing students in neighborhood schools. Interviewees indicated this was one reason absenteeism had decreased last year. During the period under reexamination, if a student moved to a new neighborhood any time during the school year, he/she had to transfer to a new neighborhood school. In 2006-2007, if a student moved after February 26, the student may remain in the original school, but the parent or guardian must provide transportation.

6.3. <u>The district has well-documented policies and practices that support equitable participation in quality educational programs for all students that address:</u>

   a. <u>high expectations for all students,</u>

   b. <u>participation in challenging courses,</u>

   c. <u>support for students to remain in and succeed in quality programs, and</u>

   d. <u>equitable participation in advanced and AP-type courses.</u>

EQA Rating from 2004: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the period of the initial review, most of the honors class sections had few students counted as enrolled. The aggregate minority population percentage of the four high schools was 77 percent. The enrollment of minority students in AP courses was 48 percent of the total AP enrollment, while the enrollment of white students was 52 percent.

Interviewees indicated that during the reexamination period under review, the district offered college prep, honors, and Advanced Placement (AP) courses at the high schools; but not all high schools offered AP courses, and classroom observations conducted by EQA examiners showed low classroom expectations, particularly at the high school level. The vocational school did not offer AP courses in 2005 and 2006, but will in 2007. The alternative high schools did not offer honors or AP courses, and the Expeditionary Learning School was planning to offer AP courses in the future.

The district offered the International Baccalaureate (IB) program at all levels. As noted on the High School of Commerce website, the IB program is "a rigorous course of study for highly motivated students that is based on international standards of excellence designed to help students compete in our global economy." The district offered a gifted and talented program at the Chestnut Middle School, and a school committee policy stated that teachers and parents identified students who can apply for this program at the end of grade 5.

District staff used the results of the PSAT to estimate student AP potential, and the district had an arrangement with the Mass Mutual Financial Group to pay for the PSAT administration. The Peter Pan transportation company created a fund to help students pay for the SAT test. The district provided the EQA with numerous data sets related to AP and honors enrollment disaggregated by gender, ethnicity, free or reduced-cost lunch status, and AP score. In 2005-2006, the district offered 15 AP courses with an enrollment of 656 students. In 2005-2006, the district offered 38 honors courses with an enrollment of 1,951 students. A review of the AP data showed that there was significant subgroup representation including the low-income subgroup.

In 2005-2006, the district offered AP courses at Central High School, the High School of Commerce, and the High School of Science and Technology. In 2006, the High School of Commerce had 58 students take 66 AP tests. Nineteen of the tests had scores of 3 or better. The High School of Science and Technology had 82 students take 107 tests. Thirty-five of the tests had scores of 3 or better. Central High School had 124 students take 170 tests. Fifty-five tests had scores of 3 or better. Interviewees indicated that there were no financial barriers to taking the AP test and that the district had a generous admission policy, which included teacher

recommendations and always allowed parents to make the final determination regarding admission to AP or honors courses.

During the period under reexamination, the district provided academic support for students in an effort to help them succeed in academic programs, such as tutoring and mandatory summer school. The district also provided summer and school year grant funded academic support programs and summer support for LEP students. The district implemented a new DCAP and developed an enhanced Student Success Plan. The district also had service and support teams available to help students develop and implement strategies associated with academic success.

6.5. <u>The district has policies and programs in place to address the needs of transient or mobile students. These policies, and programs promote transient student involvement in high quality and challenging programs.</u>

EQA Rating from 2004: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the initial review period, some transient students experienced large gaps in school enrollment and attendance. Many students, while continuing to reside in the city, left with family members and others to visit relatives in other states and United States territories for lengthy periods. However, the district had little data and conducted little analysis of this transient population.

At the time of the reexamination, interviewees stated that the district had approximately 1,100 homeless students, approximately 250 students in foster homes, and approximately 20 students displaced from Hurricane Katrina. Interviewees stated that the Department of Social Services and the Department of Youth Services had placed many of the transient and mobile students in the district. The district had a homeless coordinator and followed the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act. The act defined homeless students as lacking a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. Interviewees indicated the district had approximately 20 homeless shelters and also enrolled students who lived in homeless shelters in other cities and towns. The district enrolled and provided services for students living in group homes in the area.

The district had a process in place for providing services for homeless, transient, and mobile students.

Interviewees stated that the district had very good access to student records, which allowed the district to determine placement and the need for particular educational services. The district used the PIC to help with obtaining records. If the student had an Individualized Education Program (IEP), the special education team at the school evaluated the plan and determined what services the student needed. The district had created a literacy profile for all students that school leaders and teachers could use to determine student educational needs and help with program placement.

With an enrollment of approximately 25,000, the district had substantial transience. A review of enrollment data showed that the district had an enrollment of 2,654 students in grade 9 in the fall of 2003 and an enrollment of 1,115 students in grade 12 in the fall of 2006. A review of 2005-2006 enrollment data showed a consistent and significant drop in enrollment from grade 9 to grade 10. Interviewees attributed the decrease in enrollment from grade 9 to grade 10 to retentions and dropouts, as substantiated through a review of data. The most recent DOE retention data showed that the district regularly retained over 700 students in grade 9, and the overall district retention rate in 2004-2005 was approximately three times the state average. In addition, according to DOE data, in 2005-2006 approximately 2,700 Springfield students chose to attend public schools elsewhere, including over 2,000 students who attended four charter schools. The cost to the district for these students leaving the district was in the millions.

