



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

School District Reexamination Report:

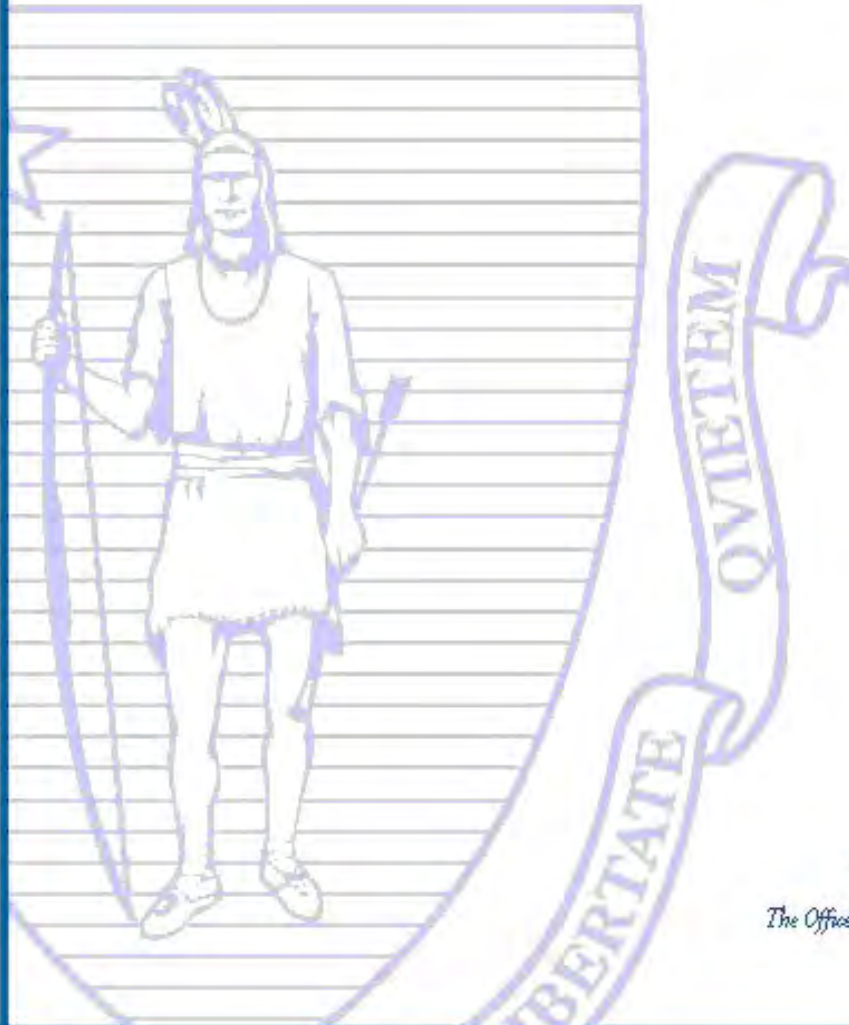
**Lawrence
Public Schools
Technical Report**



data driven

standards based

learner centered →



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

2005 - 2007

**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Office of Educational Quality and Accountability**

Educational Management Audit Council

Maryellen Donahue, Chairwoman
Irwin Blumer
Ethan d'Ablemont Burnes
Joseph Esposito
Alison Fraser

Joseph B. Rappa, Executive Director, Office of Educational Quality and Accountability

Visiting Reexamination Team

Dolores Fitzgerald, Coordinating Examiner
John Kulevich, Senior Examiner
William Contreras, Examiner
Rose DiOrio, Examiner
Linda Greyser, Examiner
David Lockwood, Examiner
Patricia O'Leary, Examiner
Fred Savoie, Examiner
William Wassel, Examiner
Patricia Williams, Examiner

The Educational Management Audit Council accepted this report at their meeting of April 11, 2008, voted to remove the district from 'Watch' status, and issued a management letter to the district expressing commendations and concerns based on the findings contained herein.

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

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Executive Summary

The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA) conducted a reexamination of the Lawrence Public Schools in November 2007. With an English language arts proficiency index of 67 proficiency index (PI) points and a math proficiency index of 51 PI points based on the 2007 MCAS test results, 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 below the state average. On the 2007 MCAS tests, 34 percent of Lawrence’s students scored at or above the proficiency standard in ELA and 21 percent did so in math.

District Overview

The city of Lawrence is located in Essex County in northeastern Massachusetts. The city grew from a farming community to a major industrial center based on textile mills using power from the nearby waterfalls. As a result, the city drew in workers from across New England and immigrant workers. With more recent immigrants, Lawrence still has a diverse population. Textiles remain important to the city’s economy, as manufacturing is the largest source of employment within the community, followed by educational, health, and social services. The city is governed by a Mayor-Council.

According to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR), Lawrence had a median family income of \$31,809 in 1999, compared to the statewide median family income of \$63,706, ranking it 349 out of the 351 cities and towns in the commonwealth. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the city had a total population of 72,043, with a population of 17,760 school-age children, or 25 percent of the total. Of the total households in Lawrence, 46 percent were households with children under 18 years of age. Ten 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 2006-2007 the Lawrence Public Schools had a total enrollment of 12,204. The demographic composition in the district was: 87.4 percent Hispanic, 7.6 percent White, 2.7 percent Asian, 2.2 percent African-American, 0.1 percent Native American, and 0.1 percent multi-race, non-Hispanic; 24.2 percent limited English proficient (LEP), 83.1 percent low income, and 18.9 percent special education. Ninety-one percent of school-age children in Lawrence attended public schools. The district does not

participate in school choice. A total of 2,435 Lawrence students attended public schools outside the district in 2006-2007, including 1,234 students who attended Greater Lawrence Technical School, 137 students who attended Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School, 90 students who attended Essex Agricultural and Technical High School, and 893 students who attended charter schools.

The district has 26 schools serving grades pre-kindergarten through 12, including 14 elementary schools serving grades pre-kindergarten through 8, five middle schools serving grades 5 through 8 (one serves grades 6 through 8), and seven high schools serving grades 9 through 12. The administrative team consists of a superintendent, an assistant superintendent for operations and support services, an assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, a director of assessment and accountability, a director of budget and finance, a director of human resources, a director of technology, a coordinator of special education services, and a coordinator of student support services. The district has a seven-member school committee.

In FY 2007, Lawrence's per pupil expenditure (preliminary), based on appropriations from all funds, was \$12,039, compared to \$11,789 statewide, ranking it 110 out of the 302 of 328 school districts reporting data. The district exceeded the state net school spending requirement in FY 2005 but was below it in FY 2006 and FY 2007. From FY 2005 to FY 2007, net school spending increased from \$116,415,684 to \$125,850,826; Chapter 70 aid increased from \$114,596,043 to \$123,087,075; the required local contribution increased from \$1,810,524 to \$4,898,318; and the foundation enrollment decreased from 13,497 to 13,143. Chapter 70 aid as a percentage of actual net school spending decreased from 98.4 to 97.8 percent over this period. From FY 2005 to FY 2006, total curriculum and instruction expenditures as a percentage of total net school spending increased from 56 to 58 percent.

Context

School districts examined by the Massachusetts Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA) are placed in 'Watch' status if the EQA examination reveals several areas of poor or unsatisfactory performance. All 'Watch' districts are monitored by the EQA and its staff. 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 previously examined the Lawrence Public Schools in April 2004 and March 2005, and the district was subsequently placed in ‘Watch’ status in July 2005. The district was monitored by an EQA examiner, Dr. Louis Perullo, and reexamined by a team of EQA examiners in November 2007. This reexamination report is the conclusion of the ‘Watch’ process, the purpose of which is to assess the progress the district has made since the prior examination.

The EQA’s third visit to Lawrence involved a review based on the indicators that received an ‘Unsatisfactory’ or ‘Poor’ rating in the 2005 review. Prior to the reexamination, the EQA team reviewed the reports of the monitor and documents that the district had prepared over the course of the previous two years.

The present superintendent has been leading the district during the past seven years and has instituted many interventions during that time to improve student achievement among all student subgroups but especially among the district’s Hispanic students. According to the superintendent, the district has the highest proportion of Latino students, by size of community, east of Texas. He further stated that students are generally coming into the district from another country, the Dominican Republic, rather than from another city in the United States.

Under the direction of the superintendent in his first year of service, the district adopted the Success for All (SFA) reading program for students in its elementary schools, and has worked closely with consultants from Johns Hopkins University to implement the program successfully. During the past several years, the district has also made some modifications to its programs such as the use of a basal text. Although district MCAS proficiency indices continued to be well below the state averages, Lawrence students did make gains in proficiency and passing rates on the MCAS ELA tests during the period of reexamination for all of its subgroups and the population as a whole. The superintendent is committed to the SFA program and “knows that we have more work to do” and remains confident that student achievement will continue to improve.

The district opened a new high school in September 2007. The \$110 million structure is architecturally and academically divided into six separate high schools, each with a different theme. This allows teams of teachers to work with small groups of students, usually no more than 500. A uniform policy mandates khakis and polo shirts for all students. The polo shirts are color coded according to each of the high schools. Each school's program includes a core curriculum with common expectations across schools, but each school augments its own curriculum. The facility is highly functional, and students, teachers, and parents, and community members exhibit a high degree of civic pride in it. The superintendent believes that the new structure and its six separate high schools will help improve student and staff morale and student achievement.

Since the last EQA visit in 2005, seniors at Lawrence High School have continued to show improvement in the number and percentage of students earning a Competency Determination (CD). According to Department of Education data, the CD attainment rate has increased from 74 percent for the Class of 2003 to 84 percent for the Class of 2007, although enrollment and graduation numbers for the cohort group show that over 55 percent of students who entered grade 9 were not enrolled in grade 12, and even fewer were graduating. The district concedes that this number is high but says that many students leave the district to attend other educational facilities or to return to their home countries.

The superintendent describes the challenge for the district as "getting kids to the language (American English) first, then content language." To meet this challenge the district has provided Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) training to more than 90 percent of its teachers who work with the district's 2,300 English language learner (ELL) students.

In a further effort to reach out and provide support to its students, the district has formed partnerships with community human services agencies and benefactors to provide at-risk students and families access to health, social, recreational, and supplemental services. The district has an assistant superintendent for operations and support services to coordinate services with more than 45 human services agencies that work with the school district.

While the district has worked to address the issues cited in the previous EQA report and submitted two progress reports as evidence, lack of improved student achievement still remains a

problem. The superintendent acknowledges this but cites the fact that progress is being made and that staff members are working hard, and they believe that their hope and work will ultimately result in considerably improved student achievement.

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 November 13-16, 2007, the EQA conducted an independent reexamination of the Lawrence Public Schools for the period 2005-2007, with a primary focus on 2007. This reexamination was based on the EQA's six major standards of inquiry that address the quality of educational management, which are: 1) Leadership, Governance, and Communication; 2) Curriculum and Instruction; 3) Assessment and Program Evaluation; 4) Human Resource Management and Professional Development; 5) Access, Participation, and Student Academic Support; and 6) Financial and Asset Management Effectiveness and Efficiency. The report is based on the source documents, correspondence sent prior to the on-site visit, interviews with the representatives from the school committee, the district leadership team, school administrators, and teachers, and additional documents submitted while in the district. The report does not consider documents, revised data, or comments that may have surfaced after the on-site visit.

For the period under reexamination, 2005-2007, Lawrence Public Schools is considered to be a 'Very Low' performing school district, marked by student achievement that was 'Low' in English language arts (ELA) and 'Very Low' in math on the 2007 MCAS tests. Over the reexamination period, student performance improved by one and one-half PI points in ELA and five PI points in math, which narrowed the district's proficiency gaps by five percent in ELA and nine percent in math.

The following provides a summary of the district's performance on the 2007 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 2007 MCAS tests in ELA, math, and STE, eligible students in Lawrence 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, approximately one-third of the students in Lawrence Public Schools attained proficiency in English language arts (ELA) on the 2007 MCAS tests, one-fifth of Lawrence students attained proficiency in math, and one-tenth attained proficiency in science and technology/engineering (STE). Eighty-four percent of the Class of 2007 attained a Competency Determination.

- Lawrence's ELA proficiency index on the 2007 MCAS tests was 67 proficiency index (PI) points. This resulted in a proficiency gap, the difference between its proficiency index and the target of 100, of 33 PI points, 19 points wider than the state's average proficiency gap in ELA. This gap would require an average improvement in performance of nearly five PI points annually to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP).
- In 2007, Lawrence's math proficiency index on the MCAS tests was 51 PI points, resulting in a proficiency gap of 49 PI points, 25 points wider than the state's average proficiency gap in math. This gap would require an average improvement of seven PI points per year to achieve AYP.
- Lawrence's STE proficiency index in 2007 was 45 PI points, resulting in a proficiency gap of 55 PI points, 27 points wider than that statewide.

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

Between 2004 and 2007, Lawrence's MCAS performance showed improvement in English language arts, in math, and in science and technology/engineering.

- Over the three-year period 2004-2007, ELA performance in Lawrence improved at an average of more than one PI point annually. This resulted in an improvement rate, or a closing of the proficiency gap, of nine percent, a rate lower than that required to achieve

AYP. The percentage of students attaining proficiency in ELA increased from 28 percent in 2004 to 34 percent in 2007.

- Math performance in Lawrence also showed improvement over this period, at an average of nearly three PI points annually. This resulted in an improvement rate of 15 percent, also a rate lower than that required to achieve AYP. The percentage of students attaining proficiency in math rose from 11 percent in 2004 to 21 percent in 2007.
- Between 2004 and 2007, STE performance in Lawrence improved at an average of two PI points per year, resulting in a narrowing of the proficiency gap by close to 10 percent. However, the percentage of students attaining proficiency in STE remained at nine percent over this period.

Do MCAS test results vary among subgroups of students?

MCAS performance in 2007 varied considerably among subgroups of Lawrence students. Of the eight measurable subgroups in Lawrence, the gap in performance between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups was 40 PI points in ELA (Asian students, limited English proficient students, respectively) and 37 PI points in math (Asian students, students with disabilities, respectively).

- The proficiency gaps in Lawrence in 2007 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).
- The proficiency gaps in ELA and math were narrower than the district average for regular education students, White students, Asian students, and non low-income students.

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

In Lawrence, the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in ELA widened from 37 PI points in 2004 to 48 PI points in 2007, and the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in math remained at 37 PI points over this period.

- All student subgroups had improved performance in ELA between 2004 and 2007. The most improved subgroup in ELA was Asian students.
- In math, the performance of all student subgroups in Lawrence also improved between 2004 and 2007. The most improved subgroups in math were White students and students with disabilities.

Fidelity of Implementation

A characteristic of effective educational organizations (schools and districts) is the strong alignment of goals, plans, processes, and actions—from the policymakers to the classroom. Therefore, the EQA has developed a protocol for assessing the alignment of these elements. The *fidelity of implementation* is an indicator of the consistency of execution of a district's expectations: its stated goals, plans, curricula, and various processes, down to the level of instruction. When these various components are consistent and highly aligned, a high level of fidelity of implementation exists. When these are inconsistent and poorly aligned, a low or poor level of fidelity of implementation exists. The classroom observation protocol is designed to collect evidence of district and school goals, plans, and expectations in the instructional setting.

The EQA team found that the level of fidelity of implementation varied in Lawrence. While there was consistent verbal agreement among all levels regarding the goals identified in the District Comprehensive Education Plan (2006-2007), the implementation of the goals as evidenced by the random classroom observations conducted by the EQA varied from level to level. Interviews and classroom observations revealed that the highest level of fidelity of implementation was at the elementary level, and the lowest at the high school level.

The goals listed in the category of School Transformation included seven essential elements: leadership and school culture, coherent curriculum, instructional practices, assessment and accountability, professional learning, student support services, and family and community engagement. The district developed a comprehensive Performance Action Plan that provided specific objectives for the goals, as well as information regarding timelines, responsibilities, and measurable outcomes for each of the broader goals.

The district provided ways for fidelity of implementation of these components by providing principals and teachers with a curriculum aligned to the state frameworks. Teachers received professional development in the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) to facilitate the district's goal of making content comprehensible for English language learners. The district was in the third year of implementing an assessment tool, the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), to identify student strengths and weaknesses. In interviews with principals and teachers, the EQA team found a consistent level of implementation of the MAP across all levels. A review of reports regarding student achievement that principals submitted to the superintendent provided further evidence of MAP implementation.

Interviews revealed a high degree of consistency among all levels in describing instructional priorities, especially for Hispanic and special education students. The classroom observations, however, showed an inconsistency between the descriptions and the observed classroom practices as they related to the SIOP model. Principals and teachers both described language acquisition and content as one of the main goals of the district. Yet, the classroom observations revealed a lower level of implementation at the high schools than at the elementary and middle schools. Implementation of curriculum had a high degree of consistency in that the Success for All reading program was consistently implemented at the elementary level. In all classrooms, examiners observed that teachers used the SFA strategies and did not veer from them.

Standard Summaries

Leadership, Governance, and Communication

The Lawrence Public Schools made some progress during the reexamination period in the area of leadership, governance, and communication. Of the five indicators in this standard that the EQA reexamined, the district improved on two, both of which received a rating of 'Satisfactory.' In addition, of the two new indicators in this standard included in the reexamination, the district received a rating of 'Satisfactory' on one.

During the reexamination period under review, Lawrence Public Schools relied primarily on analysis of MCAS test and Measures of Academic Progress results to identify students' strengths and needs and to develop programs and services to improve student achievement. While the performance of Lawrence students improved on the most recent MCAS tests, proficiency levels

remain well below the state average. The district intended to focus on the fidelity of implementation of curriculum and instruction, especially in literacy, to improve student achievement.

Lawrence improved the monitoring of teaching and learning. Administrators developed and implemented walk-through protocols, and supervisors implemented the staff evaluation procedure to ensure that evaluations were more timely and meaningful. The district also moved from a top-down to a combined districtwide and school-based professional development program.

Administrators and teachers perceived that the schools had adequate resources, although some stated the need for more staff members to assist at-risk students in regular classrooms and additional teachers to reduce the class sizes in some schools. The district allocated to teachers up to \$100 every year for purchases of classroom supplies and materials.

Although Lawrence had both district and school crisis management plans and teams, teachers at the new high school complex lacked sufficient training and practice on the crisis and emergency protocols and procedures. This was evident to the EQA examiners during the lockdown that occurred at the time of their site visit. However, the high school campus had only been open for eight weeks at the time of the EQA visit; crisis protocols had been reviewed with staff, but training and practice regarding procedures were still in process.

The district formed associations and partnerships to increase services for students. The assistant superintendent for operations coordinated these activities. The Agency Partnership Advisory Network (APAN) consisted of 45 local organizations, groups, and agencies providing assistance to at-risk students and families. All schools in Lawrence benefited from programs and services made possible or available through APAN, including extended day programs. In addition to APAN, business partners sponsored special events, programs, and services, and donated funds to the schools.

Curriculum and Instruction

The Lawrence Public Schools made improvements in the area of curriculum and instruction during the reexamination period. Of the five indicators in this standard reexamined by the EQA,

the district improved on four and received a rating of ‘Satisfactory’ on three. Of the two new indicators in this standard included in the reexamination, the district received a rating of ‘Needs Improvement’ on both.

During the reexamination period, Lawrence Public Schools revised elements of its curriculum to address student learning needs with the intention of improving student achievement. The district adopted textbooks at the elementary and middle levels to supplement the programs in place for English language arts and mathematics. In English language arts, the district added a Houghton Mifflin anthology in specific grades to supplement the trade books already in use in the Success for All program in grades 1-8. In math, the district added the Scott Foresman/Addison Wesley texts in grades 1-5 to enhance the Investigations in Number, Data, and Space program, and the Prentice Hall textbook series in grades 6-8 to supplement the Connected Math Program. To support these resource changes, the district revised the mathematics scope and sequence for these grades to include a suggested sequence for the inclusion of both the programs and the texts.

The district invested heavily in the technology to support READ 180 at the middle schools and in grade 9 at the high schools. In addition the district implemented several interventions during the period under reexamination to support students who were not achieving proficiency on the MCAS tests. These included Fast ForWord, a computerized language development and reading intervention for low-achieving students, and the Carnegie Bridge to Algebra program to support high school students not yet ready for success in algebra.

A particular staffing matter that the district needed to address was the lack of teacher or paraprofessional support for special education students and English language learners in mainstream classrooms. Teachers expressed particular concerns about this need.

The district was proactive in training its teachers in the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model to equip them to better address the needs of its English language learners. The district also mandated large amounts of instructional time for ELA and mathematics. These measures to improve student achievement had not yet resulted in significant improvements in student achievement.

Random observations of classrooms by the EQA team revealed that expectations for student performance were not high districtwide and were the lowest at the high school. Also, classroom management issues were observed most prominently at the high school.

Assessment and Program Evaluation

The EQA reexamined the Lawrence Public Schools on only two indicators in this standard. The district improved on one but received a rating of ‘Needs Improvement’ on both. Lawrence lacked a formal program evaluation system during the reexamination period. It did, however, hire a program evaluator in the 2006-2007 school year to evaluate support and special education programs. Central office staff members informed the EQA examiners that to date only support programs and services, such as READ 180 and Fast ForWord, had been evaluated. The Waterford Early Reading Program, Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), and K-8 mathematics program were scheduled for evaluation in 2007-2008. In addition, Success for All (SFA) consultants visited the schools two to three times each year to evaluate the SFA program in Lawrence. Following classroom observations, the consultants met with school coaches and the facilitator to offer suggestions for modifying the program. The district intended to expand program evaluation in the future.

Human Resource Management and Professional Development

The Lawrence Public Schools made a number of improvements in the area of human resource management and professional development during the reexamination period. Of the seven indicators in this standard reexamined by the EQA, the district improved on five, all of which received a rating of ‘Satisfactory.’ On the one new indicator in this standard included in the reexamination, the district received a rating of ‘Needs Improvement.’

During the reexamination period, the district improved accountability through school, program (see indicator 3.2 in Standard III), and personnel evaluations. The School Comprehensive Education Plans (SCEPs) were the basis for school evaluations. The SCEP process changed from a one- to a two-year cycle with review and revision in the spring and fall of each year. Plans written in the spring were reviewed and updated in the fall with goals and activities for the coming year.

The district's evaluation procedures for administrators and teachers aligned with the requirements of the Education Reform Act. A random review of administrator evaluations by EQA examiners found all evaluations to be informative and most to be instructive, containing specific recommendations to promote growth and overall effectiveness. The review also found, however, that most administrator evaluations were not timely. District administrators expressed awareness of this and intended to improve the timely completion of administrator evaluations in the future. Most of the randomly reviewed teacher evaluations were found to be timely and informative, and two-thirds contained specific recommendations to promote growth and overall effectiveness. The district focused on improving teacher performance through its supervisory model. Principals were required to conduct supervisory walk-throughs and complete walk-through protocols. The principals forwarded these protocols to the superintendent, who reviewed and discussed them with the principals. The walk-through protocol varied by grade level and academic discipline.

The district had fair and open hiring practices and focused on acquiring the most qualified teachers for each position. Principals were encouraged to secure the best possible candidates without predetermined salary limitations. Recruitment began in February when the director of human resources initiated networking strategies with professional organizations to recruit candidates, and visited local colleges to promote the April recruitment fair that the district conducted annually. The district also participated in the Massachusetts Institute for New Teachers (MINT) program and enrolled selected candidates outside the field of education in a year-long program to help those with preliminary licenses obtain initial licensure.

The district continued to use a variety of strategies to recognize and retain personnel. Some recognition practices included teacher of the year, sponsored by the rotary club, and recognitions of teachers and other staff members at monthly school committee meetings. School-based recognition varied by site. Teacher turnover in the district during the reexamination period was approximately 10 percent annually. Roughly half of those who left had retired. The other reasons for leaving included relocation, promotion and salary increases, non-renewal, reducing the commute, and childrearing.

Lawrence had a districtwide professional development committee with representatives nominated from all schools to develop and update the district's professional development plan. Many districtwide professional development programs were initiated during the period under reexamination with a common focus on improving student achievement, especially in literacy. At the same time the district placed greater emphasis on school-based, grade-level and departmental professional development activities.

Although the district had a comprehensive safety plan during the period under review, administrators at the new high school had not yet devoted sufficient time to explaining and practicing crisis and emergency procedures.

Access, Participation, and Student Academic Support

The Lawrence Public Schools also made improvements in the area of access, participation, and student academic support during the reexamination period. Of the nine indicators in this standard reexamined by the EQA, the district improved on five and received a rating of 'Satisfactory' on four. In addition, Lawrence also received a 'Satisfactory' rating on the three new indicators in this standard that were included in the reexamination.

To address lagging achievement, Lawrence Public Schools adopted and implemented a number of academic intervention programs designed to improve language development, literacy, and other academic skills, as well as interventions to address social and behavioral needs. Lawrence also implemented a number of school- or classroom-based social/behavioral programs to improve school culture and create opportunities to teach children self- and social-awareness, self-management, conflict resolution, and responsible decision-making.

Although the Massachusetts Department of Education no longer required districts to implement a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP), Lawrence had such a plan and used it to support the academic and behavioral needs of all students. The DCAP's components addressed test-taking accommodations and offered teaching strategies, templates, and sample lessons for students in the regular education program as well as second language learners, special education students, and gifted and talented students. In addition, the DCAP offered added opportunities to support teachers' implementation of the district's instructional priorities in literacy, differentiated instruction, and the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP).

The district encouraged higher rates of student and staff attendance and regularly maintained, monitored, and evaluated student attendance data. However, despite monitoring and intervention by parent liaisons, attendance officers, and school attendance committees, the district's overall attendance rate decreased slightly from 93.8 percent in 2004 to 93.4 percent in 2006, a rate below the state's target of 95 percent. According to DOE data, the average number of days absent for Lawrence students increased from 9.8 in 2004 to 10.6 in 2006, compared to the state average of 9.4 in 2006. However, Lawrence's elementary and middle schools consistently have had attendance rates in the 95 percent range since 2003, while the attendance rate at the early childhood centers (preK-K) has hovered around 92 percent and the rate at the high school has averaged 88.5 percent. No available data or data analyses described trends in staff attendance, although the EQA monitor reported it to be 95 percent from 2004 to 2006. Interviewees stated that staff attendance was monitored and discussed during performance evaluations.

The district maintained and analyzed a database on student attendance, suspensions, discipline, and dropouts. With this database, Lawrence could conduct subgroup analyses by school, grade, race, ethnicity, special program, and special education status to identify and understand trends, and to recommend prevention and intervention programs for both behavioral and academic support. The district's analysis of disciplinary data revealed that while in-school suspensions dropped to 7.5 percent during the reexamination period, though still more than twice the state average of 3.4 percent, out-of-school suspensions increased to 10.8 percent, also almost twice the state's average rate of 5.8 percent. A number of programs addressed dropout prevention and offered students opportunities for alternative routes to earning a high school diploma. The district even offered a Spanish GED program. Although the dropout rate decreased from 2001 to 2004, it increased to 10.3 percent in 2006, well above the state's average rate of 3.3 percent.

After decreasing from 2001 to 2004, student retentions increased from 2004 to 2006. By 2007, the district's retention rate was more than double the state average retention rate. This was primarily due to retentions at the high school, as the retention rate at the elementary and middle schools has remained relatively stable at approximately two percent since 2004. The high school has experienced an increase in the number of students who have not attained the necessary credits to fully matriculate to the next grade level. However, these students do not repeat the

entire year and are often moved to the next grade level at midyear upon attainment of missing credits.

The district used a stability statistic to increase understanding of the relationship between student enrollment and achievement. This measure was used to identify the percentage of grade 4-10 students who attended the Lawrence Public Schools for 3.75 full-time equivalent (FTE) years or more out of the past four years, and of grade 3 students enrolled in the district for 2.75 FTE years or more out of the past three years. School leaders and teachers took stability into account in analyzing and acting upon student achievement needs. At each grade level subject to MCAS testing, stable students outperformed non-stable students in both English language arts and mathematics.

Lawrence attempted to ameliorate the effects of poverty on its families by collaborating with nearly 45 organizations in the area to provide services to students. Schools also provided child care services and translators to accommodate parents' needs and to enable them to participate in their children's education. Although Lawrence's schools had a high mobility rate, the consistency of the ELA and mathematics programs across the district ensured continuity of instruction for students, and provided teachers with immediate access to the performance levels of students. Additionally, more than 90 percent of the teachers were trained in the SIOP model. Most teacher assignments were based on licensure, but Lawrence administrators placed retained and special education students with the teachers best able to meet their needs.

Financial and Asset Management Effectiveness and Efficiency

Rather than reexamine the district only on those 2005 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 2005-2007. The EQA examiners gave the Lawrence Public Schools an overall rating of 'Satisfactory' on this standard. They rated the district as 'Satisfactory' on 12 and 'Needs Improvement' on one of the 13 performance indicators in this standard.

The superintendent developed the budget through an open, participatory process. The budget document included goals, timelines, assumptions, three-year historical budget summaries, net school spending calculations, and individual school and central office budgets.

The district allocated resources to schools and programs based upon the goals and objectives identified in the District Comprehensive Education Plan (DCEP) and in each School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP), and recommendations by principals and program leaders based on a review of student assessment and other data. Principals discussed the status of each teacher with the superintendent and other members of the budget committee. Following completion of staffing decisions, the budget committee reviewed the line item operations budget for each school and considered allocations based on an assessment of their impact on student achievement.

The administration conducted budget work sessions with the school committee and delivered a proposed budget to the school committee in March. The budget categories included salaries, fixed costs, and operations. The school committee held the required budget public hearing in April, and the city charter specified May 1 as the final date for submission of the school budget appropriation to the mayor for recommendation to the city council. In past years, the district operated on monthly budgets from July 1 until the city council finally approved the school budget in October.

The district had adequate funds for personnel and materials, but needed additional resources for more extended day programs for at-risk students and enrichment programs for accelerated students.

Principals and program leaders had the flexibility to transfer funds between line items within their budgets, with the superintendent's prior approval. Most of these transfers were made in the fall after an analysis of MCAS test results, and in the spring following an assessment of what was needed to complete the school year. The district froze the budget in December in order to analyze and reassess the needs, ensure that spending was within fiscal limits, and reallocate the funds. The central office notified principals and program leaders of available funds in February, and began processing purchase orders for supplies, materials, and equipment. Lawrence allocated to every classroom teacher up to \$100 for educational materials purchased by December for their classrooms.

The district exactly met its net school spending requirement every year from FY 2001 through FY 2004. Lawrence exceeded the requirement by \$9,117 in FY 2005, but failed to meet the

required spending in FY 2006 by \$660,871 and in FY 2007 by \$2,134,567. The required local contribution increased from \$273,509 in FY 2004 to \$4,898,318 in FY 2007.

The school buildings were clean and well maintained in good condition. The district dedicated a new high school complex in October 2007, built at a cost of \$110 million. This project was 90 percent reimbursable by the state. Students entered one of six separate thematic high schools in September 2007. The district worked collaboratively with the city's Department of Public Works (DPW) to ensure that the school facilities were maintained, and employed a facilities director to coordinate operations with the DPW, among other responsibilities. A facilities manager supervised district custodial staff.

Lawrence had systems to ensure student safety in the schools. In school buildings equipped with a buzzer entry system, the exterior doors were locked during the school day. Visitors and tardy students gained entrance via the system and registered in the main office. The district assigned safety officers to buildings without a buzzer entry system. Lawrence required all visitors and staff members to wear identification badges.

Analysis of MCAS Student Achievement Data

The EQA's analysis of student achievement data focuses on the MCAS test results for 2004-2007, with primary attention paid to the 2007 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 Lawrence 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 Lawrence; 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 data reported here do not include students who took the MCAS Alternate Assessment.

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.

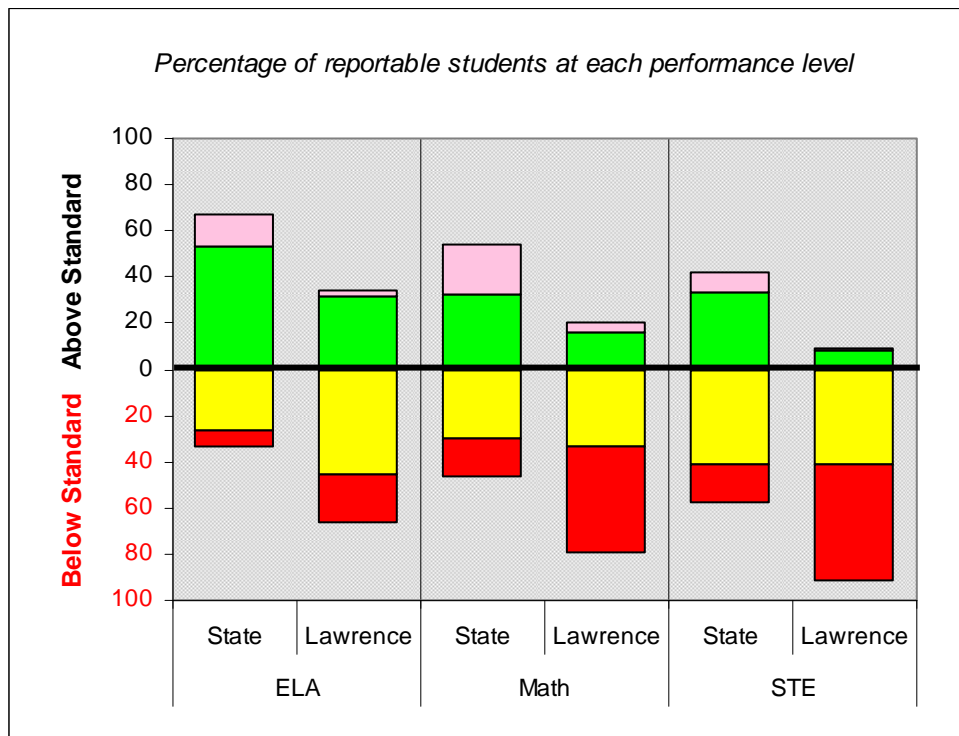
Achievement

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

Findings:

- On average, approximately one-third of the students in Lawrence Public Schools attained proficiency in English language arts (ELA) on the 2007 MCAS tests, one-fifth of Lawrence students attained proficiency in math, and one-tenth attained proficiency in science and technology/engineering (STE). Eighty-four percent of the Class of 2007 attained a Competency Determination.
- Lawrence's ELA proficiency index on the 2007 MCAS tests was 67 proficiency index (PI) points. This resulted in a proficiency gap, the difference between its proficiency index and the target of 100, of 33 PI points, 19 points wider than the state's average proficiency gap in ELA. This gap would require an average improvement in performance of nearly five PI points annually to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP).
- In 2007, Lawrence's math proficiency index on the MCAS tests was 51 PI points, resulting in a proficiency gap of 49 PI points, 25 points wider than the state's average proficiency gap in math. This gap would require an average improvement of seven PI points per year to achieve AYP.
- Lawrence's STE proficiency index in 2007 was 45 PI points, resulting in a proficiency gap of 55 PI points, 27 points wider than that statewide.

