



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

School District

Reexamination Report:

**Greater Lawrence Regional
Vocational Technical School District**

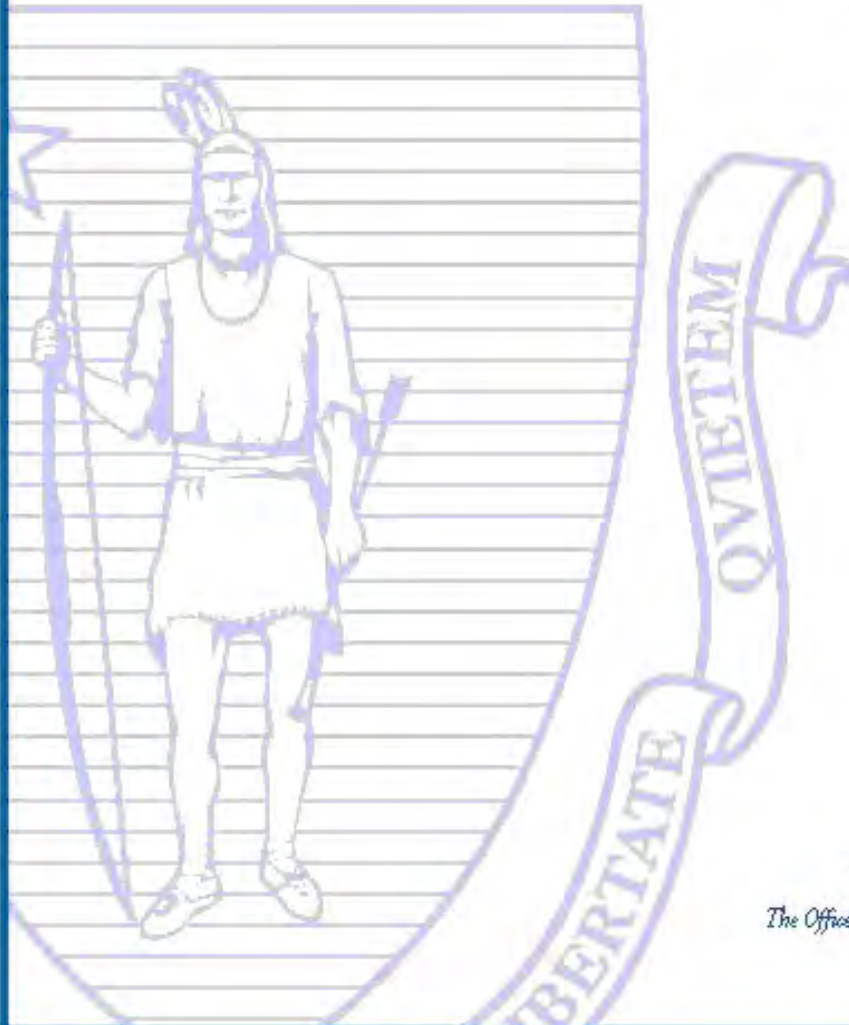
Technical Report



data driven

standards based

learner centered →



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

2005 - 2007

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

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The Educational Management Audit Council accepted this report at its meeting of April 11, 2008, voted to remove the district from 'Watch' status, and issued a management letter to the district expressing commendations 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 Greater Lawrence Regional Vocational Technical School District, Judy A. DeLuca; the school department staff of the Greater Lawrence Regional Vocational Technical School District; and the town officials in Andover, Lawrence, Methuen, and North Andover.

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Executive Summary

The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA) conducted a reexamination of the Greater Lawrence Regional Vocational Technical School District in November 2007. With an English language arts proficiency index of 70 proficiency index (PI) points and a math proficiency index of 69 PI points based on the 2007 MCAS test results, the district is considered a 'Low' performing school system according to the Department of Education's rating system (found in Appendix A of this report), with achievement below the state average. On the 2004 MCAS tests, Greater Lawrence had an English language arts proficiency index of 59 PI points and a math proficiency index of 50 PI points. Furthermore, 33 percent of Greater Lawrence's students scored at or above the proficiency standard on the 2007 MCAS tests in ELA and 40 percent did so in math. These figures compare with 23 and 14 PI points, respectively, in 2004.

District Overview

The Greater Lawrence Regional Vocational Technical School District, located in Andover, serves four communities in northeastern Massachusetts: Andover, Lawrence, Methuen, and North Andover. The district operates one school, Greater Lawrence Technical School, serving grades 9-12. The largest student population in the school represents the community of Lawrence. The city of Lawrence began as a farming community and transformed into a major industrial center, attracting many immigrants; textiles were important historically to the economy and maintain that role today. Andover is a small, suburban town that is home to many large, high technology firms, such as Hewlett-Packard, Raytheon, and Gillette, on campus-like settings. Methuen is a small, industrial town with rural, suburban, and urban aspects; its industrial past included mills for textiles, hats, and shoes, and the town now benefits from the business of such companies as Colombo, McKesson, MicroTouch, and Nabisco. North Andover is a partly suburban and partly rural community, but it also contains a few industrial parks.

The largest sources of employment within Lawrence and Methuen are manufacturing and educational, health, and social services; in Andover, educational, health, and social services, followed by professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services; in North Andover, educational, health, and social services, followed by manufacturing. Andover and North Andover are governed by a Board of Selectmen/Town Manager/Open Town

Meeting form of municipal government, while Lawrence has a Mayor-Council system and Methuen has a Town Council/Town Manager system.

According to the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR), in Greater Lawrence's member communities, the median family income in 1999 was \$31,809 in Lawrence (rank 349), \$59,831 in Methuen (rank 213), \$91,105 in North Andover (rank 44), and \$104,820 in Andover (rank 21), compared to the statewide median family income of \$63,706. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, Andover had a total population of 31,247 with 7,327 school-age children, or 23 percent of the total. Lawrence had a total population of 72,043 with 17,760 school-age children, or 25 percent of the total. Methuen had a total population of 43,789 with 8,587 school-age children, or 20 percent of the total. North Andover had a total population of 27,202 with 5,510 school-age children, or 20 percent of the total. Of the total households in the member communities, 41 percent were households with children under 18 years of age. Thirty percent of the population age 25 years or older in the member communities held a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 33 percent statewide; among the communities, this proportion varied considerably, with 10 percent in Lawrence, 23 percent in Methuen, 50 percent in North Andover, and 63 percent in Andover.

According to the Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE), in 2006-2007 the Greater Lawrence Technical School had a total enrollment of 1,462. The demographic composition in the district was: 78.7 percent Hispanic, 19.4 percent White, 1.2 percent African-American, 0.6 percent Asian, 0.1 percent Native American, and 0.0 percent multi-race, non-Hispanic; 3.6 percent limited English proficient (LEP), 75.8 percent low income, and 18.9 percent special education. Ninety-five percent of school-age children in Andover, 91 percent in Lawrence, 91 percent in Methuen, and 82 percent in North Andover attended public schools. The district participates in school choice, and 12 students from other school districts (Haverhill and Lowell) attended Greater Lawrence in 2006-2007.

The administrative team consists of a superintendent-director, a principal, two assistant principals, a director of pupil personnel, a business administrator, a director of curriculum and instruction, a director of vocational programs, a director of human resources, a director of

information systems and technology, a coordinator of data and assessment, and six academy supervisors. The district has a seven-member school committee.

In FY 2007, Greater Lawrence's per pupil expenditure (preliminary), based on appropriations from all funds, was \$17,200, compared to \$11,789 statewide, ranking it 23 out of the 302 of 328 school districts reporting data. The district exceeded the state net school spending requirement in each year of the review period. From FY 2005 to FY 2007, net school spending increased from \$20,441,589 to \$23,477,680; Chapter 70 aid increased from \$15,663,201 to \$20,447,178; the required local contribution decreased from \$4,484,376 to \$2,950,685; and the foundation enrollment decreased from 1,753 to 1,677. Chapter 70 aid as a percentage of actual net school spending increased from 77 to 87 percent over this period.

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

The EQA first examined the Greater Lawrence Regional Vocational Technical School District in May 2003, and the Educational Management Audit Council (EMAC) subsequently placed the district in 'Watch' status in November 2003. The district was monitored by an EQA examiner, Louis Perullo, and reexamined by a team of EQA examiners in October 2005. Based on that reexamination, which found a lack of improvement since the initial examination, the EMAC kept the district on 'Watch' status, and the district was monitored by another EQA examiner, Albert Argenziano, and reexamined a second time 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.

Of the 41 total indicators that received a rating of ‘Poor’ or ‘Unsatisfactory’ in the 2003 and/or 2005 EQA reviews which were reexamined in 2007, Greater Lawrence improved on 33 and received a rating of ‘Satisfactory’ on 26. On the seven new 2007 indicators also included in the reexamination, the district received a rating of ‘Satisfactory’ on all seven. In addition, the EQA examined the district on 12 of the 13 indicators in the financial and asset management effectiveness and efficiency standard (one indicator did not apply), and rated the district as ‘Satisfactory’ on six and ‘Excellent’ on one.

At the time of EQA’s first visit to the district in 2003, based upon performance index measurements, Greater Lawrence was the lowest performing vocational-technical school district in the state. Fewer than 10 percent of its student population attained proficiency on the MCAS tests, and 97 percent of its special education students scored either in the ‘Needs Improvement’ or ‘Warning/Failing’ categories. Personnel evaluations were not current for teachers or administrators, and in some cases teachers had not been evaluated since attaining professional teacher status 10 or more years earlier. The EMAC placed the district in ‘Watch’ status.

By the time the EQA visited the district again in 2005, the district had completed a major renovation project that effectively doubled the instructional space available. However, the educational practices within the building had not improved significantly. Student achievement scores were still among the lowest in the commonwealth, and teachers were still not held accountable for student learning through a confusing and inconsistent supervision and evaluation system. The EMAC kept the district in ‘Watch’ status.

Things began to happen within the district in 2007, however. A new superintendent took control in 2006 and immediately reorganized the administrative structure of the district. In addition, both teachers and administrators were required to have up to date licenses in the field in which they were working, and over 50 professional staff members were terminated for licensure issues in June 2007. Ineffective teachers were either terminated during the 90-day orientation period or assigned to improvement plans. Student achievement scores improved noticeably, particularly in mathematics. Administrators were evaluated based upon goals that included improving student achievement, and a plan for the evaluation of both professional and non-professional status teachers was formalized. Building security was improved and both nepotism and political

patronage were discontinued or severely limited as management practices within the district. Staff members were assigned to positions where student achievement was intentionally targeted for improvement, and the district provided resources to support that improvement. In short, major changes were initiated as the district began to put its own management systems in order.

Recommendations

As a result of its reexamination, the EQA arrived at recommendations for the district, which were presented to the superintendent subsequent to the reexamination. They are as follows.

- Complete the academic curriculum and implement a curriculum review cycle for the academic disciplines.
- Link curriculum development, instruction, professional development, and resource acquisition to the academic disciplines.
- Prioritize reducing the high dropout rate, which remains the highest of all vocational schools in the state, with appropriate support and prevention services.
- Develop and implement a system to determine the cost effectiveness of programs, initiatives, and activities.
- Hire an independent, outside treasurer to control all student achievement accounts.

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 26-29, 2007, the EQA conducted an independent reexamination of the Greater Lawrence Regional Vocational Technical School District 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, Greater Lawrence is considered to be a 'Low' performing school district, marked by student achievement that was 'Low' in English language arts (ELA) and 'Low' in math on the 2007 MCAS tests. Over the reexamination period, student performance improved by eight PI points in ELA and 17 PI points in math, which narrowed the district's proficiency gaps by 22 percent in ELA and 35 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 and math, eligible students in Greater 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, more than one-third of all students in Greater Lawrence attained proficiency on the 2007 MCAS tests, 35 percentage points less than the grade 10 statewide average and 20 percentage points less than the statewide vocational school district average. One-third of Greater Lawrence students attained proficiency in English language arts (ELA) and two-fifths attained proficiency in math. Ninety-five percent of the Class of 2007 earned a Competency Determination.