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

EQA Rating from 2004: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the initial period of review, the district did not have a document specifically labeled as the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP). Similarly, the district also did not have a document specifically labeled as the District Improvement Plan (DIP).

During the reexamination period under review, the district developed a DCAP to assist principals and teachers in accommodating regular education students, according to a review of documents on the district website. The district created a Corrective Action Plan 2007-2010 that served as the DIP. Although the plan did not specifically refer to the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan, it was clear that to meet the goals and successfully implement the array of initiatives listed in the Corrective Action Plan, the district would need to have the components of a DCAP in place. To maximize the performance of all student learners in the Springfield Public Schools (one of the district goals), both principals and teachers would require access to instructional strategies, personnel, and resources described in the DCAP, such as service teams and student teacher assistance teams (STATs) and listings of school personnel who can help regular education teachers develop accommodation strategies for students. The DCAP also included strategies for helping regular education teachers help ELL students succeed. These DCAP ELL support strategies will help the district implement the ELL plan and the initiative to align curricula included in the district Corrective Action Plan.

8.3. <u>Components of the DCAP include the following:</u>

    a. <u>direct and systematic instruction in reading;</u>

    b. <u>provision of services to address the needs of students whose behavior may interfere with learning;</u>

    c. <u>provisions encouraging teacher mentoring and collaboration and parental involvement; and</u>

    d. <u>assistance to classroom teachers, such as professional development, to help them analyze and accommodate the needs of students.</u>

EQA Rating from 2004: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

At the time of the initial review by the EQA, the district did not have a document specifically labeled as the DCAP and had submitted the pupil progression plan in lieu of the DCAP. However, the district had provided levels of services in varying degrees and varying consistency for the period under review.

State law required that "a school district shall adopt and implement a curriculum accommodation plan to assist principals in ensuring that all efforts have been made to meet students' needs in regular education … accommodating diverse learning styles of all children in the regular classroom and in providing appropriate services and support within the regular education program including, but not limited to, direct and systematic instruction in reading and provision of services to address the needs of children whose behavior may interfere with learning, or who do not qualify for special education services under chapter 71B. The curriculum accommodation plan shall include provisions encouraging teacher mentoring and collaboration and parental involvement."

During the reexamination period under review, the district developed a DCAP which it posted on its website. The 127-page DCAP included all the components of a DCAP required by statute. The district organized the DCAP by elementary, middle, and high school level. Each level included a list of student support personnel and resource staff who could assist teachers and accommodate students in the regular education setting. Included at all levels were STAT personnel who helped with a myriad of issues including behavior. Interviewees confirmed that the district had an operational DCAP in place for approximately one year and had provided the document to teachers.

Examples of other resources to support accommodations included school-based professional development teachers, building literacy teams, behavioral specialists, social workers and adjustment counselors to provide support to students and families, math and ELA collaborative professional development teachers (CPDTs), school psychologists, police department liaisons, model reading strategies, teacher mentors, remedial reading classes, and developmental reading evaluations and support. The DCAP included sections on essential learning, classroom practices, appropriate assessment practices, and service options. The plan also included separate sections on accommodations and strategies for students with specific disabilities or impairments, such as attention deficit disorder (ADD) or for students who are deaf or hard of hearing.

8.6. <u>Early intervention reading programs are provided at the primary level to ensure that by the end of Grade 3 students are reading at the Proficiency level on the MCAS test. *</u>

EQA Rating from 2004: Unsatisfactory

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

In interviews during the initial review, the EQA team learned that the district provided early intervention reading programs. Those efforts included the implementation and training of 20 teachers in Reading Recovery, Guided Reading, Reading by Rules, Soar to Success, the use of DIBELS in four Reading First schools, DRA, Read 180 by Scholastic, and Harcourt's Trophies. The Title I staff tracked early intervention data three times per year. However, the number of teachers trained was limited given the size of the district, and too few students had attained proficiency in reading by grade 3.

During the reexamination period under review, the district provided a number of early intervention programs and assessments to help students attain proficiency in grade 3 reading. Interviewees offered several examples of programs and assessments, including Reading Recovery, the Harcourt Trophies program, Read Naturally, Read 180, Elements of Reading Inventory, Reading First and John Silber schools, the DRA, the GRADE, the Stanford, the DIBELS, DFAs, MCAS tests, and kindergarten and early intervention screening. The district developed a districtwide reading plan in 2003. It had received grants for five Reading First schools and three John Silber schools. According to information on the DOE website, the John Silber Early Reading Initiative supported school districts and schools in implementing reading instruction in grades K-3 to have all students attain proficiency by the end of grade 3. According to DOE data, 61 percent of the K-3 students in one cohort of four Reading First schools were reading below grade level. Of the K-3 cohort of the other Reading First school, approximately 59 percent of the students were reading below grade level. The district also provided ELA supplemental educational services at a number of elementary schools with an AYP status of 'Corrective Action,' 'Restructuring,' or 'In Need of Improvement.' Interviewees indicated that when choosing and implementing programs, the district focused on the five areas of reading: vocabulary, fluency, comprehension, phonics, and phonemic awareness. Interviewees indicated that not all schools had equal access to all reading programs, and that the district initiated programs at schools that obtained grants and then attempted to replicate success at other schools.