Figure/Table 1: MCAS Test Performance by Subject, 2007



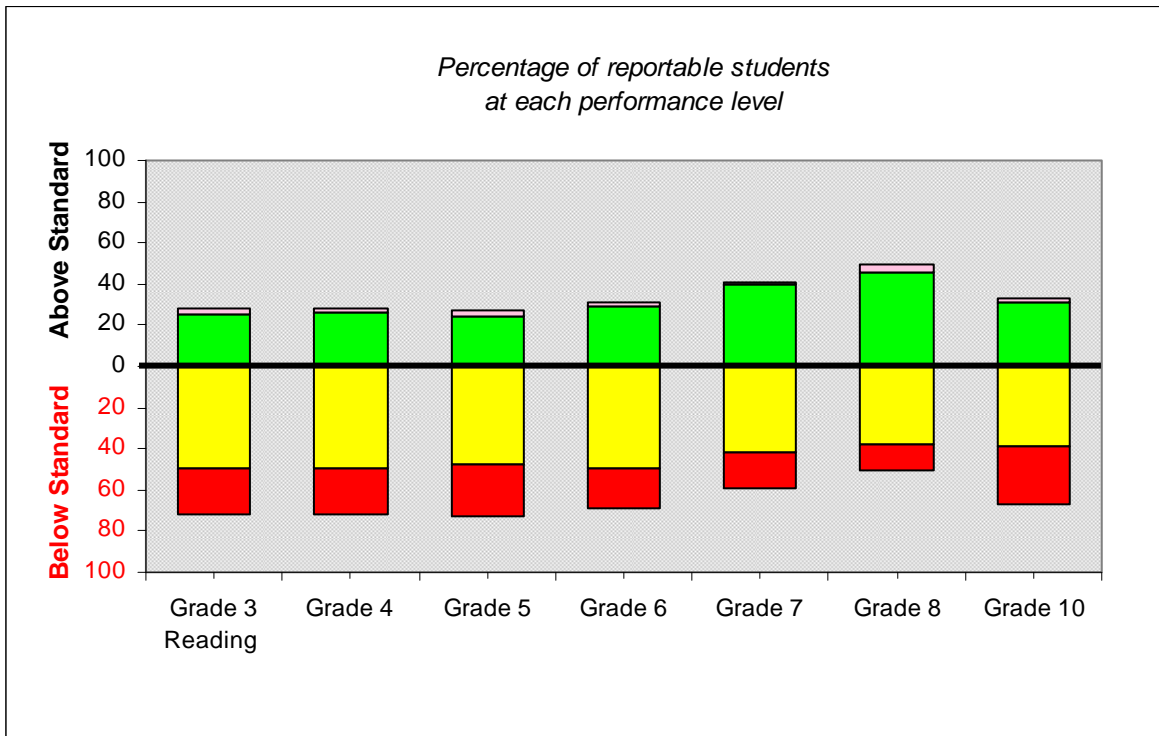
		ELA		Math		STE	
		State	Lawrence	State	Lawrence	State	Lawrence
	Advanced	13	2	22	5	9	1
	Proficient	53	32	32	16	34	8
	Needs Improvement	27	45	30	33	41	41
	Warning/Failing	7	21	17	46	17	50
Percent Attaining Proficiency		66	34	54	21	43	9
Proficiency Index (PI)		85.7	67.0	76.1	50.9	72.1	45.0

In 2007, achievement in English language arts (ELA), math, and science and technology/engineering (STE) was lower in Lawrence than statewide. In Lawrence, 34 percent of students attained proficiency in ELA, compared to 66 percent statewide; 21 percent attained proficiency in math, compared to 54 percent statewide; and nine percent attained proficiency in STE, compared to 43 percent statewide.

The 2007 proficiency index for Lawrence students in ELA was 67 PI points, compared to 86 PI points statewide; in math, it was 51 PI points, compared to 76 points statewide; and in STE, it was 45 PI points, compared to 72 points statewide.

The ELA proficiency gap for Lawrence students in 2007 was 33 PI points, compared to 14 PI points statewide, and would require an average improvement of nearly five PI points annually to make AYP. Lawrence's math proficiency gap in 2007 was 49 PI points, compared to 24 PI points statewide, and would require an average improvement of seven PI points per year to make AYP. Lawrence's STE proficiency gap was 55 PI points, compared to 28 PI points statewide.

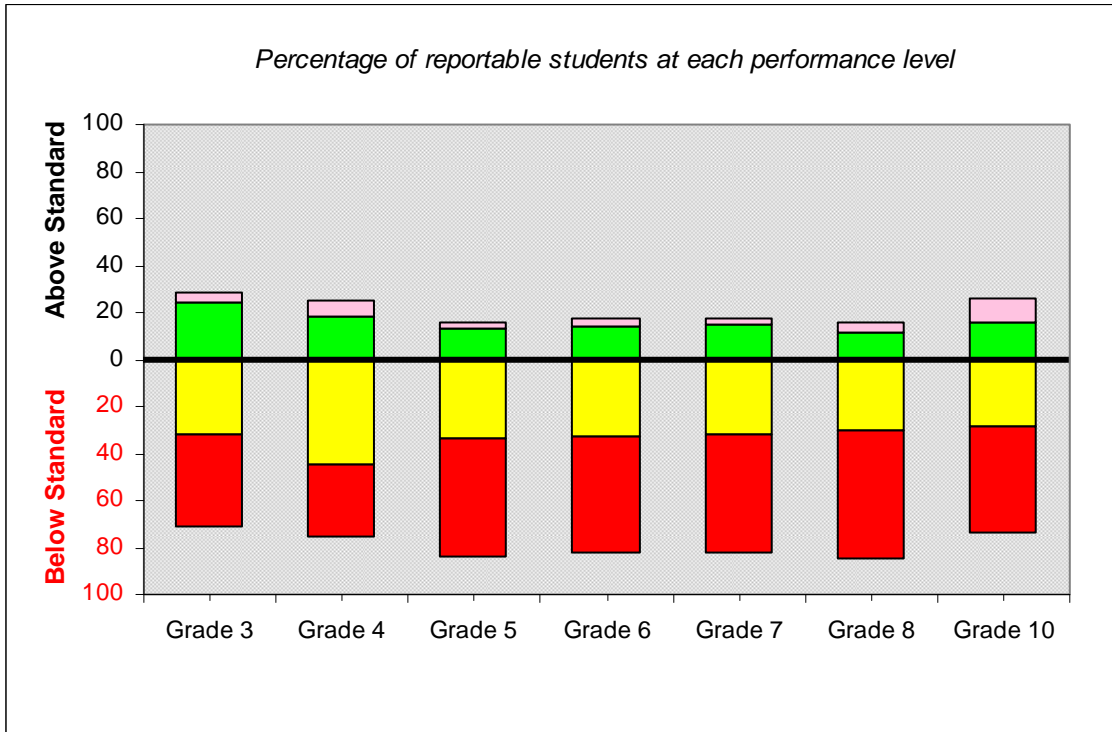
Figure/Table 2: MCAS English Language Arts (ELA) Test Performance by Grade, 2007



		Grade 3 Reading	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 10
	Advanced	3	2	2	2	1	4	2
	Proficient	26	26	25	29	40	45	31
	Needs Improvement	50	49	47	50	42	38	39
	Warning/Failing	22	22	26	19	18	13	28
	Percent Attaining Proficiency	29	28	27	31	41	49	33

The percentage of Lawrence students attaining proficiency in ELA in 2007 varied by grade level, ranging from a low of 27 percent at grade 5 to a high of 49 percent at grade 8.

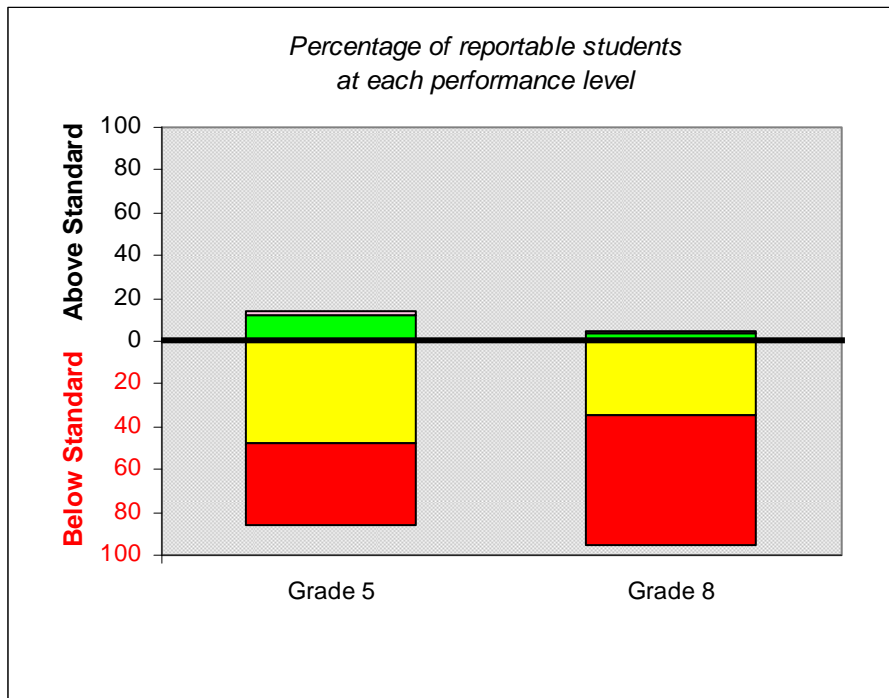
Figure/Table 3: MCAS Math Test Performance by Grade, 2007



		Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 10
	Advanced	4	7	3	3	3	4	11
	Proficient	24	18	13	14	15	11	15
	Needs Improvement	32	44	34	32	32	30	29
	Warning/Failing	39	31	50	50	50	54	45
	Percent Attaining Proficiency	28	25	16	17	18	15	26

The percentage of Lawrence students attaining proficiency in math in 2007 also varied by grade level, ranging from a low of 15 percent at grade 8 to a high of 28 percent at grade 3.

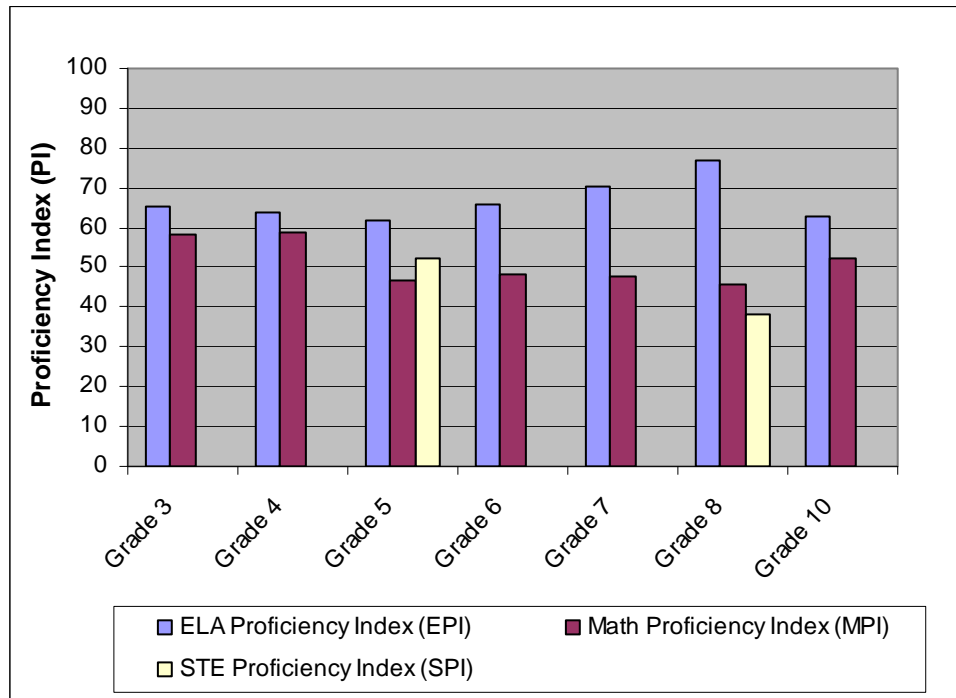
Figure/Table 4: MCAS Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) Test Performance by Grade, 2007



		Grade 5	Grade 8
	Advanced	2	0
	Proficient	12	4
	Needs Improvement	48	35
	Warning/Failing	38	61
Percent Attaining Proficiency		14	4

In Lawrence in 2007, 14 percent of grade 5 students attained proficiency in STE, and four percent of grade 8 students did so.

Figure/Table 5: MCAS Proficiency Indices by Grade and Subject, 2007

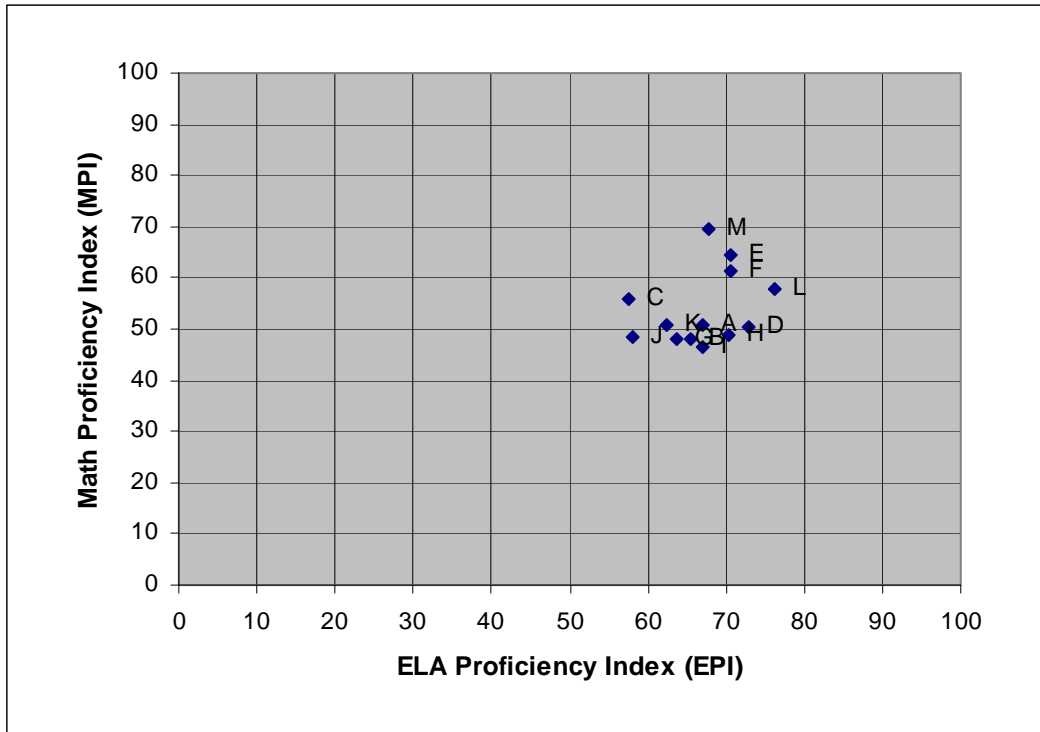


	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 10
ELA Proficiency Index (EPI)	65.4	63.6	62.0	65.9	70.5	77.0	62.9
Math Proficiency Index (MPI)	58.4	58.9	46.5	48.1	47.9	45.9	52.3
STE Proficiency Index (SPI)			52.4			38.2	

At every grade level, the performance of Lawrence students on the 2007 MCAS tests was strongest in ELA. Lawrence’s ELA proficiency gap in 2007 ranged from a low of 23 PI points at grade 8 to a high of 38 PI points at grade 5. Lawrence’s math proficiency gap ranged from a low of 41 PI points at grade 4 to a high of 54 PI points at grade 8. Lawrence’s STE proficiency gap was 48 PI points at grade 5 and 62 PI points at grade 8.

Figures 6 A-B/Table 6: MCAS ELA Proficiency Index (EPI) vs. Math Proficiency Index (MPI) by School, 2007

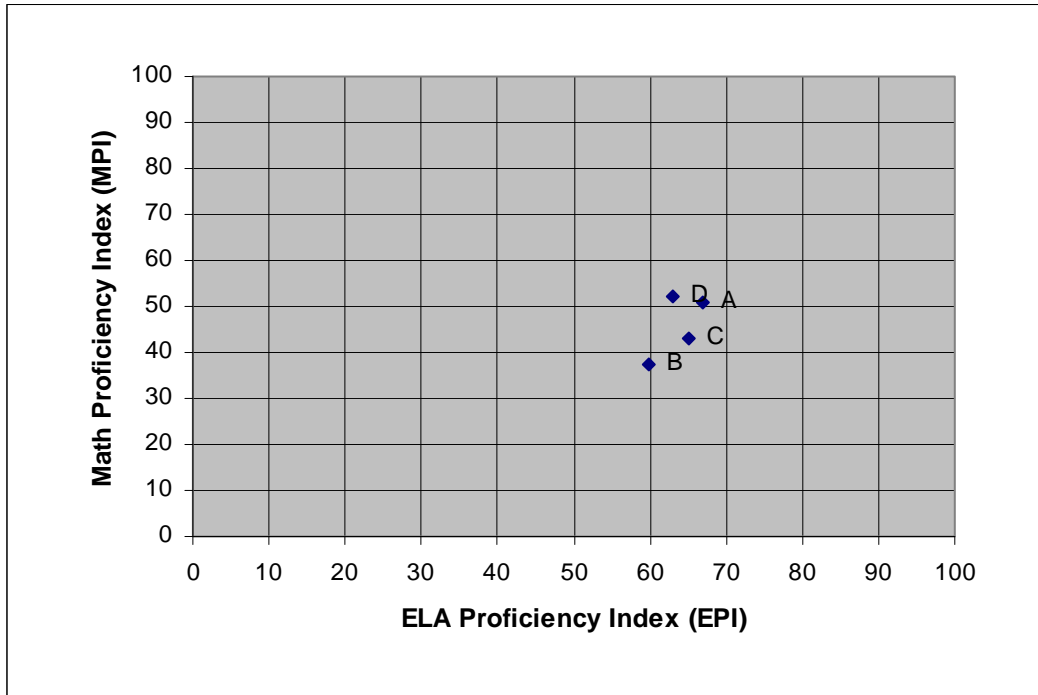
A. Elementary Schools



		ELA PI	Math PI	Number of Tests
A	Lawrence district average	67.0	50.9	9,131
B	Alexander B. Bruce Elem	65.4	47.9	1,053
C	Arlington Elem	57.5	55.8	364
D	Edward F. Parthum Elem	73.0	50.5	1,549
E	Emily G. Weatherbee Elem	70.7	64.4	693
F	Francis M. Leahy Elem	70.7	61.3	447
G	Gerard A. Guilmette Elem	63.6	48.0	1,395
H	Henry K. Oliver Elem	70.3	49.0	832
I	James F. Leonard Elem	67.0	46.4	688
J	John K. Tarbox Elem	58.1	48.3	263
K	John R. Rollins Elem	62.5	50.6	177
L	Robert L. Frost Elem	76.2	57.7	1,227
M	South Lawrence East Elem	67.7	69.4	443

Among Lawrence’s elementary schools, the ELA proficiency gap in 2007 ranged from a low of 24 PI points at Robert Frost Elementary School to a high of 42 PI points at Arlington Elementary School and John Tarbox Elementary School. Lawrence’s math proficiency gap ranged from a low of 31 PI points at South Lawrence East Elementary School to a high of 54 PI points at James Leonard Elementary School.

B. Middle and High Schools



		ELA PI	Math PI	Number of Tests
A	Lawrence district average	67.0	50.9	9,131
B	Arlington Middle	59.8	37.5	925
C	South Lawrence East Middle	65.0	43.2	1021
D	Lawrence High	62.9	52.3	1335

Among Lawrence’s middle and high schools, the ELA proficiency gap in 2007 ranged from a low of 35 PI points at South Lawrence East Middle School to a high of 40 PI points at Arlington Middle School. Lawrence’s math proficiency gap ranged from a low of 48 PI points at Lawrence High School to a high of 63 PI points at Arlington Middle School.

Equity of Achievement

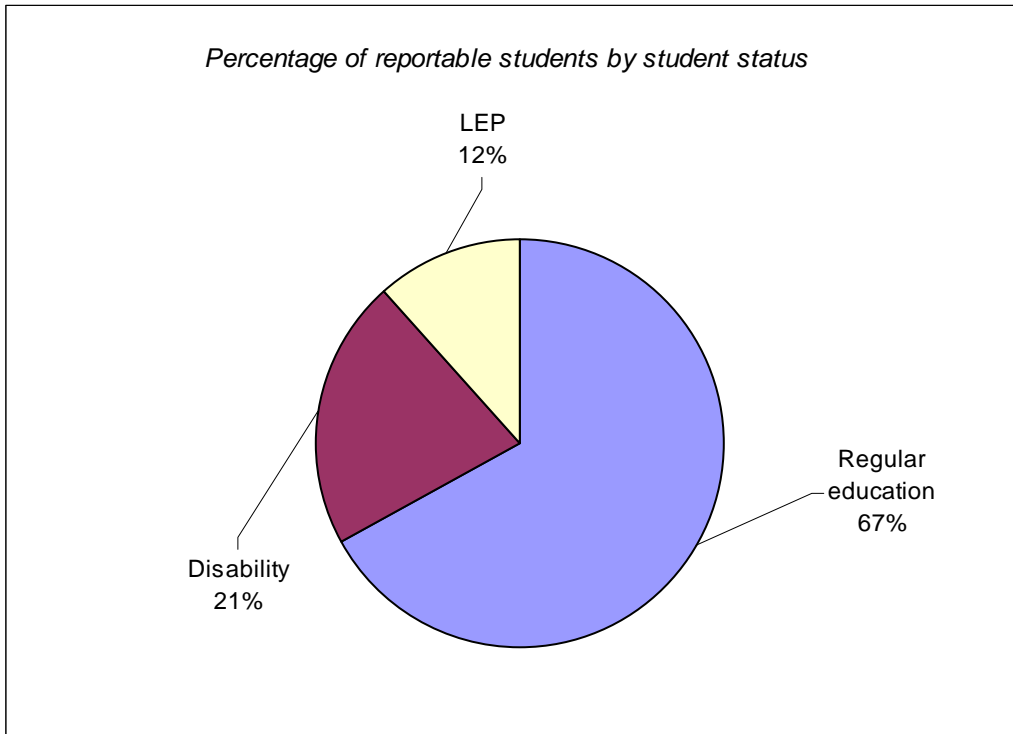
Do MCAS test results vary among subgroups of students?

Findings:

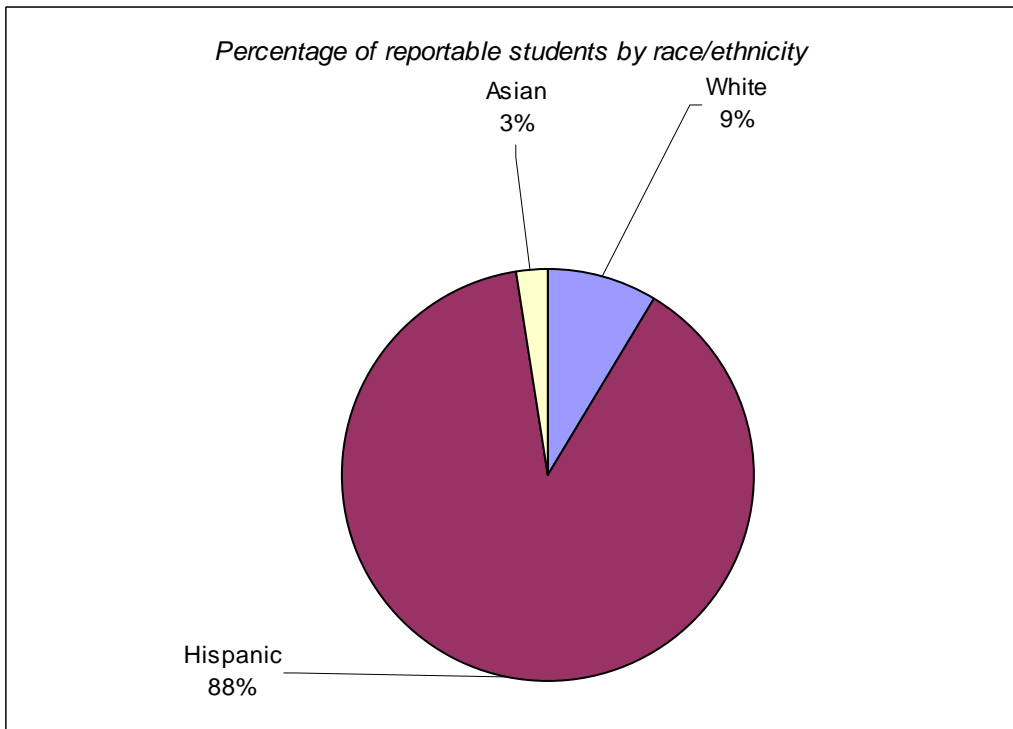
- MCAS performance in 2007 varied considerably among subgroups of Lawrence students. Of the eight measurable subgroups in Lawrence, the gap in performance between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups was 40 PI points in ELA (Asian students, limited English proficient students, respectively) and 37 PI points in math (Asian students, students with disabilities, respectively).
- The proficiency gaps in Lawrence in 2007 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).
- The proficiency gaps in ELA and math were narrower than the district average for regular education students, White students, Asian students, and non low-income students.

Figures 7 A-C/Table 7: Student Population by Reportable Subgroups, 2007

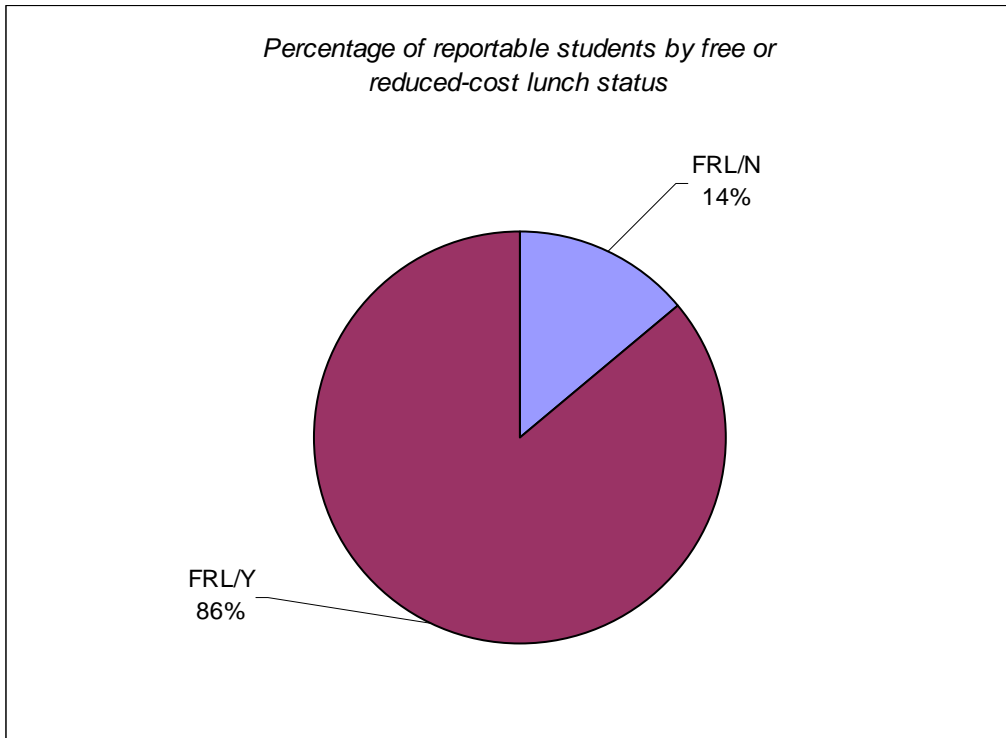
A.



B.



C.

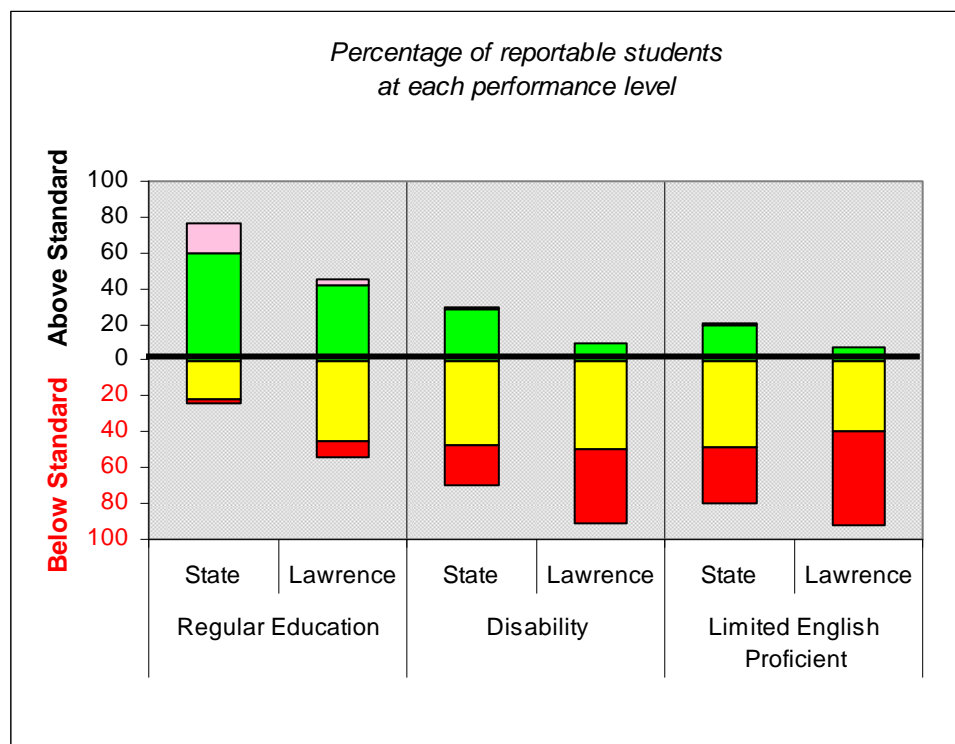


	Subgroup	Number of Students
Student status	Regular education	4319
	Disability	1377
	LEP	749
Race/ethnicity	White	543
	Hispanic	5594
	Asian	161
Free or reduced-cost lunch status	FRL/N	902
	FRL/Y	5543

Note: Data include students in tested grades levels only.

In Lawrence in 2007, 21 percent of the students tested were students with disabilities and 12 percent were limited English proficient students. Eighty-eight percent of the tested students were Hispanic, nine percent were White, and three percent were Asian. Eighty-six percent of the tested students participated in the free or reduced-cost lunch program.

Figure/Table 8: MCAS English Language Arts (ELA) Test Performance by Student Status Subgroup, 2007

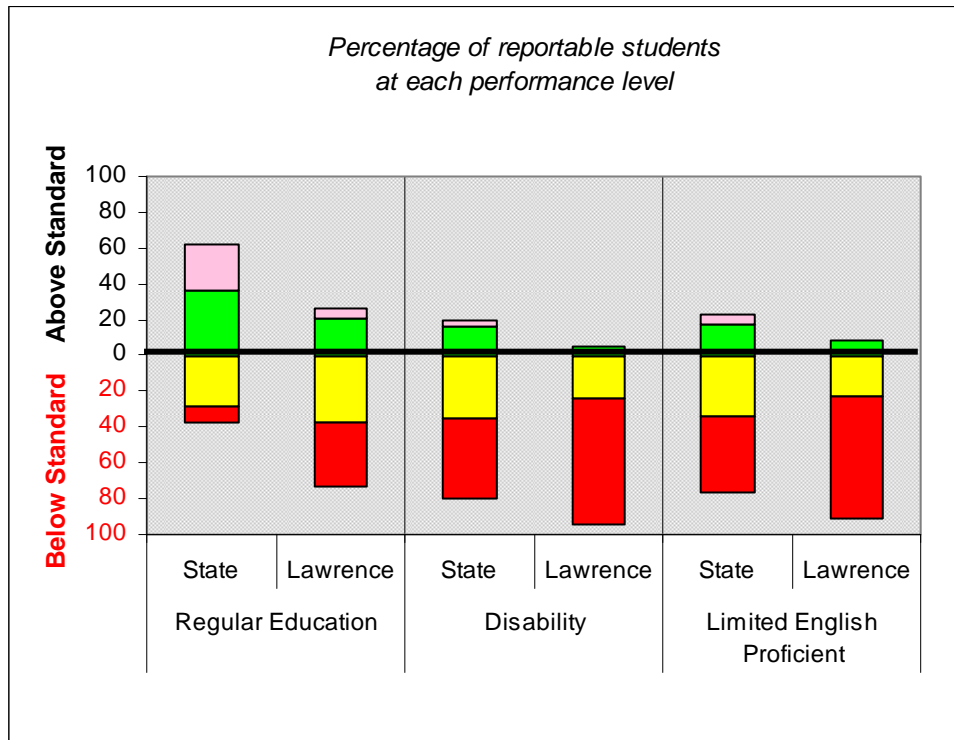


		Regular Education		Disability		Limited English Proficient	
		State	Lawrence	State	Lawrence	State	Lawrence
	Advanced	16	3	2	0	1	1
	Proficient	60	42	28	9	19	7
	Needs Improvement	21	45	48	49	48	40
	Warning/Failing	2	10	22	41	31	52
Percent Attaining Proficiency		76	45	30	9	20	8
Proficiency Index (EPI)		91.3	76.2	64.8	48.2	57.3	43.0

In Lawrence in 2007, the proficiency rate in ELA of regular education students was five times greater than that of students with disabilities and nearly six times greater than that of limited English proficient students. Forty-five percent of regular education students, nine percent of students with disabilities, and eight percent of LEP students attained proficiency in ELA on the 2007 MCAS tests.