- Greater Lawrence's average proficiency index (API) on the MCAS tests in 2007 was 69 proficiency index (PI) points, 17 PI points lower than that of grade 10 students statewide and

12 PI points lower than vocational districts statewide. Greater Lawrence's average proficiency gap, the difference between its API and the target of 100, in 2007 was 31 PI points.

- In 2007, Greater Lawrence's proficiency gap in ELA was 30 PI points, 18 PI points wider than the state's average proficiency gap in grade 10 ELA and 13 PI points wider than the gap for vocational districts statewide. This gap would require an average improvement in performance of more than four PI points annually to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP).
- Greater Lawrence's proficiency gap in math was 31 PI points in 2007, 16 PI points wider than the state's average proficiency gap in grade 10 math and 11 PI points wider than the gap for vocational districts statewide. This gap also would require an average improvement of more than four PI points per year to achieve AYP.

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

Between 2004 and 2007, Greater Lawrence's MCAS performance showed improvement overall, in ELA, and in math.

- The percentage of students scoring in the 'Advanced' and 'Proficient' categories rose by 18 percentage points between 2004 and 2007, while the percentage of students in the 'Warning/Failing' category decreased by 20 percentage points. The average proficiency gap in Greater Lawrence narrowed from 46 PI points in 2004 to 31 PI points in 2007. This resulted in an improvement rate, or a closing of the proficiency gap, of 33 percent.
- Over the three-year period 2004-2007, Greater Lawrence showed improvement in ELA at an average of nearly four PI points annually. This resulted in an improvement rate of 27 percent, a rate lower than that required to attain AYP.
- Math performance in Greater Lawrence showed even greater improvement during this period, at an average of more than six PI points annually. This resulted in an improvement rate of 38 percent, a rate higher than that required to attain AYP.

Do MCAS test results vary among subgroups of students?

Of the nine measurable subgroups in Greater Lawrence in 2007, the gap in performance between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups was 40 PI points in ELA and 26 PI points in math (non low-income students, LEP students, respectively).

- The proficiency gaps in Greater 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, low-income students (those participating in the free and reduced-cost lunch program), and male students. Less than one-fifth of students with disabilities, one-tenth of LEP students, and approximately one-third of Hispanic students, low-income students, and male students attained overall proficiency.
- The proficiency gaps in ELA and math were narrower than the district average for regular education students, White students, non low-income students, and female students. Approximately two-fifths of regular education students and White students, half of non low-income students, and approximately two-fifths of female students attained overall proficiency.

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

In Greater Lawrence, the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in ELA was 40 PI points in both 2004 and 2007, and the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in math widened from 24 PI points in 2004 to 26 PI points in 2007.

- All student subgroups in Greater Lawrence had improved performance in ELA between 2004 and 2007. The most improved subgroups in ELA were non low-income students and LEP students.
- In math, all student subgroups also had improved performance between 2004 and 2007, with greater gains than those in ELA. The most improved subgroups in math were also non low-income students and LEP students.

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.

Following the first reexamination, both the superintendent and principal retired. According to an interview with school committee members, the committee hired the new superintendent with a mandate to improve the academic performance of students and teachers. Then, with the new superintendent on board, the committee adopted a new strategic plan in November 2006. The three-year strategic plan set seven goals. The new superintendent hired a principal who led the development of the School Improvement Plan (SIP) that was in effect for school year 2006-2007. The goals of the SIP were aligned with those of the strategic plan.

The first goal of the SIP was to increase student achievement by setting higher expectations. EQA examiners found numerous examples where the school increased expectations, including linking supervisory goals to student achievement, increasing the frequency and effectiveness of staff supervision, requiring all students to pass ELA and math annually, and exploring the offering of Advanced Placement (AP) classes. The second goal was to improve access to challenging academic studies, and similar evidence was found in that area as well. Examples such as uniform use of the daily agenda, sharing of best practices, and the regular use of walk-throughs were intended to accomplish this goal. The third goal was to increase access to high quality career and vocational-technical education (CVTE) programs. The school required all CVTE programs to develop curriculum guides and align themselves with the 43 vocational-technical curriculum frameworks. The fourth goal was to deliver high quality instruction and programs. Improvements in professional development, teacher mentoring, and supervision practices were just three of several ways that the school approached that goal.

Improvement of the extra help system was the fifth goal in the SIP. Modifications such as summer school programs for which the district provided transportation, individualized student success plans, tutoring, and required after-school extra help for students who failed to pass the MCAS tests addressed that goal. The sixth goal was improvement of school climate, and the district's work to improve safety and security throughout the building was an example of its efforts directed toward this goal. Public outreach/communication was the last goal in the SIP, and the district addressed this by improving relationships with public safety officials through emergency planning, revising and improving its website, the meals-on-wheels connection, and maintaining or improving community relationships. Administratively, then, the district faithfully implemented the goals of the School Improvement Plan.

Examiners asked parallel questions to school committee members, the superintendent, principal, and teachers to determine if all staff members shared the same vision as enunciated in the School Improvement Plan. Virtually without exception, all were able to cite, in comparable language, the most important instructional priorities. All were able to cite examples of their own roles in carrying out the goals of the school, and all recognized the contributions of others as well as themselves in ensuring improved student achievement. The goals were clearly shared by all staff members.

Classroom observations by EQA examiners yielded varying but generally consistent results. In instructional practice, for example, areas related to management of instructional time received high ratings, except for transitions between activities and the depth of the instructional role taken by additional adults in the classroom, both areas which aligned with the SIP goal of increasing access to challenging academic studies. On the other hand, all academic classes participated in the writing across the curriculum and math moments daily, and individual students requiring additional help to pass the MCAS tests were continually identified and individually supported, leading examiners to conclude that teachers were faithfully implementing the related SIP goals. Examiners also noted in their classroom observations that teachers held high expectations for students and encouraged students to do high quality work, which aligned well with the SIP goal to "increase student achievement by setting higher expectations." Examiners found that students showed an understanding of the learning goals, were actively engaged in learning, and interacted with each other in a respectful and productive manner. These areas were consistent with the SIP

goal of delivering high quality instructional programs, both academic and vocational. Overall, through their observations of classroom instruction as well as their interviews with administrators and teachers, EQA examiners concluded that the goals of the School Improvement Plan were being faithfully implemented.

Standard Summaries

Leadership, Governance, and Communication

Greater Lawrence made improvements in the area of leadership, governance, and communication since the last EQA review. Of the eight indicators in this standard reexamined by the EQA in 2007, the district improved on all eight and received a rating of ‘Satisfactory’ on four. In addition, Greater Lawrence received a ‘Satisfactory’ rating on the two new indicators in this standard that were included in the reexamination.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), Greater Lawrence hired a new superintendent and principal. The priorities of the new superintendent were to ensure that all professional staff members were licensed, to improve building security, to appropriately evaluate all staff members, and to increase the effectiveness of staffing, programs, and services. The superintendent made changes to address the concerns cited in the two previous EQA reviews.

The school leadership team addressed accountability by clarifying the duties and responsibilities of administrators and requiring them to set appropriate goals. Their goals were expected to reflect the new strategic and school improvement plans, especially the need to improve student achievement. All administrators were evaluated, and their evaluations were informative and, for the most part, instructive. All administrators held appropriate licensure. The administration worked together as a team, and although there was some ambiguity in the organizational chart, administrators were clear about their own responsibilities and who evaluated them.

The district had numerous partnerships with local agencies, municipalities, and school systems that took advantage of the school’s vocational programs to construct and renovate buildings, repair vehicles, perform graphic design work, cater events, and provide meals to the elderly. Students gained valuable opportunities to learn appropriate trade skills through these partnerships. The school also took advantage of local social agencies and services for at-risk

students, including counseling and training. Greater Lawrence prepared a comprehensive safety plan in collaboration with local safety officials. The principal reviewed the plan with the faculty at the opening of school, and copies of the plan were evident in every room of the school.

The district reallocated funds in the 2007 budget to improve student achievement and to implement other district and school goals, but the budget document did not explicitly detail the connections between budget line items and these goals and program changes. Although the district underwrote needed programs in 2007-2008 based on the savings from a staff reorganization and reallocations of funds, the budget continued to be based on expected state aid and minimum contributions from member districts. Administrators stated that this approach may not be adequate to sustain and improve programs and services in the future.

Greater Lawrence actively reduced costs but lacked a formal process for evaluating cost effectiveness. During the second review period, the district decreased the number of district vehicles and phones, sought and received corporate donations, and transferred responsibility for out-of-district special education tuitions to member districts.

The district began to analyze data more comprehensively in 2007, especially data on student achievement, and disseminated these data more broadly. A newly appointed data coordinator prepared reports of aggregated and disaggregated student performance results, including individual profiles for at-risk students, and shared appropriate reports with the faculty and school committee. While Greater Lawrence modified remedial programs and services for at-risk students as a result of an analysis of aggregated data, it was only beginning to use data to modify instruction and to evaluate or change programs.

Curriculum and Instruction

Greater Lawrence made incremental progress in all seven deficient areas in curriculum and instruction cited in the prior EQA reviews. Of the seven indicators in this standard reexamined by the EQA in 2007, the district improved on four and received a rating of 'Satisfactory' on three. In addition, Greater Lawrence received a 'Satisfactory' rating on the one new indicator in this standard that was included in the reexamination.

The 2007 EQA reexamination found that Greater Lawrence had an outline of a curriculum accommodation form rather than a fully documented curriculum accommodation plan describing a continuum of regular education programs and services intended to reduce reliance on special education. However, many components of such a plan were in place, and school leaders were providing purposeful direction and an integrated approach.

Greater Lawrence had an annual cycle for review and revision of vocational curricula. Curriculum guides in the vocational areas were current, detailed, and complete. The documented academic curriculum was still in preliminary form, lacking many essential components. Greater Lawrence had a phased plan for development of the missing components, but lacked a review cycle for each academic discipline.

Greater Lawrence students used current technology in the career and vocational areas, and the use of technology in the academic disciplines was increasing. The school had state-of-the-art equipment in the technology-based fields, and made appropriate applications of technology in many other career and vocational areas. In the academic disciplines, teachers were observed making use of the computer labs, LCD projectors, and television monitors in instruction. The student-to-computer ratio at Greater Lawrence improved from 3.3 students per computer in 2003-2004 to 2.3 students per computer in 2005-2006, according to Department of Education data.

Since the prior review, Greater Lawrence enhanced the active monitoring of teachers' instruction. The current leadership improved instructional supervision by engaging highly qualified personnel; redefining roles; increasing the number of evaluators; standardizing lesson components; providing teacher training, coaching and mentoring; and developing supervision protocols.

Greater Lawrence made a deliberate attempt to increase expectations for student learning and mastery consistent with its motto, "Reggies Moving Up." Recent actions intended to raise student performance included increasing the overall quality and frequency of teacher supervision, coaching, and training; higher-level course offerings; more rigorous admissions, grading, and retention policies; celebrations of student achievement; new extracurricular offerings; and emphasis on passing the MCAS tests on the first administration.

Analysis of student achievement results, instructional monitoring, resource acquisition, and professional development were highly separate activities in the academic disciplines at Greater Lawrence, and more closely connected in the vocational areas. In the academic disciplines, student performance results were used primarily to identify students in need of services rather than to determine curricular and instructional effectiveness, in-service education needs, and budget priorities. In the vocational areas, student performance directly informed curriculum revision, use of instructional methods, staff training, and purchasing.

Assessment and Program Evaluation

Greater Lawrence improved in nearly half the areas in assessment and program evaluation rated ‘Poor’ or ‘Unsatisfactory’ in the prior EQA reviews. Of the 11 indicators in this standard reexamined by the EQA in 2007, the district improved on six, all of which received a rating of ‘Satisfactory.’