Despite the number of early intervention programs offered, a review of grade 3 reading scores showed that in 2005-2006, 38 percent of all grade 3 students attained proficiency, down from 41

percent in 2004-2005. Statewide, 58 percent of grade 3 students attained proficiency in reading in 2005-2006. Seventeen percent of the district's grade 3 students with disabilities attained proficiency in reading in 2005-2006, a decrease from 25 percent in 2004-2005. Statewide, 29 percent of students with disabilities attained proficiency. In 2005-2006, 20 percent of the district's LEP students attained proficiency, a decrease from 25 percent in the prior year. Statewide, 27 percent of LEP students attained proficiency. Of the low-income students in the district, 34 percent attained proficiency, a decrease from 37 percent in the prior year. Statewide, 35 percent of low-income students attained proficiency. Of the Hispanic students in the district, 32 percent attained proficiency, the same as the prior year. Statewide, 29 percent of Hispanic students attained proficiency. Of the district's white students, 54 percent attained proficiency, a decrease from 64 percent the prior year. Statewide, 66 percent of white students attained proficiency.

8.7. <u>The district develops Student Success Plans for all students who qualify for them, and the Plans contain the components required by statute.</u>

<u>*These indicators are not applicable to secondary and vocational schools and districts.</u>

EQA Rating from 2004: Unsatisfactory

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the initial review, the EQA team determined from interviews that despite the infrastructure being in place, not all students who qualified for Student Success Plans were likely to have had them at the time the interviews took place. Interviews with district staff also offered conflicting information as to the existence and accessibility of these plans.

A review of documents indicated and interviewees confirmed that during the reexamination period the district completed Individual Student Success Plans (ISSPs) that included the required components for all at-risk students. The pupil progression plan referenced the Student Success Plan and discussed how achievement of its learning goals related to promotion. Information provided by the district noted that the Student Success Plan generated interventions that included benchmarks and assessments. A review of a sample plan confirmed this information.

The Springfield Public Schools Mission and Goals 2005-2008 document included a section on monitoring Student Success Plans as a strategy to support pupil progression and the Culture of Achievement in the district. EQA noted that the DCAP stated, "When service or STAT teams develop individual curriculum accommodation plans it is important to make sure that any student determined at risk receives a Student Success Plan that generates an academic portfolio in accordance with the Pupil Progression Plan." According to information provided by the district, the Student Success Plan is more than a compliance document and has direct connections to what the student needed to master academically.

The district provided a document to the EQA entitled Student Success Timeline for District-Wide Compliance from March 2005-November 2006. During this time the district held multiple training sessions for principals and staff, including directors, teachers, supervisors, psychologists, ELL teachers, professional development teachers, and others. The district provided sign-in sheets from training sessions to the EQA. The district launched the enhanced Student Success Plan in August 2006, according to information provided by the district. The enhanced Student Success Plan helped principals and other district administrators monitor the progress of success plans. The Student Success Plan data system generated reports by grade, school, and for the entire district. The district provided a report on the Student Success Plans dated January 12, 2007 which showed that 54 schools or school levels had generated Student Success Plans for 8,909 students.

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	✓				✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				6
Needs Improvement		✓	✓	✓				✓			✓	✓	✓	7
Unsatisfactory														

Rather than reexamine the district only on those 2004 indicators on which the district was rated 'Poor' or 'Unsatisfactory,' the EQA conducted a full examination of the district on Standard VI covering the period 2004-2006.

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:

- An inadequate district budget and supplemental funding prevented the school system from fully implementing recommendations for improvement. The city lacked additional funding to address urban school issues, such as attendance, English language learners, facilities maintenance, and safety and security.

- The school budget process involved all stakeholders. A clear, comprehensive, and understandable budget with a budgetary history and trends guided all educational initiatives. The teachers' contract and the decision-making team in each school provided input to the administration regarding staffing levels, supplies, and materials.

- Budget development and resource allocation was not based on an ongoing analysis of student performance data, nor was an evaluation-based review conducted as part of the budget development to determine the cost effectiveness of most programs, initiatives, and activities.

- The city developed a formal preventative maintenance plan to maximize the use of its schools. However, some schools lacked cleanliness, safety, sufficient space, and consistent, comfortable room temperatures.

- The city and district had in place a purchasing process that adhered to Massachusetts procurement laws and secured supplies and materials in a timely manner.

- Although most schools visited were safe and secure, several others were not; in some schools main entrances were not locked, crisis management plans were missing, and not all staff members were wearing ID badges.