Lawrence's ELA proficiency gap in 2007 was 24 PI points for regular education students, compared to nine PI points statewide; 52 PI points for students with disabilities, compared to 35 PI points statewide; and 57 PI points for LEP students, compared to 43 PI points statewide. The performance gap in ELA between Lawrence's regular education students and students with disabilities was 28 PI points, and between regular education students and LEP students it was 33 PI points.

Figure/Table 9: MCAS Math Test Performance by Student Status Subgroup, 2007

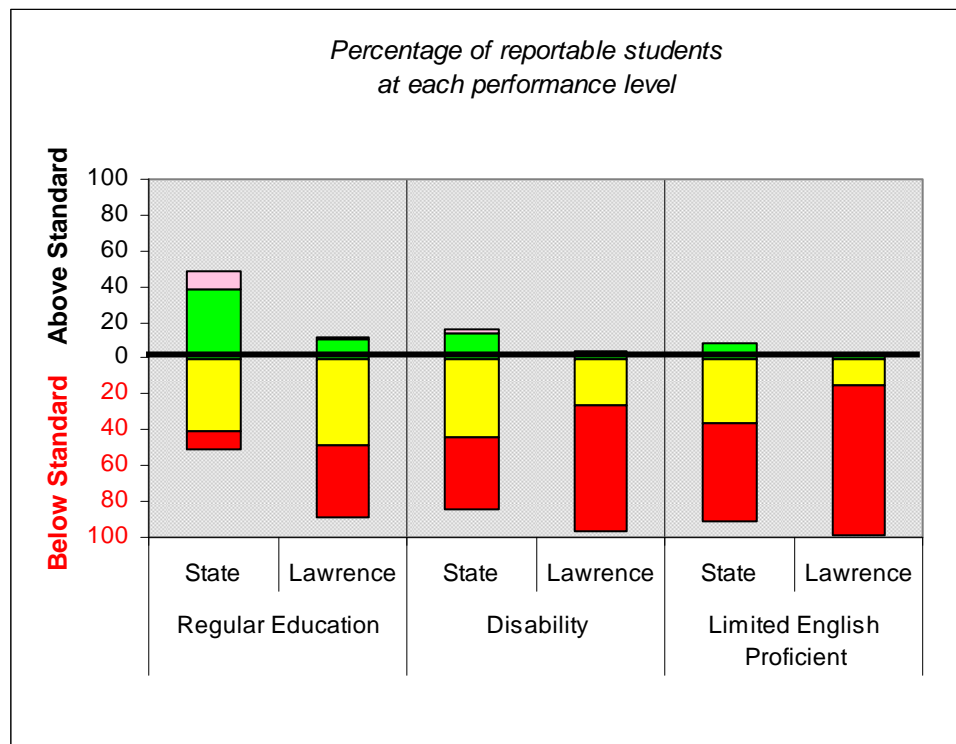


		Regular Education		Disability		Limited English Proficient	
		State	Lawrence	State	Lawrence	State	Lawrence
	Advanced	26	6	4	1	6	1
	Proficient	36	20	16	5	18	8
	Needs Improvement	28	38	36	24	34	23
	Warning/Failing	10	36	44	70	43	69
	Percent Attaining Proficiency	62	26	20	6	24	9
	Proficiency Index (MPI)	82.2	57.9	51.0	34.1	53.0	35.9

In Lawrence in 2007, the proficiency rate in math of regular education students was more than four times greater than that of students with disabilities and nearly three times greater than that of limited English proficient students. Twenty-six percent of regular education students, six percent of students with disabilities, and nine percent of LEP students attained proficiency in math on the MCAS tests in 2007.

Lawrence’s math proficiency gap in 2007 was 42 PI points for regular education students, compared to 18 PI points statewide; 66 PI points for students with disabilities, compared to 49 PI points statewide; and 64 PI points for LEP students, compared to 47 PI points statewide. The performance gap in math between Lawrence’s regular education students and students with disabilities was 24 PI points, and between regular education students and LEP students it was 22 PI points.

Figure/Table 10: MCAS Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) Test Performance by Student Status Subgroup, 2007

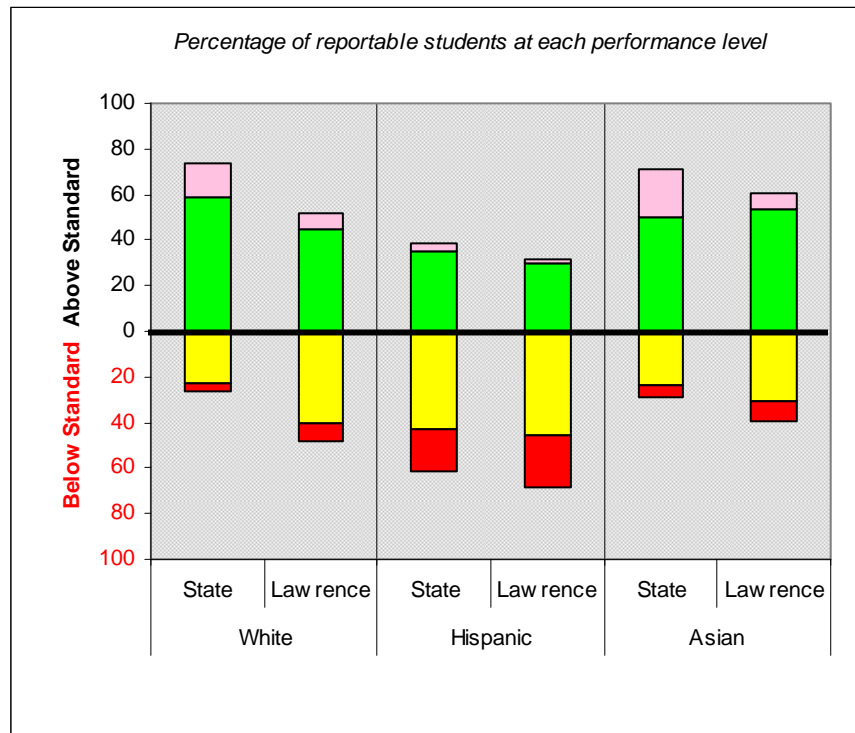


		Regular Education		Disability		Limited English Proficient	
		State	Lawrence	State	Lawrence	State	Lawrence
	Advanced	10	1	2	0	1	0
	Proficient	39	10	14	4	8	1
	Needs Improvement	41	49	44	26	36	15
	Warning/Failing	10	40	40	70	55	84
Percent Attaining Proficiency		49	11	16	4	9	1
Proficiency Index (SPI)		77.5	50.4	51.8	34.3	42.2	27.4

In Lawrence in 2007, the proficiency rate in science and technology/engineering of regular education students was nearly three times greater than that of students with disabilities and 11 times greater than that of LEP students. Eleven percent of regular education students, four percent of students with disabilities, and one percent of LEP students attained proficiency in STE on the 2007 MCAS tests.

Lawrence's STE proficiency gap in 2007 was 50 PI points for regular education students, compared to 23 PI points statewide; 66 PI points for students with disabilities, compared to 48 PI points statewide; and 73 PI points for LEP students, compared to 58 PI points statewide. The performance gap in STE between Lawrence's regular education students and students with disabilities was 16 PI points, and between regular education students and LEP students it was 23 PI points.

Figure/Table 11: MCAS English Language Arts (ELA) Test Performance by Race/Ethnicity Subgroup, 2007

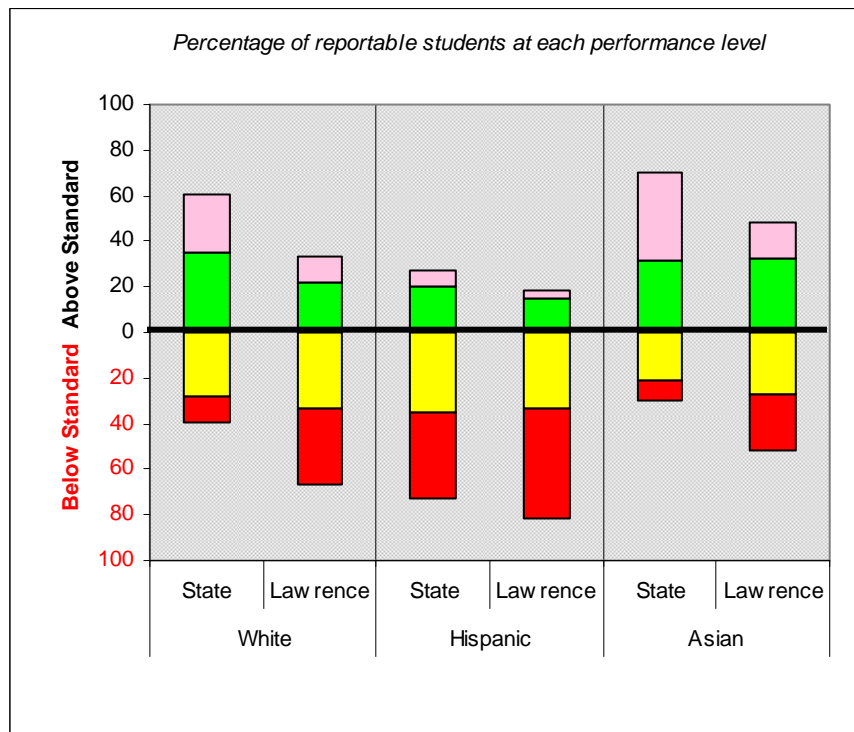


		White		Hispanic		Asian	
		State	Lawrence	State	Lawrence	State	Lawrence
	Advanced	16	6	3	2	21	7
	Proficient	58	45	35	30	50	54
	Needs Improvement	22	40	43	46	23	31
	Warning/Failing	4	8	19	23	5	8
	Percent Attaining Proficiency	74	51	38	32	71	61
	Proficiency Index (EPI)	89.8	79.4	69.8	65.2	87.7	82.6

In Lawrence in 2007, performance on the MCAS ELA tests varied widely by race/ethnicity, as 61 percent of Asian students, 51 percent of White students, and 32 percent of Hispanic students attained proficiency in ELA on the 2007 MCAS tests.

Lawrence's ELA proficiency gap in 2007 was 17 PI points for Asian students, compared to 12 PI points statewide; 21 PI points for White students, compared to 10 PI points statewide; and 35 PI points for Hispanic students, compared to 30 PI points statewide. The performance gap in ELA between Lawrence's Asian and White students was four PI points, and between Asian and Hispanic students it was 18 PI points.

Figure/Table 12: MCAS Math Test Performance by Race/Ethnicity Subgroup, 2007

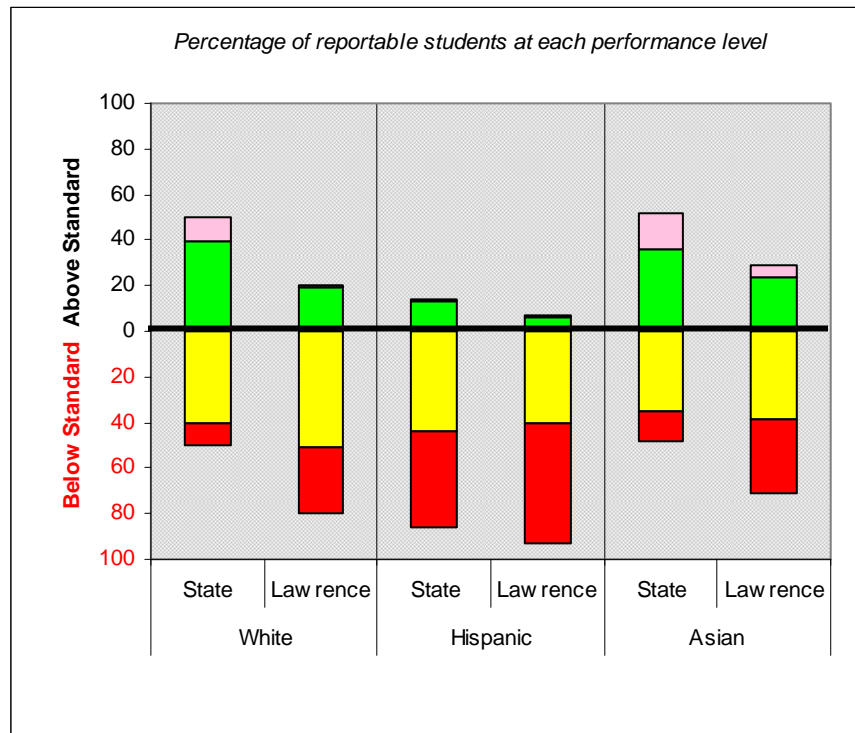


		White		Hispanic		Asian	
		State	Lawrence	State	Lawrence	State	Lawrence
	Advanced	25	11	7	4	39	16
	Proficient	35	22	20	15	31	33
	Needs Improvement	28	34	35	33	21	27
	Warning/Failing	11	33	37	48	9	25
Percent Attaining Proficiency		60	33	27	19	70	49
Proficiency Index (MPI)		80.9	61.4	56.9	49.2	85.4	71.5

In Lawrence in 2007, performance on the MCAS math tests also varied widely by race/ethnicity, as 49 percent of Asian students, 33 percent of White students, and 19 percent of Hispanic students attained proficiency in math on the MCAS tests in 2007.

Lawrence's math proficiency gap in 2007 was 29 PI points for Asian students, compared to 15 PI points statewide; 39 PI points for White students, compared to 19 PI points statewide; and 51 PI points for Hispanic students, compared to 43 PI points statewide. The performance gap in math between Lawrence's Asian and White students was 10 PI points, and between Asian and Hispanic students it was 22 PI points.

Figure/Table 13: MCAS Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) Test Performance by Race/Ethnicity Subgroup, 2007

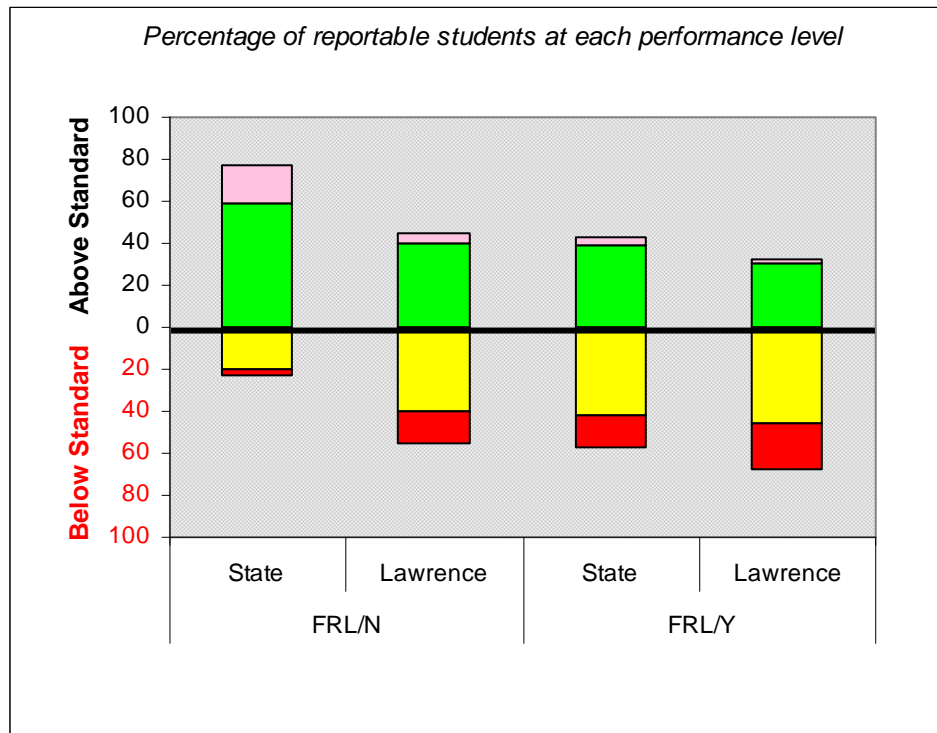


		White		Hispanic		Asian	
		State	Lawrence	State	Lawrence	State	Lawrence
	Advanced	10	1	2	1	15	5
	Proficient	39	19	13	7	36	24
	Needs Improvement	40	51	44	40	35	38
	Warning/Failing	10	29	41	52	14	33
	Percent Attaining Proficiency	49	20	15	8	51	29
	Proficiency Index (SPI)	78.0	58.2	50.6	43.3	76.8	60.9

In Lawrence in 2007, performance on the MCAS STE tests likewise varied widely by race/ethnicity, as 29 percent of Asian students, 20 percent of White students, and eight percent of Hispanic students attained proficiency in STE on the 2007 MCAS tests.

Lawrence's STE proficiency gap in 2007 was 39 PI points for Asian students, compared to 23 PI points statewide; 42 PI points for White students, compared to 22 PI points statewide; and 57 PI points for Hispanic students, compared to 49 PI points statewide. The performance gap in STE between Lawrence's Asian and White students was three PI points, and between Asian and Hispanic students it was 18 PI points.

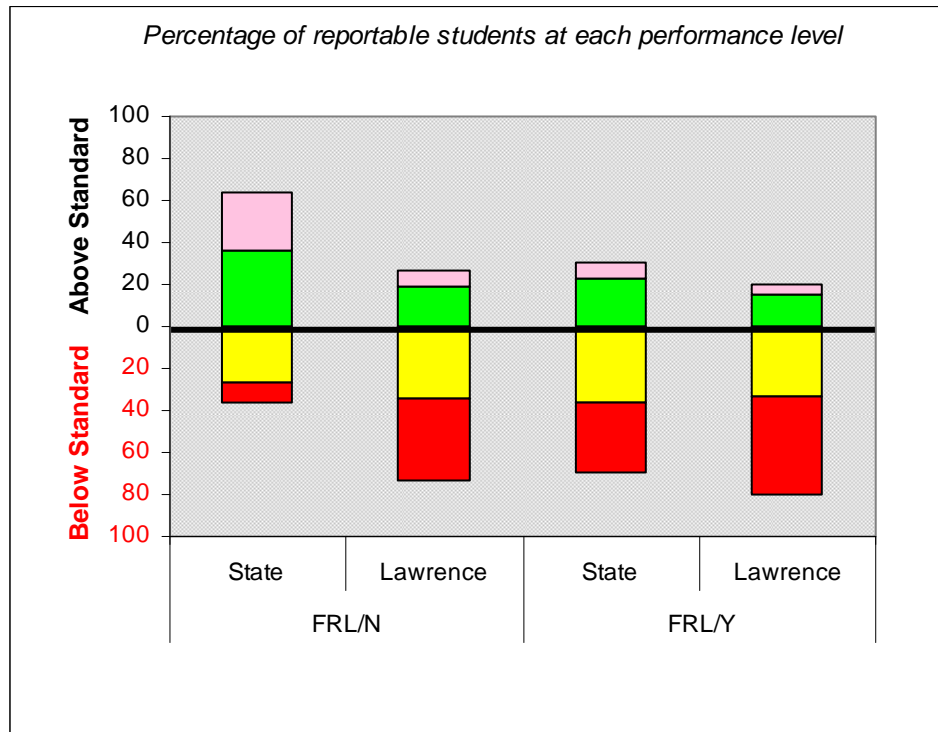
Figure/Table 14: MCAS English Language Arts (ELA) Test Performance by Socioeconomic Status Subgroup, 2007



		FRL/N		FRL/Y	
		State	Lawrence	State	Lawrence
	Advanced	17	5	4	2
	Proficient	59	40	39	30
	Needs Improvement	20	40	42	46
	Warning/Failing	3	16	15	22
Percent Attaining Proficiency		76	45	43	32
Proficiency Index (EPI)		91.0	73.2	73.4	66.0

In Lawrence in 2007, 32 percent of low-income (FRL/Y) students attained proficiency in ELA on the MCAS tests, compared to 45 percent of non low-income (FRL/N) students. The ELA proficiency gap was 34 PI points for low-income students, compared to 27 PI points statewide. Lawrence’s performance gap in ELA between the two subgroups was seven PI points.

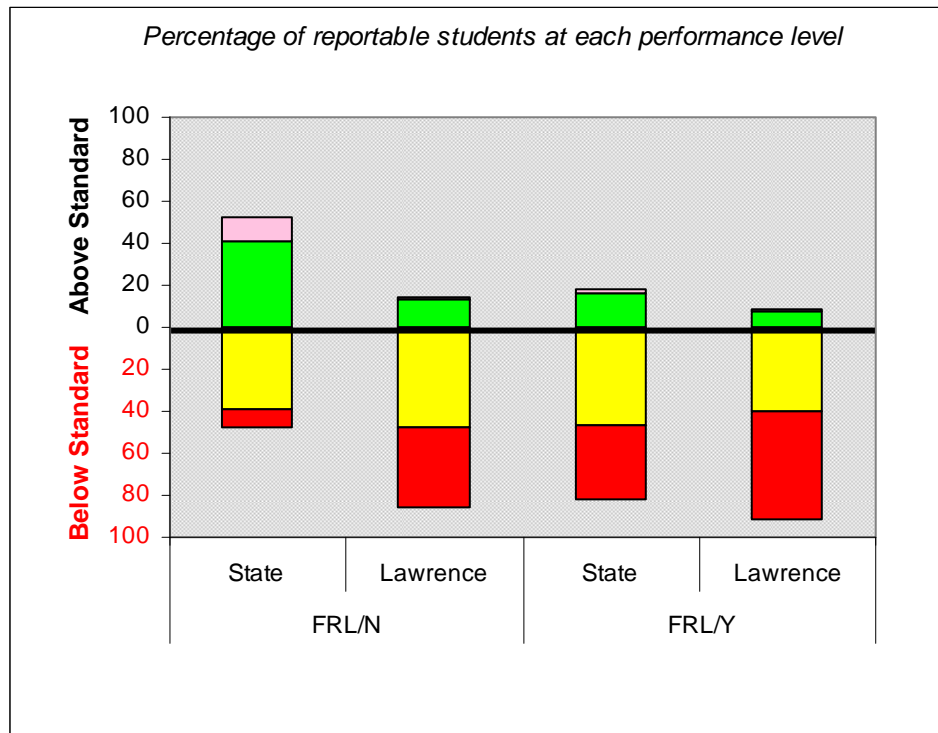
Figure/Table 15: MCAS Math Test Performance by Socioeconomic Status Subgroup, 2007



		FRL/N		FRL/Y	
		State	Lawrence	State	Lawrence
	Advanced	27	8	8	4
	Proficient	36	19	23	15
	Needs Improvement	27	35	37	33
	Warning/Failing	10	39	33	47
Percent Attaining Proficiency		63	27	31	19
Proficiency Index (MPI)		82.7	56.8	60.3	49.9

In Lawrence in 2007, 19 percent of low-income (FRL/Y) students attained proficiency in math on the MCAS tests, compared to 27 percent of non low-income (FRL/N) students. The proficiency gap in math was 50 PI points for low-income students, compared to 40 PI points statewide, and 43 PI points for non low-income students, compared to 17 PI points statewide. The performance gap in math between the two subgroups in Lawrence was seven PI points.

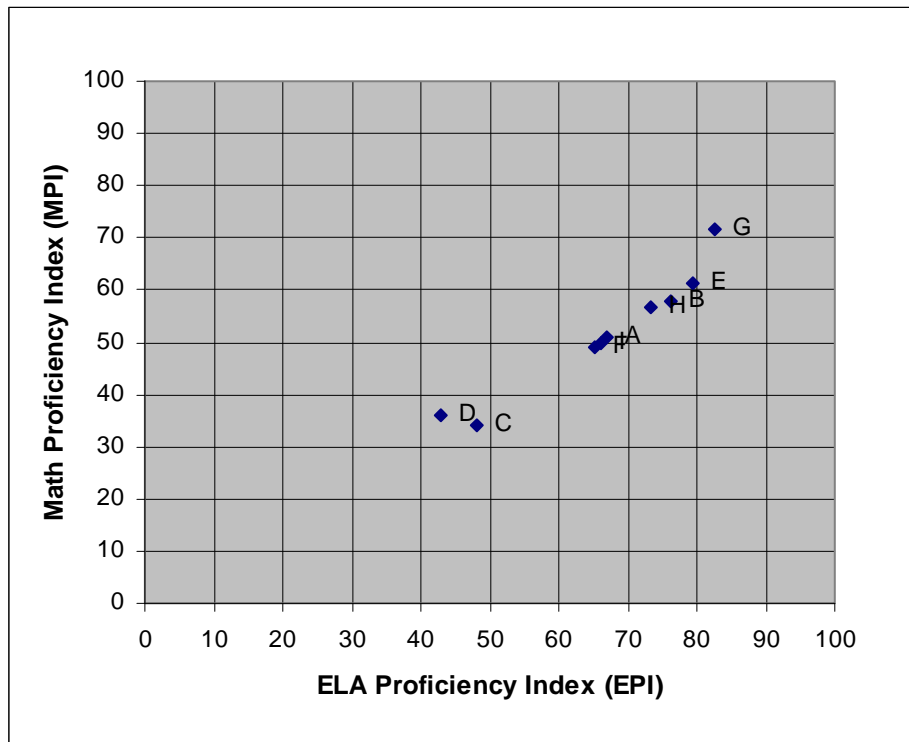
Figure/Table 16: MCAS Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) Test Performance by Socioeconomic Status Subgroup, 2007



		FRL/N		FRL/Y	
		State	Lawrence	State	Lawrence
	Advanced	11	1	2	1
	Proficient	41	13	17	7
	Needs Improvement	39	48	47	40
	Warning/Failing	9	38	34	52
Percent Attaining Proficiency		52	14	19	8
Proficiency Index (SPI)		79.4	51.6	55.2	44.0

In Lawrence in 2007, eight percent of low-income (FRL/Y) students attained proficiency in STE on the MCAS tests, compared to 14 percent of non low-income (FRL/N) students. The proficiency gap in STE was 56 PI points for low-income students, compared to 45 PI points statewide, and 48 PI points for non low-income students, compared to 21 PI points statewide. Lawrence's performance gap in STE between the two subgroups was eight PI points.

Figure/Table 17: MCAS ELA Proficiency Index vs. Math Proficiency Index by Subgroup, 2007



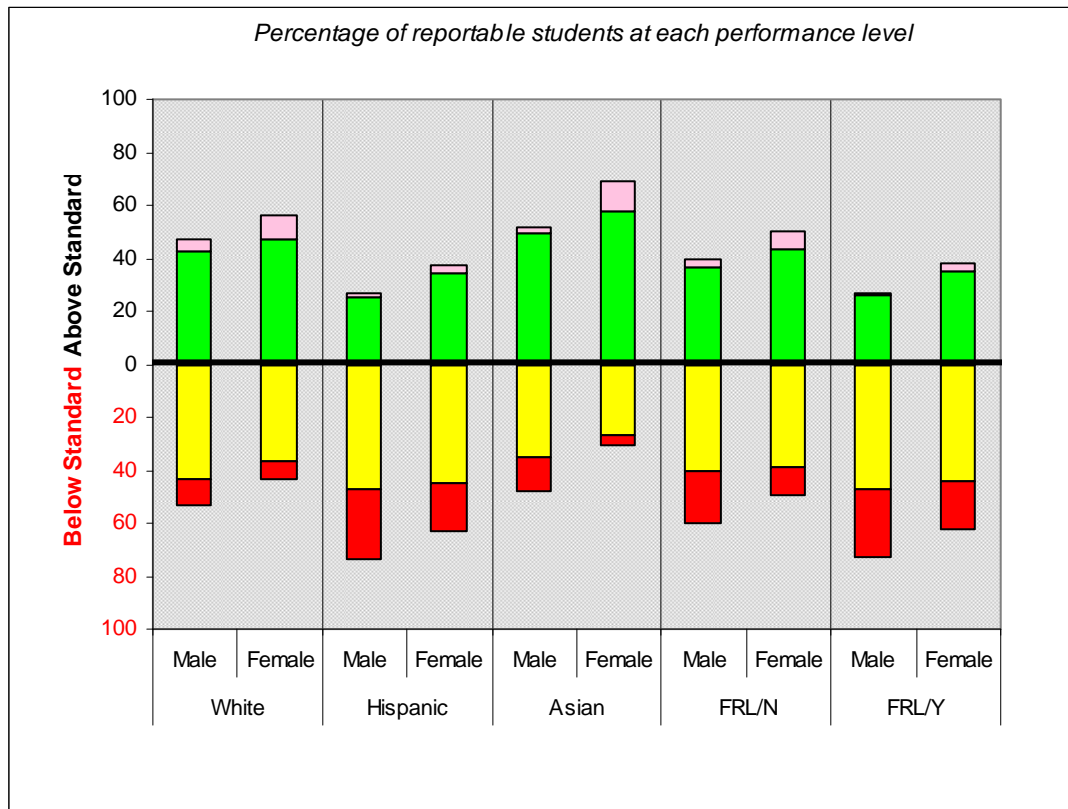
		ELA PI	Math PI	Number of Tests
A	Lawrence	67.0	50.9	12,412
B	Regular Education	76.2	57.9	8,637
C	Disability	48.2	34.1	2,283
D	LEP	43.0	35.9	1,492
E	White	79.4	61.4	1,052
F	Hispanic	65.2	49.2	10,760
G	Asian	82.6	71.5	317
H	FRL/N	73.2	56.8	1,770
I	FRL/Y	66.0	49.9	10,641

The gap in performance between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in Lawrence in 2007 was 40 PI points in ELA (Asian students, limited English proficient students, respectively) and 37 PI points in math (Asian students, students with disabilities, respectively).

Regular education students, White students, Asian students, and non low-income students in Lawrence performed above the district average in both ELA and math in 2007, while students with disabilities, LEP students, Hispanic students, and low-income students performed below the district average in both subjects.

Each subgroup in Lawrence had stronger performance in ELA than in math on the 2007 MCAS tests. The gap between performance in ELA and math ranged between 11 and 18 PI points for all subgroups in Lawrence with the exception of LEP students, for whom this gap was seven PI points.

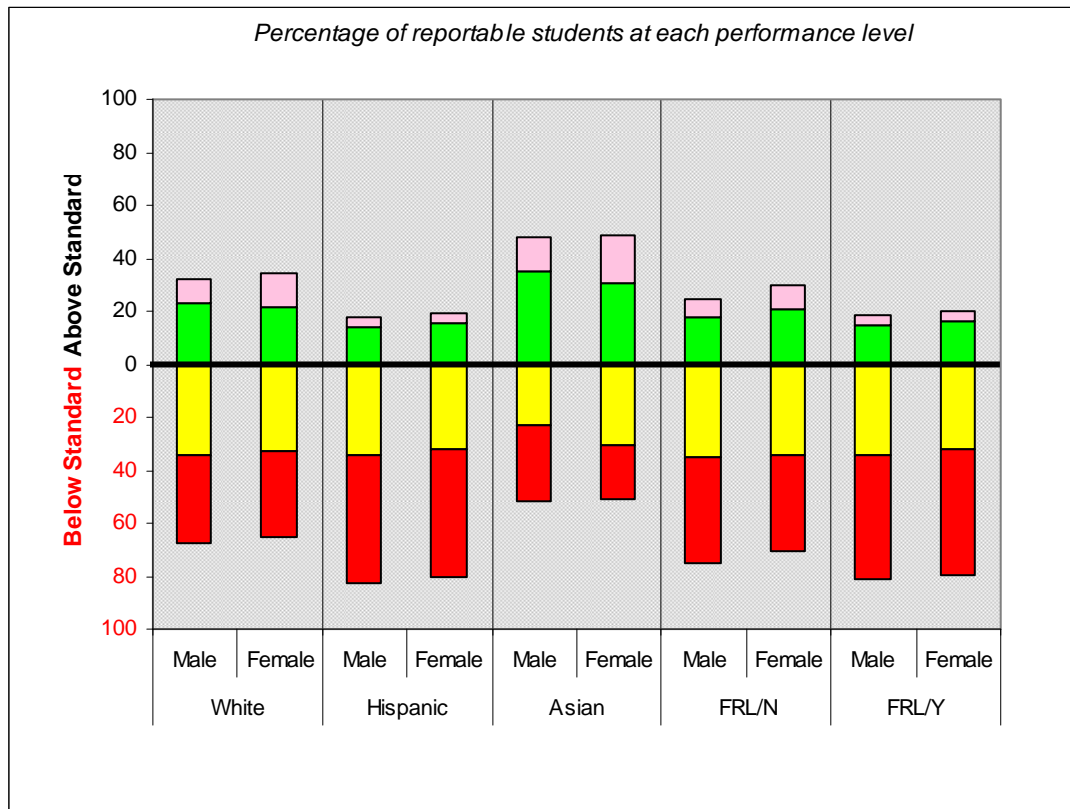
Figure/Table 18: MCAS English Language Arts (ELA) Test Performance by Race/Ethnicity and Socioeconomic Status by Gender, 2007



		White		Hispanic		Asian		FRL/N		FRL/Y	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
	Advanced	4	9	1	3	3	11	3	7	1	3
	Proficient	43	48	26	34	49	58	37	43	26	35
	Needs Improvement	44	37	47	45	35	27	41	39	47	44
	Warning/ Failing	10	7	26	18	13	4	20	11	25	18
Percent Attaining Proficiency		47	57	27	37	52	69	40	50	27	38
Proficiency Index (EPI)		77.2	82.0	61.6	69.2	77.6	87.3	69.4	77.8	62.4	69.9
Number of Tests		282	244	2,802	2,602	77	81	490	397	2,748	2,593

On the 2007 MCAS tests in ELA, Lawrence’s female students outperformed male students in all racial/ethnic and socioeconomic subgroups. The performance gap in ELA between female and male students was narrowest for White students (five PI points) and widest for Asian students (10 PI points).