During the second reexamination period, the leadership and staff in Greater Lawrence collected, analyzed, and used student achievement data more systematically. The district used the results of the MCAS tests, the Stanford 10, the Scholastic Reading Inventory, and teacher-generated tests to improve its delivery of instruction and support services, and to monitor student progress. Greater Lawrence ensured that all students participated in assessments, and the district had an MCAS participation rate above the state average.

The district’s leaders reported on student progress to parents, the school committee, and the community. Parents received student progress reports and report cards regularly via mail. Other forms of communication included newsletters, the district website, and the Connect-ED system. The district also had two Spanish-speaking parent liaisons to improve communication with Hispanic families.

The district employed a coordinator of data and assessment and trained its administrative team and lead teachers in the use of TestWiz. The coordinator interpreted assessment data and provided teachers with in-depth analyses of student responses on the MCAS tests on an individual, classroom, or schoolwide basis. The district disseminated these analyses to the staff, and staff members used these data to target students’ needs and to strengthen instructional practices.

The district engaged in mandated external program reviews and contracted for program reviews of special education and Title I services. It was beginning to plan and implement an evaluation cycle to measure the effectiveness of its instructional and support programs. For example, the READ 180 program adopted in 2007 had an inherent assessment component to provide the district with data to evaluate its effectiveness.

The district's vocational programs were fully developed and regularly reviewed. Greater Lawrence revised its programs to satisfy licensure and certification requirements and to meet prevailing codes. The district conducted and used surveys of business and industry to determine emerging needs and to keep its equipment current. The district adjusted its career and vocational programs to meet industry standards and local employment trends.

Human Resource Management and Professional Development

Greater Lawrence made improvements in the area of human resource management and professional development since the last EQA review. Of the nine indicators in this standard reexamined by the EQA in 2007, the district improved on all nine and received a rating of 'Satisfactory' on eight. In addition, Greater Lawrence received a 'Satisfactory' rating on the one new indicator in this standard that was included in the reexamination.

During the 2006-2007 school year, the new Greater Lawrence superintendent reviewed the personnel files of teachers and administrators, and notified those whose licensure was in question. The district encouraged these staff members to contact the Department of Education to correct inaccuracies or misunderstandings. Greater Lawrence also offered professional development opportunities to meet certification requirements and counseled staff members about the appropriate steps to take to secure certification. The district reported that 46 staff members were terminated on June 14, 2007. Of that number, 21 were terminated for licensure issues, although seven were subsequently re-hired based on updated licensure confirmation or waivers requested by the district and approved by the Department of Education. Four other employees teaching in areas outside of their certification were transferred to appropriate positions internally.

The district recruited and hired 88 new staff members to complete staffing for the 2007-2008 school year. The newly hired teachers participated in an induction program that began with an intensive three-day program prior to the start of school and that continued throughout the school

year. Teachers new to the district were assigned a mentor, who served as a part of a support team to help make them successful in the district. New teachers also participated in a required 36-hour graduate credit course funded by the district. Administrators new to the district were also mentored through the services of a consultant.

The director of curriculum and instruction supervised the planning of professional development for professional staff members under the direction of the superintendent and principal. The professional development plan was based on a broad understanding of the implications of student achievement results, data from placement and other examinations, and teacher recommendations. Using the services of a consultant, professional development stressed classroom management and instructional practices. Consultant trainers visited classrooms to ensure that the techniques introduced in the training sessions were used. Professional development activities were scheduled on two professional development days at the beginning of the school year and on delayed opening and early release days. On some of those days teachers met in department or cluster groups to share best practices and participated in peer support sessions.

In addition to the regularly scheduled professional development activities, the district also supported cohort groups pursuing professional development and advanced degrees through the services of another outside consultant who arranged credit through a state college. The district also reimbursed teachers the tuition for approved courses related to their assignments, under the provisions of the teachers' contract.

The district provided training for administrators on effective supervision and evaluation. According to a review of teacher personnel files by the EQA team, administrators had observed the majority of teachers new to the district and wrote up their classroom observations. The new administrators had not yet been able to complete evaluations of teachers with professional status who lacked timely evaluations. The EQA team found timely evaluations in 68 percent of the teacher files examined. All administrative personnel had timely evaluations. The evaluations complied with the requirements of education reform, and the EQA examiners considered 86 percent to be informative and 32 percent to be instructive.

Access, Participation, and Student Academic Support

Greater Lawrence also made improvements in the area of access, participation, and student academic support since the last EQA review. Of the six indicators in this standard reexamined by the EQA in 2007, the district improved on all six and received a rating of ‘Satisfactory’ on five. In addition, Greater Lawrence received a ‘Satisfactory’ rating on the three new indicators in this standard that were included in the reexamination.

Greater Lawrence addressed the MCAS performance of its students by making a number of changes in the services offered to at-risk students. Title I funds which previously were used to sponsor a monthly enrichment program for all students in the school were reallocated to provide services to at-risk students on site, during and after school and on Saturdays. All students who were at-risk of failing the MCAS tests in grade 10 and all upperclassmen who failed the MCAS tests completed an Individual Student Success Plan (ISSP) with an at-risk counselor. The district also added mathematics and special education staff members and two certified ELL teachers to replace uncertified ELL teachers. To provide for consistency in the ELA program, the district placed the ELL staff under the aegis of the ELA department.

During the reexamination period, the MCAS proficiency rate in ELA improved from 25 percent in 2005 to 32 percent in 2006 to 33 percent in 2007. In mathematics, the proficiency rate rose from 20 percent in 2005 to 29 percent in 2006 to 40 percent in 2007. The aggregate student population made AYP in both ELA and mathematics; however, the special education and White student subgroups did not make AYP in mathematics in 2006. Greater Lawrence initiated a student support team to address students who were failing. A referral to the team constituted the first step in a new three-tiered process to determine the needs of students at risk of failing. These meetings resulted in a plan for referred students and the provision of timely services. The at-risk counselors monitored student progress. At Tier II, the team placed students in inclusion classes that were smaller and often had a teacher’s assistant. At Tier III, the students were referred for evaluation under the special education law.

A new computer-assisted reading program offered students three or more years below grade level with individualized remedial instruction. During the 2005-2006 school year, counselors updated all of the special education plans, many of which were missing or incomplete.

In response to a teacher survey on classroom management, the district made a number of changes. The position of vice principal in charge of discipline was created and two deans were placed under the direction of the vice principal. The vice principal worked with a group of teachers to make changes in the discipline policy and in some disciplinary procedures. This relieved teachers of some of the disciplinary responsibilities and placed them with the administration. The school council made the appropriate changes in the student handbook to ensure that it was in line with the new code. All teachers participated in an in-service on the policy, and the classroom management policy was posted in all classrooms. The vice principal reported that referrals to the office had decreased and suspensions were fewer. Teachers and students also reported that the students were demonstrating positive behaviors. In classroom observations, the EQA team noted the respectful behaviors of the students.

To increase communication with parents and involve them in the education of their students, two Spanish-speaking parent liaisons were added to the staff. The primary responsibility of the liaisons was attendance. They stated that an important part of their role was to build relationships with the parents and students. They called parents on a daily basis when students were absent, and send letters home when students were absent on consecutive days. The liaisons also called parents to invite them to school events, and to explain how to use the parent portal on the school's website. Attendance improved from 89.7 percent in the last year of the prior reexamination period to 93.3 percent in 2006.

Greater Lawrence instituted a number of measures to prevent students from dropping out; however, its dropout rate remained the highest of the state's vocational high schools. The district instituted regular student support team meetings to ensure that students at risk of dropping out received remedial services in a timely manner. In addition, the new staff positions of at-risk counselors and the parent liaisons created capacity for close monitoring of these students. Although staff members held exit interviews with students who stated their intention of dropping out and informed them of the resources available in the community, the district had no recovery program for dropouts.

Financial and Asset Management Effectiveness and Efficiency

Rather than reexamine the district only on those 2002 and 2005 indicators on which the district was rated 'Poor' or 'Unsatisfactory' in its prior reviews, the EQA conducted a full examination of the district on the financial and asset management effectiveness and efficiency standard covering the period 2005 through 2007. The EQA examiners gave Greater Lawrence an overall rating of 'Satisfactory' on this standard. They rated the district as 'Excellent' on one, 'Satisfactory' on six, 'Needs Improvement' on five, and not applicable on one of the 13 performance indicators in this standard.

The budget process in Greater Lawrence began annually in November with budget requests submitted by lead teachers in each department. The academy leaders collected the requests and forwarded them to the business office. The business office subsequently produced a budget workbook consisting of the collected requests for the superintendent and school principal. In December, the school leadership team met to review the requests. The business office estimated the funds available to meet the district's needs. In making these estimates, the district used sources of income such as tuition, excess and deficiency accounts, grants, and Chapter 70 aid. The district used municipal Medicaid and Medicare funds reimbursed for special education services to reduce member district assessments.

A two-member subcommittee of the school committee reviewed the superintendent's proposed budget at several meetings and made a recommendation to the full school committee. Following a public meeting, the committee voted to approve the budget and the assessments to the member districts. The member districts approved these assessments. There was little analysis of student performance data in budget development.

The superintendent stated that the budget and other available resources provided the students with a quality education. Officials of the member districts also stated that the assessments were fair and adequate to provide their students with a sound education. The district exceeded its net school spending requirements for the period under review.

Per pupil expenditures were above the state average. Analysis of the municipal revenue growth factor showed comparable increases with the communities' assessments. Use of the excess and deficiency account, tuition, and other funds held the assessments to an acceptable increase.

School administrators stated that the main facility, constructed in 1964 and renovated in 2004, was in excellent condition. A large addition was completed in 2005-2006. The facilities were well lit, clean, well maintained, and conducive to student learning and achievement.

The district had an extensive security system and a comprehensive safety plan providing for almost every contingency. The security system dispensed photo identification badges to all visitors and provided an immediate criminal background check. Students and faculty wore identification badges. The security desk at the main entrance was staffed throughout the day, and the school had a full-time resource officer and full- and part-time hall monitors. Over 50 surveillance cameras throughout the building were connected to a central monitor at the security desk. The district's emergency and crisis plan was developed in consultation with police, fire, and medical personnel. This plan was visible in every room or area in the school. The school conducted drills and practices routinely, and made necessary revisions in protocols and procedures.

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 2007 MCAS test results revealed differences between the achievement of students in Greater 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 Greater 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 EQA then subjected the data to gap analysis, a statistical method that describes the relationship between student aggregate and subgroup performance and the state standard or target of 100 percent proficiency on the MCAS tests. Gap analysis also describes the relative achievement of different entities at a specific point in time, as well as how those relationships change over time. Gap analysis consists of several separate indicators, each of which builds on the others, and can be applied to a district, school, or subgroup of students.

The basis for gap analysis is the *proficiency index*, which is a measure of student performance that shows whether students have attained or are making progress toward proficiency, or meeting the state standard. The unit of measure is proficiency index (PI) points, and a score of 100 indicates that all students in the aggregate or in a subgroup are proficient. It can be calculated for overall achievement as well as achievement in an individual subject. Please see Appendix A for more detailed information about the proficiency index.