Summary

The budget process during the period under reexamination involved all stakeholders. The Finance Control Board established all financial policies and procedures and approved all financial decisions. The teachers' contract determined staffing levels. Each school received from $75 to $100 per student for the purchase of supplies and materials. The school-centered decision-making (SCDM) team decided on all purchases. Requisitions required the signature of the school principal as well as a representative of the SCDM team. Title I requisitions also required an explanation stating the relationship of the purchase to student achievement. Budget documents presented a clear, complete, and comprehensive picture of revenues and expenditures, and the district's Legacy software supported the city software and the integration of all financial data. The school committee, administrators, and the Finance Control Board received timely financial reports. The school system enhanced financial reports with Excel and Lotus spreadsheets.

The school district met the minimum required net school spending in only one year (FY 2005) of the period under reexamination, and the budget did not provide adequate financial resources for this urban school system. The city experienced severe financial problems during these years and before, which required the establishment of a five-member Finance Control Board. This board included the mayor, the president of the city council, and three gubernatorial appointees. The

five-member board appointed an executive director and a staff to handle day-to-day decisions. Since its inception July 1, 2004, the board met approximately 30 times. During the period under reexamination, the city did not attempt an operational override since the last such action in 1989 resulted in an erosion of the city tax base. Of the approximately 25,000 students enrolled, 76 percent qualified for the free or reduced-cost lunch program, and the district had significant numbers of English language learners and minority students. Attendance, dropouts, and retentions required additional financial support.

The city engaged in significant efforts and initiatives to upgrade school buildings that had suffered neglect of maintenance for many years, and the district put in place a formal preventative maintenance program to maximize and prolong the efficient and effective use of all schools. In 2005, the city centralized the maintenance of school buildings into the Department of Parks, Buildings, and Recreational Management. The department implemented procedures that focused on correcting building codes and cleanliness. The department also implemented a web-based work order system that enabled schools to post online maintenance requests as needed and track the status of their work order requests on a daily basis. Springfield has committed in excess of $7 million to the maintenance of schools since FY 2005. In FY 2006, the city expended $1,258,932 for school maintenance and $530,753 in extraordinary maintenance. The city also performed an energy audit of all public buildings and developed energy savings projects expected to save $45 million over several years. In an attempt to improve the cleanliness of schools, the district privatized second shift custodians. Although the district made significant efforts to address maintenance and cleanliness issues, not all schools reflected an environment that supported student learning and achievement. Cleanliness, safety, and cramped quarters remain as issues.

The district employed a director of security. His responsibilities included ensuring that safety and security measures were in place at each school, such as locked doors, remote entry, and video cameras, and that the emergency operating procedures (EOP) document was in every school, reviewed and updated periodically by police and fire personnel, and disseminated as necessary. District staff had the responsibility to download the EOP from the district website, and building principals had the responsibility to train new teachers, substitute teachers, and volunteers. The director provided all schools with equipment to make identification badges, and all staff were

required to wear badges as mandated by school committee policy. He was available to provide training at the request of principals, usually during the weekly extended day period at each school. Although the district went to great lengths to provide safety and security, not all schools visited by EQA examiners exhibited such efforts.

2007 Indicators

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

Through interviews, observations, and document reviews, EQA examiners found that the budget process involved all stakeholders. During the period under review, the city's Finance Control Board controlled all city finances including the school system. Because of a $40 million dollar deficit in FY 2003, the legislature passed Chapter 169, which gave control of all financial decisions for the City of Springfield to the Finance Control Board beginning July 1, 2004.

Article 1, section C1 of the teachers' contract (2007-2010) allowed teachers to recommend what supplies to order. The contract in section C2 permitted itinerant teachers to order supplies weekly from the principal's office. In addition, the contract set staffing levels through student rations for a variety of positions.

Each school received the benefit of two sources of funding. The first source, the approximately $75-$100 allocation, provided the school-centered decision-making team (parents, teachers, and principal) with revenue for the purchase of texts and common supplies. All purchases needed a rationale and had to be consistent with the School Improvement Plan, and all requisitions required a sign-off by the principal, another sign-off by the representative of the school-centered decision-making team, and a signature by the zone administrator. The second source of funds came from program supervisors and/or directors.   This allowed for the maintenance of curriculum initiatives. For example, the music supervisor for the school system would order all

supplies and materials for that program. Another source of funds came from the Title I grant (elementary schools only). Interviewees stated that more involvement by more people occurred.

The city has adhered to the practice of meeting 100 percent of net school spending (NSS) requirements. The EQA examiners found that the budget documents provided clear, comprehensive, complete, current, and understandable data for all sources of revenues and expenditures as well as budgetary history and trends. The city and school district utilized an integrated Legacy software system and intended to upgrade to MUNIS on July 1, 2007.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Most principals interviewed stated that school resources, both financial and human, were based on "formula" (approximately $75-$100 per student for educational supplies and materials, and student enrollment data and class size for teacher assignment) and not tied to either student achievement or program evaluation. The EQA monitor also reported that the annual school budget was formula-driven and not driven by student achievement data.

The district allocated resources to improve achievement for all students by implementing collaborative professional development teachers (CPDTs), installing the Read 180 program in the middle schools, expending its E-rate funds to install technology in schools having the highest percentage of low-income students, and allocating approximately $75-$100 per student for principals to use to achieve SIP goals. An analysis of aggregated and disaggregated student assessment data upon which these decisions might have been based was not made available to EQA examiners.