Figure/Table 19: MCAS Math Test Performance by Race/Ethnicity and Socioeconomic Status by Gender, 2007



		White		Hispanic		Asian		FRL/N		FRL/Y	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
	Advanced	9	13	4	4	13	18	7	9	4	4
	Proficient	23	21	14	16	35	30	17	20	15	16
	Needs Improvement	34	33	34	32	23	30	35	34	34	32
	Warning/ Failing	34	33	48	48	29	21	40	36	47	47
Percent Attaining Proficiency		32	34	18	20	48	48	24	29	19	20
Proficiency Index (MPI)		60.7	62.1	48.8	49.6	70.8	72.3	55.2	58.6	49.6	50.3
Number of Tests		283	243	2,774	2,582	77	82	486	397	2,727	2,573

On the 2007 MCAS tests in math, Lawrence’s female students also outperformed male students in all racial/ethnic and socioeconomic subgroups. The performance gap in math between female and male students was narrowest for Hispanic and low-income students (less than one PI point) and widest for non low-income students (three and one-half PI points).

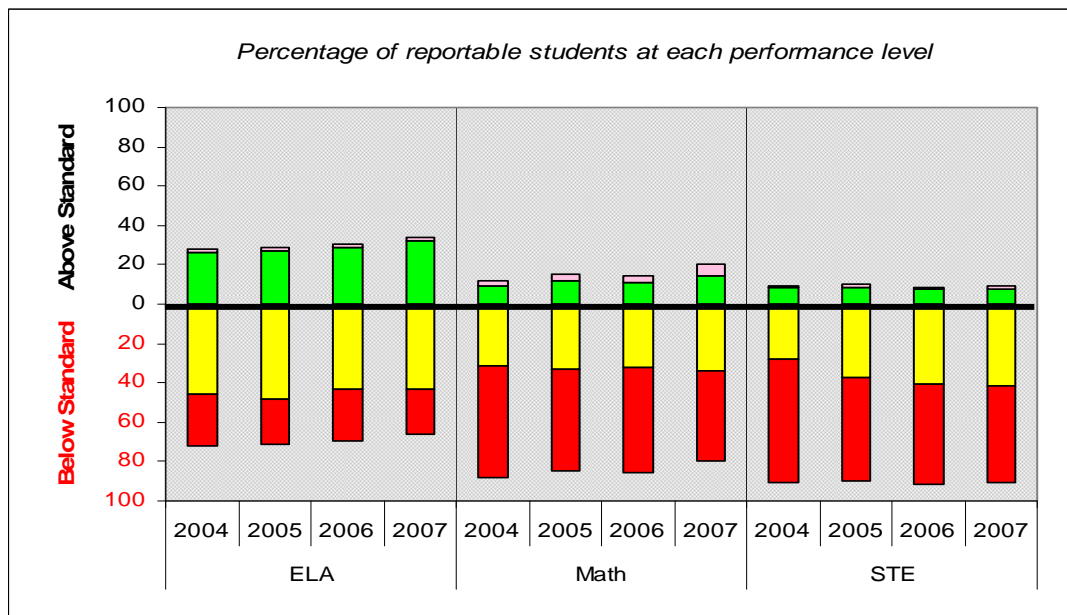
Improvement

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

Findings:

- Between 2004 and 2007, Lawrence's MCAS performance showed improvement in English language arts, in math, and in science and technology/engineering.
- Over the three-year period 2004-2007, ELA performance in Lawrence improved at an average of more than one PI point annually. This resulted in an improvement rate, or a closing of the proficiency gap, of nine percent, a rate lower than that required to achieve AYP. The percentage of students attaining proficiency in ELA increased from 28 percent in 2004 to 34 percent in 2007.
- Math performance in Lawrence also showed improvement over this period, at an average of nearly three PI points annually. This resulted in an improvement rate of 15 percent, also a rate lower than that required to achieve AYP. The percentage of students attaining proficiency in math rose from 11 percent in 2004 to 21 percent in 2007.
- Between 2004 and 2007, STE performance in Lawrence improved at an average of two PI points per year, resulting in a narrowing of the proficiency gap by close to 10 percent. However, the percentage of students attaining proficiency in STE remained at nine percent over this period.

Figure/Table 20: MCAS Test Performance by Subject, 2004-2007



	ELA				Math				STE			
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2004	2005	2006	2007	2004	2005	2006	2007
Advanced	2	2	2	2	2	4	3	6	1	1	1	1
Proficient	26	27	29	32	9	12	11	15	8	9	8	8
Needs Improvement	46	49	43	44	31	33	32	34	28	37	41	41
Warning/ Failing	26	22	26	22	57	52	53	46	63	53	50	50
Percent Attaining Proficiency	28	29	31	34	11	16	14	21	9	10	9	9
Proficiency Index (PI)	62.5	64.4	63.6	66.0	42.4	46.1	45.2	50.9	39.0	43.8	44.2	45.0

Note: Trend data include grades at which testing was administered in each subject in all four years; therefore, the 2007 ELA and math data may differ from those reported in Figure/Table 1.

The percentage of Lawrence students attaining proficiency in ELA increased from 28 percent in 2004 to 34 percent in 2007. The proficiency gap in ELA narrowed from 38 to 34 PI points over this period, resulting in an improvement rate of nine percent, a rate lower than that required to make AYP.

The percentage of Lawrence students attaining proficiency in math increased from 11 percent in 2004 to 21 percent in 2007. The proficiency gap in math narrowed from 58 to 49 PI points over this period, resulting in an improvement rate of 15 percent, also a rate lower than that required to make AYP.

The percentage of Lawrence students attaining proficiency in STE remained at nine percent between 2004 and 2007. The proficiency gap in STE narrowed from 61 to 55 PI points over this period, an improvement rate of nearly 10 percent.

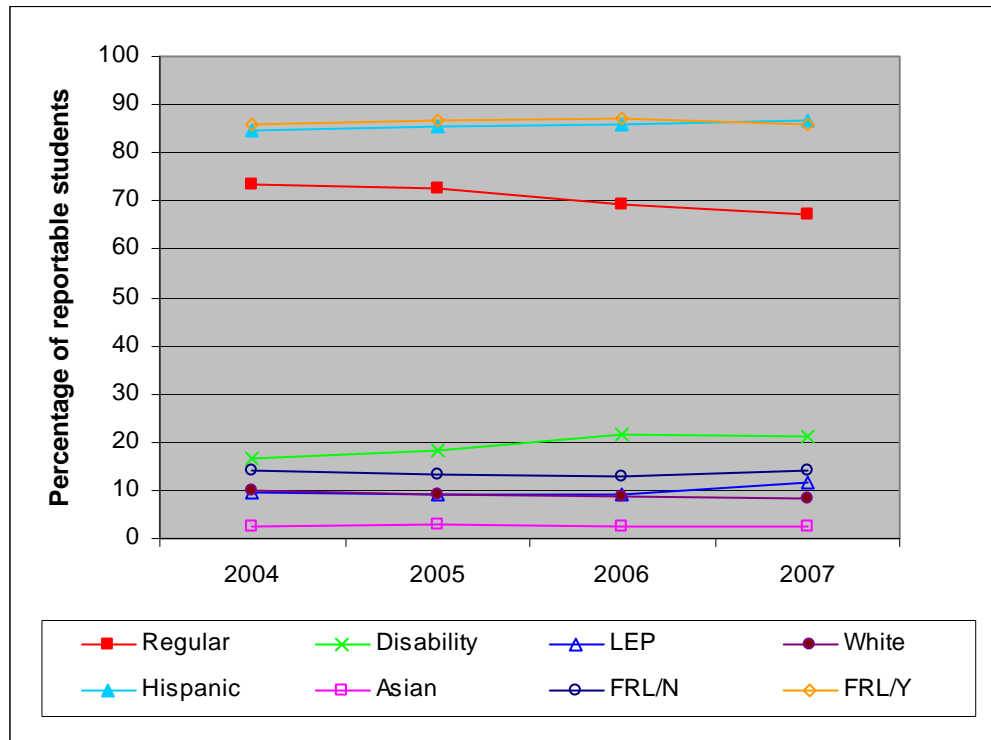
Equity of Improvement

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

Findings:

- In Lawrence, the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in ELA widened from 37 PI points in 2004 to 48 PI points in 2007, and the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in math remained at 37 PI points over this period.
- All student subgroups had improved performance in ELA between 2004 and 2007. The most improved subgroup in ELA was Asian students.
- In math, the performance of all student subgroups in Lawrence also improved between 2004 and 2007. The most improved subgroups in math were White students and students with disabilities.

Figure/Table 21: Student Population by Reportable Subgroups, 2004-2007



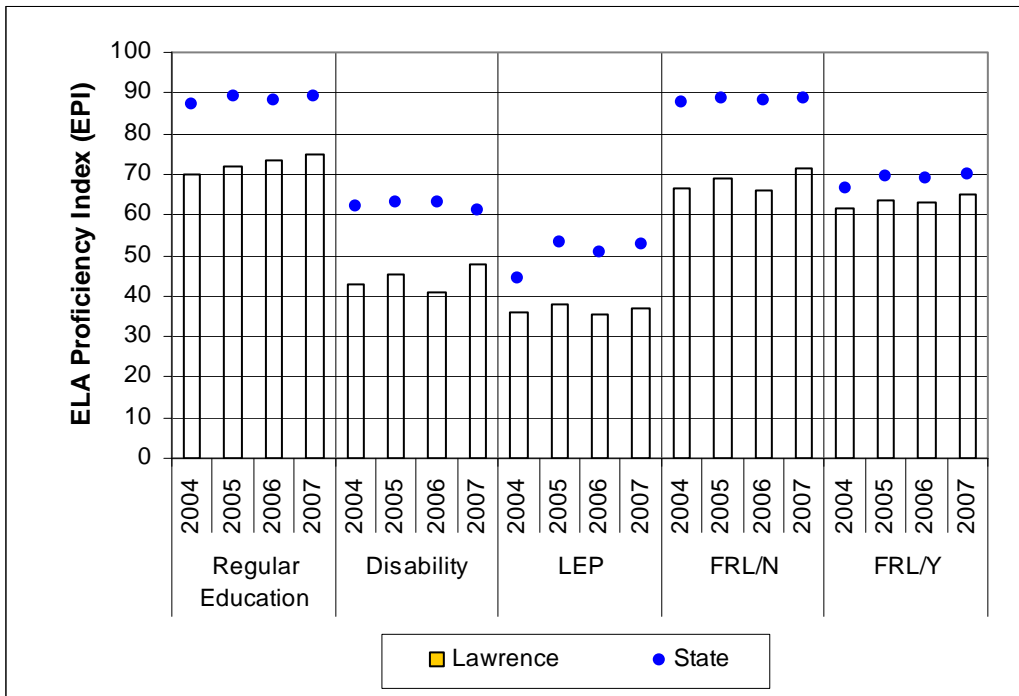
	Number of Students				Percentage of students			
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2004	2005	2006	2007
Lawrence	5,674	5,376	6,505	6,445	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Regular	4,178	3,904	4,500	4,319	73.6	72.6	69.2	67.0
Disability	947	980	1,403	1,377	16.7	18.2	21.6	21.4
LEP	549	492	602	749	9.7	9.2	9.3	11.6
White	565	484	569	543	10.0	9.0	8.7	8.4
Hispanic	4,810	4,602	5,600	5,594	84.8	85.6	86.1	86.8
Asian	149	154	163	161	2.6	2.9	2.5	2.5
FRL/N	799	707	827	902	14.1	13.2	12.7	14.0
FRL/Y	4,875	4,669	5,678	5,543	85.9	86.8	87.3	86.0

Note: The 2007 percentages of students reported here may differ from those reported in Figure/Table 7; the percentages shown here are based on the total number of students in the district, whereas the percentages shown in Figure 7 are based on the number of students in reportable subgroups. Data include students in tested grades only.

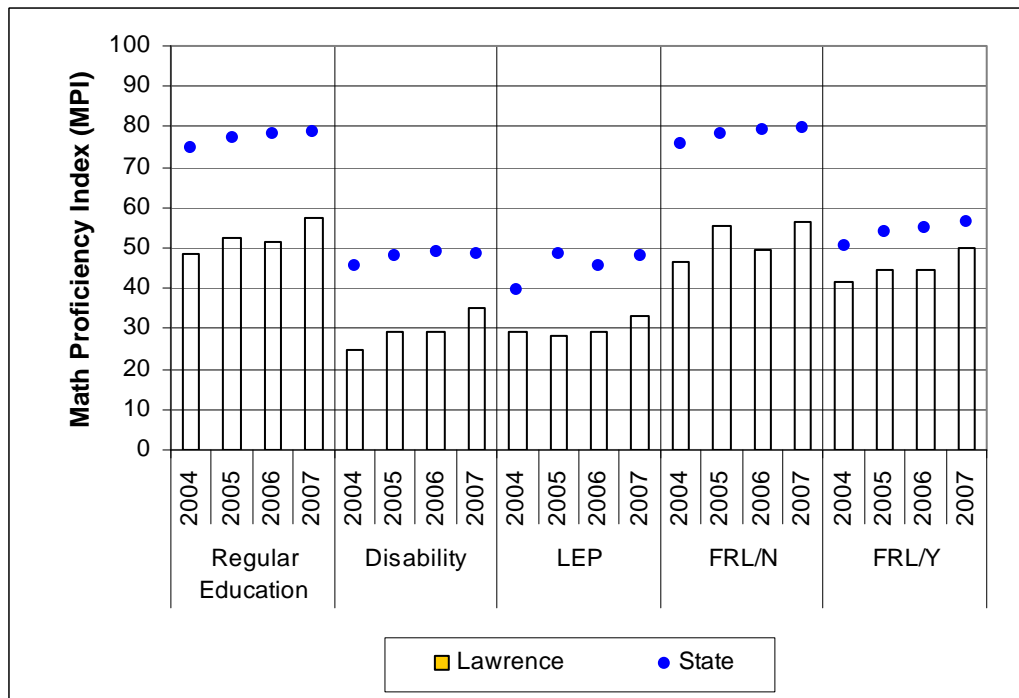
Between 2004 and 2007 in Lawrence, the proportion of regular education students declined by seven percentage points, students with disabilities increased by five percentage points, and LEP students increased by two percentage points. The proportion of White students decreased by one and one-half percentage points, Hispanic students increased by two percentage points, and Asian students remained the same. The proportion of low-income students also remained the same.

Figures 22 A-D/Table 22: MCAS Proficiency Indices by Subgroup, 2004-2007

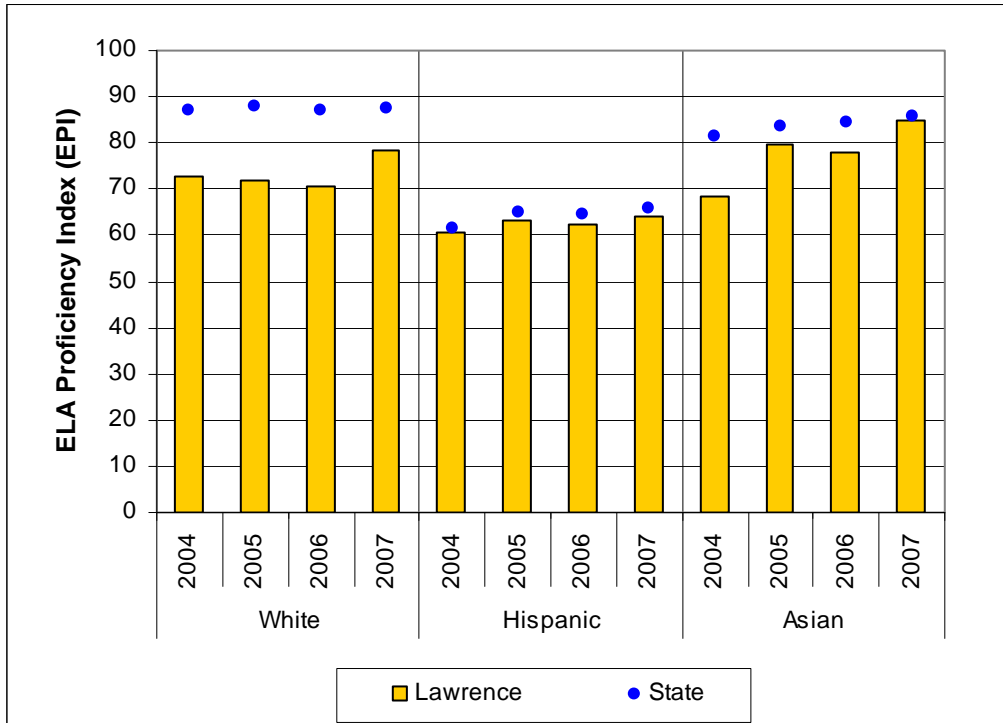
A. ELA Proficiency Index (EPI) by Student Status and Free or Reduced-Cost Lunch Subgroups



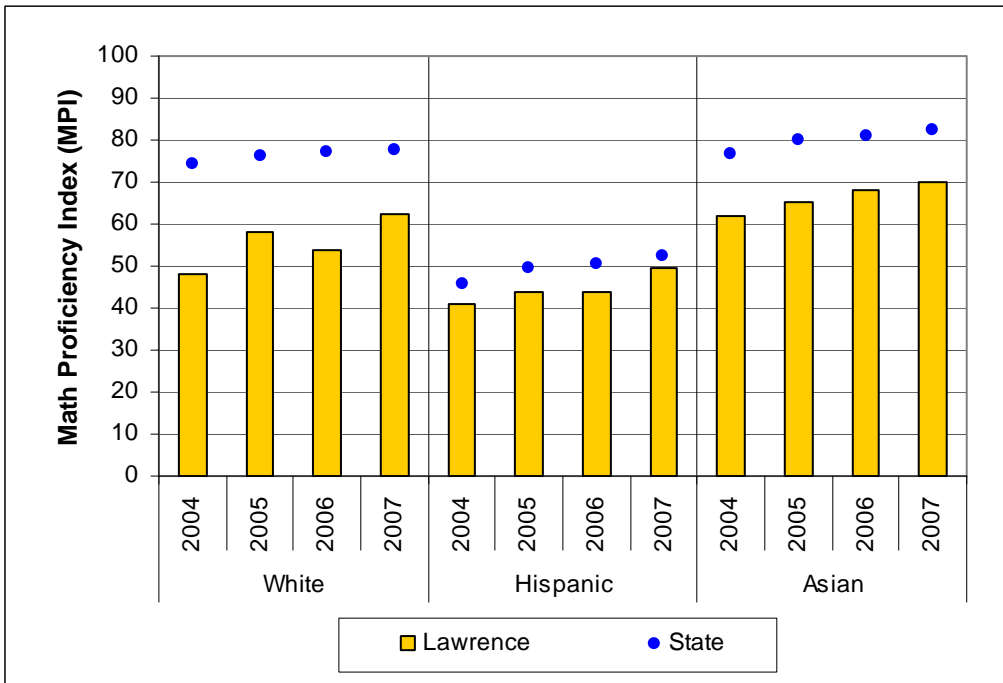
B. Math Proficiency Index (MPI) by Student Status and Free or Reduced-Cost Lunch Subgroups



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



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



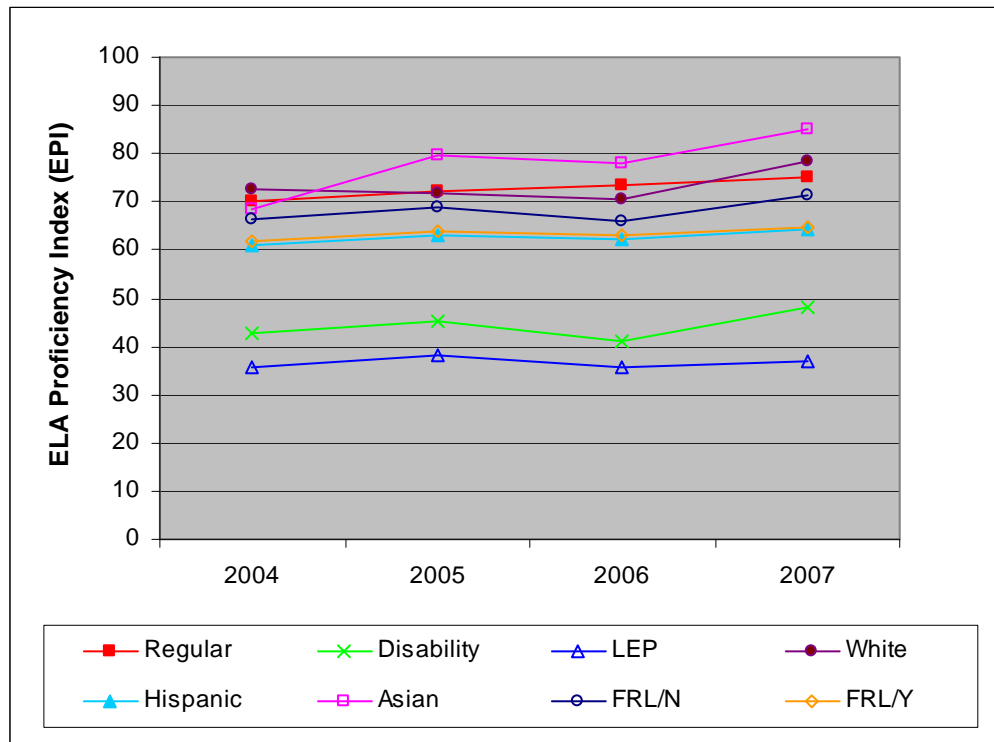
State				Lawrence			
Subgroup	Year	EPI	MPI	Subgroup	Year	EPI	MPI
Regular Education	2004	87.3	74.7	Regular Education	2004	70.1	48.3
	2005	89.2	77.4		2005	72.0	52.5
	2006	88.3	78.2		2006	73.4	51.4
	2007	89.0	78.9		2007	75.0	57.6
Disability	2004	62.1	45.3	Disability	2004	42.9	24.6
	2005	63.3	47.9		2005	45.2	29.4
	2006	62.9	49.0		2006	40.9	29.1
	2007	61.2	48.4		2007	48.0	35.2
LEP	2004	44.4	39.6	LEP	2004	35.8	29.3
	2005	53.4	48.4		2005	38.0	28.2
	2006	50.9	45.6		2006	35.5	29.1
	2007	52.9	47.9		2007	37.1	33.4
FRL/N	2004	87.9	75.9	FRL/N	2004	66.5	46.6
	2005	88.9	78.1		2005	68.8	55.4
	2006	88.3	79.0		2006	66.1	49.4
	2007	88.6	79.7		2007	71.3	56.3
FRL/Y	2004	66.6	50.7	FRL/Y	2004	61.8	41.7
	2005	69.7	53.9		2005	63.7	44.7
	2006	68.8	55.0		2006	63.2	44.6
	2007	70.0	56.3		2007	64.9	50.0
White	2004	86.9	74.4	White	2004	72.8	47.9
	2005	87.7	76.2		2005	71.7	58.2
	2006	87.1	77.2		2006	70.6	53.9
	2007	87.4	77.8		2007	78.5	62.2
Hispanic	2004	61.4	45.7	Hispanic	2004	60.8	41.0
	2005	64.8	49.3		2005	63.0	43.9
	2006	64.6	50.6		2006	62.4	43.6
	2007	65.8	52.2		2007	64.2	49.3
Asian	2004	81.2	76.6	Asian	2004	68.3	61.9
	2005	83.7	80.2		2005	79.5	65.3
	2006	84.3	81.0		2006	77.9	68.0
	2007	85.5	82.5		2007	85.0	70.2

Note: Trend data include grades at which testing was administered in each subject in all four years; therefore, 2007 data may differ from those reported in Figure/Tables 8, 9, 11, 12, 14, and 15.

In Lawrence, all student subgroups with the exception of Asian students had greater improvement in math than in ELA between 2004 and 2007. Over this period, the performance of regular education students improved by five PI points in ELA and by nine points in math. The performance of students with disabilities improved by five PI points in ELA and by 11 points in math. The performance of LEP students improved by one PI point in ELA and by four points in math. The performance of non low-income students improved by five PI points in ELA and by 10 points in math, and the performance of low-income students improved by three PI points in ELA and by eight points in math.

Also during this period, the performance of White students improved by six PI points in ELA and by 14 points in math. The performance of Hispanic students improved by three PI points in ELA and by eight points in math. The performance of Asian students improved by 17 PI points in ELA and by eight points in math.

Figure/Table 23: MCAS English Language Arts Proficiency Index (EPI) by Subgroup, 2004-2007



	ELA Proficiency Index (EPI)				Percent Attaining Proficiency			
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2004	2005	2006	2007
Lawrence	62.5	64.4	63.6	66.0	28	29	31	34
Regular	70.1	72.0	73.4	75.0	35	37	41	45
Disability	42.9	45.2	40.9	48.0	8	7	6	10
LEP	35.8	38.0	35.5	37.1	4	3	3	4
White	72.8	71.7	70.6	78.5	44	43	41	51
Hispanic	60.8	63.0	62.4	64.2	25	27	29	32
Asian	68.3	79.5	77.9	85.0	37	44	49	62
FRL/N	66.5	68.8	66.1	71.3	34	40	34	43
FRL/Y	61.8	63.7	63.2	64.9	27	27	30	32

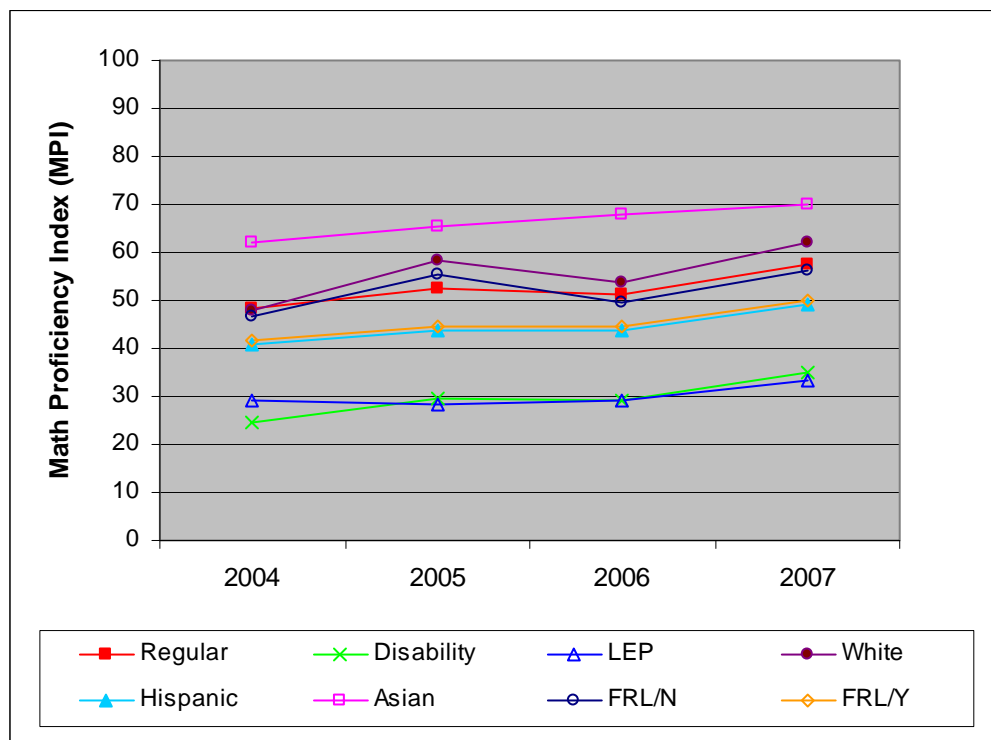
Note: Trend data include grades at which testing was administered in each subject in all four years; therefore, 2007 data may differ from those reported in Figure/Tables 8, 11, and 14.

All student subgroups in Lawrence had improved performance in ELA between 2004 and 2007. The ELA proficiency gap for Lawrence’s regular education students narrowed from 30 to 25 PI points over this period, resulting in an improvement rate of 16 percent; for students with disabilities, it narrowed from 57 to 52 PI points, an improvement rate of nine percent; and for LEP students, it narrowed from 64 to 63 PI points, an improvement rate of two percent. The proficiency gap in ELA for White students narrowed from 27 to 22 PI points, an improvement rate of 21 percent; for Hispanic students, it narrowed from 39 to 36 PI points, an improvement rate of nine percent; and for Asian students, it narrowed from 32 to 15 PI points, an improvement rate of 53 percent. The ELA proficiency gap for non low-income students

narrowed from 34 to 29 PI points, an improvement rate of 14 percent; and for low-income students it narrowed from 38 to 35 PI points, an improvement rate of eight percent.

Between 2004 and 2007, the performance gap in ELA between regular education students and students with disabilities stayed the same, and between regular education students and LEP students it widened by four PI points. The ELA performance gap between Asian and White students changed from five PI points in favor of White students in 2004 to seven points in favor of Asian students in 2007, and between Asian and Hispanic students it widened by 13 points. The performance gap in ELA between non low-income and low-income students widened by two PI points over this period.

Figure/Table 24: MCAS Math Proficiency Index (MPI) by Subgroup, 2004-2007



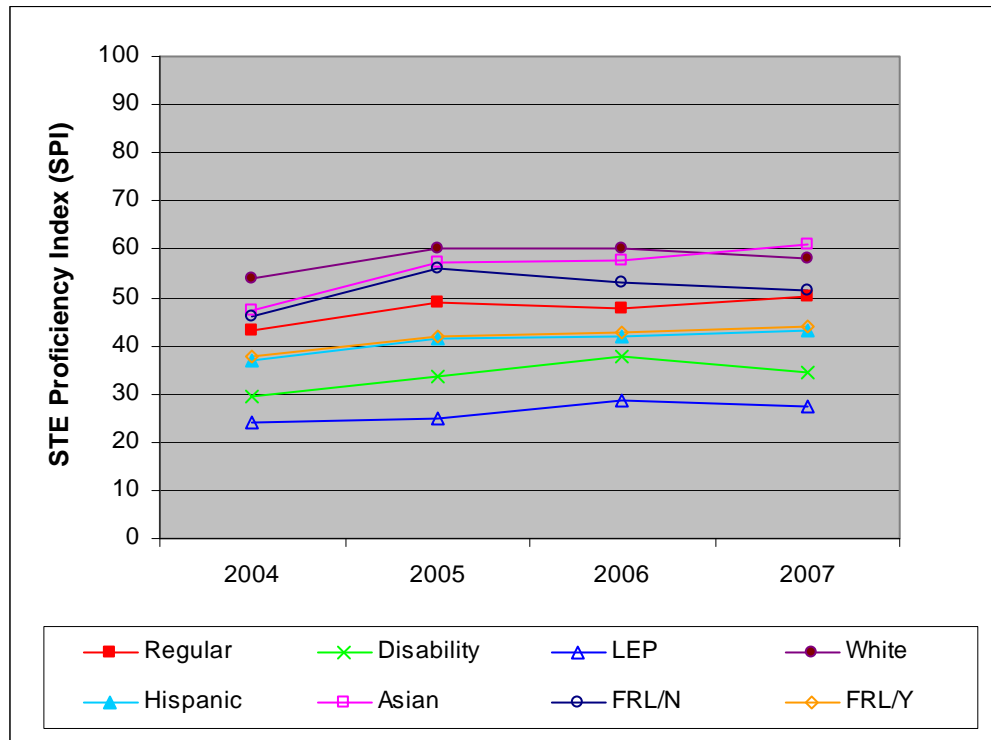
	Math Proficiency Index (MPI)				Percent Attaining Proficiency			
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2004	2005	2006	2007
Lawrence	42.4	46.1	45.2	50.9	12	16	14	20
Regular	48.3	52.5	51.4	57.6	15	20	19	26
Disability	24.6	29.4	29.1	35.2	2	3	2	5
LEP	29.3	28.2	29.1	33.4	4	2	5	7
White	47.9	58.2	53.9	62.2	15	28	23	34
Hispanic	41.0	43.9	43.6	49.3	11	13	13	18
Asian	61.9	65.3	68.0	70.2	39	41	41	47
FRL/N	46.6	55.4	49.4	56.3	15	25	18	27
FRL/Y	41.7	44.7	44.6	50.0	11	14	14	19

Note: Trend data include grades at which testing was administered in each subject in all four years; therefore, 2007 data may differ from those reported in Figure/Tables 9, 12, and 15.