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

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

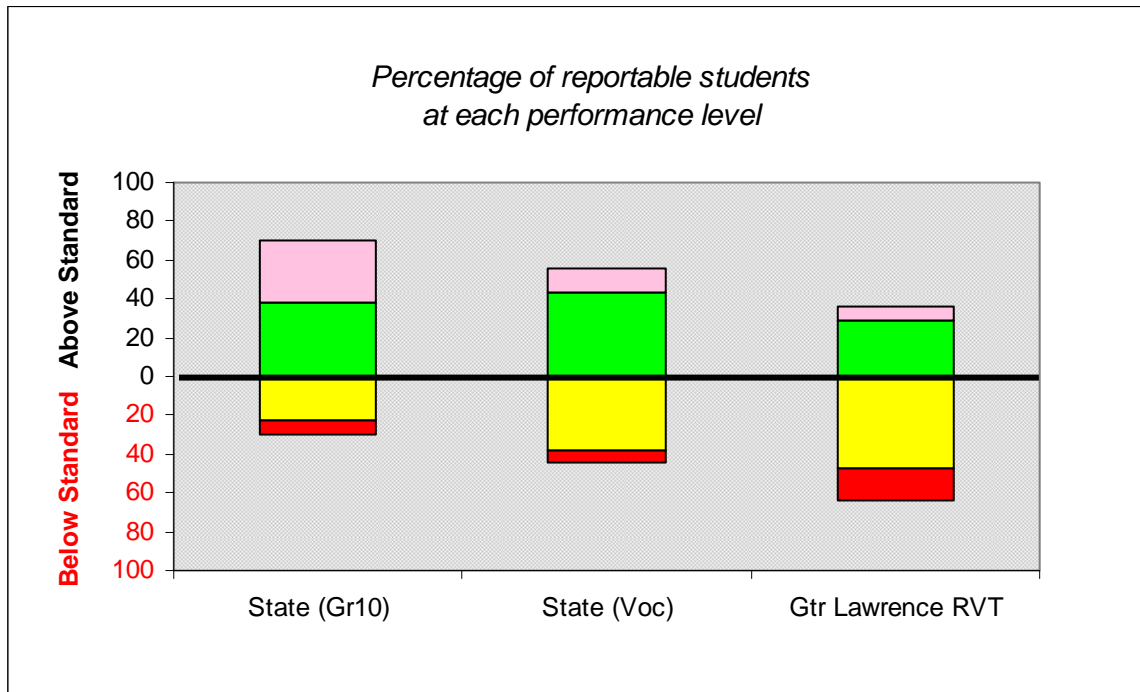
Achievement

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

Findings:

- On average, more than one-third of all students in Greater Lawrence attained proficiency on the 2007 MCAS tests, 35 percentage points less than the grade 10 statewide average and 20 percentage points less than the statewide vocational school district average. One-third of Greater Lawrence students attained proficiency in English language arts (ELA) and two-fifths attained proficiency in math. Ninety-five percent of the Class of 2007 earned a Competency Determination.
- Greater Lawrence's average proficiency index (API) on the MCAS tests in 2007 was 69 proficiency index (PI) points, 17 PI points lower than that of grade 10 students statewide and 12 PI points lower than vocational districts statewide. Greater Lawrence's average proficiency gap, the difference between its API and the target of 100, in 2007 was 31 PI points.
- In 2007, Greater Lawrence's proficiency gap in ELA was 30 PI points, 18 PI points wider than the state's average proficiency gap in grade 10 ELA and 13 PI points wider than the gap for vocational districts statewide. This gap would require an average improvement in performance of more than four PI points annually to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP).
- Greater Lawrence's proficiency gap in math was 31 PI points in 2007, 16 PI points wider than the state's average proficiency gap in grade 10 math and 11 PI points wider than the gap for vocational districts statewide. This gap also would require an average improvement of more than four PI points per year to achieve AYP.

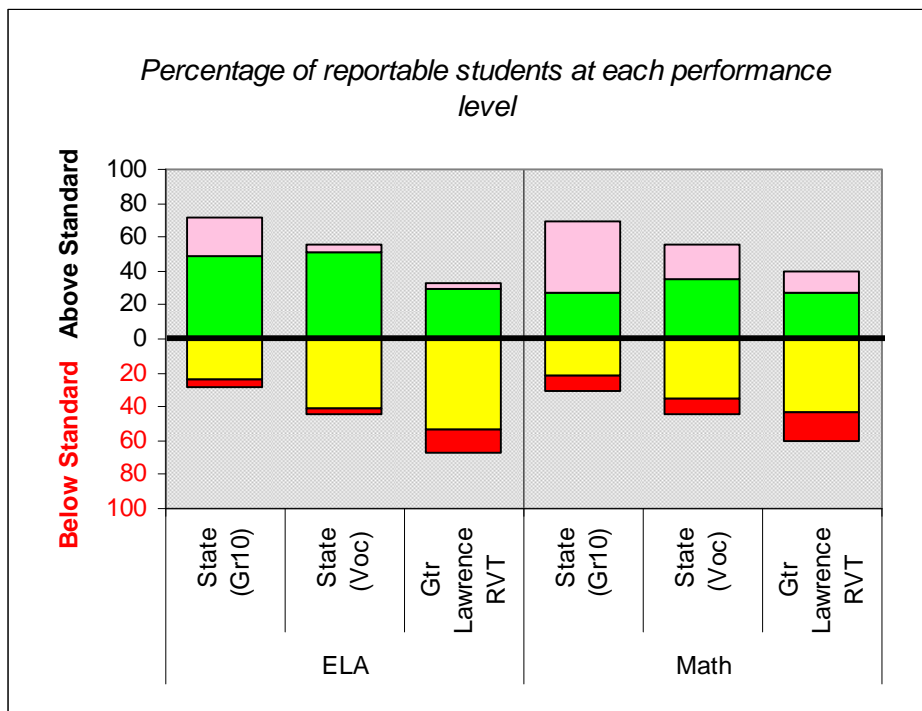
Figure/Table 1: MCAS Test Performance, 2007



	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Gtr Lawrence RVT
Advanced	32	13	7
Proficient	39	43	29
Needs Improvement	23	38	48
Warning/Failing	7	6	16
Percent Attaining Proficiency	71	56	36
Average Proficiency Index (API)	86.5	81.7	69.4

In 2007, 36 percent of Greater Lawrence students attained proficiency on the MCAS tests overall, 35 percentage points less than the grade 10 statewide average of 71 percent, and 20 percentage points less than the statewide vocational district average of 56 percent. Sixteen percent of Greater Lawrence students scored in the ‘Warning/Failing’ category, nine percentage points more than that of grade 10 students statewide and 10 percentage points more than that of vocational districts statewide. Greater Lawrence’s average proficiency index (API) on the MCAS tests in 2007 was 69 proficiency index (PI) points, 17 PI points lower than that of grade 10 students statewide and 13 PI points lower than that of vocational districts statewide. Greater Lawrence’s average proficiency gap in 2007 was 31 PI points.

Figure/Table 2: MCAS Test Performance by Subject, 2007



		ELA			Math		
		State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Gtr Lawrence RVT	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Gtr Lawrence RVT
	Advanced	22	4	3	42	21	12
	Proficient	49	51	30	28	35	28
	Needs Improvement	24	40	53	22	36	43
	Warning/Failing	5	4	14	8	8	18
Percent Attaining Proficiency		71	55	33	70	56	40
Proficiency Index (PI)		88.0	83.3	69.9	85.0	80.0	68.8

In 2007, achievement in grade 10 English language arts (ELA) and math in Greater Lawrence was lower than that statewide as well as the statewide vocational district averages. In ELA, 33 percent of Greater Lawrence students attained proficiency, compared to 71 percent statewide and 55 percent in vocational districts. In math, 40 percent of Greater Lawrence students attained proficiency, compared to 70 percent statewide and 56 percent in vocational districts.

Greater Lawrence students had similar achievement levels in ELA and math on the 2007 MCAS tests. The proficiency index for Greater Lawrence students in ELA was 70 PI points, and in math it was 69 PI points. These figures compare to 88 PI points in ELA and 85 PI points in math for grade 10 students statewide, and 83 PI points in ELA and 80 PI points in math for vocational districts statewide.

The proficiency gap for Greater Lawrence students in 2007 was 30 PI points in ELA and 31 PI points in math. These figures compare to 12 PI points in ELA and 15 PI points in math for grade 10 students statewide, and 17 PI points in ELA and 20 PI points in math for vocational districts statewide. Greater Lawrence's proficiency gaps in both ELA and in math would require an average annual improvement of more than four PI points to meet AYP.

Equity of Achievement

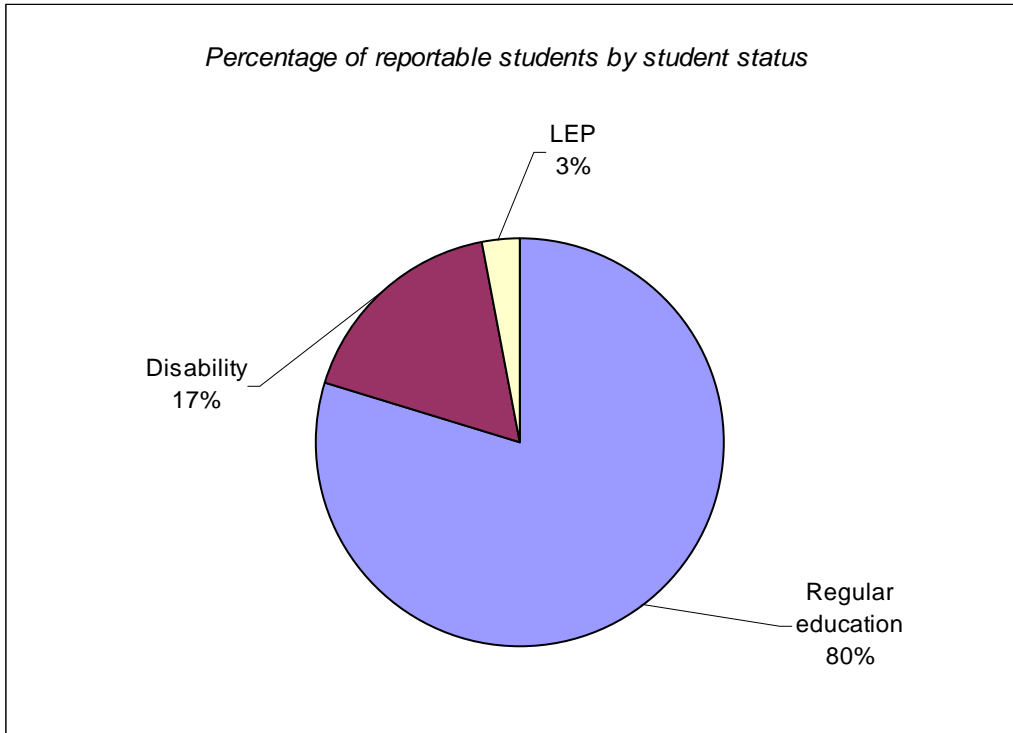
Do MCAS test results vary among subgroups of students?

Findings:

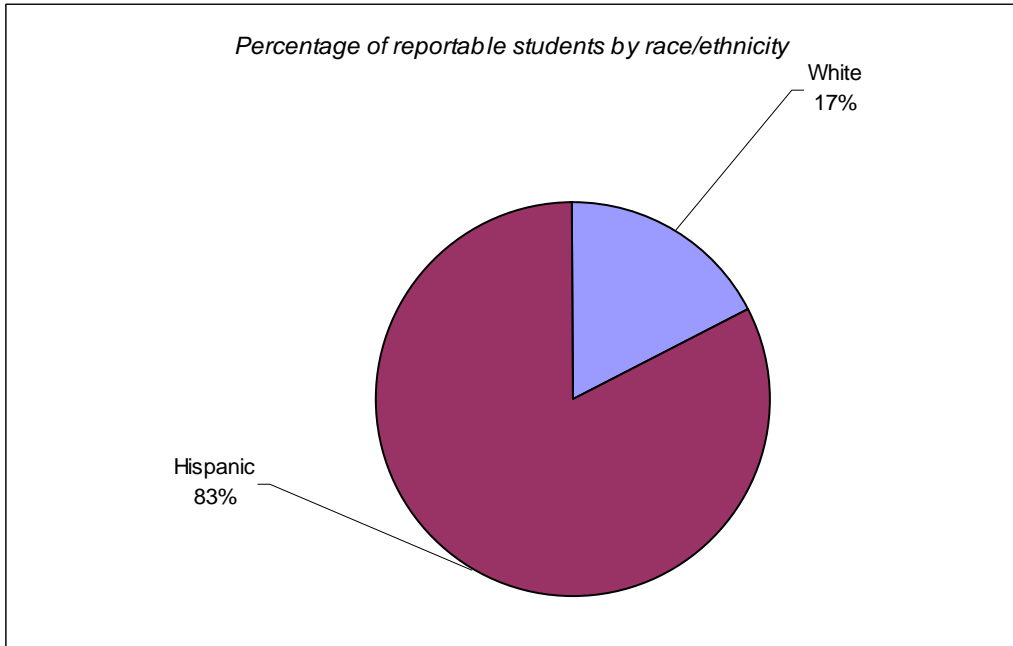
- Of the nine measurable subgroups in Greater Lawrence in 2007, the gap in performance between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups was 40 PI points in ELA and 26 PI points in math (non low-income students, LEP students, respectively).
- The proficiency gaps in Greater Lawrence in 2007 in both ELA and math were wider than the district average for students with disabilities, limited English proficient (LEP) students, Hispanic students, low-income students (those participating in the free and reduced-cost lunch program), and male students. Less than one-fifth of students with disabilities, one-tenth of LEP students, and approximately one-third of Hispanic students, low-income students, and male students attained overall proficiency.
- The proficiency gaps in ELA and math were narrower than the district average for regular education students, White students, non low-income students, and female students. Approximately two-fifths of regular education students and White students, half of non low-income students, and approximately two-fifths of female students attained overall proficiency.