The EQA monitor reported, for October 1, 2004 through April 30, 2006, that the CPDT program, developed to improve ELA and math instruction to schools where achievement in ELA and math, as measured by MCAS scores, needed improvement. The class size reduction teachers program created to support implementation of the district's Reading Plan remained in the budget

despite reductions in state funding because the deployment of such teachers improved student performance. Empirical data substantiating this decision were not made available to EQA examiners.

In FY 2006, the superintendent requested $1 million to purchase reading, math, science, and social studies textbooks, an amount eventually augmented by the Financial Control Board. Interviewees reported that the Financial Control Board gave the district discretion on what textbooks to purchase, and they stated that if the purchases were data driven the Financial Control Board did not see the data.

In the FY 2006 district budget, the superintendent identified six major initiatives related to student achievement that "strive to influence" budget decision-making and resource allocation: 1) aligning curriculum, instruction, and assessment; 2) incorporating student achievement goals in all new contracts; 3) improving the quality and integrity of staff performance evaluations; 4) using formative assessments to improve teacher and student performance; 5) high school reform; and 6) negotiating teacher contracts that tie knowledge and skills to compensation. EQA examiners were unable to determine the impact of student achievement data on budget decisions and resource allocation related to these six initiatives.

It was evident to EQA examiners and verified by interviewees that the district based its proposals for federal and state grants on performance data and staff needs to improve instructional skills. District administrators and the executive director of the Finance Control Board also reported that they were making a determination regarding incorporating student achievement data into the development of the FY 2008 budget. The district was conducting an analysis of some schools to ascertain the relationship between the allocation of resources and student performance, i.e., whether more resources resulted in higher scores. One principal reported that she would use student achievement data to develop her FY 2008 budget.

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 budget and supplemental funding did not provide sufficient financial resources to ensure educationally sound programs and facilities of quality. Severe financial difficulties led to creation of the legislatively empowered Finance Control Board. This board influenced all financial and financially related decisions for the school district.

Interviews with school principals supported the fact that schools had adequate supplies and materials. Buildings, however, required considerable repairs. Lack of preventative maintenance led to the closing of a school during the period under review for over 200 violations of the building code. The district had not built a new school in over 40 years. Throughout the review period, the district did not make capital expenditures beyond $35,820 in FY 2005 for the purchase of land or a building.

In fiscal year 2004, the district total budgetary expenditure was $278,588,414, representing a 0.3 percent increase over fiscal year 2003 and exceeding required minimum net school spending by $44,031,275. Non-net school spending totaled $87,569,277 and included city expenditures totaling $27,072,133 for debt retirement and other services and $1,827,162 for fixed charges (insurance and employee retirement), and district expenditures totaling $13,192,014 for transportation services, $476,770 for private transportation services, and $946,897 for fixed charges.

In fiscal year 2005, the district total budgetary expenditure was $285,369,579, representing a 2.4 percent increase over fiscal year 2004 and exceeding the required NSS by $41,660,811. Non-net school spending totaled $43,722,384 and included city expenditures totaling $26,979,919 for debt retirement and other services and $549,925 for fixed charges. It also included district

expenditures totaling $14,639,553 for transportation services, $310,835 for private transportation services, and $1,206,219 for fixed charges.

In fiscal year 2006, the district total budgetary expenditure was $292,821,662, representing a 2.6 percent increase over fiscal year 2005 and exceeding NSS by $39,357,277. Non-net school spending totaled $41,064,532, and included city expenditures totaling $24,341,766 for debt retirement and other services and $25,303 for fixed charges. It also included district expenditures totaling $14,890,235 for transportation services, $297,984 for private transportation services, and $1,508,911 for fixed charges.

Administrative expenditures increased substantially in FY 2006 for both the city and the district. In FY 2005, these expenditures totaled $7,580,386. In FY 2006, these expenditures totaled $13,900,357, an increase of $4,625,856, due primarily to school committee procurement of legal services.

Total instructional expenditures as a percentage of total expenditures was 47 percent in FY 2005 and 49 percent in FY 2006. Though the district's expenditures for instructional services (function code 2000) increased from $132,252,932 in FY 2004 to $135,521,956 (or 2.5 percent) in FY 2005, expenditures for teachers and classrooms actually decreased from $96,545,872 to $80,263,188 (or 17 percent), according to Schedule 1 of the district's 2005 and draft 2006 End of Year Pupil and Financial Report. This allowed reallocation of funds to provide specialists, instructional technology, and guidance counselors. Total expenditures for texts and software (function code 2410) decreased $137,019 from $299,582 to $162,563 during that period. In FY 2006, expenditures for instructional services increased to $142,830,186 (or five percent), expenditures for teachers and classrooms decreased by $3,344,370 to $76,918,818, allowing the district to increase expenditures for texts and software by $2,861,615, for teacher specialists by 2,212,049, for non-clerical paraprofessionals and instructional assistants by $1,743,700, and for guidance counselors by $1,368,426.

In FY 2006, total expenditures for programs with other districts increased by $7,452,288, from $30,076,890 in FY 2005 to $38,634,696. The city's share of these expenditures increased from $15,502,874 to $16,608,392, primarily covering tuition for school choice and tuition to

Commonwealth Charter Schools. The district's share increased from $14,574,016 to $22,026,304, primarily covering tuition to non-public schools.