In math, the performance of all student subgroups in Lawrence also improved between 2004 and 2007. The math proficiency gap for Lawrence’s regular education students narrowed from 52 to 42 PI points over this period, resulting in an improvement rate of 18 percent; for students with disabilities, it narrowed from 75 to 65 PI points, an improvement rate of 14 percent; and for LEP students, it narrowed from 71 to 67 PI points, an improvement rate of six percent. The proficiency gap in math for White students narrowed from 52 to 38 PI points, an improvement rate of 27 percent; for Hispanic students, it narrowed from 59 to 51 PI points, an improvement rate of 14 percent; and for Asian students, it narrowed from 38 to 30 PI points, an improvement rate of 22 percent. The math proficiency gap for non low-income students narrowed from 53 to 44 PI points, an improvement rate of 18 percent; and for low-income students it narrowed from 58 to 50 PI points, an improvement rate of 14 percent.

Between 2004 and 2007, the performance gap in math between regular education students and students with disabilities narrowed by one PI point, and between regular education students and LEP students it widened by five PI points. The math performance gap between Asian and White students narrowed by six PI points, and between Asian and Hispanic students it remained the same. The performance gap in math between non low-income and low-income students widened by one PI point over this period.

Figure/Table 25: MCAS STE Proficiency Index (SPI) by Subgroup, 2004-2007



	STE Proficiency Index (SPI)				Percent Attaining Proficiency			
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2004	2005	2006	2007
Lawrence	39.0	43.8	44.2	45.0	9	10	9	9
Regular	43.1	48.8	47.8	50.4	11	13	11	12
Disability	29.3	33.6	37.6	34.3	4	3	3	4
LEP	23.9	25.1	28.8	27.4	1	1	3	1
White	53.9	60.2	60.3	58.2	21	22	22	20
Hispanic	36.8	41.3	42.0	43.3	7	8	7	7
Asian	47.2	57.4	57.8	60.9	19	18	24	29
FRL/N	45.9	56.0	53.2	51.6	14	19	18	14
FRL/Y	37.9	42.0	42.8	44.0	8	8	7	8

In science and technology/engineering, all student subgroups in Lawrence also showed improved performance between 2004 and 2007. The STE proficiency gap for Lawrence’s regular education students narrowed from 57 to 50 PI points over this period, resulting in an improvement rate of 13 percent; for students with disabilities, it narrowed from 71 to 66 PI points, an improvement rate of seven percent; and for LEP students, it narrowed from 76 to 73 PI points, an improvement rate of five percent. The proficiency gap in STE for White students narrowed from 46 to 42 PI points, an improvement rate of nine percent; for Hispanic students, it narrowed from 63 to 57 PI points, an improvement rate of 10 percent; and for Asian students, it narrowed from 53 to 39 PI points, an improvement rate of 26 percent. The STE proficiency gap for non low-income students narrowed from 54 to 48 PI points, an improvement rate of 11 percent; and for low-income students it narrowed from 62 to 56 PI points, an improvement rate of 10 percent.

Between 2004 and 2007, the performance gap in STE between regular education students and students with disabilities widened by two PI points, and between regular education students and LEP students it widened by four points. The STE performance gap between Asian and White students changed from seven PI points in favor of White students in 2004 to three points in favor of Asian students in 2007, and between Asian and Hispanic students it widened by seven PI points. The performance gap in STE between non low-income and low-income students remained the same over this period.

Participation

Are all eligible students participating in required state assessments?

Finding:

- On the 2007 MCAS tests in ELA, math, and STE, eligible students in Lawrence participated at levels that met or exceeded the state's 95 percent requirement.

n-Values by Subgroup and Performance Level, 2007

Subgroup	Performance Level	ELA	Math	STE
Lawrence	ALL LEVELS	6,229	6,183	1,856
	Advanced	146	288	20
	Proficient	1,981	985	148
	Needs Improvement	2,809	2,066	764
	Warning/Failing	1,293	2,844	924
Regular Education	Advanced	141	274	19
	Proficient	1,822	874	133
	Needs Improvement	1,943	1,622	643
	Warning/Failing	426	1,535	522
Disability	Advanced	1	9	1
	Proficient	105	52	13
	Needs Improvement	564	276	94
	Warning/Failing	475	801	254
Limited English Proficient	Advanced	4	5	0
	Proficient	54	59	2
	Needs Improvement	302	168	27
	Warning/Failing	392	508	148
White	Advanced	34	58	2
	Proficient	236	117	29
	Needs Improvement	213	177	78
	Warning/Failing	43	174	44
Hispanic	Advanced	96	196	14
	Proficient	1,609	790	105
	Needs Improvement	2,483	1,790	643
	Warning/Failing	1,216	2,580	840
African-American	Advanced	5	9	1
	Proficient	51	26	1
	Needs Improvement	61	56	21
	Warning/Failing	21	49	22
Asian	Advanced	11	25	3
	Proficient	85	52	13
	Needs Improvement	49	43	21
	Warning/Failing	13	39	18
Free or Reduced-Cost Lunch/No	Advanced	43	72	2
	Proficient	352	166	33
	Needs Improvement	353	305	118
	Warning/Failing	139	340	94
Free or Reduced-Cost Lunch/Yes	Advanced	103	216	18
	Proficient	1,629	819	115
	Needs Improvement	2,455	1,761	646
	Warning/Failing	1,154	2,504	830
Male	Advanced	41	143	9
	Proficient	899	491	86
	Needs Improvement	1,504	1,097	413
	Warning/Failing	794	1,482	440
Female	Advanced	105	145	11
	Proficient	1,082	494	62
	Needs Improvement	1,304	969	351
	Warning/Failing	499	1,362	484

n-Values by Grade and Year, 2004-2007

Grade	Year	ELA	Math	STE
Grade 3	2004	1,014	0	0
	2005	968	0	0
	2006	887	881	0
	2007	908	901	0
Grade 4	2004	1,005	1,014	0
	2005	976	981	0
	2006	915	921	0
	2007	856	855	0
Grade 5	2004	0	0	1,028
	2005	0	0	958
	2006	962	966	965
	2007	899	898	891
Grade 6	2004	0	1,062	0
	2005	0	985	0
	2006	963	962	0
	2007	971	974	0
Grade 7	2004	1,079	0	0
	2005	1,041	0	0
	2006	994	993	0
	2007	926	928	0
Grade 8	2004	0	1,099	1,098
	2005	0	1,071	1,069
	2006	1,066	1,070	1,069
	2007	978	983	965
Grade 10	2004	465	475	0
	2005	446	440	0
	2006	489	463	0
	2007	691	644	0
All Grades	2004	3,563	3,650	2,126
	2005	3,431	3,477	2,027
	2006	6,276	6,256	2,034
	2007	6,229	6,183	1,856

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 2004-2007 reported in Figure/Tables 20-25 and in the table of n-values by grade and year:

English language arts (ELA): 3, 4, 7, 10

Math: 4, 6, 8, 10

Science and technology/engineering (STE): 5, 8

The highest performance level for grade 3 reading in 2006 and 2007 was 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 2007 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 Lawrence Public Schools. It reports on only those 2005 indicators that received a ‘Poor’ or ‘Unsatisfactory’ rating and that the EQA team reassessed. The table below displays the initial 2005 ratings and the 2007 reassessments. The narrative that follows presents the relevant 2005 indicators, followed by the ratings from 2005 and 2007 and corresponding evidence for the ratings. Because of the changes in the EQA standards and indicators, the 2005 indicators are organized according to the 2007 standards. In addition, the district was examined and rated on selected 2007 indicators that were not part of the prior examination.

Standard I: Leadership, Governance, and Communication							
	2005 Indicators					2007 Indicators	
Ratings ▼ Indicators ►	9.4	9.5	11.4	11.7	11.10	13	14
Excellent							
Satisfactory		2007		2007		2007	
Needs Improvement	2007		2007		2007		2007
Poor	2005		2005	2005	2005		
Unsatisfactory		2005					

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:

- Lawrence Public Schools implemented new programs and services based upon an analysis of student performance data.

- The district experienced little improvement in student achievement during the reexamination period.
- Lawrence increased its focus on the fidelity of implementation of curricular modifications, instructional techniques, and literacy initiatives to improve student achievement.
- Although most interviewees perceived that the school department's budget was adequate, lack of staffing to assist at-risk students in mainstream classes left these students without the support they needed to succeed. However, the district did establish programs and services in all its schools to assist at-risk students and families through the Agency Partnership Advisory Network.
- The district and each school had a crisis plan and team. Staff training on the crisis and emergency protocols and drills on the procedures were in process, but as yet were inadequate at the new high school.

Summary

The Lawrence Public Schools made some progress during the reexamination period in the area of leadership, governance, and communication. Of the five indicators in this standard that the EQA reexamined, the district improved on two, both of which received a rating of 'Satisfactory.' In addition, of the two new indicators in this standard included in the reexamination, the district received a rating of 'Satisfactory' on one.

During the reexamination period under review, Lawrence Public Schools relied primarily on analysis of MCAS test and Measures of Academic Progress results to identify students' strengths and needs and to develop programs and services to improve student achievement. While the performance of Lawrence students improved on the most recent MCAS tests, proficiency levels remain well below the state average. The district intended to focus on the fidelity of implementation of curriculum and instruction, especially in literacy, to improve student achievement.

Lawrence improved the monitoring of teaching and learning. Administrators developed and implemented walk-through protocols, and supervisors implemented the staff evaluation procedure to ensure that evaluations were more timely and meaningful. The district also moved

from a top-down to a combined districtwide and school-based professional development program.

Administrators and teachers perceived that the schools had adequate resources, although some stated the need for more staff members to assist at-risk students in regular classrooms and additional teachers to reduce the class sizes in some schools. The district allocated to teachers up to \$100 every year for purchases of classroom supplies and materials.

Although Lawrence had both district and school crisis management plans and teams, teachers at the new high school complex lacked sufficient training and practice on the crisis and emergency protocols and procedures. This was evident to the EQA examiners during the lockdown that occurred at the time of their site visit. However, the high school campus had only been open for eight weeks at the time of the EQA visit; crisis protocols had been reviewed with staff, but training and practice regarding procedures were still in process.

The district formed associations and partnerships to increase services for students. The assistant superintendent for operations coordinated these activities. The Agency Partnership Advisory Network (APAN) consisted of 45 local organizations, groups, and agencies providing assistance to at-risk students and families. All schools in Lawrence benefited from programs and services made possible or available through APAN, including extended day programs. In addition to APAN, business partners sponsored special events, programs, and services, and donated funds to the schools.

2005 Indicators

9.4. 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.

EQA Rating from 2005: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the prior period of EQA review (2001-2004), student achievement did not improve significantly in Lawrence, although monitoring of student achievement occurred routinely and

throughout the year, according to the administrative team members and substantiated by student assessment reports. The district leadership encouraged and expected staff members to use student assessment information, and the principals and teachers, assisted by appropriate district personnel and school-level facilitators, used this information to inform and modify instructional programs and practices. District and school personnel periodically collaborated to analyze both formative and summative student assessment data to improve instruction and to support instructional program decisions.

During the reexamination period under review (2005-2007), district leaders monitored student achievement data throughout the year, reviewed the goals in the District Comprehensive Education Plan (DCEP) and the individual School Comprehensive Education Plans (SCEPs), and implemented programs, policies, and services to improve student achievement. Lawrence analyzed student achievement data and implemented some new programs and services during the reexamination period, but the district saw little improvement in MCAS test results. Interviewees told the EQA team that too many Lawrence students scored in the 'Warning/Failing' and 'Needs Improvement' categories on the MCAS English language arts (ELA), mathematics, and science and technology/engineering (STE) tests, and the district needed to improve their performance. They went on to say that in order to improve student achievement they would focus on the quality of teaching and learning and the fidelity of implementation of programs, especially in literacy.

The superintendent stated that district leaders and teachers were frustrated by the rate of student progress as measured by the MCAS tests, but the demographics in Lawrence were challenging and unusual. Lawrence had the highest proportion of Latino students, by size of community, east of Texas, and most of these students had come to Lawrence directly from the Dominican Republic rather than from another city within the United States. Many Lawrence ELL students lacked basic readiness skills and a learning disposition. The superintendent added that although the district had much more work to do, it's work was sustained by the hope that all students could achieve proficiency.

Interviewees told the EQA examiners that a central office administrator analyzed the MCAS test and Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) results, and shared the initial findings with

principals. The principals subsequently discussed the results and findings with teachers at faculty, team, and grade-level meetings. According to teachers, analysis of test data led to the implementation of new programs and services and changes in teaching strategies to improve student achievement.

In interviews, administrators and teachers provided examples of new district programs and services intended to improve student achievement. At the elementary level, Lawrence supplemented Investigations in Number, Data, and Space with the Scott Foresman/Addison Wesley mathematics program, and the Success for All reading program with Soar to Success, a reading intervention program. Lawrence also began using literature circles in elementary and middle school classrooms to meet the needs of students reading at and above grade level. At the middle school level, Lawrence supplemented the Prentice Hall mathematics program with the Connected Mathematics Program (CMP) and instituted the READ 180 program. At the high school, the district introduced READ 180 and Bridge to Algebra to improve student performance in literacy and mathematics, respectively. Administrators and teachers told the EQA examiners that the district also provided Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) training for teachers through its professional development program to improve instruction for ELL students.

Administrators stated that they prepared and submitted an annual school report card to the superintendent. The report card included data on student enrollment, staffing, teacher qualifications, student achievement in reading and mathematics, and adequate yearly progress (AYP).

9.5 All of the district's administrators are appropriately certified.

EQA Rating from 2005: Unsatisfactory

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the prior EQA examination, the EQA team reviewed the personnel records of 24 district-level administrators for appropriate certification. Three, or 12 percent, of the records reviewed contained no information on certification status. Of the remaining 21 records, 11, or 52 percent, contained current certifications, and 10, or 48 percent, contained expired certifications, and no

evidence existed to substantiate that these administrators had appropriate certification for their roles within the district.

In contrast to this finding, the district had reported that of 42 administrators employed at the time of the prior site visit, 41 were licensed for the jobs they held, and only one person appointed did not hold the certification required in the job posting.

During the reexamination, the EQA team randomly selected and reviewed 23 building-based administrator personnel folders. With one exception, all administrators were licensed, and the human resources office subsequently provided licensure documentation for that administrator. The Department of Education no longer provided school-based administrator licensure data.

According to the January 1-June 30, 2006 EQA monitor's report, 56 of the 59 school-based administrators were appropriately certified. According to the Lawrence Public Schools progress report on the attainment of EQA standards, July 1-December 31, 2006, 65 of the 70 district administrators were certified. Four of the five uncertified administrators were fellows in the Lawrence Leadership in Education Advancement Program. According to the Lawrence Public Schools progress report on the attainment of EQA standards, January 1-June 30, 2007, by June 2007, 68 of the 70 district administrators were certified. The two uncertified administrators had completed the Lawrence Leadership in Education Advancement Program in June 2007, and were in the process of meeting certification requirements.

11.4. The district allocates its resources to accomplish targeted initiatives and objectives at the district and school levels to improve student achievement for all student populations.

EQA Rating from 2005: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the prior period of EQA review, principals planned their budgets to support the initiatives in their respective Comprehensive Education Plans (CEPs). Although principals could reallocate resources based on the student needs identified through assessment, student achievement improved little in Lawrence.

During the reexamination period, the district allocated its resources to accomplish targeted initiatives and objectives at all levels to improve the achievement all students. Although Lawrence reallocated resources, especially to improve literacy, student proficiency on the MCAS tests saw modest gains.

In interviews, administrators described the curricular and instructional goals in the DCEP and SCEPs and the resources needed to accomplish them. They also described the process for developing their yearly budget proposals and went on to say that the superintendent expected justification for budget requests. Administrators differed on the importance of the SCEP goals in the final determination of the district budget.

Principals stated, and the superintendent and central office administrators confirmed, that they could transfer funds within their budgets with the prior approval of the superintendent to undertake new initiatives, expand programs and services, and resolve emergency health and safety issues. The principals also stated that some budget transfers were explicitly based on a review and analysis of MCAS and MAP test results, and cited implementation of the READ 180 program as an example.

District leaders told the EQA examiners that Lawrence had made a number of decisions and expenditures to improve student achievement, including those for SIOP training, READ 180, the Soar to Success supplement to the Success for All program, Bridge to Algebra, Scott Foresman/Addison Wesley and Prentice Hall mathematics textbook series, and extended day programs. Interviewees also stated that the new high school small schools model was designed to improve student achievement.

11.7. The budget and district's expenditures are adequate to provide for appropriate levels of staffing, professional development, materials, supplies, and equipment.

EQA Rating from 2005: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the prior period of EQA review, the district did not meet the required foundation requirement for professional development in 2000-2001, 2001-2002, and 2002-2003, according

to a review of the district's End of Year Pupil and Financial Reports. The district did meet the professional development requirement of \$943,350 in 1999-2000, when the district reported professional development expenditures of \$1,265,100, which exceeded the requirement by \$321,750.

During the reexamination period under review, interviewees agreed that the district's budget and expenditures were adequate for appropriate levels of staffing, professional development, materials, supplies, and equipment. The superintendent stated that while the budget was "never enough," the district had "adequate resources overall." The superintendent went on to say that the district's unmet needs included additional extended day and intervention programs for at-risk students and enrichment programs for accelerated students. The superintendent also cited the need to increase funding for professional development because "We do not have enough money to do what we need to do."

Most teachers and administrators told the EQA team that the budget was adequate to provide the necessary materials, supplies, textbooks, and equipment. Some teachers cited specific needs. For example, teachers at the high school stated that additional teachers were needed to lower some class sizes, and to provide more assistance to special education students. High school teachers also told the EQA team that there was not enough copier paper and the library needed more books. They added that they understood that the six high schools were still in transition, and some cartons with materials, supplies, and books had not yet been unpacked.

The superintendent told the EQA examiners, and teachers confirmed, that the district allocated to each teacher up to \$100 for supplies and materials purchased for the classroom.

11.10. Decisions resulting in changes in budget appropriations are made based on the analysis of student data to maximize the opportunities for the achievement of all students.

EQA Rating from 2005: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the prior period of EQA review, the CEP of each school was used as its School Improvement Plan (SIP). These plans addressed student needs based on the analysis of student

data. Principals were expected to adjust their budgets based on the midyear review of the CEPs. The district reviewed student achievement data whenever reductions were made in the proposed budget. The district made reductions that had the least direct impact on students and classrooms. Based on a review of budget booklets for each fiscal year under review, the superintendent stated that the reductions were made, and whenever possible grant funding was used to supplement the services. Principals had the authority to make any necessary adjustments to their respective building-based budgets. Despite these practices, there was little improvement in student achievement in Lawrence.

During the reexamination period under review, MCAS and MAP test data analysis led to changes in district budget appropriations intended to improve the achievement of all students. While these changes had resulted in only a slight improvement in MCAS test performance to date, administrators told the EQA team that they hoped for more improvement when the new district initiatives “took hold.”

Administrators stated that the district had allocated funds to implement READ 180, Bridge to Algebra, and Soar to Success; purchase Scott Foresman/Addison Wesley and Prentice Hall mathematics textbooks; establish focus and design teams; and engage curriculum coaches. Lawrence had also shifted the focus of its professional development program from a top-down to a combined districtwide and school-based one in order to address the specific needs of each school.

The superintendent stated that some schools had a disproportionate number of special education students, and went on to say that the district attempted to align its resources with the needs of the students. While the principals concurred, some administrators and teachers in focus groups told the EQA examiners that some special education, ELL, and Title I students did not receive adequate support in mainstream classes because of inadequate staffing.

The superintendent stated that principals were strong advocates for their respective subgroup populations, and had “pushed” for the establishment of extended day programs in their schools. These remedial and enrichment programs were available to all students in grades 3-8, for one and a half hours a day, four days a week. Interviewees spoke favorably about extended day programs.

The superintendent also told the EQA team that the district had increased teacher accountability through its walk-through protocols and improved implementation of the teacher evaluation procedure. Building administrators were expected to observe teachers implementing curricular modifications and instructional strategies. All teachers were expected to post “Do Now,” an agenda with objectives and the homework assignment, in their classrooms.

2007 Indicators

13. The district formed partnerships with community human service agencies and benefactors, such as corporate and civic sponsors, to provide at-risk students and families access to health, social, recreational, and supplemental educational services.

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district formed partnerships with community human services agencies and benefactors to provide at-risk students and families access to health, social, recreational, and supplemental educational services. The superintendent told the EQA team that the assistant superintendent for operations and support services was responsible for overseeing the Agency Partnership Advisory Network (APAN). Forty-five agencies participated in APAN including the American Red Cross, Big Brother and Big Sister, Community Day Care, Family Services, Merrimack Valley YMCA, South Bay Mental Health, and Visiting Nurse Association. The state agencies in APAN included the Department of Social Services, the Department of Youth Services , the Department of Transitional Assistance, the Probation Department, and the Office of the District Attorney Office.

The assistant superintendent stated that the APAN leadership team, consisting of the assistant superintendent, mental health and business partners, and some state agency liaisons, met on the first Wednesday of every other month. These meetings were well attended, and APAN members also communicated via e-mail.

In interviews, administrators stated that APAN focused on providing services to at-risk students, collaborative grant writing, and extended day programming. The assistant superintendent told the EQA examiners that every school had at least one business partner on its school leadership team. Business partners provided uniforms for students and some student supplies, and funded both

incentive programs and special events. In interviews, principals expressed appreciation of the donations made by business partners.

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

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The superintendent stated that the district had developed a comprehensive safety plan in collaboration with the community, and that the plan was reviewed with the police and fire departments prior to the start of each school year. The superintendent added that each school had its own safety plan aligned with the district plan. Leadership personnel were reworking the safety plan for the high school. Some interviewees at the high school stated that they had yet to meet this year on school safety and crisis management. Also, a few teachers stated that while the high school had a lockdown during the EQA visit, not all teachers were not aware of it because of a lack of communication. In interviews, high school teachers said that they did not have copies of protocols and procedures to follow in emergency situations. Some also stated that there had been inconsistency in implementation of the plans, and in communication with them about the plans.

Administrators told the EQA team that the assistant superintendent for operations chaired the district crisis team. The superintendent confirmed that the assistant superintendent served as coordinator of the district crisis team, comprised of the director of food services, the director of facilities and plant management, the coordinator of student support services, the coordinator of health and nursing services, the director of human resources, the director of budget and finance, the manager of transportation and safety, the supervisor of Channel 10/multimedia, the director of technology, the executive secretary, the coordinator of special education services, and a school resource officer. The assistant superintendent stated that the crisis team met monthly to review the district response to any incidents that had occurred during the prior month. The assistant superintendent also served as the school department's liaison on the Emergency Planning Committee for Lawrence, chaired by the fire chief. This committee met quarterly.

The assistant superintendent reviewed each school crisis management plan prior to the start of the year with the assistance of representatives from the police and fire departments. The EQA team found that these plans had a standard format and contents including a listing of crisis team members and alternates, emergency telephone numbers, student and staff disabilities information, evacuation plans, responsibilities of school personnel, crisis designation codes, and a crisis response checklist. A handbook entitled School Crisis Response Handbook for Educators: The First 30 Minutes was included in the folder with each crisis management plan.

District leaders stated the school district had 31 safety officers and two attendance officers, one for the middle schools and one for the high schools. According to the superintendent, the school department budget funded safety officers trained by the police department. The superintendent told the EQA examiners that the high schools had police protection on two shifts, from 6:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., and from 2:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. The superintendent went on to say that safety officers were assigned to those district schools without locked exterior doors and a buzzer entry system.

Standard II: Curriculum and Instruction							
	2005 Indicators					2007 Indicators	
Ratings ▼ Indicators ►	4.4	4.6	5.1	5.3	5.4	9	11
Excellent							
Satisfactory	2007		2007		2007		
Needs Improvement		2007		2007		2007	2007
Poor	2005	2005					
Unsatisfactory			2005	2005	2005		

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 revised its curriculum to improve student achievement of all its students.
- Staffing levels, particularly for special education students and English language learners in mainstream classrooms, were not adequate to deliver the district’s curriculum.
- Lawrence Public Schools implemented instructional programs to meet the needs of its students.
- The district mandated ample instructional time for the tested content areas. However, large percentages of its students in the aggregate and in subgroups did not achieve proficiency on the MCAS tests.
- High percentages of special education, ELL, and Title I students were included in regular education classrooms, but additional staff members were observed in only six of the 93 randomly selected classrooms that the EQA visited. The district cited that staffing for special education students across the district was at a 1:8 ratio, as the district had 141 special education teachers and 133 special education paraprofessionals to service its 2,087 special education students.
- Random observations of classrooms indicated that key indicators of positive student learning were not always present, particularly at the high schools.

Summary

The Lawrence Public Schools made improvements in the area of curriculum and instruction during the reexamination period. Of the five indicators in this standard reexamined by the EQA, the district improved on four and received a rating of ‘Satisfactory’ on three. Of the two new indicators in this standard included in the reexamination, the district received a rating of ‘Needs Improvement’ on both.

During the reexamination period, Lawrence Public Schools revised elements of its curriculum to address student learning needs with the intention of improving student achievement. The district adopted textbooks at the elementary and middle levels to supplement the programs in place for English language arts and mathematics. In English language arts, the district added a Houghton Mifflin anthology in specific grades to supplement the trade books already in use in the Success for All program in grades 1-8. In math, the district added the Scott Foresman/Addison Wesley texts in grades 1-5 to enhance the Investigations in Number, Data, and Space program, and the Prentice Hall textbook series in grades 6-8 to supplement the Connected Math Program. To support these resource changes, the district revised the mathematics scope and sequence for these grades to include a suggested sequence for the inclusion of both the programs and the texts.

The district invested heavily in the technology to support READ 180 at the middle schools and in grade 9 at the high schools. In addition the district implemented several interventions during the period under reexamination to support students who were not achieving proficiency on the MCAS tests. These included Fast ForWord, a computerized language development and reading intervention for low-achieving students, and the Carnegie Bridge to Algebra program to support high school students not yet ready for success in algebra.

A particular staffing matter that the district needed to address was the lack of teacher or paraprofessional support for special education students and English language learners in mainstream classrooms. Teachers expressed particular concerns about this need.

The district was proactive in training its teachers in the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model to equip them to better address the needs of its English language learners. The district also mandated large amounts of instructional time for ELA and mathematics. These

measures to improve student achievement had not yet resulted in significant improvements in student achievement.

Random observations of classrooms by the EQA team revealed that expectations for student performance were not high districtwide and were the lowest at the high school. Also, classroom management issues were observed most prominently at the high school.

2005 Indicators

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 2005: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the prior period of EQA review (2001-2004), the MCAS test data indicated that there was not equitable improvement in achievement across all grades and subgroups, although the district had a practice of reviewing student achievement every eight weeks for all students. This practice also served to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum. The Success for All model required regrouping if indicated by student achievement level. District staff members analyzed MCAS test results and provided the analyses to schools. Analyses were discussed at team meetings.

During the reexamination period under review (2005-2007), interviewees reported that while the learning outcomes in the district's written curriculum did not change during the period under review, the district did revise other elements of its written curriculum to address student learning needs. As the district completed these revisions, it disseminated them to teachers, most frequently through a train the trainer model.

For example, the district made several changes in the resources suggested for teacher use. In English language arts, the district added in 2006 the use of a Houghton Mifflin anthology to supplement the trade books already in use in Success for All (SFA), the district's adopted ELA

program in grades 1-8. The SFA program personnel suggested the addition of the anthology to supplement the program, and they revised the teacher's guide to reflect this change. The district purchased both the anthologies and the revised teacher's edition so that each teacher and each class had the resources needed to implement the curriculum revisions. Similarly in math, the district analyzed assessment results and saw that student performance was not improving using Investigations in Number, Data, and Space and the Connected Math Program (CMP), and added the Scott Foresman/Addison Wesley texts for grades 1-5 to enhance the Investigations program, and the Prentice Hall textbook series for grades 6-8 to supplement the CMP. To support these resource changes, the district revised the mathematics scope and sequence for these grades to include a suggested sequence for the inclusion of both the programs and the texts. Examiners observed the anthology, the revised SFA teacher's guide, and the middle school math textbook in use in classrooms. The district conducted a study and found that students taught using the anthology were more successful on the MAP tests than anticipated. Assessment results also indicated that after the Prentice Hall text was added as a curriculum resource, student achievement in mathematics improved at the middle school.

Furthermore, as the district turned its attention to poor student performance on open-response questions on the MCAS tests, administrators made revisions in the curriculum guide for writing. Writing coaches then trained teachers districtwide in the use of the revised guide during a professional development day.

Similarly, as Lawrence High School became a set of smaller specialized schools, teachers in each new school undertook to modify curriculum to reflect the theme of the school.

4.6. Staffing levels are adequate to deliver the district's curriculum to all students and student subgroups.

EQA Rating from 2005: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the prior period of EQA review, the district adopted the Success for All comprehensive school reform model in 2001. The district also reduced the number of students assigned to teachers in ELA and mathematics in grades 9 and 10 from 120 to 70 students. Interviewees

stated that 30 percent of grade 1 students, 20 percent of grade 2 students, and 10 percent of grade 3 students would receive one-on-one tutoring as needed because they were scoring below grade level. Although district documentation and interviewees indicated that initially some of the schools met their goals, at the time of the prior site visit none of the schools had met their goals. At no time since the adoption of the SFA program did the district as a whole meet its goals.

During the reexamination period under review, examiners found in their classroom observations that the average class size districtwide was 17.1. This varied at different levels: average class size at the elementary level was observed to be 15.7, at the middle school 17.3, and at the high school 18.0. However, average class sizes could be misleading since coaches were in place throughout the district. Each elementary and middle school had an SFA facilitator as well as lead teachers and content area coaches. As a result, the schools, by requiring all professionals to facilitate a group during the extended literacy block, provided ELA instruction to students in significantly smaller groups.

However, during visits to 93 randomly selected classrooms, the EQA examiners found paraprofessionals in only six classrooms, and other teachers in four. In addition, teachers in middle and high school focus groups noted the need for more support for special education students in mainstream classes. This lack of support was also observed by the EQA examiners. According to teachers in focus groups, the lack of support in mainstream classrooms by special education, ELL, and Title I staff members meant that large numbers of identified students did not receive the classroom support they needed to learn. However, between 2005 and 2007 the percentage of special education and LEP students scoring above the 'Warning/Failing' level on the MCAS tests in ELA and math increased at most grades tested; much of the gain occurred between 2006 and 2007.

5.1. The district has implemented instructional programs that:

- a. are designed to meet the assessed needs of its students, and
- b. include the practices, resources and procedures needed to support the instructional programs.

EQA Rating from 2005: Unsatisfactory

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the prior period of EQA review, the newly appointed superintendent (July 2000) evaluated the effectiveness of the instructional program then in place, and found that it lacked rigor, was inconsistently implemented, and had little connection with improving the quality of teaching and learning. At that time, 17 comprehensive school reform models were under consideration at grades preK-8 across the district, because each school selected its own reform model. The district faced a 35 percent inter-district and intra-district mobility rate, and for many of its students English was not the first language.

During the reexamination period under review, the district implemented a number of instructional programs to meet the assessed needs of its students and, for the most part, provided the resources needed to support the programs. During this period, the district, as required by the state's mandate for Category 2 training, trained more than 90 percent of its teachers in the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP). The SIOP model provided teachers with strategies for teaching their English language learners in mainstream classrooms across the district. Hispanic students comprised 87.4 percent of the district's students, and of these 24.2 percent were limited English proficient (LEP). Additionally, the district invested substantial sums of money to purchase the technology necessary to implement READ 180 in middle schools in 2006-2007, and then in grade 9 in 2007-2008. Research has indicated that READ 180 improved reading scores of Title I students, and 86 percent of the district's students participated in the free or reduced-cost lunch program. Schools with READ 180 labs revised student schedules so that targeted students had a full period of instruction using this program. The district also implemented Fast ForWord, a computerized reading program for students scoring in the lowest percentiles on the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) test, and schools made time during the literacy block for the appropriate students to use the program. In addition, to support its numerous high school students not yet ready for success in algebra, the district purchased and promoted the Carnegie Bridge to Algebra program.

Additional reading interventions introduced or expanded were the Waterford Early Reading Program, Soar to Success, Jamestown Reading Navigator, and Voyager Passport. Finally, to enhance the reading program for its better readers, the district adopted literature circles.

- 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 2005: Unsatisfactory

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the prior period of EQA review, the district adopted the Success for All model in order to offer a standardized curriculum in reading and instructional time across the district. In 2002, the district launched an Instructional Management System created by a cross-district team to provide longer blocks of time for core curriculum instruction.

At the middle school level, the district had 60-minute blocks in reading, writing, and mathematics. The district was considering contracting with an evaluation association to provide a diagnostic assessment of grades K-12. Interviewees indicated that the district was “struggling” to close the achievement gap, and the existing method of assessment did not yield diagnostic information. Despite the changes in instructional time, the district saw no significant improvement in student achievement.

During the reexamination period under review, the district met the state requirements for instructional time in core content areas at all levels. At the elementary level, the district mandated a 90-minute literacy block, which in many schools was extended by an additional 30 minutes, as well as 60 minutes of mathematics instruction. At the middle school, the district required 60 minutes of instruction in both ELA and mathematics. At both the middle schools and the high schools for grade 9 students, those students scoring in the 15th to 25th percentile on the MAP received 90 minutes of instruction through READ 180. In addition to these mandated times, all schools had extended learning time for at-risk students, before school, after school, or during the summer. However, regardless of these mandated and extended learning blocks for ELA and math, only 45 percent of regular education, nine percent of students with disabilities,

and eight percent of LEP students attained proficiency on the 2007 MCAS tests in ELA, and 26, six, and nine percent, respectively, did so in math.