Figures 3 A-C/Table 3: Student Population by Reportable Subgroups, 2007

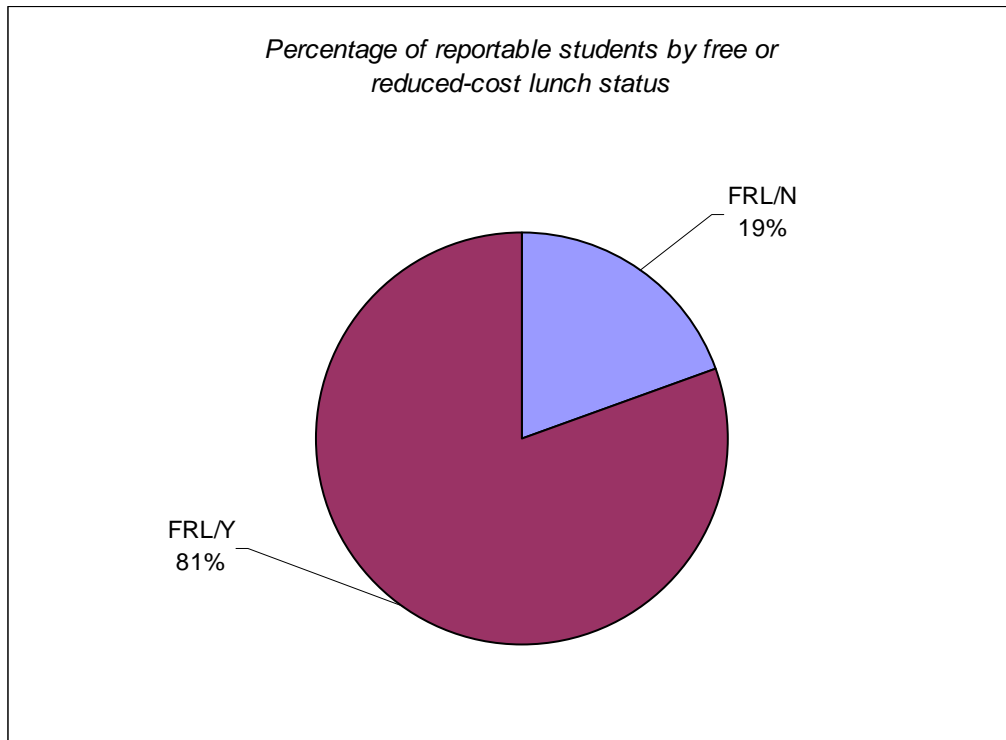
A.



B.



C.

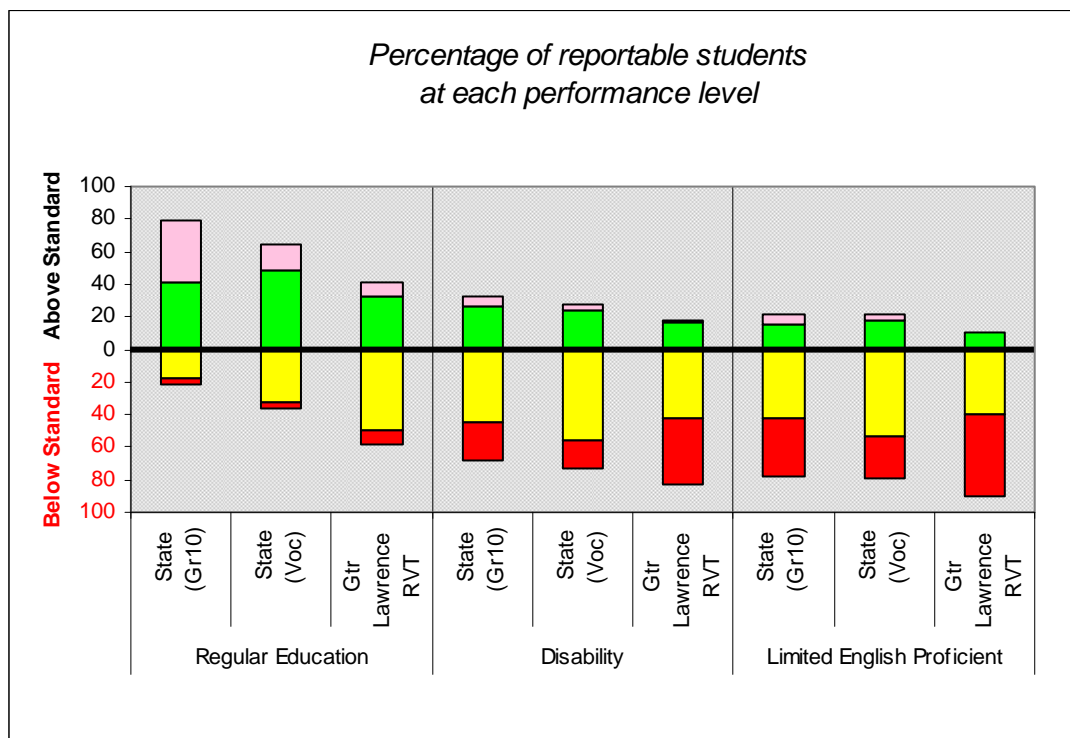


	Subgroup	Number of Students
Student status	Regular education	259
	Disability	56
	LEP	10
Race/ethnicity	White	55
	Hispanic	261
Free or reduced-cost lunch status	FRL/N	63
	FRL/Y	262

Note: Data include students in tested grades levels only.

In Greater Lawrence in 2007, 17 percent of the tested students were students with disabilities, three percent were LEP students, 83 percent were Hispanic students, and 81 percent were low-income (FRL/Y) students.

Figure/Table 4: MCAS Test Performance by Student Status Subgroup, 2007

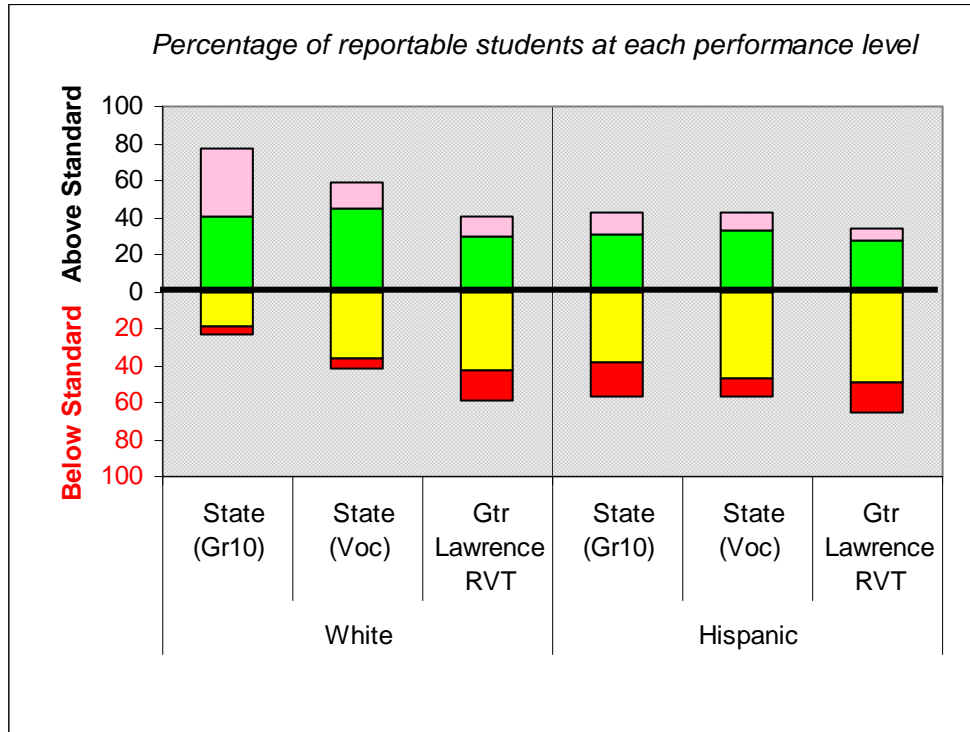


	Regular Education			Disability			Limited English Proficient		
	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Gtr Lawrence RVT	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Gtr Lawrence RVT	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Gtr Lawrence RVT
Advanced	37	16	9	6	3	1	7	3	0
Proficient	41	49	32	27	24	16	15	18	10
Needs Improvement	18	33	49	45	56	43	42	54	40
Warning/Failing	3	3	9	22	16	40	36	25	50
Percent Attaining Proficiency	78	65	41	33	27	17	22	21	10
Average Proficiency Index (API)	91.5	86.6	74.3	64.9	65.6	51.2	54.4	58.0	43.8

In 2007, the proficiency rate of regular education students at Greater Lawrence was more than two times greater than that of students with disabilities and four times greater than that of LEP students. Forty-one percent of regular education students, 17 percent of students with disabilities, and 10 percent of LEP students attained overall proficiency on the MCAS tests. These figures compare to 78, 33, and 22 percent, respectively, statewide; and 65, 27, and 21 percent, respectively, for vocational school districts statewide.

Greater Lawrence’s ELA proficiency gap in 2007 was 26 PI points for regular education students, 49 PI points for students with disabilities, and 56 PI points for LEP students. The average performance gap between regular education students and students with disabilities was 23 PI points, and between regular education students and LEP students it was 30 PI points. These compare to 27 and 37 PI points, respectively, statewide, and 21 and 29 PI points, respectively, for vocational districts statewide.