A review of the district's financial documents indicated the district maintained and closely monitored the following revolving accounts and special funds: circuit breaker, lost textbook, building usage fees, athletic, food service, adult education, etc. During FY 2006, circuit breaker reimbursement totaled $3,389,61, and Medicaid receipts totaled $4,201,302 and went to the city. Revolving account receipts totaled $12,682,422.

EQA examiners learned that the city did not attempt an operational override during the period under review. This decision expressed a concern that an override would create a negative impact on the city, as occurred when the city last passed an override in 1989.

The district had in place fundraising guidelines that ensured accuracy and protected the community. Procedures and staff training to correctly account for cash collected consisted of numbered tickets, numbered checks requiring two signatures, the bonding of employees handling funds, the use of peach tree software, the counting of money in the central office, the reconciling of all transactions, as well as annual audits.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Interviewees stated the district was engaged in a review of the budget as it relates to curricular needs. During the period under review, the district hired a chief academic officer, who in turn hired four people to work with her, and gave her a budget with which to work. They also stated that an ongoing debate persisted between the district and the Financial Control Board regarding how much money was being spent and why, and the importance of evaluating programs based on analyzing data. The Financial Control Board believed that having program evaluation models in place and measuring data was essential. Interviewees further stated that the Financial Control Board could not see how in the past district spending related to the superintendent's goals, but

efforts were being made to address this issue; data were being collected from each school to assist in developing the FY 2008 budget, and all contracts (principals, assistant superintendents) had goals relating to those of the superintendent.

At the insistence of the superintendent, the district conducted an ongoing evaluation of the cost effectiveness of the attendance teams (the superintendent kept the teams in the FY 2007 budget for an additional year to evaluate cost effectiveness). During the period under review, the district had evaluated the cost effectiveness of the school lunch program, facilities management, and student transportation (boundary plan). EQA examiners were unable to determine if the district realized efficiencies in these areas, and if so, how it allocated cost savings to improve student performance.

In September 2005, the Financial Control Board had Public Financial Management, Inc. (PMF) prepare an operations assessment report that reviewed seven district functions in order to assess the efficient use of financial resources. The functions included central administration, purchasing, facilities management, transportation, telecommunications, food services, and the delivery of special education services. The EQA monitor's report covering May 1-September 30, 2005 reported that the Financial Control Board and the district were reviewing the PMF report to determine if the "operational efficiencies can be implemented and if the cost savings can then be reallocated to improve instructional effectiveness." The EQA monitor made no further mention of the PMF report in subsequent reports, and EQA examiners were unable to ascertain if the district realized savings resulting from improved efficiencies and applied them to improving instructional effectiveness.

In the interview with the school committee, one member stated that money was being "wasted" on the Twilight Program and that student attendance did not show improvement, bringing the cost effectiveness of this program into question.

As stated earlier, the district continued to deploy collaborative professional development teachers and class size reduction teachers despite continued budget constraints because of the improvement in student performance. However, requested empirical data substantiating this decision were not made available to EQA examiners for review.

5. <u>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.</u>

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

Due to severe financial problems, the state legislature passed Chapter 169 establishing a Finance Control Board for the City of Springfield. The authority of this board superseded the authority of the city council and the school committee in all financial matters. A review of district documents and administrative interviews indicated that the district and the city lacked the appropriate written agreement regarding indirect costs. City officials explained that a written agreement benefited neither the school department nor the city. In an effort to record accurate insurance expenditures, pensions, unemployment compensation, workmen's compensation, etc., the city moved all approved indirect costs with the exception of administration and finance to the school budget. The Finance Control Board, authorized by the legislature to control all financial decisions for the City of Springfield, approved this action. The director of finance stated that this action by the city offset the need for a written agreement since only one item, that of the city's finance and administrative services, existed.   The director also stated that the DOE and Department of Revenue (DOR) approved this.

6. <u>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.</u>

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The Massachusetts Department of Education's Chapter 70 Trends, FY 1998 through FY 2007 indicated that in FY 2004, the actual net school spending was less than the required NSS by $1,821,290 (or 0.8 percent). In FY 2005, actual net school spending by the district exceeded the required spending by $684,555 (or 0.3 percent), and in FY 2006 actual net school spending again was less than the required spending by $10,459,556 (or 4.1 percent). Over the same period, total budgetary expenditures exceeded required net school spending by well over $40 million annually due to expenditures in non-net school spending accounts.

7. <u>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.</u>

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

A review of school committee minutes and interviews with school officials and a representative of the Finance Control Board verified that the school committee and appropriate administrators and staff received regular, timely, and accurate reports. A review of financial reports and interviews with city and school officials verified the accuracy and timeliness of filing state and federal grant financial reports.