5.4. The district employs highly qualified teachers, that are certified in the area(s) of their primary assignment or responsibility.

EQA Rating from 2005: Unsatisfactory

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the prior period of EQA review, ‘highly qualified’ teachers taught 82.3 percent of core academic classes. At the time of the site visit, based on review of documentation on the status of the district’s teachers, only 54 of the district’s 70 pre-kindergarten teachers were certified. At the grades 1-6 level, 179 of 203 teachers were certified. At the grades 5-9 level, 86 of 115 of the district’s teachers were certified. Of the district’s 87 transitional bilingual education (TBE) teachers, 61 were certified. Short-term and long-term substitutes, tutors, and instructional support staff members were not certified. The district’s No Child Left Behind (NCLB) report card for 2003 cited that 87.7 percent of the teachers were either licensed or certified, and the remaining were in the process of obtaining either a license or certification.

During the reexamination period under review, interviewees indicated, and a review of district documents substantiated, that increasing the percentage of highly qualified teachers in the core academic areas had been a focus of the human resources department. The superintendent’s report of progress on attainment of EQA standards dated August 31, 2006 indicated that 89 percent of the core academic area teachers were highly qualified. Administrators and a review of district records indicated that the percentage of highly qualified teachers had increased during the period under review to almost 93 percent in March 2007, and increased to over 96 percent by June 2007. District administrators stated that during the period under review, the human resources department tracked the progress of teachers toward obtaining highly qualified status. During the two years under reexamination, the district’s mentor facilitator and the director of human resources visited the district’s schools each month to talk with and assist teachers to develop plans for obtaining highly qualified status.

2007 Indicators

9. The district created inclusive classrooms or programs for student populations, through an integrated services model, minimizing separation from the mainstream.

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Interviews with administrators and teachers as well as classroom observations indicated that, for the most part, special education, limited English proficient, and Title I students were included in regular education classrooms. The inclusion model adopted by the district often did not include the necessary classroom support for mainstreamed students. Examiners' classroom observations confirmed this lack of support. Even though the district's teachers had received training in differentiated instructional strategies appropriate to serving special education students in the regular classroom through trainings in SIOP, DCAP, the Reaching and Teaching All Students Handbook, and SFA strategies, 70 percent of special education students and 69 percent of LEP students were in the 'Warning/Failing' category on the 2007 MCAS tests in math, and 41 and 52 percent, respectively in ELA.

Administrators reported that one strength of the Success for All program was that it did not differentiate among special education, LEP, and regular education students. Rather, teachers determined all students' achievement levels and assigned each one to a group without regard to membership in subgroup populations. The assumption was that SFA addressed the needs of all subgroup populations at whatever level they were functioning. Teachers in mainstream math classrooms generally worked with subgroup populations without teacher or paraprofessional support.

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

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the site visit, the EQA examiners observed a total of 93 randomly selected classrooms and recorded the presence or absence of 33 attributes reflected in the Principles of Effective Teaching, grouped into five categories: classroom management; instructional practice; expectations; student activity, work, and behavior; and classroom climate for learning. Examiners recorded the attributes observed in each of the five categories during their time spent in the classroom. Observations were conducted at the district's schools as follows: 27 at the elementary level, 34 at the middle school level, and 32 at the high school level. In total, the EQA examiners observed 46 ELA classrooms, 34 math classrooms, 11 science classrooms, and two classrooms of other subjects. In calculating the presence of observed practices, where appropriate, the practices that would not be applicable were noted and were removed from the total to obtain a proper basis for determining the percentage.

A review of the classroom observations revealed that classroom management strategies were successfully in place at all levels, especially at the elementary level, and the district therefore had educationally appropriate settings for the teaching/learning process to take place. Additionally, overall classroom climate was satisfactory, and, with the exception of the high school, in most cases rooms were well provisioned with resource materials.

Instructional practices at the elementary and middle schools were rated by EQA examiners at about the same level, while the high school was rated lower. Of the five categories observed, the area of expectations received the lowest rating. In this category, examiners noted positive indicators in only 41 percent of the classrooms observed at the high schools, and in 63 percent at the elementary schools and 61 percent at the middle schools. In the category of student activity, work, and behavior, the EQA team observed, without reference to the quality of work assigned, that students generally were actively engaged in learning, with the highest ratings again at the elementary and middle school levels.

Classroom management refers to the maintenance of order and structure within the classroom. Classroom rules and routines are established and internalized, and students take responsibility for their work with or without teacher direction. The teacher models and promotes respectful behavior and maintains safety in the classroom. Instructional time is maximized due to smooth

transitions between activities. Other adults working in the classroom have an active instructional role. Positive indicators of classroom management were evident in 78 percent of the classrooms observed districtwide, with 90 percent at the elementary level, 81 percent at the middle school level, and 66 percent at the high school level.

Examiners reported numerous instances of students responding to teacher questions in Spanish and some instances of the teacher responding in Spanish. In addition, the lack of additional teachers, aides, and assistants playing an instructional role in the classroom was most evident at the high school level, where additional support for students was found in only 14 percent of the observed classrooms. This compared with 50 percent at the elementary level and 78 percent at the middle school level. Overall, additional support for students was found in 33 percent of the classrooms observed.

Instructional practice was the largest category reviewed by the examiners. Effective instructional practice is considered evident when the teacher implements instructional strategies that reflect school and/or district priorities. The teacher makes learning goals clear to students, and students understand their relevance. The teacher increases the level of learning by using a variety of instructional techniques. Instructional time is allocated and used effectively, and the pace of instruction is appropriate to students' varied rates of learning. The teacher elicits student contributions and uses a variety of questioning techniques that encourage elaboration, thought, and broad involvement. The teacher checks for student understanding and corrects misunderstandings, and provides clear and explicit directions that are understood by students. English language acquisition and language development are embedded in all subject areas. The teacher uses available technology appropriately to deliver instruction. Positive indicators of instructional practice were evident in 68 percent of the classrooms observed districtwide, with 71 percent at the elementary level, 75 percent at the middle school level, and 60 percent at the high school level.

While examiners reported an average of 4.0 computers per classroom available for student use, teachers were observed using technology to deliver instruction in 41 percent of the observed classrooms overall, with 48 percent at the elementary schools, 45 percent at the middle schools, and 31 percent at the high schools. Observers also found that the teacher provided clear and

explicit directions that were understood by the students in 85 percent of observed classrooms districtwide, with 89 percent at the elementary schools, 91 percent at the middle schools, and 75 percent at the high schools. In contrast, however, examiners observed teachers increasing the level of learning by using a variety of instructional techniques in 46 percent of the observed classrooms districtwide, with 44 percent at the elementary level, 59 percent at the middle level, and 34 percent at the high school level.

Expectations refers to the maintenance of high standards for students by teachers. The teacher communicates and enforces expectations and guidelines for student work and behavior, and the teacher encourages students and expresses confidence in their ability to do challenging work. Instructional time focuses on having students produce high quality work, and the teacher provides models and rubrics to exemplify such work. High quality student work is shown to be valued through activities such as celebration, citation, exhibition, and publication. Positive indicators of expectations for students were evident in 54 percent of the classrooms observed districtwide, with 63 percent at the elementary level, 61 percent at the middle school level, and 41 percent at the high school level.

Teachers were observed encouraging students and expressing confidence in their ability to do challenging work in 64 percent of the observed classrooms districtwide, with 73 percent at the elementary level, 68 percent at the middle level, and 53 percent at the high school level. Also, teachers were observed communicating and enforcing standards, expectations, and guidelines for student work and interpersonal behavior in 65 percent of the classrooms observed overall, with 70, 71, and 53 percent at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, respectively. Finally, teachers provided models and/or rubrics to exemplify high quality student work in 39 percent of the classrooms observed districtwide, with 54 percent at the elementary level, 47 percent at the middle level, and 19 percent at the high school level.

Positive *student activity, work, and behavior* are considered evident when students are actively engaged in the learning process. They show an understanding of the lesson's objective, and they demonstrate ownership of learning by asking their own questions. Students are able to recall information from prior learning and make connections to new learning. They make appropriate use of technology in the classroom. The interaction between students is respectful, and they are

purposefully and productively engaged in learning. Student work reflects quality, complexity, and care. Positive indicators of student activity, work, and behavior were evident in 59 percent of the classrooms districtwide, with 65 percent at the elementary level, 57 percent at the middle level, and 55 percent at the high school level.

Examiners found students actively engaged in the learning process in 73 percent of the classrooms observed districtwide, with 85 percent at the elementary schools, 76 percent at the middle schools, and 59 percent at the high schools. Also, students demonstrated ownership of learning by asking their own questions in 46 percent of the classrooms observed districtwide, with 38 percent at the elementary level, 50 percent at the middle level, and 47 percent at the high school level. In addition, observers noted that students used available technology appropriately in 15 percent of the classrooms observed districtwide, with 25 percent at the elementary level, nine percent at the middle level, and 13 percent at the high school level.

Finally, indicators of positive *classroom climate for learning* are considered evident when the teacher creates an inclusive environment where all students are accepted and where the space is used to accommodate a range of learning activities. The teacher uses positive reinforcement to enhance students' self-esteem and self-confidence, and appeals to students' interests or curiosity to motivate them. The classroom is well provisioned and includes multiple resources that address different learning styles. Positive indicators of classroom climate for learning were evident in 72 percent of the classrooms observed districtwide, with 80 percent at the elementary school level, 76 percent at the middle school level, and 60 percent at the high school level.

Examiners found that space was used flexibly to accommodate a range of learning activities in 70 percent of the classrooms observed districtwide, with 93 percent at the elementary level, 79 percent at the middle level, and 41 percent at the high school level. Also, classrooms were observed to be well provisioned with multiple resources for learning in 69 percent of the classrooms observed districtwide, with 85 percent at the elementary level, 71 percent at the middle level, and 53 percent at the high school level.

Summary of Classroom Observations

	Number of Classrooms				Average Class Size	Average Paraprofs. per Class	Computers		
	ELA	Math	Other	Total			Total Number	Number for Student Use	Average Students per Computer
Elementary	15	9	3	27	15.7	0.0	126	106	4.0
Middle	18	13	3	34	17.3	0.1	145	120	4.9
High	13	12	7	32	18.0	0.1	200	170	3.4
Total	46	34	13	93	17.1	0.1	471	396	4.0

	Classroom Management	Instructional Practice	Expectations	Student Activity & Behavior	Classroom Climate
Elementary					
Total observations	103	209	81	120	107
Maximum possible	124	294	129	185	134
Avg. percent of observations	90%	71%	63%	65%	80%
Middle					
Total observations	113	269	103	135	130
Maximum possible	139	360	170	236	170
Avg. percent of observations	81%	75%	61%	57%	76%
High					
Total observations	103	210	65	122	96
Maximum possible	156	352	160	223	160
Avg. percent of observations	66%	60%	41%	55%	60%
Total					
Total observations	319	688	249	377	333
Maximum possible	409	1,006	459	644	464
Avg. percent of observations	78%	68%	54%	59%	72%

Standard III: Assessment and Program Evaluation		
	2005 Indicators	
Ratings ▼ Indicators ►	1.7	3.2
Excellent		
Satisfactory		
Needs Improvement	2007	2007
Poor		2005
Unsatisfactory	2005	

III. Assessment and Program Evaluation

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

Findings:

- Program evaluation conducted by a program evaluator hired in 2006-2007 was limited to support and special education programs. Success for All (SFA) program evaluations were conducted twice a year by SFA consultants.
- The district did not meet Competency Determination standards for graduation from high school.

Summary

The EQA reexamined the Lawrence Public Schools on only two indicators in this standard. The district improved on one but received a rating of ‘Needs Improvement’ on both. Lawrence lacked a formal program evaluation system during the reexamination period. It did, however, hire a program evaluator in the 2006-2007 school year to evaluate support and special education programs. Central office staff members informed the EQA examiners that to date only support programs and services, such as READ 180 and Fast ForWord, had been evaluated. The Waterford Early Reading Program, Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), and K-8 mathematics program were scheduled for evaluation in 2007-2008. In addition, Success for All (SFA) consultants visited the schools two to three times each year to evaluate the SFA program in Lawrence. Following classroom observations, the consultants met with school coaches and the

facilitator to offer suggestions for modifying the program. The district intended to expand program evaluation in the future.

2005 Indicators

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

EQA Rating from 2005: Unsatisfactory

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the prior period of EQA review (2001-2004), based on the progress report on students attaining the Competency Determination (CD) released by the DOE in 2004, 74 percent of the Class of 2003 earned a Competency Determination, and 68 percent of the Class of 2004 earned a Competency Determination.

During the reexamination period under review (2005-2007), all seniors did not meet the Competency Determination standard. The 2006 four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate for all students in the district was 41 percent. According to the EQA monitor's report, this was the lowest graduation rate in the state. According to district statistics, 40 percent of the Class of 2008 attained a CD as grade 10 students in 2006, a decrease from 46 percent for the Class of 2007 in 2005. After some students took two retests and others took four retests, the final Competency Determination rate for the Class of 2006 was 85 percent, according to DOE data. However, the rate of attainment of the CD for students enrolled in the district for most of their education had increased over the years.

3.2. 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.

EQA Rating from 2005: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the prior period of EQA review, the district's 12-member administrative leadership team oversaw program evaluation. Student performance data and curriculum review information were used to address student performance. Districtwide adoption and implementation of new programs such as Breakthrough to Literacy, Success for All, and the Coalition of Essential Schools resulted from this process. Teams formed by the central office staff evaluated school programs every two to three years. The district and school comprehensive education plans (CEPs) were reviewed continuously. The program evaluations and review of CEPs were on annual timetables due to the need to substantially improve student achievement in ELA and mathematics.

The district focused on short-term rather than long-term goals. It established goals and actions in the CEPs on an annual basis, and EQA examiners had difficulty finding evidence of district expectations for a time period three to five years into the future. This resulted in much repetition of goals from year to year. Student achievement in both ELA and mathematics, as measured by the MCAS tests, remained flat during this period. The number of teachers needing replacement each year exceeded one hundred, and the number of long-term substitutes needed each year remained constant, as did the typical number of teachers lacking certification for their respective assignments. Indications of progress in these areas were not readily identifiable from a broad perspective. Despite efforts by the district, program evaluation did not result in improved student achievement.

During the reexamination period, the district lacked a formal program evaluation system and cycle, but administrators told the EQA examiners that the district had hired a program evaluator in the 2006-2007 school year. Central office personnel informed the examiners that only the support programs had been evaluated; these included READ 180, Fast ForWord, and the Positive Behavior Support (PBS) program. The program evaluator visited classrooms and shared information with central office and school personnel. The Waterford Early Reading Program, Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), and K-8 mathematics program were scheduled to be evaluated in 2007-2008, according to interviewees, but examiners found little evidence that these reviews had begun.

Although programs were not formally evaluated except for support programs and services, administrators and teachers described the role of external consultants in this area and their impact on program changes. Success for All (SFA) staff members visited the schools two to three times each year. Following classroom observations, they met with the principal, school coaches and the facilitator to offer suggestions for modifying the program “to make it fit the needs identified by data.” For example, consultants suggested limiting the number of required questions for students who were not producing adequate, complete answers. Another suggestion was to place non-English speaking students in a group with an English as a second language (ESL) teacher.

Teachers told the EQA team examiners that teachers reviewed SFA and Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) results informally in focus groups, and made some changes in the curriculum and instruction. Examples of these changes included strengthening phonics instruction, adjusting time allotments within the literacy block, and purchasing anthologies for literature to replace trade books for students not benefiting from the Success for All program. The university director of the Learn to Read by Reading (LRR) program visited one school that had adopted it as its reading program. The director suggested that the school increase the time devoted to phonics instruction to meet students’ needs.

Lawrence adopted additional programs, such as Early Success, Soar to Success, Houghton Mifflin anthologies, Criterion, and the Jamestown Navigator, and modified some programs and services during the reexamination period. These adoptions and modifications resulted directly from a review of research, an analysis of disaggregated data, and recommendations made by teacher focus groups assembled specifically for this purpose. EQA examiners found little evidence that these adoptions and modifications resulted directly from formal program evaluations.

Standard IV: Human Resource Management and Professional Development

2005 Indicators								2007 Indicator
Ratings ▼ Indicators ►	3.1	3.4	3.5	7.2	7.5	10.5	10.8	13
Excellent								
Satisfactory			2007	2007	2007	2007	2007	
Needs Improvement	2007	2007						2007
Poor	2005	2005			2005	2005	2005	
Unsatisfactory			2005	2005				

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 district had an effective teacher evaluation system that included monitoring of the principals’ evaluation calendars by the director of human resources, and supervision of the principals’ walk-through practices by the superintendent.
- The district initiated recruitment strategies that included networking at professional conferences and visits to area colleges to promote the district’s annual April recruitment fair. This fair attracted over three hundred candidates who participated in multiple interviews.
- The MINT program conducted interviews at the recruitment fair. This program provided alternate routes to certification for candidates from outside the field of education. The candidates selected attended a year-long program to help those with preliminary licenses obtain initial licensure.
- The district routinely recognized staff members through both school and district practices, including selection of a teacher of the year.
- While the district’s formal evaluation procedure for administrators complied with the requirements of the Education Reform Act, in practice administrator evaluations were not timely. The district intended to focus more on the timely completion of administrator evaluations.

- The district had a districtwide professional development committee that met monthly to review its professional development plan. The district initiated districtwide professional development for its teachers and administrators to improve literacy instruction and student achievement.
- The district shifted its emphasis from a districtwide to a combined districtwide and school-based planning of professional development during the period under reexamination.
- Although the district had a comprehensive safety plan during the period under review, high school administrators had not devoted sufficient time to explaining and practicing crisis and emergency procedures to prepare teachers to act in emergencies.

Summary

The Lawrence Public Schools made a number of improvements in the area of human resource management and professional development during the reexamination period. Of the seven indicators in this standard reexamined by the EQA, the district improved on five, all of which received a rating of ‘Satisfactory.’ On the one new indicator in this standard included in the reexamination, the district received a rating of ‘Needs Improvement.’

During the reexamination period, the district improved accountability through school, program (see indicator 3.2 in Standard III), and personnel evaluations. The School Comprehensive Education Plans (SCEPs) were the basis for school evaluations. The SCEP process changed from a one- to a two-year cycle with review and revision in the spring and fall of each year. Plans written in the spring were reviewed and updated in the fall with goals and activities for the coming year.

The district’s evaluation procedures for administrators and teachers aligned with the requirements of the Education Reform Act. A random review of administrator evaluations by EQA examiners found all evaluations to be informative and most to be instructive, containing specific recommendations to promote growth and overall effectiveness. The review also found, however, that most administrator evaluations were not timely. District administrators expressed awareness of this and intended to improve the timely completion of administrator evaluations in the future. Most of the randomly reviewed teacher evaluations were found to be timely and informative, and two-thirds contained specific recommendations to promote growth and overall

effectiveness. The district focused on improving teacher performance through its supervisory model. Principals were required to conduct supervisory walk-throughs and complete walk-through protocols. The principals forwarded these protocols to the superintendent, who reviewed and discussed them with the principals. The walk-through protocol varied by grade level and academic discipline.

The district had fair and open hiring practices and focused on acquiring the most qualified teachers for each position. Principals were encouraged to secure the best possible candidates without predetermined salary limitations. Recruitment began in February when the director of human resources initiated networking strategies with professional organizations to recruit candidates, and visited local colleges to promote the April recruitment fair that the district conducted annually. The district also participated in the Massachusetts Institute for New Teachers (MINT) program and enrolled selected candidates outside the field of education in a year-long program to help those with preliminary licenses obtain initial licensure.

The district continued to use a variety of strategies to recognize and retain personnel. Some recognition practices included teacher of the year, sponsored by the rotary club, and recognitions of teachers and other staff members at monthly school committee meetings. School-based recognition varied by site. Teacher turnover in the district during the reexamination period was approximately 10 percent annually. Roughly half of those who left had retired. The other reasons for leaving included relocation, promotion and salary increases, non-renewal, reducing the commute, and childrearing.

Lawrence had a districtwide professional development committee with representatives nominated from all schools to develop and update the district's professional development plan. Many districtwide professional development programs were initiated during the period under reexamination with a common focus on improving student achievement, especially in literacy. At the same time the district placed greater emphasis on school-based, grade-level and departmental professional development activities.

Although the district had a comprehensive safety plan during the period under review, administrators at the new high school had not yet devoted sufficient time to explaining and practicing crisis and emergency procedures.

2005 Indicators

3.1. The district employs a system of:

- a. school evaluation that focuses on accountability for administrators;
- b. program evaluation that focuses on accountability for administrators and staff;
- c. personnel evaluation that focuses on accountability for all administrators, teachers, and staff.

EQA Rating from 2005: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the prior period of EQA review (2001-2004), principals were evaluated annually based upon the principal's evaluation form. The School Improvement Plan (SIP) was referred to as the Comprehensive Education Plan (CEP), and the district also had a CEP. Each respective school's CEP provided the primary basis for the evaluation of the principal and was also related to a merit pay opportunity of up to two percent beyond the standard pay raise. Consequences for poor performance during the period under review included non-renewal, redeployment to another position, and withholding of merit increases. A 12-member team constantly evaluated program data.

The teacher evaluation system allowed for only two grades on each component of the teacher evaluation form: 'Satisfactory' and 'Needs Improvement.' This negotiated and operationally formal evaluation system and documentation minimized accountability for teachers. A review of teacher files indicated that 'Satisfactory' was given in the majority of cases, and 'Needs Improvement' was rarely given.

During the reexamination period (2005-2007), the district strengthened accountability for administrators, teachers, and staff members through implementation of revisions to its school, personnel, and program evaluation processes. Interviewees stated that school evaluation continued to be based on the School Comprehensive Education Plans (SCEPs). The SCEP review and revision process changed during the period under reexamination from an annual to a two-year cycle, complemented by annual updates. Reviews took place in the spring and fall of

each year. Progress on the current SCEP was reviewed in the spring of the first year. In the fall, an action plan was devised summarizing actions and progress to date and establishing plans for the next year. A new plan was developed at the end of the two-year cycle. Interviewees described the SCEP as a living document, continuously evolving from the prior year.

Interviewees told the EQA examiners that the district hired a program evaluator in 2006-2007 to evaluate support and special education programs in all of the district's schools. This evaluator visited classrooms in all schools, and shared the information gathered with the central office staff and school personnel. Success for All (SFA) consultants evaluated the district's SFA program twice a year. Interviewees went on to say that the district planned to expand program evaluation to other areas.

The district held administrators accountable through the evaluation procedure. Accountability was implicit in the merit pay provision in principals' contracts. This provision allowed principals to earn up to one percent above any standard increase by meeting their school goals for the year. All of the administrative evaluations reviewed by EQA examiners were informative, and 14 (82 percent) were instructive, containing specific recommendations to promote growth and overall effectiveness.

The superintendent also held principals and assistant principals accountable for programs and personnel in their schools by requiring regularly scheduled supervisory walk-throughs. Principals made walk-throughs, provided written feedback to teachers, and submitted the protocols to the superintendent's office for review. Supervision of administrators other than principals was the responsibility of the central office staff.

Teachers were held accountable through personnel evaluation practices in the district. Interviewees stated that all administrators who supervised and evaluated staff members were trained in a clinical supervision model. The district's human resources department furnished each principal a list of teachers subject to evaluation during that year. Interviewees said that the human resources director made reminders throughout the year to ensure timely completion of personnel evaluations. In interviews, principals told the EQA team that they were required to conduct classroom walk-throughs regularly during the reexamination period. They went on to say that they were also required to complete Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP)

or Success for All (SFA) monitoring checklists after walk-throughs, and to forward them to the superintendent. The superintendent required principals to complete approximately 10 walk-throughs per week and assistant principals five per week. Feedback to teachers ranged from informal comments to copies of the monitoring checklist. Interviewees stated that the superintendent reviewed the monitoring checklists and conferred with principals and other central office administrators when necessary.

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

EQA Rating from 2005: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the prior period of EQA review, the Principal Performance Review written format consisted of several templates and scales which met the requirements of the state Education Reform Act. Other administrators in the system were evaluated on a cycle that met MERA standards. In the first three years, principals were evaluated annually, and, after that bi-annually. According to a random review of the principals' evaluations conducted by the EQA examiners, 100 percent were signed by the supervisor and administrator, though fewer than 50 percent of the randomly sampled evaluations were timely.

During the reexamination period, while the district's formal evaluation procedure for administrators complied with the requirements of the Massachusetts Education Reform Act, its practice was not fully aligned in that not all administrators had been evaluated in a timely manner. Of the 23 administrator files randomly reviewed by the EQA team, one did not contain any evaluations. Five were the files of newly appointed administrators who did not yet require evaluation. Fifteen or 88 percent of administrators' evaluations reviewed were not timely. Sixteen of the 17, or 94 percent of the evaluations reviewed were signed, and all contained the components of education reform. All of the evaluations were informative; and 14, or 82 percent, were instructive and contained specific recommendations to promote growth and overall effectiveness. Central office administrators told the EQA team that they intended to improve the timeliness of administrator evaluations. They went on to say that the superintendent was

responsible for supervising the principals, and central office administrators were responsible for supervising all other administrators.

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

EQA Rating from 2005: Unsatisfactory

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the prior period of EQA review, the district's evaluation system for teachers could have been used to satisfy the requirements of the state education reform law provided that the narrative addressed all of the fundamental areas. In practice, however, based on a review of over 100 teacher evaluations by the EQA team, the teacher evaluation narrative component did not cover all of the expected areas in a comprehensive fashion. In a review of 102 teacher personnel files, only 82 (80 percent) contained evaluations. Of these, all were signed by administrators, and all but one were signed by the teacher evaluated.

During the reexamination period, the district's formal evaluation procedure complied with the requirements of the Massachusetts Education Reform Act in accordance with MGL Chapter 71, Section 38. The EQA examiners reviewed 49 randomly selected teacher personnel files. Of the 49 selected, six were newly hired teachers not yet requiring evaluation, and one was a teacher who had resigned from the district prior to being evaluated. Of the 42 teachers evaluations reviewed, 36 (76 percent) were timely, and 37 (88 percent) were signed and contained the components of the Education Reform Act. Thirty-six (86 percent) of the evaluations were informative, and 26 (62 percent) were instructive. Two-thirds of the evaluations (28 of 42) contained specific recommendations to promote growth and overall effectiveness.

Interviewees stated, and a review of district documents confirmed, that the director of human resources prescribed the frequency and timeframe for teacher evaluations in accordance with the negotiated agreement with the Lawrence teachers' union in a memorandum to all principals, coordinators, and supervisors distributed annually in September. According to the procedure, teachers with professional status were evaluated at least once every two years and received an evaluation report on or before May 15. Further procedures directed that the observation process

should commence as soon as possible in the evaluation year, and that a minimum of one formal observation conference precede the May 15 evaluation report. Evaluations of professional status teachers were due by the end of May.

According to the procedure, teachers without professional status were evaluated annually, commencing as soon as possible during the school year. These teachers had a minimum of two observation conferences preceding an April 15 evaluation report. At least one of the observation conferences took place before December 21, and the second prior to March 1. Teachers without professional status were notified in writing on or before June 15 during their first three years of employment if they were not going to be reemployed for the following school year. The evaluations were due in the office of human resources by a specified date at the end of March.

Attached to the memorandum accompanying teachers' evaluations was a listing by school of teachers with and without professional status for whom evaluations were required in that school year. Administrators responsible for evaluating teachers were required to submit an evaluation schedule or calendar to the superintendent by the middle of October, with a copy given to the human resources director.

According to interviewees, teacher performance was a component of the budget-building process that began in February of each year. In the course of presenting the proposed budget for their respective schools, principals discussed the performance of each of their teachers with the superintendent. Questions about teacher performance were sometimes raised and addressed during these sessions.

During the reexamination period, the district focused on improving the quality of active teacher supervision. Interviewees told EQA examiners that the superintendent required principals and assistant principals to conduct supervisory walk-throughs of classes regularly. Principals were expected to conduct approximately 10 and assistant principals five walk-throughs per week. The district required principals to complete walk-through protocols. These protocols contained checklists addressing classroom environment, instructional management, and instructional rigor. The principals provided teachers feedback, and submitted the protocols to the superintendent's office. The EQA examiners reviewed 18 completed walk-through protocols. The protocol instruments varied by grade level and academic discipline.

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

EQA Rating from 2005: Unsatisfactory

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the prior period of EQA review, the district did not have a professional development plan, but rather a program that was developed as a result of the district's Comprehensive Education Plan and the Comprehensive Education Plans of individual schools. Therefore, one of the ways in which district updated its professional development needs was through the same process of updating these plans.

The district did not use surveys to determine the professional needs of staff members, and for most of the time under review the district did not have a professional development committee with representatives from the district. In 2003, a professional development committee was created as a result of contract negotiations with the teachers' union.

During the reexamination period, specifically three years ago, Lawrence created a districtwide professional development team consisting of administrators and teachers representing the district's schools. This committee, co-chaired by a teacher, met monthly throughout the year to update the district's professional development plan. The committee also reviewed student achievement data and developed and conducted surveys to determine teachers' professional development needs. After analyzing the results, it recommended both districtwide and school-based professional development activities to benefit the staff.

All district teachers received a minimum of 45 hours of professional development each school year supported by both district and grant funds. Nearly 50 district facilitators, lead teachers, content coaches, and external experts presented professional development sessions. Since most Lawrence students were not native English speakers, the district decided in 2006 to focus a major part of its professional development efforts on implementation of the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model. A research-based model, SIOP was intended to make course content more comprehensible to English language learners.

In the spring of 2006, 50 master teachers and 15 other staff members attended a two-day institute on the SIOP model. Prior to the start of the school year in September, the district provided a full-day training on the model for all K-8 teachers. This was followed by additional training for master teachers, and a full-day SIOP leadership institute for all building principals. The district SIOP training program, including peer coaching at the school building level, was intended to help teachers develop and deliver lessons to increase the English language skills of ELL students to enable them to demonstrate proficiency on the MCAS tests.

Lawrence offered training on the Success for All reading program, including annual refresher courses, implementation visits, and a leadership academy conducted by Johns Hopkins University. These initiatives trained teachers to use data to improve instruction. The district also provided professional development programs for both teachers and administrators on implementation of Soar to Success, a reading comprehension intervention program for students in grades 3-5, and READ 180, a comprehensive program for grade 6-9 students.

Lawrence updated its professional development plan and budgeted for professional development. The central office wrote and received federal and state grants for professional development activities. For example, during the 2006-2007 school year, Lawrence budgeted more than \$2,100,000 for professional development activities from both local funds and federal and state professional development grants. The district expended an additional \$1,400,000 from Title IIA Teacher Quality grants to underwrite the salaries of the district's instructional content coaches. These coaches helped teachers improve their instructional practices.

7.5. 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.

EQA Rating from 2005: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the prior period of EQA review, the district did not offer any formal courses in the analysis of data through its professional development program. In interviews, district administrators stated that teachers received data analysis training in many informal ways. For

example, the Success for All reading program required teachers to analyze data, and the facilitators of this program provided the requisite teacher training.

For most of the period under review, the district did not have a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP). The district had a plan dated August 2003 that contained a wide variety of accommodations for learners in the district.

During the reexamination period, district and school trainings on SIOP, Success for All, and READ 180 all were intended to improve teachers' instruction, particularly of ELL students. Interviewees told the EQA team that Lawrence supplemented major district initiatives with many school-based, grade-level, and departmental initiatives during the period under review. Administrators and teachers agreed that the emphasis shifted in the last two years from districtwide professional development initiatives to more site-based programs.

The district furnished the EQA team with professional development calendars for each month of the 2006-2007 school year. These calendars detailed the district's professional development offerings. For example, the district offered 37 professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators during October 2006, including an overview of a new science program for grade 1 teachers, training on a new reading program for grade 1 and 2 teachers, specialized trainings for grade 5-12 foreign language teachers, and training for middle school teachers on increasing students' readiness for challenging college preparatory courses in high school. Opportunities for the district's administrators included SIOP leadership training, and training on staff development for assistant principals.

The district professional development committee had a goal to develop a data-driven school community that systemically collected, analyzed, and used student achievement data to improve programs and instructional practices. Administrators told the EQA examiners that many professional development days and half days were devoted at least in part to data analysis. The district trained school leaders and content specialists to use disaggregated data to plan differentiated instruction. On some professional development days, school-based teacher teams and content specialists met to analyze the results of student performance assessments in order to identify and address weaknesses in the district's instructional programs.

The district augmented its initiatives to address the needs of ELL and special education students in the spring of 2006 by issuing a comprehensive handbook entitled *Differentiated Instruction: Reaching and Teaching All Students* to all district teachers. This handbook contained best practices, sample lesson plans, and rubrics to help teachers differentiate instruction for a heterogeneous population. The district provided followed-up professional development activities based on the handbook during the 2006-2007 school year.

10.5. The district has a process for the recruitment and hiring of staff that involves appropriate administrative and staff participation. The process is perceived as fair and open and focuses on identifying and acquiring the most qualified individuals for each position.

EQA Rating from 2005: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the prior period of EQA review, the district had a system for recruiting and employing qualified staff. The principals organized the screening process and selected candidates for interviews. The goal was to maintain a faculty of qualified teachers, particularly in ELA and mathematics. For the past several years, there had been a need to recruit more than 100 teachers in the district each year. During this interval, the district annually employed over 100 teachers who were not certified for the positions they held, including nearly 50 permanent substitutes.