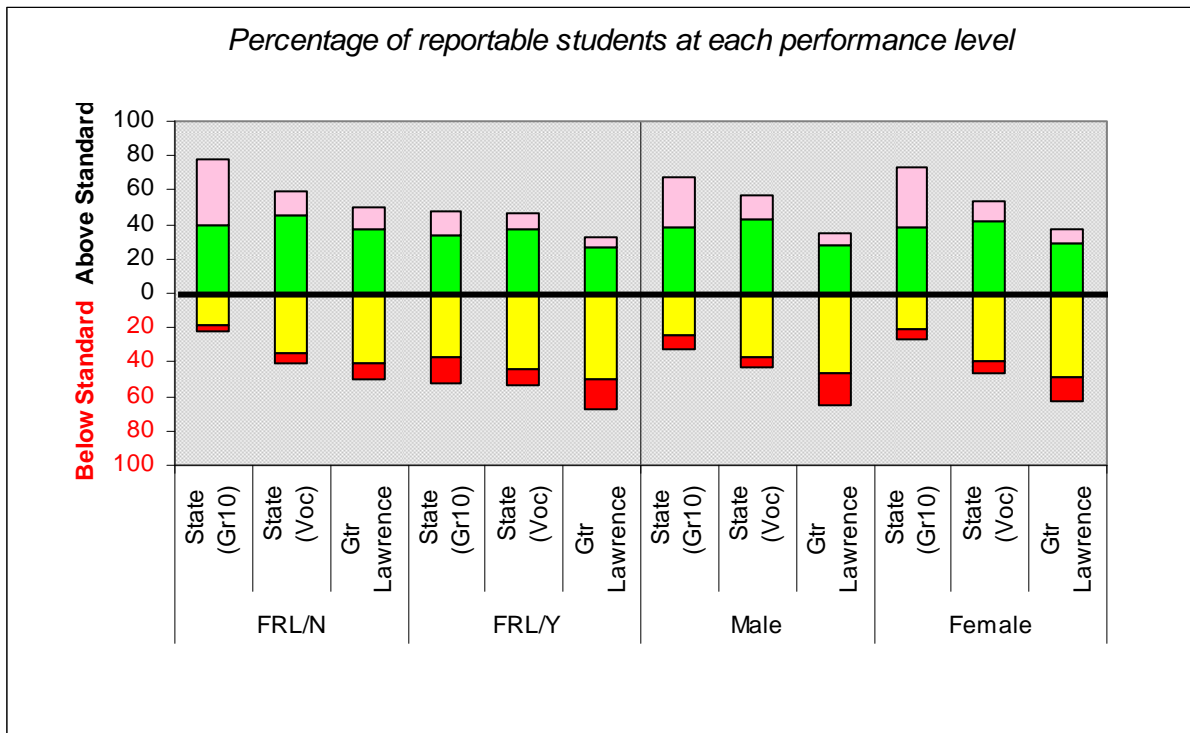
Figure/Table 5: MCAS Test Performance by Race/Ethnicity Subgroup, 2007



		White			Hispanic		
		State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Gtr Lawrence RVT	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Gtr Lawrence RVT
	Advanced	36	14	11	12	9	7
	Proficient	41	45	30	31	33	28
	Needs Improvement	19	36	43	39	47	50
	Warning/Failing	4	5	16	18	10	16
Percent Attaining Proficiency		77	59	41	43	42	35
Average Proficiency Index (API)		90.2	83.3	70.5	71.0	74.6	68.8

In Greater Lawrence in 2007, 41 percent of White students attained overall proficiency on the MCAS tests, compared to 35 percent of Hispanic students. The average proficiency gap was 29 PI points for White students and 31 PI points for Hispanic students, and the average performance gap between the two subgroups was two PI points.

Figure/Table 6: MCAS Test Performance by Socioeconomic Status and Gender Subgroups, 2007

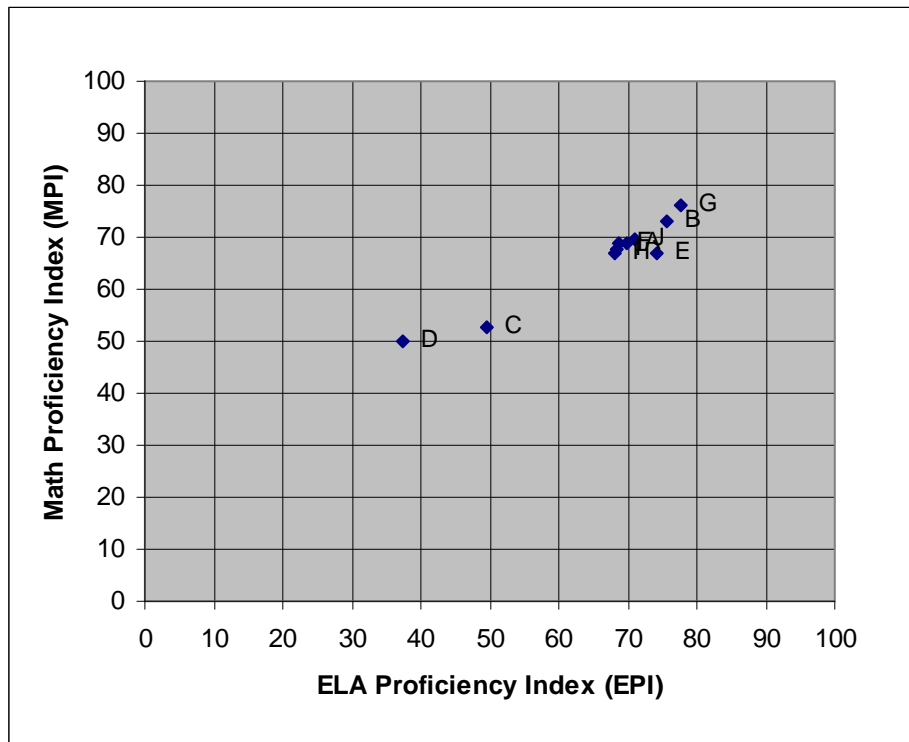


		FRL/N			FRL/Y			Male			Female		
		State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Gtr Lawrence RVT	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Gtr Lawrence RVT	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Gtr Lawrence RVT	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Gtr Lawrence RVT
	Advanced	38	14	13	14	10	6	29	14	7	35	12	8
	Proficient	40	46	37	34	37	27	39	43	28	38	42	30
	Needs Improvement	18	35	41	37	44	50	25	37	47	21	39	49
	Warning/Failing	4	5	9	14	9	18	8	6	19	6	7	14
Percent Attaining Proficiency		78	60	50	48	47	33	68	57	35	73	54	38
Average Proficiency Index (API)		90.5	83.9	77.0	74.7	76.6	67.5	85.2	82.4	68.0	88.0	80.7	70.4

In Greater Lawrence in 2007, 33 percent of low-income (FRL/Y) students attained overall proficiency on the MCAS tests, compared to 50 percent of non low-income (FRL/N) students. The average proficiency gap was 33 PI points for low-income students and 23 PI points for non low-income students, and the average performance gap between the two subgroups was 10 PI points.

Thirty-five percent of male students and 38 percent of female students attained overall proficiency on the MCAS tests. The average proficiency gap was 32 PI points for male students and 30 PI points for female students, and the average performance gap between the two subgroups was two PI points.

Figure/Table 7: MCAS ELA Proficiency Index vs. Math Proficiency Index by Subgroup, 2007

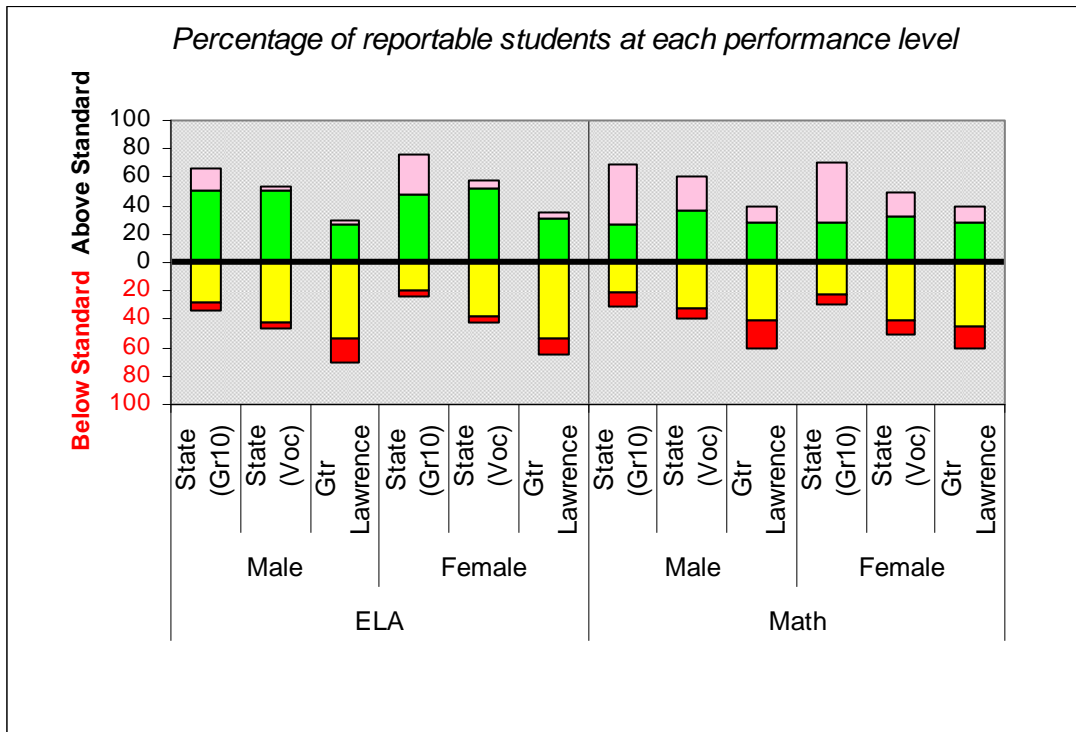


		ELA PI	Math PI	Number of Tests
A	Gtr Lawrence RVT	69.9	68.8	647
B	Regular Education	75.6	73.0	517
C	Disability	49.6	52.8	110
D	LEP	37.5	50.0	20
E	White	74.1	66.8	110
F	Hispanic	68.8	68.9	519
G	FRL/N	77.8	76.2	123
H	FRL/Y	68.0	67.0	522
I	Male	68.3	67.6	296
J	Female	71.1	69.7	349

Of the nine measurable subgroups in Greater Lawrence in 2007, the gap in performance between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups was 40 PI points in ELA (non low-income students, LEP students, respectively) and 26 PI points in math (non low-income students, LEP students, respectively).

The proficiency gaps in Greater Lawrence in 2007 in both ELA and math were wider than the district average for students with disabilities, LEP students, Hispanic students, low-income students, and male students. The proficiency gaps in ELA and math were narrower than the district average for regular education students, White students, non low-income (FRL/N) students, and female students.

Figure/Table 8: MCAS ELA and Math Test Performance by Gender Subgroup, 2007



		ELA						Math					
		Male			Female			Male			Female		
		State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Gtr Lawrence RVT	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Gtr Lawrence RVT	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Gtr Lawrence RVT	State (Gr10)	State (Voc)	Gtr Lawrence RVT
Advanced	16	3	3	28	6	3	42	24	11	42	17	12	
Proficient	50	50	27	48	52	31	27	36	28	28	33	28	
Needs Improvement	28	42	53	20	38	53	21	32	40	22	41	45	
Warning/Failing	6	4	17	4	4	12	9	7	21	8	10	16	
Percent Attaining Proficiency	66	53	30	76	58	34	69	60	39	70	50	40	
Proficiency Index (PI)	85.8	82.4	68.3	90.3	84.5	71.1	84.6	82.3	67.6	85.6	76.8	69.7	

On the 2007 grade 10 MCAS tests in both ELA and math, female students outperformed male students in Greater Lawrence. The proficiency gaps for Greater Lawrence’s male students were 32 PI points in ELA and 32 PI points in math, and for female students they were 29 PI points in ELA and 30 PI points in math. Performance of both male and female students in Greater Lawrence was lower than that of their counterparts statewide.