The transfer of funds from line item to line item required the request to be forwarded to the city auditor with a rationale. Only the Finance Control Board could make the final decision. For the period under review, the city employed the firm of Powers and Sullivan, CPA, Wakefield MA to perform the required single audit. In FY 2005, the audit firm reported three findings: failure to report $1.3 million in federal grant revenues on schedule 1; the lack of an agreement letter between school committee and city officials for the reporting of indirect costs; and calculations used to allocate special education costs on schedule 4 utilized FY 2004 full-time equivalent (FTE) students reported on schedule 11. The auditor reported that the city carried forward a surplus of $6 million at the end of FY 2005 and a surplus of $30.9 million at the end of FY 2006.

City and school officials reported that the school department had encumbered funds in both years to settle ongoing negotiations with school employees. In addition, city officials explained that a written agreement benefited neither the school department nor the city. In an effort to record accurate health insurance expenditures for retired and active employees, the city moved all insurance expenditures to the school budget. The Finance Control Board approved this action.

All stakeholders received timely financial reports as well as special reports upon request. The former director of finance stated that the district had filed appropriate amendments to the FY 2005 End of Year Report with the DOE to correct inaccuracies.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The payroll/financial software used during the period under review was reported to be inadequate to provide real-time financial management information. For example, monthly reports to principals regarding the status of their budgets were provided two weeks into the next month. EQA examiners could not ascertain if the software provided accounting information by program or ensured spending remained within fiscal budget limits. Staff reported that the software did not have financial forecasting capability. The district's finance office did use Excel/Lotus spreadsheets to provide more timely and informative budget data, but principals could not directly access this information; they had to request it from the district business office.

In order to alleviate the inadequacies in the current software system, the city has purchased the MUNIS management software, which is expected to be operational for financial and payroll purposes July 1, 2007. This will provide district budget managers will real-time financial data, remote purchasing capabilities, forecasting capabilities, and so forth.

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

Interviews with school department personnel indicated that for the period under review the Springfield school district had a system in place to acquire, monitor, and coordinate all local, state, federal, and private competitive grants. In the past, the system employed a grant writer but the district experienced greater success utilizing a team approach. The team consisted of one

assistant superintendent, the director of special education, the Title I director, the grant accounting coordinator, and the director of federal magnet grants.

A review of the Department of Education End of Year Grant Summary revealed that the district in FY 2005 received $35,514,891 from 29 federal grants and $4,910,078 from 14 state grants for a district total of $40,424,969. In FY 2006, the district received $39,139,205 in federal grants, $5,530,444 from other federal grants, $2,346,097 from DOE administered state grants, and $2,723,688 from other state grants for a FY 2006 total of $49,739,434 in federal and state grants. In addition, the district received from private grants and gifts $1,441,388 in FY 2005 and $1,977,036 in FY 2006.

The grant accounting coordinator tracked all grant revenue and expenditures. A review of end of year reports indicated that all grant expenditures provided clear and accurate reporting. Efficient management of all grants and special revenue accounts occurred using the district's financial accounting system. The superintendent signed all grants.

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 city procurement officer was MCPPO certified during the period under review and all purchasing went through the Central Purchasing Office. The district also employed staff knowledgeable of the state procurement laws, although not MCPPO certified. These employees prepared bid documents, secured necessary quotes, and so forth, prior to forwarding documentation to the city procurement officer.

The business office procedures manual was last updated August 9, 2005. The manual makes it clear that "even if something is specifically written into a grant or the superintendent gave permission to obtain specific goods or services, a contract or purchase order must be in place and Massachusetts procurement laws must be followed."

Interviewees reported that a competitively procured independent financial auditor conducted a citywide audit every year, and that the district shared audit results and implemented audit recommendations. The audits ensured the accuracy of the city's procurement, tracking, and monitoring systems and were current and timely.

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

Interviews with school officials revealed that the school system had in place a formal preventative maintenance program to maximize and prolong the effective use of all school buildings.   The Department of Parks, Buildings, and Recreational Management had the responsibility of maintaining school buildings.   Its mission statement, "a safe, comfortable learning environment conducive to maximizing the educational experience of Springfield students," focused the efforts of this department on schools maintenance.   Officials agreed that the maintenance of school buildings had long been neglected.

The implementation of procedures and systems focused on cleanliness and correction of building code violations. A needs assessment to prioritize school needs and provide a high level baseline provided the first maintenance steps necessary for over 40 schools with an average age of 54 years. The development of a one-stop management tool using Facilities Management Plans, version 2.1, centralized the management of custodians, grounds, and building maintenance. Each school had an ID number; number of custodians; date of construction; gross square footage; student enrollment; dates of most recent repairs to roofs, boilers, and intercom; fuel type; parking spaces; history; and capital needs and maintenance needs.

A review of documents revealed that the district implemented a web-based work order system. Schools used online work order requests and could track work orders daily. The city committed over $7 million to school buildings since FY 2005. Maintenance projects reflected a deferred maintenance initiative and the system initially budgeted $100,000 per school for maintenance needs. In FY 2006 the city expended $1,258,932 for the maintenance of school buildings and $530,753 in extraordinary maintenance. These amounts represented a one percent increase over FY 2005. In addition, the city performed an energy audit for all public buildings and developed energy savings projects totaling $45 million.

To improve the cleanliness of schools the city privatized the second shift custodians and placed them under the direction of an outside vendor. Interviewees stated that the buildings received more attention in FY 2006 than ever before. In addition, the district received annual inspections from the building and fire departments. Even though the city made significant efforts to address maintenance issues, not all schools provided an environment that supported student learning and achievement.