Lawrence faced significant challenges in recruiting qualified faculty members. The district struggled to employ minority staff members, which would better reflect the student population in the district. Lawrence recruited late in the season, producing a vacancy list late in the spring. For example, in 2003-2004 the list was issued at the end of April, and the process began in Lawrence after most districts had already completed their hiring.

During the reexamination period, Lawrence maintained its system of recruitment and employment, but initiated the process earlier. Administrators told the EQA examiners that the district began recruitment in February when the director of human resources attended conferences held by the New England Association of Employment in Education (NEAEE) and the National Association of School Personnel Administrators (NASPA) to network with colleagues. The director of human resources also visited local area colleges to promote the

district and announce its recruitment fair. Over the last seven years, the district has conducted a recruitment fair annually on a Saturday in April. Candidates for teaching positions registered and participated in multiple interviews. On the same day, representatives of the Massachusetts Institute for New Teachers (MINT) interviewed candidates from outside the field of education. The MINT program provided an alternate route to certification. The candidates selected attended a year-long program conducted by the district to help them obtain initial licensure.

Principals organized the screening process and selected candidates for interviews. Principals comprised interview teams of teachers, district curriculum administrators, and facilitators appropriate to the grade level and subject area of the vacancy, rated the candidates, and submitted a list of three finalists in rank order to the superintendent, who made the appointment. Administrators stated that the superintendent almost always supported principals' recommendations, and they could not recall an instance when the superintendent interviewed a candidate for a teaching position. Interviewees described the process as fair, open, and intended to secure the best possible candidates without a predetermined limitation on salary. They went on to say that this was the perception throughout the district. Administrative openings were filled through a similar inclusive process involving central office administrators and others.

10.8. The district routinely recognizes the accomplishments of its professional and support staff and has low rates of employee turnover, especially among qualified staff with professional status.

EQA Rating from 2005: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the prior period of EQA review, Lawrence acknowledged a teacher of the month. The teachers selected received mugs and cards as part of this recognition effort. The district also held an annual special breakfast to recognize exemplary teachers, and a special dinner to honor retiring teachers.

Attrition was largely attributed to retirement, including approximately 50 staff members at the end of the 2003-2004 school year. The district conducted exit interviews using a survey form. The forms were mailed to employees after they had left the district, and the return rate was 20

percent. The sample was relatively small, but some respondents cited reasons other than retirement for leaving the district. These included higher salaries in other districts and professional differences with the direction of the curriculum under standards-based instruction, which were based at least in part on the need to follow a prescribed curriculum.

During the reexamination period, Lawrence implemented a variety of strategies to retain staff members including recognition of staff accomplishments and professional growth opportunities. The director of the human resources coordinated districtwide recognition practices, and principals coordinated school-based practices. Interviewees gave examples of teacher recognition including the teacher of the year, sponsored by the rotary club, and acknowledgements of teachers and other staff members at monthly school committee meetings. School-based recognition varied by school.

Administrators told the EQA team that nearly half of the attrition in the district was attributable to retirements. They went on to cite some other prevalent reasons included relocation, promotion and higher salaries, reducing commuting time and distance, non-renewals, and childrearing. The human resources department tracked the reasons for leaving the district by conducting exit interviews and mailing surveys to the homes of those who had left the district without an interview. According to district records for the 2006-2007 school year, four of 109 teachers employed by the district resigned, representing a retention rate of over 96 percent. Administrators stated that the annual teacher turnover rate was approximately 10 percent, or 100 to 120 of over 1,000 teachers

2007 Indicator

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

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The Lawrence Public Schools has had a comprehensive safety plan in place for several years. The plan was based on close coordination between the school department and the city's police

and fire departments, and it was updated annually. The district crisis management team, composed of representatives from each of the district's schools, met monthly throughout the school year to review the protocol that would be used by all schools. Lawrence developed a districtwide code for identifying types of emergencies. The codes were printed on the reverse side of teachers' identification badges for easy reference.

In addition to the districtwide crisis management team, each school had its own crisis team and followed a protocol to deal with certain crises and/or emergencies. Although the composition of school teams varied, all teams consisted of school administrators, guidance personnel, school nurses, custodians, and teachers.

Principals reviewed safety, emergency, and evacuation procedures for their buildings with all of their teachers annually, and all schools conducted fire drills and school evacuation procedures regularly. Administrators also stated that they kept copies of the crisis management plan in their offices, vehicles, and homes. In a focus group, high school teachers agreed that the time devoted to crisis management at the beginning of the school year was insufficient. They went on to say that there had not been a lockdown drill since the new high school opened in September 2007. When an actual lockdown occurred recently at the school, many members of the staff "were in the dark" on exactly what to do, and several expressed that they felt unsafe during the incident. In addition, interviewees stated that substitute teachers, student teachers, and parent volunteers had not been included in the crisis and emergency training sessions and reviews.

Standard V: Access, Participation, and Student Academic Support												
2005 Indicators										2007 Indicators		
Ratings ▼ Indicators ►	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5	6.6	8.1	8.2	8.3	8.6	4	5	6
Excellent												
Satisfactory			2007			2007	2007	2007		2007	2007	2007
Needs Improvement	2007	2007		2007	2007				2007			
Poor	2005	2005	2005	2005	2005	2005	2005	2005				
Unsatisfactory									2005			

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:

- Leaders and teachers used the district’s DCAP components to analyze student learning styles and behavior and provide academic support and services to all students.
- Some teachers reported a need for additional resources to support special education students.
- The DCAP provided teachers with strategies and tools to use that supported the district’s instructional priorities in literacy, differentiated instruction, and sheltered instruction and observation.
- Early intervention programs did not result in all students reading at the proficient level by the end of grade 3.
- The district established policies and implemented a systematic process to gather, monitor, and evaluate student and staff attendance data but was ineffective in sustaining an overall high rate of student attendance districtwide, although attendance at the elementary and middle schools was at acceptable levels.
- The district encouraged attendance and used subgroup analyses of student attendance, suspension, discipline, and dropout data to understand trends and recommend interventions and prevention strategies.

- Despite numerous intervention and prevention programs offered in the district, the dropout rate decreased only slightly and was still well above the state average, and although in-school suspensions decreased, out-of-school suspensions increased.
- Lawrence produced neither an analysis nor documentation of the relationship of staff attendance to either staff performance or student achievement.
- Lawrence collaborated with many community organizations to provide services to students and their families. The district had a high mobility rate and a large population of low-income families and second language learners.

Summary

To address lagging achievement, Lawrence Public Schools adopted and implemented a number of academic intervention programs designed to improve language development, literacy, and other academic skills, as well as interventions to address social and behavioral needs. Lawrence also implemented a number of school- or classroom-based social/behavioral programs to improve school culture and create opportunities to teach children self- and social-awareness, self-management, conflict resolution, and responsible decision-making.

Although the Massachusetts Department of Education no longer required districts to implement a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP), Lawrence had such a plan and used it to support the academic and behavioral needs of all students. The DCAP's components addressed test-taking accommodations and offered teaching strategies, templates, and sample lessons for students in the regular education program as well as second language learners, special education students, and gifted and talented students. In addition, the DCAP offered added opportunities to support teachers' implementation of the district's instructional priorities in literacy, differentiated instruction, and the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP).

The district encouraged higher rates of student and staff attendance and regularly maintained, monitored, and evaluated student attendance data. However, despite monitoring and intervention by parent liaisons, attendance officers, and school attendance committees, the district's overall attendance rate decreased slightly from 93.8 percent in 2004 to 93.4 percent in 2006, a rate below the state's target of 95 percent. According to DOE data, the average number of days absent for Lawrence students increased from 9.8 in 2004 to 10.6 in 2006, compared to the state

average of 9.4 in 2006. However, Lawrence's elementary and middle schools consistently have had attendance rates in the 95 percent range since 2003, while the attendance rate at the early childhood centers (preK-K) has hovered around 92 percent and the rate at the high school has averaged 88.5 percent. No available data or data analyses described trends in staff attendance, although the EQA monitor reported it to be 95 percent from 2004 to 2006. Interviewees stated that staff attendance was monitored and discussed during performance evaluations.

The district maintained and analyzed a database on student attendance, suspensions, discipline, and dropouts. With this database, Lawrence could conduct subgroup analyses by school, grade, race, ethnicity, special program, and special education status to identify and understand trends, and to recommend prevention and intervention programs for both behavioral and academic support. The district's analysis of disciplinary data revealed that while in-school suspensions dropped to 7.5 percent during the reexamination period, though still more than twice the state average of 3.4 percent, out-of-school suspensions increased to 10.8 percent, also almost twice the state's average rate of 5.8 percent. A number of programs addressed dropout prevention and offered students opportunities for alternative routes to earning a high school diploma. The district even offered a Spanish GED program. Although the dropout rate decreased from 2001 to 2004, it increased to 10.3 percent in 2006, well above the state's average rate of 3.3 percent.

After decreasing from 2001 to 2004, student retentions increased from 2004 to 2006. By 2007, the district's retention rate was more than double the state average retention rate. This was primarily due to retentions at the high school, as the retention rate at the elementary and middle schools has remained relatively stable at approximately two percent since 2004. The high school has experienced an increase in the number of students who have not attained the necessary credits to fully matriculate to the next grade level. However, these students do not repeat the entire year and are often moved to the next grade level at midyear upon attainment of missing credits.

The district used a stability statistic to increase understanding of the relationship between student enrollment and achievement. This measure was used to identify the percentage of grade 4-10 students who attended the Lawrence Public Schools for 3.75 full-time equivalent (FTE) years or more out of the past four years, and of grade 3 students enrolled in the district for 2.75 FTE years

or more out of the past three years. School leaders and teachers took stability into account in analyzing and acting upon student achievement needs. At each grade level subject to MCAS testing, stable students outperformed non-stable students in both English language arts and mathematics.

Lawrence attempted to ameliorate the effects of poverty on its families by collaborating with nearly 45 organizations in the area to provide services to students. Schools also provided child care services and translators to accommodate parents' needs and to enable them to participate in their children's education. Although Lawrence's schools had a high mobility rate, the consistency of the ELA and mathematics programs across the district ensured continuity of instruction for students, and provided teachers with immediate access to the performance levels of students. Additionally, more than 90 percent of the teachers were trained in the SIOP model. Most teacher assignments were based on licensure, but Lawrence administrators placed retained and special education students with the teachers best able to meet their needs.

2005 Indicators

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

EQA Rating from 2005: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the period of EQA review (2001-2004), attendance data were monitored and collected at each school by parent liaisons who were trained paraprofessionals. Attendance data were entered into a management information system (MIS), and attendance reports were generated and sent to schools by a supervisor of attendance located at the central office.

According to district administrators, the Lawrence Public Schools set a target of 95 percent attendance for staff members. The 95 percent target was equivalent to nine days of staff absence annually. According to district calculations of the total number of teacher absences in each school, most schools fell within the average of nine days of absence per teacher. This calculation

included days out of school for short-term and long-term illness, professional days, and personal days. Several schools had an average of 11 days of absence, and others were under nine.

The Lawrence Public Schools had policies and monitoring procedures to produce a higher rate of student attendance. However, the 2002 attendance data for Lawrence documented only one school at the 95 percent attendance rate. The high school's attendance rate for 2002 was 84 percent, and the district targeted high school student attendance beginning that year. The district provided examiners with an updated local attendance report through March 31, 2004 indicating that most schools were at or near the 95 percent target rate and the high school was at 90 percent.

During the reexamination period under review (2005-2007), the district implemented systematic procedures to gather, monitor, and evaluate student and staff attendance data. Parent liaisons compiled and reported attendance data to the district office, made calls to families after two days of unexcused absence, and conducted home visits after three unexcused absences. The district produced monthly reports of school and district attendance for principals and central office administrators to analyze and evaluate. When necessary, they intervened programmatically to reduce high absence rates. The superintendent, other central office staff members, principals, parent liaisons, and various committees monitored attendance data, and the superintendent offered feedback to individual school principals when appropriate.

Monthly reports reviewed by EQA examiners compared school and district summary data from the current month and year to date with corresponding data from the previous year. The reports listed the rates of student attendance, number of special education referrals, and number of 504s. They did not include staff attendance data. The reports also included the number of in-school and out-of-school suspensions by listing the number of monthly infractions as well as the number of students involved. A similar monthly health services report contained two-year comparative data by school and district data that included the number of health room visits, dismissals, emergency room referrals, medication use, nutritional assistance, and pregnancies.

According to the superintendent's progress report on the attainment of EQA standards dated January 1-June 30, 2006, beginning in 2004 Lawrence had produced subgroup analyses of attendance and other data by school, grade level, race, ethnicity, and specialized programs such as ESL, 504 prototypes, and special education. According to this report, when the district

reviewed subgroup data it found that attendance rates were fairly consistent across populations, with the highest absenteeism rates found among medically fragile, multiple-handicapped special education students.

At the end of each school year, the district published and made public an annual school report card which, in addition to achievement data, displayed the current year's student attendance data by district and by school as well as multi-year district and school data to show trends. In addition, the district had an attendance panel to review, report on, and recommend interventions for students with high rates of absenteeism. A frequently absent student and the student's parents were required to meet with the panel to discuss the student's attendance record and consequences.

Principals and central office administrators received quarterly reports of staff attendance. Although the EQA examiners did not review these reports, the EQA monitor's report stated that teachers met the 95 percent attendance target in 2005 and 2006. Interviewees stated that district and school leaders recognized teachers with positive attendance records and identified those whose attendance records needed improvement. Principals specifically followed up with teachers who exhibited patterns of consecutive absences or multiple absences prior to or following weekends. Interviewees went on to say that principals used attendance data as a component of teachers' performance evaluations and, if warranted, included attendance goals in teachers' improvement plans. When a teacher transferred to an in-district school, the district provided the principal a copy of the teacher's attendance record.

Since 2004, according to data from the Department of Education, the district's K-12 overall attendance rates have lagged slightly below the state's average rates and did not meet the state's and the district's target of 95 percent in any year. In fact, during the reexamination period the attendance rate dropped slightly. In addition, according to DOE data, the average number of days absent for Lawrence students increased from 9.8 in 2004 to 10.6 in 2006, compared to the state average of 9.4 in 2006.

In 2004, the overall attendance rate in Lawrence was 93.8 percent compared to the state's average rate of 94.2 percent. In 2005, the district's attendance rate was 93.7 percent compared to the state average of 94.4 percent. In 2006, the district's attendance rate dropped to 93.4 percent

compared to the state rate of 93.8 percent. According to district data, aggregate attendance rates in grades K-8 met or exceeded the state target of 95 percent each year from 2004 to 2006. However, during that same three-year period, attendance rates in grades 9-12 dropped slightly from 89.7 percent in 2004 to 89.3 percent in 2006, after having peaked at 90.2 percent in 2003.

With the opening of Lawrence's new campus of six high schools in September 2007, that month's high school attendance rate of 96.8 percent exceeded the rate in September 2006 by slightly more than 10 percentage points. The district's overall attendance rate for September 2007 was 96.1 percent, well above the state target of 95 percent.

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

- a. analyzes these records;
- b. uses the analyses to improve participation and involvement of all students;
- c. tracks students who have ceased to participate in school programs.

EQA Rating from 2005: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the prior period of EQA review, the school district had an AS400 to store, maintain, and retrieve data from its management information system (MIS). During the site visit, the administration provided examiners with all student attendance, suspension, discipline, and dropout reports upon request. Daily attendance reports were provided to principals and liaisons.

With the exception of slight increases in grades 6, 7, 8 and 12, out-of-school suspensions declined over a three-year period. For the same period, in-school suspensions increased in grades 9 and 10, but declined in other grades.

The MIS tracked student attendance, and the parent liaison used these data to identify students at-risk in grades K-8, and to make home contacts and home visits. At the high school, academy administrators and guidance counselors used the MIS to track and locate missing students. While

the MIS offered the district comprehensive information on many factors that impact student achievement, student achievement for the period under review showed little or no improvement.

During the reexamination period under review, the district produced daily, monthly, quarterly, and annual reports on student attendance to inform district and school administrators. In addition, the district added data on suspensions, types of disciplinary infractions, and dropouts to its database to enable district and school administrators to analyze both frequency and trends by school, grade level, individual student, special education status, race, and ethnicity. Both district- and school-level personnel analyzed and evaluated these data, and used them to recommend interventions intended to help students attend and succeed in school.

According to the superintendent's progress report, since 2004 attendance officers identified 99 percent of the students who failed to appear at the start of the school year or who left school during the school year. Teachers and administrators told the EQA examiners that attendance officers and parent liaisons also contacted the home of every student after three consecutive unexcused absences. Community outreach personnel worked with families and the district to help parents encourage students to attend school regularly, stay in school, stay motivated to succeed, and seek counseling and academic support services when needed. Since 2004, Lawrence has tracked the reasons for leaving school for 92 percent of its dropouts, and checked on their status at the start of the next semester or school year to encourage them to return to school.

In addition to the district's two attendance officers, each school had a discipline committee that met monthly. This committee was responsible for using its respective school's data analyses to plan prevention and intervention programs intended to increase attendance and reduce suspensions, retentions, dropouts, and disciplinary infractions.

The district offered some nontraditional opportunities for students to earn a high school diploma. A credit recovery program in the high school's learning center offered students small classes with more individualized instruction for one year to get back on track academically. In the recovery program, students worked closely with teachers and counselors to complete graduation requirements. On-line learning was also available for students in the credit recovery program. To

qualify for the recovery program, students must be at least 16 years old, underperforming in academics, failing MCAS, absent excessively, and have uncompleted courses.

The Diploma Plus program served students with a similar construct of needs. The students enrolled scored at least a 6.0 on the Tests of Adult Basic Education (TABE). Diploma Plus provided small classes with more individualized instruction, project-based learning, work, career exploration, and dual enrollment at a community college. Sophomore and junior students entered the presentation phase of Diploma Plus and seniors entered the plus phase. The program allowed students to explore careers through internships of their choice, gain college awareness, and complete high school graduation requirements. Diploma Plus served 30 students in 2007 and had a waiting list. Last year 14 students graduated from the program; two continued their education in four-year colleges, seven enrolled in community colleges, and four attended certificate programs.

In addition to supporting students seeking a traditional GED program, the district offered a Spanish GED program that served older students who demonstrated at least a grade 4 reading level in their primary language upon entering the system, and showed proof of educational standing from their country of origin. These students took intensive English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) classes and Spanish GED preparation classes.

The district tracked and reported attendance and other non-academic data and used them to understand status and trends and to inform decision-making on appropriate interventions. An analysis of attendance data by the EQA examiners showed little progress in improving student attendance during the reexamination period. The district's student achievement profile for 2005-2006 included summary data and school-level data on student attendance, out-of-school suspensions, retentions, and special education referrals for the six years beginning in 2001, in addition to extensive analysis of student achievement data. According to the report, although district attendance peaked in 2003 at 94.1 percent, the 2006 rate of 93.4 was the same as the rate in 2001. Overall district attendance rates during the six-year period showed no evidence of sustained improvement. For the period of reexamination, student attendance dropped slightly from an average rate of 93.8 percent in 2004 to 93.4 percent in 2006. These rates were below the state average of 94.5 percent in 2006 and the state's target of 95 percent. However, Lawrence's

elementary and middle schools consistently have had attendance rates in the 95 percent range since 2003, while the attendance rate at the early childhood centers (preK-K) has hovered around 92 percent and the rate at the high school has averaged 88.5 percent.

DOE data showed that the district's out-of-school suspension rate of 6.1 percent in 2004 increased to 10.8 percent in 2006, compared to the state average of 2.5 percent. DOE data also showed a decrease in in-school suspensions. Lawrence's in-school suspension rate of 11.1 percent in 2004 dropped to 7.5 percent in 2006, though still above the state average of 3.4 percent.

District data showed that while student retentions dropped from 227 in 2001 to a low of 116 in 2004, retentions increased to 176 in 2005 and 169 in 2006, when the district's retention rate was more than double the state average. Although the district's retention rate of 1.6 percent for students in grades K-8 was below the state average of 2.5 percent for those grade levels in 2006, the district's overall K-12 retention rate increased from 4.4 percent in 2004 to 6.3 percent in 2006. This was primarily due to retentions at the high school, as the retention rate at the elementary and middle schools has remained relatively stable since 2004. The high school has experienced an increase in the number of students who have not attained the necessary credits to fully matriculate to the next grade level. However, these students do not repeat the entire year and are often moved to the next grade level at midyear upon attainment of missing credits.

According to DOE data, the dropout rate for Lawrence students in grades 9-12 decreased from 11.2 percent in 2004 to 10.3 percent in 2006. Although the district made progress, its dropout rate continued to exceed the state average, which was 3.3 percent in 2006.

2.4. The district actively encourages student attendance in conformity with their policies and expectations.

EQA Rating from 2005: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the prior period of EQA review, the district focused on raising student attendance rates. Lawrence provided a year-to-date update of attendance through March 2004 documenting that

seven schools had attendance rates at or above 95 percent, and four schools had attendance rates just under 95 percent. Overall, the district documented a year-to-date attendance rate of 94 percent as of March 2004. Lawrence High School's year-to-date attendance as of March 2004 was 90.0 percent. Lawrence implemented initiatives to increase the monitoring of attendance data and the evaluation of student attendance as a component of student achievement. Complete 2004 data provided by the administration documented improved student attendance at all levels.

During the reexamination period under review, the district and each school encouraged student attendance, implemented policies, and set expectations for improved attendance at all levels. When students failed to report to school, parent liaisons or one of the two district attendance officers called the home if the parent had not notified the school of the absence. The district asked for medical documentation when a student was absent for more than three consecutive days. When a student reached five days of unexcused absences, the district required the parent to meet with the attendance panel or the family support team to discuss the student's attendance record and develop a plan to ensure improved daily attendance. Family support teams comprised of a classroom teacher, reading teacher, a nurse, a counselor, and a special education teacher supported families in resolving the issues that impeded their children from attending school daily. Although recent data showed improvements in attendance in the early grades, trend data indicated that progress in improving attendance was difficult to achieve for older students, despite the interventions and opportunities the district offered them.

Each September, Lawrence sent a letter to every family stating the district's attendance policy and the state student attendance law. This letter also advised parents of actions the district would take when students did not attend school regularly, such as attendance panels, required medical documentation of absences, youth court for older students, and the filing of CHINS (Child in Need of Services) or care and protection petitions. Although the district's letter notified parents that taking children out of school for vacations during school time was not permitted, a number of interviewees told the EQA team that it was common for students to leave school for family visits, often for months at a time during the winter, and return to the school in the spring. In addition, each school reviewed the contents of the letter with parents at school open houses and at parent-teacher meetings.

Interviewees indicated that individual schools offered incentives such as movie passes and treats to encourage student attendance. Some elementary and middle schools held grade-level competitions for the highest attendance record, and the results were announced at the end of each week.

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 2005: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the prior period of EQA review, while student attendance at most schools was below 95 percent, district administrators stated that procedures were in place to analyze the relationship between student achievement and attendance. School officials described a program that required assessment of student performance in English language arts at eight-week intervals. School personnel told the EQA team that staff and student attendance were components of the assessment of student achievement.

During the reexamination period under review, interviewees told the EQA examiners that the district reviewed both student and staff attendance data when analyzing achievement, and began to look for relationships among achievement data, attendance data, and student mobility in order to better understand patterns of subgroup performance.

In 2006, the district made use of a stability statistic to determine the relationship between mobility and student achievement on the MCAS tests in ELA and mathematics. The district disaggregated achievement results for stable and non-stable students to analyze trends in student academic progress. Lawrence defined stability as a full-time equivalent (FTE) enrollment of at least 3.75 years out of the past four years for students in grades 4-10. For students enrolled in grade 3, the district used an FTE enrollment of 2.75 years out of the past three years. In

interviews with the EQA team, teachers and administrators stated that they considered the effect of student stability on student achievement in discussions at school-level, grade-level, and content-level meetings.

According to district data for 2006, the following percentages of students were considered stable: 77 percent of the students in grade 3; 67 percent in grade 4; 73 percent in grade 5; 78 percent in grade 6; 78 percent in grade 7; 79 percent in grade 8; and 73 percent in grade 10.

At each tested grade level, stable students outperformed non-stable students on both the English language arts and mathematics MCAS tests. Furthermore, the difference in performance between stable and non-stable students, in favor of stable students, tended to increase across grade levels. For example, the MCAS test passing rates for stable students exceeded the passing rates for non-stable students by eight percentage points in ELA and five percentage points in math in grade 3; by six percentage points in ELA and eight percentage points in math in grade 4; by 16 percentage points in ELA and eight percentage points in math in grade 5; by 10 percentage points in ELA and four percentage points in math in grade 6; by 15 percentage points in ELA and eight percentage points in math in grade 7; by 27 percentage points in ELA and 11 percentage points in math in grade 8; and by 20 percentage points in ELA and 14 percentage points in math in grade 10.

The higher MCAS test performance of continuously enrolled students highlighted the challenges the district faced in supporting its non-stable student population. The district created a newcomers program at the high school as one strategy to address the needs of unstable students. This program provided ELL students with a double block of English and mathematics during the school day. The district also offered extended day programs, after-school academic programs, and summer programs for all students in need of academic assistance.

Although stable students outperformed non-stable students across all grade levels on both the ELA and mathematics MCAS tests, the proficiency and passing rates for both groups in Lawrence were well below the state averages during the period of reexamination. Lawrence's proficiency rates ranked 11 out of the state's 12 urban districts. The demographics in Lawrence were unusual and challenging. Lawrence ranked highest in the state in percentage enrollment of students whose first language was not English (82.5 percent) and in percentage enrollment of

low-income students (83.1 percent). The district had the second highest percentage enrollment of limited English proficient (LEP) students (24.2 percent).

Although district proficiency indices continued to be well below the state averages for both the aggregate population and for subgroups, Lawrence students did make gains in proficiency and passing rates on the ELA and math MCAS tests during the period of reexamination for all of its subgroups and the population as a whole. From 2004 to 2007, the gains in ELA proficiency ranged from 1.6 proficiency index (PI) points for Hispanic students, representing 87.4 percent of the student population, to 16.7 PI points for Asian students, representing 2.7 percent of the student population. During the same interval, the gains in mathematics proficiency ranged from 4.1 PI points for LEP students, representing 24.2 percent of the student population, to 14.3 PI points for White students, representing 7.6 percent of the student population.

According to the 2007 EQA monitor's report, the district met its staff attendance goal of 95 percent in 2005 and 2006. The EQA examiners did not have access to staff attendance data or documents linking staff attendance data to indicators of student achievement. Interviewees told the EQA team that the district and each school tracked teacher attendance and referred to attendance data in follow-up discussions during evaluation sessions and in summary evaluation reports.

6.6. The district has policies and practices that assign faculty to students and courses that maximize all faculty talents and skills and promote high levels of student achievement.

EQA Rating from 2005: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the prior period of EQA review, students progressed through the grades according to a new retention and promotion policy. Assignment of staff members to students was carefully considered when placing students who had been retained. However, these changes did not result in high levels of student achievement.

Also, according to interviewees, LEP and special education students were placed with teachers who had demonstrated ability to work collaboratively with support staff members. At all grade

levels, accommodations were made to team classroom teachers with educational specialists and paraprofessionals with credentials appropriate for either LEP or special education. At the elementary level, staff members stated that students were redistributed annually. Administrators and teachers considered both student and teacher compatibility in the annual reassignment of grade K-5 students. The school district's commitment to Success for All required careful matching of students with staff members. At the middle school level, each school employed different means to accommodate teaching and learning styles. With the exception of one middle school using a balanced literacy model under the guidance of Tufts University, the remainder of the middle schools had adopted Success for All strategies. At the high school, students were randomly assigned to the grade 9 success academy controlling for gender, academics, discipline, LEP status, and special education status. The assignment of teachers to students was not seriously considered until grade 10. Grade 10 students were assigned based upon grade 9 performance and grade 8 MCAS test results received in the fall.

During the reexamination period under review, some consideration was given to the assignment of teachers for retained and special education students, but the district had no written policies or practices. According to administrators, assignments were usually made based on licensure, but principals sometimes considered other factors. According to staff members, teachers could express grade-level preferences, but this did not necessarily result in the desired assignment. Teachers in a focus group told EQA examiners that principals might put pressure on staff members to move from one grade level to another, or to participate in looping. Some teacher requests for a change of assignment were denied based on reasons determined by the administrator. For example, a teacher's good classroom management skills might be more necessary in the upper grades. Teachers stated that principals made some verbal requests and suggestions for changes of assignment, but there were few involuntary transfers.

Teachers who challenged accelerated students were often assigned to teach literature. At the high school, the principals recruited some teachers for the thematic schools, but, according to teachers, "veteran staff members got the school they wanted." The College Board provided summer training for teachers of Advanced Placement (AP) courses.

All teachers were trained in the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) to support students in their classrooms. Students were grouped for support services, and non-English speaking students were often placed with ESL teachers. During interviews, staff members at the International School at the high school told the EQA examiners that there was always a paraprofessional in every classroom who “spoke the native language.”

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

EQA Rating from 2005: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the prior period of EQA review, the district did not have a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) that addressed the needs of all students until August 2003. Prior to this time, beginning in 2001, the district developed a learning strategies guide that administrators referred to as the seed of the DCAP. This guide was developed by the special education department through a process involving ELL and special education teachers. These teachers came together to share best practices as a result of the introduction of differentiated learning strategies in inclusion classrooms. The guide was used informally with special education and ELL students, and there was no systemic procedure for using it to accommodate the needs of regular education students. However, the district continued to work on developing a DCAP that would be available for use by all staff members, and the DCAP was completed in August 2003.

During the period of reexamination, the district updated its District Curriculum Accommodation Plan and distributed the revised document to all professional staff members. Lawrence’s DCAP was separate from the district’s Comprehensive Education Plan, and its primary goal was to support the district’s general goals and objectives by providing teachers with specific teaching strategies, accommodations, and teaching resources. In addition to addressing the needs of students in general education programs, the DCAP also addressed the needs of Lawrence’s

diverse student population including special education, at-risk, and ELL students, and accelerated students in need of enrichment. The DCAP was an optional and useful strategy, but no longer required by the Department of Education as a component of education reform.

Central office staff members trained principals and other school leaders to implement the DCAP to meet the needs of regular education students. These leaders offered professional development to help classroom teachers learn to use the components of the DCAP, and also embedded DCAP strategies and tools in school-level, content-level, and grade-level professional development sessions. The district's family support teams also used the DCAP to help design plans and modifications to better address students' learning needs. Finally, the DCAP supported the district's emphasis on differentiated and sheltered instruction by offering strategies, templates, and tools in addition to those presented in intensive professional development trainings for teachers during the reexamination period.

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

- a. analyzing and accommodating diverse learning styles of all students in the regular classroom, and
- b. providing appropriate services and support within the regular education program.

EQA Rating from 2005: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the prior period of EQA review, while the district did not have a DCAP in place for the entire period, many staff members had been trained in the use of differentiated instruction. The DCAP in use contained a few paragraphs to help teachers to identify students' learning styles, and it provided lists of accommodations they could use to address them.

Family success teams at the middle and high school levels and family support teams at the elementary level provided additional support for teachers. Content coaches provided teachers with support to help students succeed. Each elementary and middle school building had full-time literacy/writing and math/science coaches to assist in developing strategies to meet student needs. All grade K-8 buildings had the Success for All reading program, and the two full-time

facilitators assigned to these buildings provided support for teachers. The collegial cluster teams that met during common planning times in most of the schools offered another source of teacher support.

During the reexamination period under review, regular education teachers used the DCAP as one resource to analyze and accommodate the diverse learning styles of students in regular education classrooms. The DCAP also offered appropriate support within the regular education program by giving teachers effective strategies to use with all students.

As a resource, the DCAP outlined multiple approaches teachers could use to improve their practice. The DCAP contained four customized ELA standards and five customized math standards. Each of these standards addressed multiple curriculum frameworks and state standards, and described specific tools, strategies, and accommodations to apply in teaching the standards. For example, one customized reading comprehension standard outlined multiple accommodations for reading behaviors, vocabulary development, phonemic awareness, comprehension, and writing and listed useful strategies for teaching regular education students as well as students with specific learning needs.

The district identified differentiated instruction and SIOP as key priorities since the last EQA review, and it supported teachers and school and district administrators with initial and follow-up professional development in each during the reexamination period. To further support those initiatives, the DCAP's appendices offered an overview of the conceptual framework for differentiated instruction and provided teachers with suggestions and samples of lessons and templates to implement. The DCAP's appendices also offered teachers exemplars of tools, lesson plans, and templates to support them in using sheltered and scaffolded instruction. These were recognized as best teaching practices.

The EQA examiners saw evidence of the use of SIOP in observations of grade 1-10 classrooms. Teachers posted language and content objectives, and principals stated that they looked for dual objectives during walk-throughs and scheduled classroom observations. The EQA examiners also observed other SIOP language and literacy strategies such as Word Walls to emphasize key vocabulary in content areas, and flexible grouping in ELA and mathematics in the early grades to provide targeted instruction to facilitate student progress.

8.3. Components of the DCAP include the following:

- a. direct and systematic instruction in reading;
- b. provision of services to address the needs of students whose behavior may interfere with learning;
- c. provisions encouraging teacher mentoring and collaboration and parental involvement; and
- d. assistance to classroom teachers, such as professional development, to help them analyze and accommodate the needs of students.

EQA Rating from 2005: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the prior period of EQA review, the district's DCAP did not include specific references to a direct and systematic instruction in reading. However, in 2001 the district adopted the Success for All reading program in grades K-8 in all schools with the exception of one that adopted the Coalition of Essential Schools model. A family component was part of the Success for All model, and each building had designated facilitators to implement that part of the program.