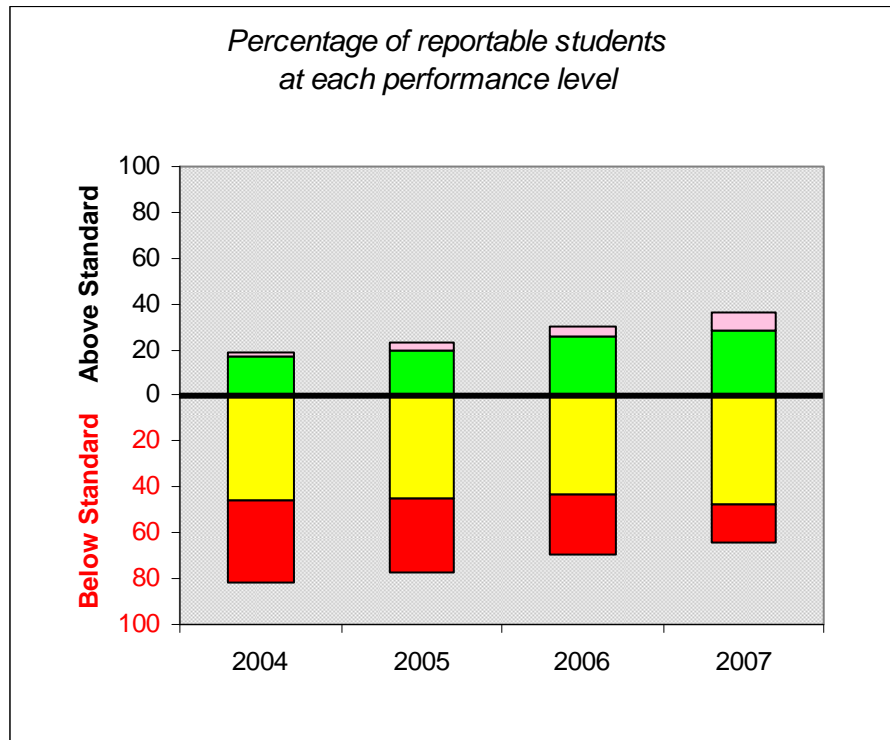
Improvement

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

Findings:

- Between 2004 and 2007, Greater Lawrence's MCAS performance showed improvement overall, in ELA, and in math.
- The percentage of students scoring in the 'Advanced' and 'Proficient' categories rose by 18 percentage points between 2004 and 2007, while the percentage of students in the 'Warning/Failing' category decreased by 20 percentage points. The average proficiency gap in Greater Lawrence narrowed from 46 PI points in 2004 to 31 PI points in 2007. This resulted in an improvement rate, or a closing of the proficiency gap, of 33 percent.
- Over the three-year period 2004-2007, Greater Lawrence showed improvement in ELA at an average of nearly four PI points annually. This resulted in an improvement rate of 27 percent, a rate lower than that required to attain AYP.
- Math performance in Greater Lawrence showed even greater improvement during this period, at an average of more than six PI points annually. This resulted in an improvement rate of 38 percent, a rate higher than that required to attain AYP.

Figure 9/Tables 9 A-B: MCAS Test Performance, 2004-2007



A.

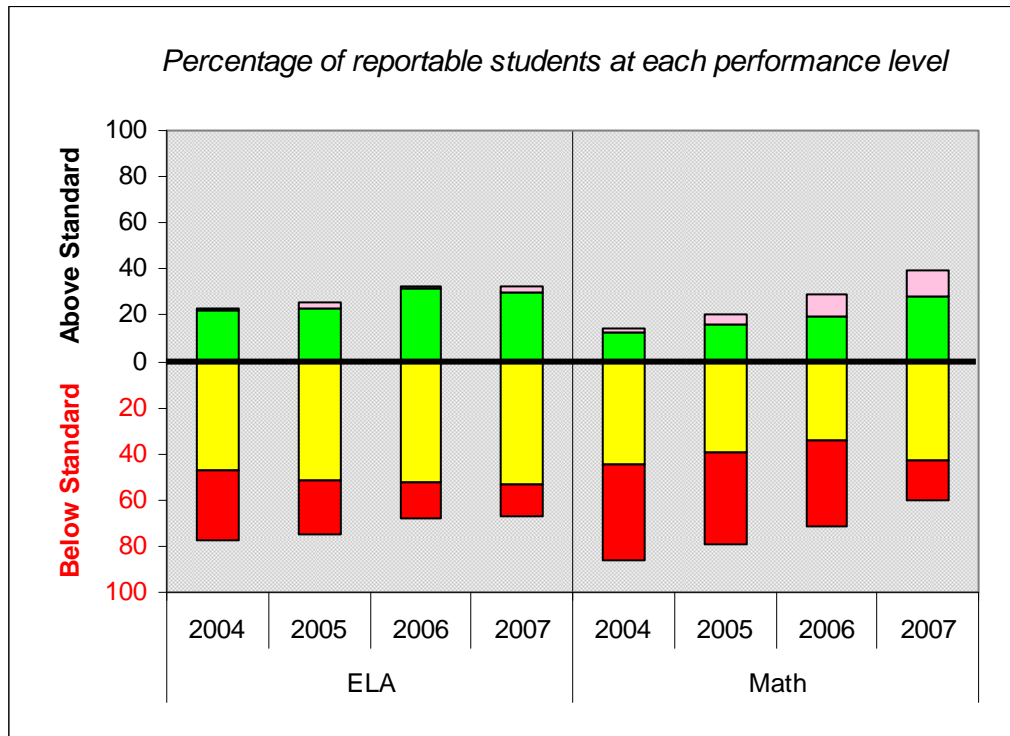
		2004	2005	2006	2007
	Advanced	1	3	5	7
	Proficient	17	20	26	29
	Needs Improvement	46	45	43	48
	Warning/Failing	36	32	26	16
	Percent Attaining Proficiency	18	23	31	36
	Average Proficiency Index (API)	54.4	56.9	62.5	69.4

B. n-values

	2004	2005	2006	2007
Advanced	9	24	40	48
Proficient	115	160	208	186
Needs Improvement	310	364	353	310
Warning/Failing	241	258	213	103
Total	675	806	814	647

The percentage of Greater Lawrence students attaining overall proficiency on the MCAS tests increased from 18 percent in 2004 to 36 percent in 2007. The percentage of students in the 'Warning/Failing' category decreased from 36 percent in 2004 to 16 percent in 2007. The average proficiency gap in Greater Lawrence narrowed from 46 PI points in 2004 to 31 PI points in 2007, resulting in an improvement rate of 33 percent.

Figure/Table 10: MCAS Test Performance by Subject, 2004-2007



		ELA				Math			
		2004	2005	2006	2007	2004	2005	2006	2007
	Advanced	1	2	1	3	2	4	9	12
	Proficient	22	23	31	30	12	16	20	28
	Needs Improvement	47	51	53	53	44	39	34	43
	Warning/ Failing	30	24	15	14	41	41	37	18
Percent Attaining Proficiency		23	25	32	33	14	20	29	40
Proficiency Index (PI)		58.8	61.5	67.4	69.9	50.1	52.2	57.5	68.8

The percentage of Greater Lawrence students attaining proficiency in ELA increased from 23 percent in 2004 to 33 percent in 2007. The proficiency gap in ELA narrowed from 41 PI points in 2004 to 30 PI points in 2007, resulting in an improvement rate of nearly 27 percent, a rate lower than that required to make AYP.

The percentage of Greater Lawrence students attaining proficiency in math increased from 14 percent in 2004 to 40 percent in 2007. The proficiency gap in math narrowed from 50 PI points in 2004 to 31 PI points in 2007, resulting in an improvement rate of 38 percent, a rate higher than that required to make AYP.

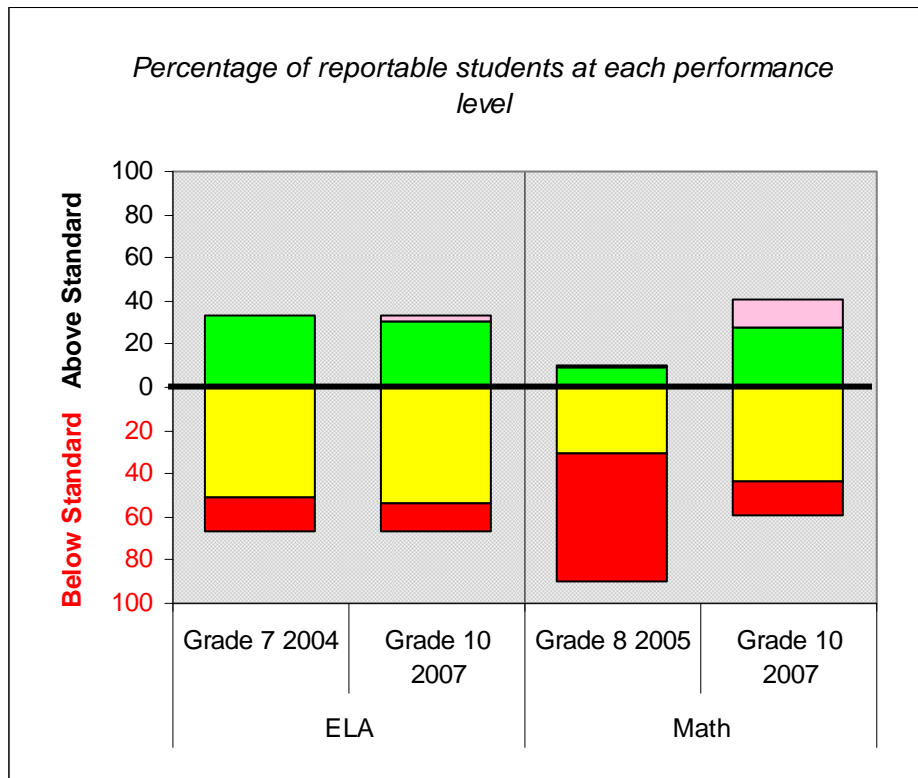
Table 11: MCAS Proficiency Indices by Vocational Technical District, 2004-2007

District	2004			2005			2006			2007		
	ELA PI	Math PI	API	ELA PI	Math PI	API	ELA PI	Math PI	API	ELA PI	Math PI	API
Bristol County Agr	87.7	88.9	88.3	89.6	87.4	88.5	88.1	88.8	88.5	93.8	93.3	93.6
Norfolk County Agr	88.1	83.7	85.9	92.8	88.8	90.8	95.0	91.0	93.0	95.6	90.5	93.1
Blackstone Valley	84.5	79.9	82.2	83.0	82.7	82.9	87.9	86.5	87.2	90.9	89.3	90.1
Tri-County	72.9	63.9	68.4	80.9	73.9	77.4	85.1	86.3	85.7	87.1	88.0	87.6
Shawsheen Valley	82.2	76.4	79.3	84.6	79.2	81.9	89.1	81.4	85.3	88.8	85.5	87.2
South Shore	80.0	75.7	77.9	83.0	78.1	80.6	81.4	82.6	82.0	87.4	85.4	86.4
Whittier	72.3	64.9	68.6	75.7	72.8	74.3	82.6	90.4	86.5	84.8	87.6	86.2
Montachusett	75.4	64.4	69.9	79.1	74.7	76.9	82.1	82.4	82.3	87.7	84.6	86.2
Cape Cod	74.7	67.8	71.3	83.0	79.9	81.5	86.3	86.4	86.4	86.3	85.0	85.7
Minuteman	76.2	75.3	75.7	77.8	76.5	77.2	85.4	77.9	81.7	87.3	83.4	85.4
Assabet Valley	70.9	63.7	67.3	79.0	74.6	76.8	78.7	81.3	80.0	86.7	83.7	85.2
Old Colony	71.9	69.7	70.8	79.4	79.6	79.5	76.9	75.9	76.4	84.3	85.2	84.8
Upper Cape Cod	79.7	68.0	73.8	83.0	72.8	77.9	83.7	79.7	81.7	87.4	82.1	84.8
Northern Berkshire	81.2	72.9	77.1	76.4	67.0	71.7	80.3	76.6	78.5	86.9	82.1	84.5
Blue Hills	75.8	65.6	70.7	77.4	76.4	76.9	84.4	82.4	83.4	85.8	83.2	84.5
Southern Worcester	72.7	66.9	69.8	79.0	75.6	77.3	80.9	81.0	81.0	85.6	81.9	83.8
Greater Lawrence	69.2	54.2	61.7	77.6	64.0	70.8	78.1	76.4	77.3	85.1	80.3	82.7
Essex Agr	71.7	52.8	62.3	81.8	60.4	71.1	89.5	79.0	84.3	89.8	74.8	82.3
State Average Voc	73.6	66.6	70.1	78.4	72.3	75.3	80.9	78.0	79.5	84.0	80.5	82.2
Greater New Bedford	69.8	59.6	64.7	75.7	64.6	70.2	80.2	73.4	76.8	84.6	78.1	81.4
North Shore	73.9	69.4	71.6	85.4	77.2	81.3	82.6	80.4	81.5	87.7	74.8	81.3
Bristol-Plymouth	72.9	67.6	70.2	80.6	74.0	77.3	85.4	79.6	82.5	83.7	76.3	80.0
Northeast Metro	65.0	61.8	63.4	70.8	69.8	70.3	71.5	74.1	72.8	75.4	80.3	77.9
Northampton-Smith	63.8	59.7	61.8	72.4	68.6	70.5	72.9	67.4	70.2	79.9	75.4	77.7
Nashoba Valley	68.5	70.0	69.2	75.9	67.5	71.7	77.5	79.8	78.7	77.4	77.9	77.7
Pathfinder	73.4	63.1	68.2	77.8	74.7	76.3	77.0	68.1	72.6	80.4	74.4	77.4
Greater Lowell	64.8	58.7	61.7	69.5	62.2	65.9	74.7	68.1	71.4	78.5	73.2	75.9
Franklin County	79.3	70.5	74.9	74.4	70.7	72.6	83.7	79.1	81.4	77.9	68.9	73.4
Southeastern	70.8	61.5	66.1	75.3	62.9	69.1	71.2	67.1	69.2	75.2	70.0	72.6
Greater Lawrence	59.1	50.1	54.6	61.8	52.4	57.1	67.4	57.6	62.5	69.8	68.8	69.3
So Middlesex (Keefe)	60.5	50.6	55.6	68.1	60.4	64.3	68.5	60.0	64.3	67.4	71.0	69.2

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

Performance in Greater Lawrence on the 2004-2007 MCAS tests was below the average for vocational districts statewide. The average performance gap between Greater Lawrence and vocational districts statewide was 15 PI points in 2004 and 13 PI points in 2007. The performance gap in ELA between Greater Lawrence and vocational districts statewide narrowed from 15 PI points in 2004 to 14 PI points in 2007, and in math it narrowed from 17 PI points in 2004 to 12 PI points in 2007.