Walk-throughs revealed that in some schools students sat with coats on in cool classrooms. Other classrooms had windows open due to high temperatures, ripped shades covered windows, and a need for space forced some schools to share space and some schools lacked appropriate cleanliness. For example, at the Glenwood School a science classroom also served as a cafeteria.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

It was reported that capital planning was an area much neglected for years. In particular, there was no long-term capital plan in place to address limited space issues. School visits revealed that educational facilities in many cases were lacking; at several schools students ate lunch in halls or their classrooms, academic classes were held in the halls in at least one elementary school, and special education and fine arts classes were observed in hallways at several schools.

However, the district now has a comprehensive plan prepared in conjunction with district personnel and the Department of Parks, Buildings, and Recreational Management. The basis of the plan was to provide a "safe, comfortable learning environment conducive to maximizing the educational experience of Springfield students." The plan assessed every school in the district identifying and prioritizing long- and short-term capital and maintenance needs. Interviewees stated that the city would seek state assistance in securing capital funding for doors and windows, roofs, and so forth. The plan calls for spending approximately $42.5 million on capital improvements over the next four to five years.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Security was evident in most schools; of 12 visited by EQA examiners, 10 had the main entrance locked and visitors had to ring a bell to gain entrance, and at eight schools the examiners had to identify themselves, the door was opened remotely, and a camera monitored the main entrance. Although only five of the 12 schools required EQA examiners to sign in/out and only nine required visitor passes, the overall consistency of such practices was difficult to ascertain because examiners arrived with their own identification badges. In only three schools could they determine that all staff wore identification badges. Wearing badges was school committee policy.

At the middle and high schools, 21 police officers on daily assignment inside the schools provided staff and student security. Police cars were parked in the front of schools to inform the public that a police officer was on site. High school students were required to wear color-coded (different color for each school) identification badges to assist police officers in identifying intruders. They used portable metal detectors as well as stationary detectors at the alternative high school.

School committee interviewees reported satisfaction with school safety, and one principal reported that workshops were conducted on safety procedures, including lockdowns. However, several principals reported some safety concerns due to unruly students, lack of a working intercom system, no crisis plan, and no equipment to make identification badges. At two of the 12 schools, the main entrance was unlocked and visitors did not have to ring a bell to gain entry.

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	23,755	0.0	167,084,195	-0.3	24,133,201	133,461,741	6.5	157,594,942	5.7	158,519,816	6.1	924,874	0.6
FY98	25,064	5.5	180,668,399	8.1	24,468,652	146,358,953	9.7	170,827,605	8.4	171,360,291	8.1	532,686	0.3
FY99	25,965	3.6	194,014,029	7.4	25,107,284	164,005,009	12.1	189,112,293	10.7	189,271,324	10.5	159,031	0.1
FY00	26,888	3.6	204,790,087	5.6	26,061,361	181,512,049	10.7	207,573,410	9.8	207,596,540	9.7	23,130	0.0
FY01	27,681	2.9	215,084,294	5.0	26,715,501	188,368,793	3.8	215,084,294	3.6	215,560,811	3.8	476,517	0.2
FY02	28,330	2.3	229,544,141	6.7	27,674,587	206,589,727	9.7	234,264,314	8.9	234,299,099	8.7	34,785	0.0
FY03	28,699	1.3	236,411,782	3.0	27,804,658	208,607,124	1.0	236,411,782	0.9	237,120,143	1.2	708,361	0.3
FY04	28,669	-0.1	234,557,139	-0.8	26,150,281	208,406,858	-0.1	234,557,139	-0.8	232,735,849	-1.8	-1,821,290	-0.8
FY05	28,368	-1.0	242,805,576	3.5	28,075,949	215,632,819	3.5	243,708,768	3.9	244,393,323	5.0	684,555	0.3
FY06	28,412	0.2	253,464,385	4.4	28,100,362	225,364,023	4.5	253,464,385	4.0	243,004,829	-0.6	-10,459,556	-4.1

	Dollars Per Foundation Enrollment			Percentage of Foundation				Chapter 70 Aid as Percent of Actual NSS
	Foundation Budget	Ch 70 Aid	Actual NSS	Ch 70	Required NSS	Actual NSS		
FY97	7,034	5,618	6,673	79.9	94.3	94.9		84.2
FY98	7,208	5,839	6,837	81.0	94.6	94.8		85.4
FY99	7,472	6,316	7,289	84.5	97.5	97.6		86.7
FY00	7,616	6,751	7,721	88.6	101.4	101.4		87.4
FY01	7,770	6,805	7,787	87.6	100.0	100.2		87.4
FY02	8,103	7,292	8,270	90.0	102.1	102.1		88.2
FY03	8,238	7,269	8,262	88.2	100.0	100.3		88.0
FY04	8,182	7,269	8,118	88.9	100.0	99.2		89.5
FY05	8,559	7,601	8,615	88.8	100.4	100.7		88.2
FY06	8,921	7,932	8,553	88.9	100.0	95.9		92.7

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.