In interviews, district administrators indicated that the district had a variety of support services in place to address the needs of students whose behavior interfered with learning, including a full-time counselor at smaller schools and three counselors at the larger schools.

The district's mentoring program was a component of the district's Comprehensive Education Plan and provided support for all new teachers, including those in the MINT program. Time was provided for mentors and mentees to meet in the summer before the opening of school, as well as regular meeting times during the school year. Mentors also met as a group during the school year. Mentees had an opportunity to observe in other classrooms during the school year. The district provided a full-time mentor facilitator to implement its mentoring program. At the time of the site review, mentoring was provided for two years, but the district hoped to increase mentoring support to three years in the future.

During the reexamination period, teachers used components of the DCAP to support their direct and systematic instruction in reading, according to interviews, documents, and classroom observations. The DCAP provided accommodations, tools, and strategies that represented best practices such as differentiated instruction, sheltered instruction, and scaffolded instruction, among others. A review of the DCAP's components showed that teachers and facilitators could apply those practices, strategies, tools, and templates whether they used Success for All, the reading program used in most of the district's elementary schools, or the Learn to Read by Reading (LRR) program used at the South Lawrence East Elementary School. Teachers in grades 5-12 could also apply the DCAP's tools and templates in ELA and math classes, and evidence from interviews and classroom observations indicated that they did. Finally, literacy coaches and teachers in the district's several lab classes also applied tools and strategies drawn from the DCAP to model techniques for direct reading instruction in the district.

The DCAP also provided approved test-taking accommodations for students with learning or behavioral difficulties. In addition, the DCAP offered teachers guidance in designing lessons for students with behavioral and organizational needs. It included other sections such as monitoring of students on field trips, teacher in-service for specific handicaps, and group experiences for social skills, but gave teachers few tools to address those needs.

The district recognized the challenges presented by behavioral dysfunction and offered at least seven other district initiatives to support students whose behavioral needs interfered with learning. Support came from programs such as the Positive Behavior Interventions Support (PBIS) approach introduced in 2006 at seven schools. PBIS was a data-based model that offered a staff-driven schoolwide plan to address behavior through positive reinforcement and specific interventions to discourage negative behavior. The district also supported Safe and Caring Schools, a thematic approach to teach children self and social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making through the use of classroom-based lessons within the regular curriculum. Another model was Peer Mediation, a school-based student-managed program designed to teach the benefits of non-violent conflict resolution. A school counselor supervised peer mediation programs, and peer mediators used their skills to help other students resolve their differences.

Other behavior-focused models included a school-based solutions team providing solutions and modifications for students exhibiting a particular need. Suggested modifications were implemented and evaluated throughout the process. The team also generated recommendations for special education services. Project Alert utilized a curriculum designed to discourage drug use and provided skills and strategies to resist drugs and establish new non-use attitudes and beliefs through small group activities, role playing, real life videos, and guided classroom discussions.

The PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) curriculum was a comprehensive program for promoting emotional and social competencies and reducing aggression and behavior problems in elementary school students while simultaneously enhancing classroom performance. First Steps to Success was an early intervention program designed to divert at-risk students from a path leading to antisocial patterns of behavior through the use of small group or classroom-based activities supported by parental involvement .

The DCAP encouraged teacher mentoring and collaboration by laying out strategies that grade-level and subject-level teams could use when collaborating to plan instruction. Evidence from the DCAP document, interviews, and classroom observations showed that teachers did plan collaboratively at grade-level and content-level meetings. Experienced teachers often mentored newer teachers in how to implement strategies drawn from the DCAP's components, although this was not a formal part of the district's mentoring program.

The DCAP also described interventions to improve parental leadership and to help equip parents to make a positive impact on improving student achievement. Two components outlined in the DCAP targeted strengthening and channeling parental leadership. The Parent Leadership Assistance Network (Project PLAN) was intended to support district initiatives by creating effective parent leaders, a strong parent community, and partnerships with community-based and faith-based organizations involved in the schools. In interviews, several principals and administrators stated that Project Plan was used in a number of schools. The district also introduced workshops for parents under the auspices of Every Person Influences Children (EPIC), a national non-profit organization that helped parents, teachers, and community members raise children to be responsible adults. EPIC provided programs in the district to

enhance parenting skills and to train parents to become advocates for their children's education through workshops, facilitator training, parent advocacy training, and a parent leadership institute.

8.6. 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.

EQA Rating from 2005: Unsatisfactory

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the prior period of EQA review, the district provided a number of reading programs at the primary levels, including the Reading First program that was implemented at three sites in the district, and during the 2003-2004 school year the Success for All reading program in grades 1-8 and the Waterford Program at the kindergarten level. The Breakthrough to Literacy Program was provided at the pre-kindergarten and kindergarten levels, and the Tufts University Learn to Read by Reading Program was used at the district's early childhood centers. In interviews, district administrators told the EQA team that they had not focused on increasing diagnostic information in the district because they were concentrating on getting the Success for All reading components "down pat." Despite these interventions, only 25 percent of the district's grade 3 students scored at the 'Proficient' level on the 2003 MCAS ELA tests.

During the reexamination period, all students were not reading at the 'Proficient' level by the end of grade 3. The district provided early intervention programs, but grade 3 MCAS test reading scores were unchanged. In 2003, 25 percent of district students scored in the 'Advanced' and 'Proficient' categories, and 27 percent scored in the 'Warning/Failing' category. In 2006, 24 percent of district students scored in the 'Advanced' and 'Proficient' categories, and 26 percent in the 'Warning/Failing' category.

The district used the Success for All, Reading First, and Learn to Read by Reading literacy models since their implementation in 2001. Grade 3 MCAS reading scores saw slight improvement during the period under reexamination, and one administrator commented, "I'm not sure if SFA is the best instrument to use." The district provided extended day and summer programs and interventions in the classroom through Reading First grants. Early Success and

Soar to Success were purchased for grades K-4 to target students for interventions during the literacy block, and ELA coaches and facilitators helped teachers implement these programs. The district also adopted the Waterford Early Reading Program and Fast ForWord to support literacy skills.

Administrators told the EQA team that the district's 2007 grade 3 MCAS test reading scores improved over its 2006 results. In 2007, the percentage of district students scoring in the 'Advanced' and 'Proficient' categories increased from 24 percent to 28 percent, and the percentage of students scoring in the 'Warning/Failing' category decreased from 26 percent to 24 percent. Despite the district's early intervention programs and practices, Lawrence's 2007 district results were still well below the state average of 59 percent in the 'Advanced' and 'Proficient' categories, and well above the state average of nine percent in the 'Warning/Failing' category.

2007 Indicators

4. The district immediately assessed the skills and needs of entering and mobile students when records were not available or accessible, and made educationally appropriate and effective placements.

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

According to interviewees, students were evaluated immediately upon entering the school. The Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) was used for placement, and intakes were conducted when necessary using the Home Language Survey and the Language Acquisition Scales (LAS). If a student appeared to need special education services and records were not available, the school developed a preliminary Individualized Education Program (IEP) until further records could be obtained or additional assessments were conducted. Mathematics and English language arts programs were standard within the district, facilitating student placement.

The district experienced a high mobility rate. According to administrators, 60 to 70 percent of grade 3 students had been in the system since kindergarten. Administrators reviewed achievement data based on the number of years students were educated in the district. During

interviews, staff members told the EQA examiners that the district's data showed that the longer students were continuously enrolled in the district, the better they performed.

Three categories were determined to be of significance in this analysis: students in the district for their entire education; students in the district for more than three consecutive years (stable); and students in the district for less than three consecutive years (non-stable). In all grades except for grade 10, students in Lawrence for their entire education predominated. However, the percentages of non-stable students in the district were high, ranging from 21 to 24 percent in grades 3-5, and from 19 to 21 percent in grades 6-8. By grade 10, the percentage of non-stable students reached 29 percent. According to the superintendent's progress report for the period January to June 2007, approximately 75 percent of students across all grades were stable, a higher percentage than ever before, but some teachers stated that given the mobility rate they were being "held accountable for students they did not teach."

5. The district provided programs and services to alleviate the adverse effects of poverty (including delayed language development, lack of readiness skills, low self-esteem and aspirations, high mobility, and family instability) on students' social, emotional, and intellectual development.

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

Approximately 86 percent of students in the Lawrence Public Schools were Hispanic and 84 percent were from low-income families. Realizing the effects of poverty, the district took steps to provide multi-faceted support. During the period under review, the district screened all preschool children with the Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDI) to evaluate and monitor the literacy skills of three- and four-year-olds attending preschool. The district provided half-day preschool sessions and full-day kindergarten at no cost to parents. The district used Success for All Kinder Corner and Curiosity Corner at the kindergarten and preschool level, respectively. Both are language-based programs. The Waterford Early Reading program was used in grade K-2 classrooms to foster the development of literacy skills.

Children participated in the Safe and Caring Schools Program in grades K-8 which highlighted monthly themes on social and emotional topics. In order to build students' self esteem, schools

prominently displayed pictures, personal stories, and certificates of student and citizens of the month in classrooms and hallways as evidenced by school visits. One of the high school principals stated that the high school built confidence in students by promoting a “college-going environment.”

Several programs were also offered to provide other academic and social support to students and their families. Extended Day focused on academic support, while providing a safe after-school environment to ensure that students would not be at home alone. The local Boys and Girls Clubs helped students with homework after school. The district also provided SPELL, a summer program for ELL students. At the high school level, a Family Literacy Program offered parents the opportunity to participate in an after-school ESL class with their children.

Teacher stated in interviews, and a review of documents confirmed, that the district addressed absenteeism and truancy. Parent liaisons contacted the home when students were absent and followed up with home visits when necessary. After three consecutive days, parents and students were called before the school attendance panel. In order to promote stability, schools accommodated families who moved within the district by allowing the children to remain in their original schools, provided that their parents provided or arranged for transportation. The district also conducted Every Person Influences Children (EPIC) workshops in effective parenting.

Solutions teams in the schools were proactive in solving problems before students were referred for evaluation under the special education law. A parent or teacher could consult the team on medical, social, emotional, or academic problems. A counselor chaired the team and counselors, teachers, and other relevant staff members attended the meeting to brainstorm possible solutions.

6. The district directly involved parents and community organizations in the education of their children through their regular communication and outreach, and facilitated their participation by such means as holding meetings and events at convenient times and locations and providing translators, transportation, and child care.

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

Teachers and administrators described the various formats the district used to communicate with and involve parents in the education of their children. Each school hosted an open house evening for parents. Progress and report cards were sent home in addition to newsletters and calendars written in both English and Spanish. The local television station, Channel 10, broadcast school announcements and aired the superintendent's forum in both English and Spanish. Schools scheduled PTA meetings and provided child care for families with young children and no access to babysitters. Parents were notified of the monthly Second Cup of Coffee group which met prior to the beginning of the school day. At these coffee sessions, teachers and administrators addressed various topics, and on occasion students demonstrated mathematics or reading skills. Summer mathematics packets for grades 2-8 and reading lists for grades K-12 were sent home with students at the end of the school year.

Family support teams, comprised of teachers, the school nurse, and counselors, were established in K-8 schools to discuss student needs and brainstorm solutions to social, emotional, or academic problems. Parents were invited to participate in these sessions. Since many staff members were Spanish-speaking, translators were readily available for parents at all school events and meetings. Headphones for simultaneous Spanish translations were provided when necessary.

An Agency Partnership Advisory Network (APAN) comprised of 45 various organizations that worked with families met monthly with district administrators to coordinate their work with schools. For example, community outreach specialists helped track students who missed more than three consecutive days of school. According to the EQA monitor's report, these specialists worked with parents to develop educational options, enabling students to complete high school. They also provided counseling and academic support services to encourage students to remain in school instead of dropping out.

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	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	12
Needs Improvement						✓								1
Unsatisfactory														

Rather than reexamine the district only on those 2005 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 2005-2007.

VI. Financial and Asset Management Effectiveness and Efficiency

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

Standard Rating: Satisfactory

Findings:

- Student assessment results influenced budget decisions and the allocation of resources in Lawrence.
- Lawrence received most of its revenue from state aid, and used Chapter 70 aid primarily to fund the school budget.
- The district did not meet its net school spending requirement in FY 2006 and FY 2007.
- The City of Lawrence funded the reconstruction of its athletic complex even though this project was not eligible for state reimbursement.
- Principals and program directors had discretion to reallocate funds in their budgets with the prior approval of the superintendent.

- The district budget was adequate, except for some unmet needs for more extended day programs for at-risk students, and enrichment programs and opportunities for accelerated students.
- The new high school complex was state of the art and embodied the district's vision of thematic learning in a smaller personalized environment.

Summary

The superintendent developed the budget through an open, participatory process. The budget document included goals, timelines, assumptions, three-year historical budget summaries, net school spending calculations, and individual school and central office budgets.

The district allocated resources to schools and programs based upon the goals and objectives identified in the District Comprehensive Education Plan (DCEP) and in each School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP), and recommendations by principals and program leaders based on a review of student assessment and other data. Principals discussed the status of each teacher with the superintendent and other members of the budget committee. Following completion of staffing decisions, the budget committee reviewed the line item operations budget for each school and considered allocations based on an assessment of their impact on student achievement.

The administration conducted budget work sessions with the school committee and delivered a proposed budget to the school committee in March. The budget categories included salaries, fixed costs, and operations. The school committee held the required budget public hearing in April, and the city charter specified May 1 as the final date for submission of the school budget appropriation to the mayor for recommendation to the city council. In past years, the district operated on monthly budgets from July 1 until the city council finally approved the school budget in October.

The district had adequate funds for personnel and materials, but needed additional resources for more extended day programs for at-risk students and enrichment programs for accelerated students.

Principals and program leaders had the flexibility to transfer funds between line items within their budgets, with the superintendent's prior approval. Most of these transfers were made in the fall after an analysis of MCAS test results, and in the spring following an assessment of what was needed to complete the school year. The district froze the budget in December in order to analyze and reassess the needs, ensure that spending was within fiscal limits, and reallocate the funds. The central office notified principals and program leaders of available funds in February, and began processing purchase orders for supplies, materials, and equipment. Lawrence allocated to every classroom teacher up to \$100 for educational materials purchased by December for their classrooms.

The district exactly met its net school spending requirement every year from FY 2001 through FY 2004. Lawrence exceeded the requirement by \$9,117 in FY 2005, but failed to meet the required spending in FY 2006 by \$660,871 and in FY 2007 by \$2,134,567. The required local contribution increased from \$273,509 in FY 2004 to \$4,898,318 in FY 2007.

The school buildings were clean and well maintained in good condition. The district dedicated a new high school complex in October 2007, built at a cost of \$110 million. This project was 90 percent reimbursable by the state. Students entered one of six separate thematic high schools in September 2007. The district worked collaboratively with the city's Department of Public Works (DPW) to ensure that the school facilities were maintained, and employed a facilities director to coordinate operations with the DPW, among other responsibilities. A facilities manager supervised district custodial staff.

Lawrence had systems to ensure student safety in the schools. In school buildings equipped with a buzzer entry system, the exterior doors were locked during the school day. Visitors and tardy students gained entrance via the system and registered in the main office. The district assigned safety officers to buildings without a buzzer entry system. Lawrence required all visitors and staff members to wear identification badges.

Indicators

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The superintendent developed the budget through an open, participatory process, and the district's budget document was clear, complete, current, and understandable, and included detail to explain and support the district's requests.

District personnel stated the budget process began in December of each year when the superintendent met with administrators to develop the budget goals and priorities. The district based these goals and priorities on the analysis of student performance data. The school committee approved the goals and priorities by mid-January, and each principal met individually with the district's budget committee, which included but was not limited to the superintendent, the assistant superintendent for operations, the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, and the human resources director.

District personnel stated that the principal reviewed the status of each teacher in the building with the superintendent and other members of the budget committee, and any questions about teacher performance were raised and addressed. Following the completion of staffing decisions, the budget committee reviewed the line item operations budget for each school, and considered allocations based on their impact on student achievement in the school.

The district allocated resources to schools and programs based upon the goals and objectives in each School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP) and the District Education Comprehensive Plan (DCEP), and recommendations by principals and program leaders based on a review of data on achievement, attendance, discipline, special education referrals, and other areas. Interviewees stated and documents confirmed that instructional program needs, and the overall goal of proficient achievement of all students, drove budget decisions in Lawrence.

The administration conducted budget work sessions with the school committee, and delivered a draft budget to the school committee in March. According to district personnel, the school committee held the required budget public hearing in April. The district presented the budget in three categories: salaries, fixed costs, and operations. Lawrence posted budget information on the district website and made copies available at the school buildings, city hall, and libraries. The city charter, budget timelines, and the agreement between the city and the school department on indirect charges specified that the school budget appropriation request was to be submitted to the mayor for recommendation to the city council by May 1. Interviewees stated that in past years the district did not have an approved budget from which to work until October, and operated on monthly budgets from July 1.

The document included budget goals, timelines, assumptions, three-year historical budget summaries, net school spending calculations, and individual school and central office budgets. Each school budget contained a staffing list and a proposed budget by responsibility center, including a narrative and budget detail. The document did not contain specific information about grants and use of grant funds.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district allocated resources to schools and programs based on the goals, objectives, and desired outcomes specified in each School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP) and the District Comprehensive Education Plan (DCEP). Principals and program leaders reviewed their individual needs and aligned their resources to address those needs. Building-level administrators and program leaders also had the flexibility to adjust line item allocations within their budgets and to transfer funds with the superintendent's prior approval. Transfers occurred primarily in the fall after an analysis of MCAS test results, and in the spring after an assessment of what was needed to complete the school year.

Interviewees stated that the ongoing analysis of student assessment data influenced budget decisions and the allocation of resources during the period under reexamination. They went on to say that the district allocated its resources based primarily on reviews of MCAS English language arts and mathematics test scores. Through a review of Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) results, the district identified needs in both ELA and mathematics at various grade levels and allocated district and grant resources.

In response to skill weaknesses identified by analysis of student achievement data, the district purchased the Scott Foresman/Addison Wesley and Prentice Hall textbook programs to supplement the Investigations in Number, Data, and Space and Connected Mathematics programs. The district also purchased Houghton Mifflin anthologies for targeted grade levels and expanded intervention resources such as READ 180, Waterford Early Reading Program, and Fast ForWord. The district budget included funds for professional development to help teachers to address student needs, and to improve the achievement of all students.

In interviews with the EQA examiners, district personnel stated that as a result of the analysis of student achievement data, the district allocated funds for mathematics specialists rather than mathematics coaches at the Wetherbee Elementary School, and hired additional paraprofessionals.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

Interviewees stated that the budget was adequate to provide for appropriate staffing, materials, supplies, and professional development. Central office administrators told the EQA team that principals “may not have had what they wanted, but had what they needed.” Most interviewees stated the district fully funded staffing and materials needs; however, some high school teachers

told the EQA team that more staff members were needed to assist special education students and to lower some class sizes.

Principals had authority to transfer funds within their school budgets, with the prior approval of the superintendent. District personnel stated that every classroom teacher was provided with a \$100 allotment to purchase by December educational materials of their choosing to use in their classrooms. The superintendent stated that the district had adequate resources, but needed more extended day programs for at-risk students and enrichment programs for accelerated students.

According to Department of Education data, Lawrence's per pupil expenditure was \$361 below the state average in FY 2004, and \$199 below the state average in FY 2005. In FY 2006, the district per pupil expenditure exceeded the state average by \$384. In FY 2007, according to preliminary DOE data, the district per pupil expenditure exceeded the state average by \$250.

According to information on the Department of Revenue (DOR) website, as of August 2007 the Moody bond rating for Lawrence was Baa3. According to a 2006-2007 list of revenues by source from the Division of Local Services, 69.26 percent of Lawrence's revenue came from state aid, 17.11 percent from the tax levy, 13.19 from local receipts, and 0.44 from other available sources. Lawrence had a stabilization fund balance of zero in 2005-2006, and free cash amounting to \$15,112.68 as of July 1, 2006. District personnel stated, and DOR data confirmed, that the tax levy was at the maximum allowable limit. The EQA examiners did not meet with city officials.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

Interviewees indicated that central office personnel conducted program evaluations and other reviews to determine the cost effectiveness of its operational programs, initiatives, and activities. The district participated in collaborative purchasing and examined its transportation, heating, and utilities costs, and out-of-district placements. Central office personnel told the EQA examiners that the district opened a K-12 therapeutic school and a school for exceptional students.

According to district documents, Lawrence reallocated resources at midyear to address instructional program needs. In the spring of 2006, each school received an additional \$250 per student for identified needs that impacted student achievement.

Administrators stated that Lawrence lacked a formal program evaluation system but analyzed student performance data. They went on to say that there had been improvements in student performance in areas where resources were added. The district hired a program evaluator in 2006 who had evaluated support programs at the time of the EQA site visit. District personnel also described the role of outside consultants in program changes.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

A written agreement between the district and the city detailed the manner and the amounts to be used in calculating indirect charges levied on the school district budget by the city. The city based charges to the schools on an agreement executed by the mayor and superintendent dated May 29, 1997.

District personnel stated that the agreement needed to be reexamined and updated, and that both the current superintendent of schools and the current mayor supported a review of the agreement. School representatives did not, however, state any problems with the method of calculation or the amounts to be used in the calculation of the indirect charges levied on the district; the EQA examiners did not meet with city officials.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The district did not meet its net school spending (NSS) requirement of the Education Reform Act in FY 2006 and FY 2007. The district exactly met its required spending every year from FY 2001 through FY 2004. In FY 2005 the district exceeded the NSS requirement by \$9,117.

According to Department of Education data, Lawrence failed to meet the NSS requirement by \$660,871 (0.5 percent) in FY 2006, and by \$2,134,567 (1.7 percent) in FY 2007. Interviewees told the EQA examiners that the district and city personnel had met to discuss the shortfall.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The school committee received monthly budget reports in accordance with its policy DI, Fiscal Accounting and Reporting. Reports on grant and revolving funds were not provided regularly to the school committee, but made available upon request. The reports generated for the school committee and administration had information on the current status of the budget in comparison with the budget at that same time during the prior fiscal year. School committee meetings were televised, making the budget information public. Because principals and program leaders and their office staffs had access to the financial system to track their budgets, the business office did not need to furnish them reports.

The school committee received transfers for approval. School committee policy DBI, Budget as Spending Plan/Transfer Authority, specified that transfers between major categories of the budget required school committee approval. As long as they did not impact the total school or departmental allocation, transfers within school or departmental budgets did not require the school committee's approval. Principals and program leaders could transfer funds with the superintendent's prior approval.

District personnel interviewed stated that the district requested an extension to October 31 and submitted the End of Year Pupil and Financial Report and final financial grant forms within the

time allowed by the Department of Education. The director of budget and finance told the EQA examiners that the extension ensured the accuracy and timeliness of information not only of expenditures from the local budget but also from grants, as reported on final financial grant forms. The district also filed amendments to the end of year report, when applicable, in a timely fashion.

Interviewees stated the city provided the information needed to complete Schedules 1 and 19 in a timely manner, as specified in the agreement between the district and the city executed in 1997.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

In accordance with school committee policy DI, the district used a fund-based accounting system that was in compliance with all financial reporting requirements. The district maintained its accounts payable and payroll on an AS400 SIMS, while the city used MUNIS. The two systems were linked allowing information to be transferred electronically via a crosswalk. Interviewees at the school department stated the system worked well for both parties, and reports were generated as needed. The EQA examiners did not interview city personnel.

The district's business office processed all payroll and accounts payable warrants. School committee policies included, but were not limited to, procedures for submitting documentation for payroll and for procuring goods and services.

The reports generated for the school committee and administration contained information on the current status of the budget and the status at that same time during the prior fiscal year. The prior year's expenditures for utilities and heat were analyzed to forecast usage and costs.

The district's business office encumbered salary, benefits, and operating costs such as utilities and heat. Lawrence used purchase orders to encumber expenditures for goods and services. The

district utilized the purchase requisition system for expenditures from the local budget and from grants and revolving accounts. Building principals and program leaders authorized all transactions for their buildings and programs prior to central office approval and generation of purchase orders.

The assistant superintendent for operations and support services and the contract and payroll manager reviewed purchase order requests for accuracy prior to approving and processing them. The superintendent reviewed all purchases. District personnel stated that the purchaser was responsible for any purchase made without approval.

The district froze the budget in December in order to analyze and reassess the needs of the district, ensure that spending was within fiscal limits, and reallocate funds as needed. The central office notified principals and program leaders in February of the funds available, and began processing purchase orders for supplies, materials, and equipment. The district budget timeline specified a date in April as the deadline for procurements for the current fiscal year.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

School committee policy DD encouraged administration to seek and secure all possible sources of state, federal, and other special funds to enhance educational opportunities for students in the Lawrence Public Schools. The policy stated that the superintendent should keep informed of all possible funds available to the school district under the various state and federal programs and the manner in which the funds could be best used in the school system. The policy further stated that the superintendent and his designee were responsible for seeking and coordinating the development of proposals for all specially funded projects and submitting these proposals to the committee for approval.

Interviewees stated the district maintained a grants office staffed by a bookkeeper and project assistant. Lawrence sought grants to supplement the local budget in order to meet needs identified through data analysis. District personnel told the EQA examiners that in FY 2007 the district applied for five competitive grants and was awarded two. One application was pending and two were not approved. The district received a \$60,000 After School and Out of School Time (ASOST) state grant, and a \$56,000 Secondary Reading Grades 6-12 grant in FY 2006 that it used to fund teacher planning time.

District personnel stated the school system participated in the successful Microsoft class action suit. As a result, the district realized \$1.8 million in vouchers to be used within a specified time. Lawrence also received \$189,000 in e-rate funds in 2006 2007.

According to Department of Education data, the district received \$18,027,525 in competitive and entitlement federal and state grants in FY 2005, \$17,459,295 in FY 2006, and \$16,412,912 in FY 2007. The district's Title I funds decreased by \$1,152,235 from FY 2005 to FY 2007, and Lawrence's PL 94-142 special education allocation decreased by \$121,287 during the same interval.

The district received circuit breaker funds totaling approximately \$2 million yearly. These funds were deposited and expended by the school district without further appropriation. According to the end of year reports, the district municipal Medicaid reimbursement ranged from \$2,780,090 in FY 2004 to \$5,576,921 in FY 2006. District personnel stated that these reimbursements were received by the City of Lawrence, deposited directly into the general fund, and were not available to the school district.

The director of budget and finance reviewed and monitored all supplemental expenditures, and the business office controlled and monitored all grant and revolving funds. Lawrence had a purchase order system for expenditure of goods and services from grants and revolving accounts, and the superintendent reviewed all purchase orders.

The business office prepared all grant and revolving account payroll and vendor warrants. The EQA examiners found that there were adequate internal controls in the business office to ensure

that the district adhered to procurement laws. The district monitored procurements to ensure that the vendors selected provided goods and services at the lowest cost.

Lawrence had effective systems and procedures to ensure the completeness and accuracy of deposits in revolving accounts and that expenditures from these accounts were appropriate. The district also had effective procedures for handling cash and preparing and processing student activity account deposits and expenditures.

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

In compliance with state law, the city charter, and school committee policy DJE, the district secured at least three quotes for items costing \$5,000 and above, and formally bid goods and services costing above \$25,000. The district advertised invitations to bid in the local newspapers and, when applicable, in the central register and the goods and services bulletin. Lawrence also participated in cooperative purchasing through the Greater Lawrence Educational Collaborative and procured goods from state contracts.

The director of budget and finance, the assistant superintendent for operations and support services, and the superintendent of schools were certified as school business administrators. The district employed a contract and payroll manager who reviewed all contracts, bids, and purchases, and had MCPPO credentials.

The city hired Melanson, Heath & Company, P.C. to conduct a yearly audit of the city's financial statements. The firm audited the school department as a department of the city. District personnel interviewed stated that the city had utilized the services of the audit firm for at least five years

but did not know whether the city had retained the services of the audit firm through a bidding process. Interviewees told the EQA team that that the administration and school committee addressed the findings and recommendations in the management letters.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district worked collaboratively with the city's Department of Public Works (DPW) to ensure that the school facilities were appropriately maintained. Lawrence employed a facilities director who coordinated operations with the DPW, among other duties, and a facilities manager who supervised district custodial staff.

The written 603 CMR 10.0 related agreement between the city and school department described the city's responsibilities and the allocation of costs for maintenance of the school facilities. The district maintained an automated work order system to ensure timely completion.

Lawrence contracted each year for boiler, HVAC, generator, elevator, sprinkler system, fire alarm, and fire extinguisher preventive maintenance. According to the preventive maintenance schedule, air filters were changed every six months, and the district contracted for any necessary air quality testing.

During the site visit, the EQA examiners determined that all of the schools visited were well illuminated and clean. The high school complex was new, and the other buildings were well maintained in good condition.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

Central office administrators interviewed by EQA examiners stated that Lawrence had a five-year capital plan which had been updated by the capital planning committee prior to the EQA visit. This plan described future capital development and improvement needs, including educational and program facilities of adequate size.

While the school department did not have a designated representative on the capital planning committee, the assistant superintendent for operations and support services attended the meetings. The committee evaluated, ranked, and prioritized all capital requests received from city departments, and presented them for inclusion in the city's capital budget. Health and safety were critical considerations in prioritizing the requests. Interviewees stated the city had funded school roof and boiler replacement projects, and purchased vans to transport district special education students.

The district dedicated a new high school complex in October 2007. Students were enrolled in one of six programs housed in six separate buildings beginning in September 2007. Not all punch list items were completed at the time of the EQA visit. Central office administrators stated that the \$110 million school building project was 90 percent state reimbursable, and the City of Lawrence had received \$85 million of the reimbursable costs from the state.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

Lawrence had a system for ensuring student safety. In school buildings equipped with a buzzer entry system, the exterior doors were locked during the school day. Visitors and tardy students gained entrance via the system and registered in the main office. The district assigned safety

officers to buildings without a buzzer entry system. The district funded safety officers in the schools trained by the police department.

Some of the newer schools were equipped with video surveillance cameras, but the older schools were too difficult to wire. The new high school campus was equipped with a state of the art surveillance system, and had security officers working in two shifts to cover the facility from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Visitor identification badges were required in the schools, and the district also required all staff members to wear identification badges. Some staff badges had the district crisis codes on the reverse side.

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 three indices: the English Language Arts Proficiency Index (EPI), the Math Proficiency Index (MPI), and the Science and Technology/Engineering Index (SPI).

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 2007 MCAS tests in a given content area:

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 proficiency index is calculated by adding: $0 + 3.75 + 10.5 + 25.5 + 18 = 57.75$. The proficiency index for the Anywhere High School would be 57.75.

The EPI would be calculated using the ELA results for all students taking the ELA exam. The MPI would be calculated using the math results for all students taking the math exam. The SPI would be calculated 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 1998 – FY 2007

	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
FY98	11,742	2.1	85,366,152	2.3	0	79,628,983	8.8	78,037,931	6.5	78,037,931	9.8	0	0.0
FY99	12,178	3.7	90,498,304	6.0	0	87,543,238	9.9	84,041,100	7.7	84,041,100	7.7	0	0.0
FY00	12,578	3.3	94,780,462	4.7	0	95,988,108	9.6	92,949,692	10.6	92,949,692	10.6	0	0.0
FY01	12,976	3.2	100,768,559	6.3	0	99,686,384	3.9	99,056,350	6.6	99,056,350	6.6	0	0.0
FY02	13,037	0.5	105,296,329	4.5	956,094	104,229,751	4.6	105,185,845	6.2	105,185,845	6.2	0	0.0
FY03	13,582	4.2	111,641,862	6.0	0	110,389,271	5.9	108,048,461	2.7	108,048,461	2.7	0	0.0
FY04	13,486	-0.7	111,720,814	0.1	273,509	110,688,674	0.3	110,962,183	2.7	110,962,183	2.7	0	0.0
FY05	13,497	0.1	116,406,567	4.2	1,810,524	114,596,043	3.5	116,406,567	4.9	116,415,684	4.9	9,117	0.0
FY06	13,187	-2.3	120,547,909	3.6	3,240,618	117,307,291	2.4	120,547,909	3.6	119,887,038		-660,871	-0.5
FY07	13,143	-0.3	127,369,323	5.7	4,898,318	123,087,075	4.9	127,985,393	6.2	125,850,826	3.0 5.0	-2,134,567	-1.7

	<u>Dollars Per Foundation Enrollment</u>			<u>Percentage of Foundation</u>			<u>Chapter 70 Aid as Percent of Actual NSS</u>
	<u>Foundation Budget</u>	<u>Ch 70 Aid</u>	<u>Actual NSS</u>	<u>Ch 70</u>	<u>Required NSS</u>	<u>Actual NSS</u>	
FY98	7,270	6,782	6,646	93.3	91.4	91.4	102.0
FY99	7,431	7,189	6,901	96.7	92.9	92.9	104.2
FY00	7,535	7,631	7,390	101.3	98.1	98.1	103.3
FY01	7,766	7,682	7,634	98.9	98.3	98.3	100.6
FY02	8,077	7,995	8,068	99.0	99.9	99.9	99.1
FY03	8,220	8,128	7,955	98.9	96.8	96.8	102.2
FY04	8,284	8,208	8,228	99.1	99.3	99.3	99.8
FY05	8,625	8,490	8,625	98.4	100.0	100.0	98.4
FY06	9,141	8,896	9,091	97.3	100.0	99.5	97.8
FY07	9,691	9,365	9,576	96.6	100.5	98.8	97.8

Foundation enrollment is reported in October of the prior fiscal year (e.g., FY07 enrollment = Oct 1, 2005 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.