Figure 12/Tables 12 A-B: Change in Students' MCAS Test Performance from 2004/05 to 2007, by Subject



A.

		ELA		Math	
		Grade 7 2004	Grade 10 2007	Grade 8 2005	Grade 10 2007
	Advanced	0	3	1	12
	Proficient	33	30	9	28
	Needs Improvement	51	53	31	44
	Warning/Failing	16	13	59	16
Percent Attaining Proficiency		33	33	10	40
Proficiency Index (PI)		69.3	70.8	40.7	69.9

B. n-values

	ELA		Math	
	Grade 7 2004	Grade 10 2007	Grade 8 2005	Grade 10 2007
Adv	1	9	4	34
Prof	88	86	25	79
NI	134	151	85	123
W/F	41	37	162	44
Total	264	283	276	280

Note: The above data include students whose 2007 grade 10 MCAS results could be linked with their 2004 grade 7 ELA results and 2005 grade 8 math results based on the student identifier (SASID).

Thirty-three percent of the grade 10 students in Greater Lawrence attained proficiency on the ELA test in 2007; as grade 7 students in 2004, 33 percent also had attained proficiency on the ELA test. Forty percent of the grade 10 students in Greater Lawrence attained proficiency on the math test in 2007; as grade 8 students in 2005, 10 percent had attained proficiency on the math test, an increase of 30 percentage points. The proficiency gap of grade 10 students in 2007 in ELA was 29 PI points; in 2004 the proficiency gap for those same students in grade 7 in ELA had been 30 PI points. The proficiency gap of grade 10 students in 2007 in math was 30 PI points; in 2005 the proficiency gap of those same students in grade 8 in math had been 59 PI points.

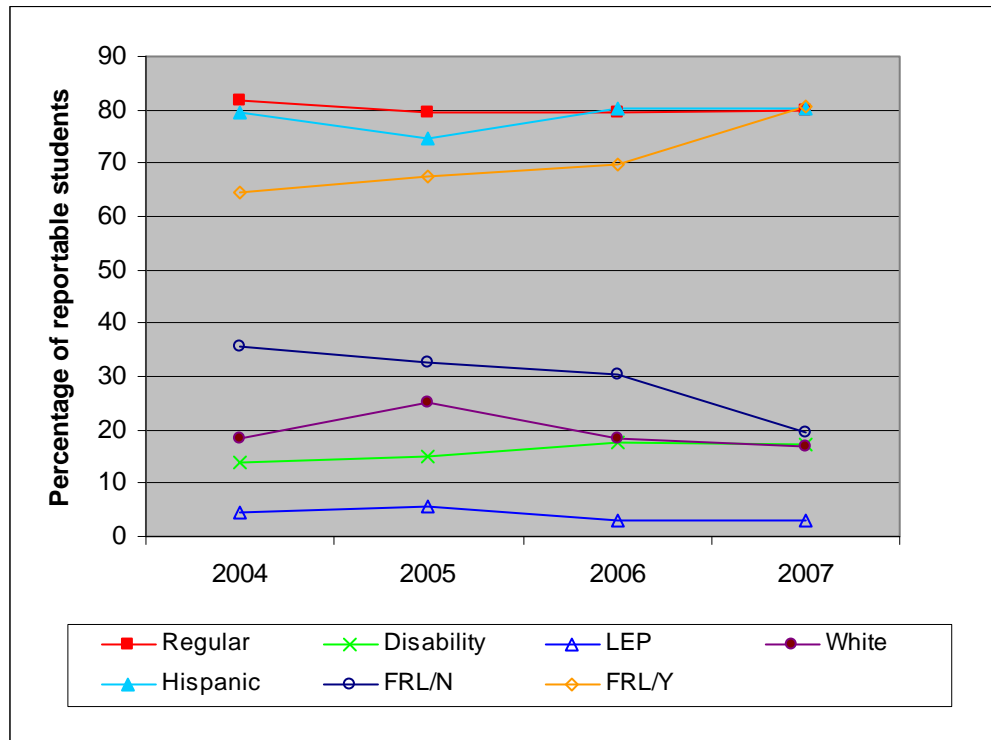
Equity of Improvement

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

Findings:

- In Greater Lawrence, the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in ELA was 40 PI points in both 2004 and 2007, and the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in math widened from 24 PI points in 2004 to 26 PI points in 2007.
- All student subgroups in Greater Lawrence had improved performance in ELA between 2004 and 2007. The most improved subgroups in ELA were non low-income students and LEP students.
- In math, all student subgroups also had improved performance between 2004 and 2007, with greater gains than those in ELA. The most improved subgroups in math were also non low-income students and LEP students.

Figure/Table 13: Student Population by Reportable Subgroups, 2004-2007



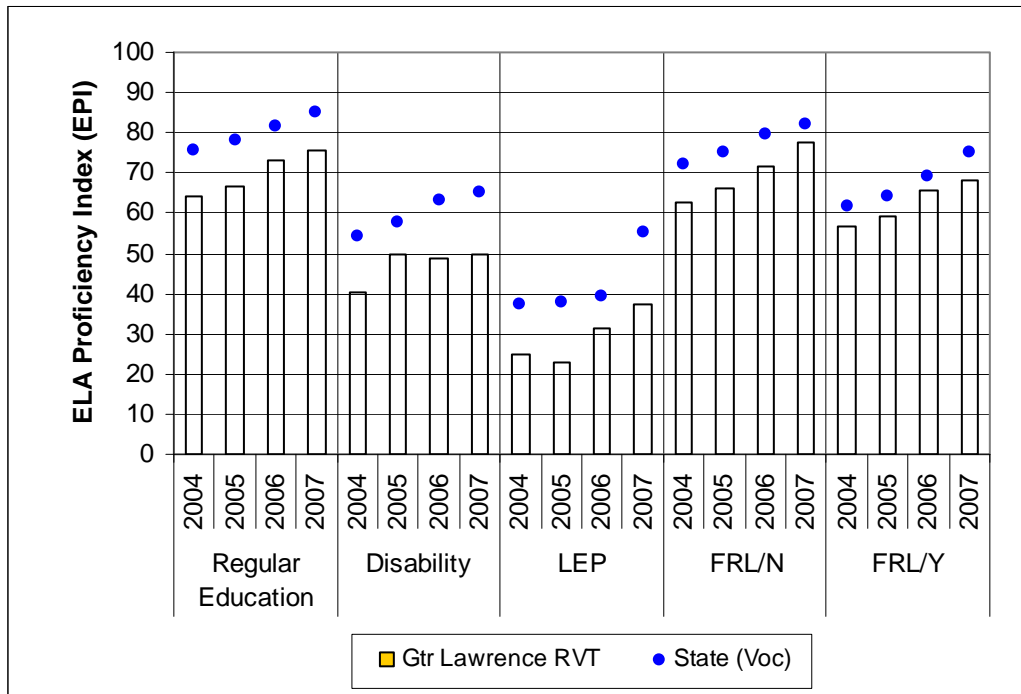
	Number of Students				Percentage of students			
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2004	2005	2006	2007
Gtr Lawrence RVT	340	420	407	325	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Regular	278	334	324	259	81.8	79.5	79.6	79.7
Disability	47	63	71	56	13.8	15.0	17.4	17.2
LEP	15	23	12	10	4.4	5.5	2.9	3.1
White	63	105	75	55	18.5	25.0	18.4	16.9
Hispanic	270	313	327	261	79.4	74.5	80.3	80.3
FRL/N	121	137	123	63	35.6	32.6	30.2	19.4
FRL/Y	219	283	284	262	64.4	67.4	69.8	80.6

Note: The 2007 percentages of students reported here may differ from those reported in Figure 3; the percentages shown here are based on the total number of students in the district, whereas the percentages shown in Figure 3 are based on the number of students in reportable subgroups. Data include students in tested grades only.

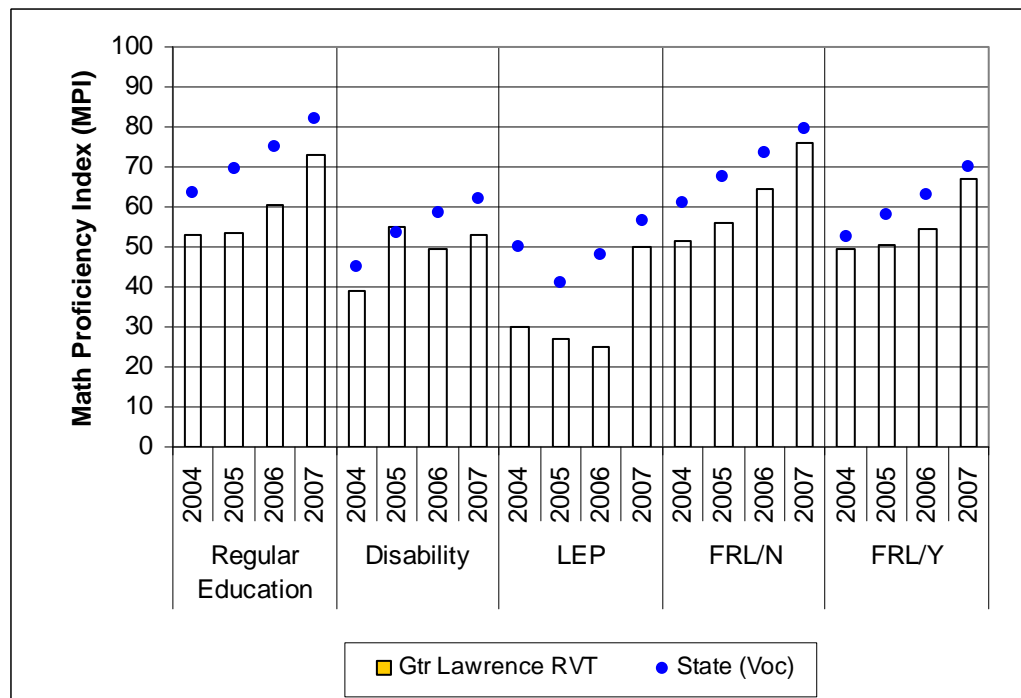
Between 2004 and 2007 in Greater Lawrence, the proportion of low-income (FRL/Y) students increased by more than 16 percentage points, the proportion of students with disabilities increased by more than three percentage points, that of LEP students decreased by over one percentage point, and Hispanic students increased by one percentage point.

Figures 14 A-D/Table 14: MCAS Proficiency Indices by Subgroup, 2004-2007

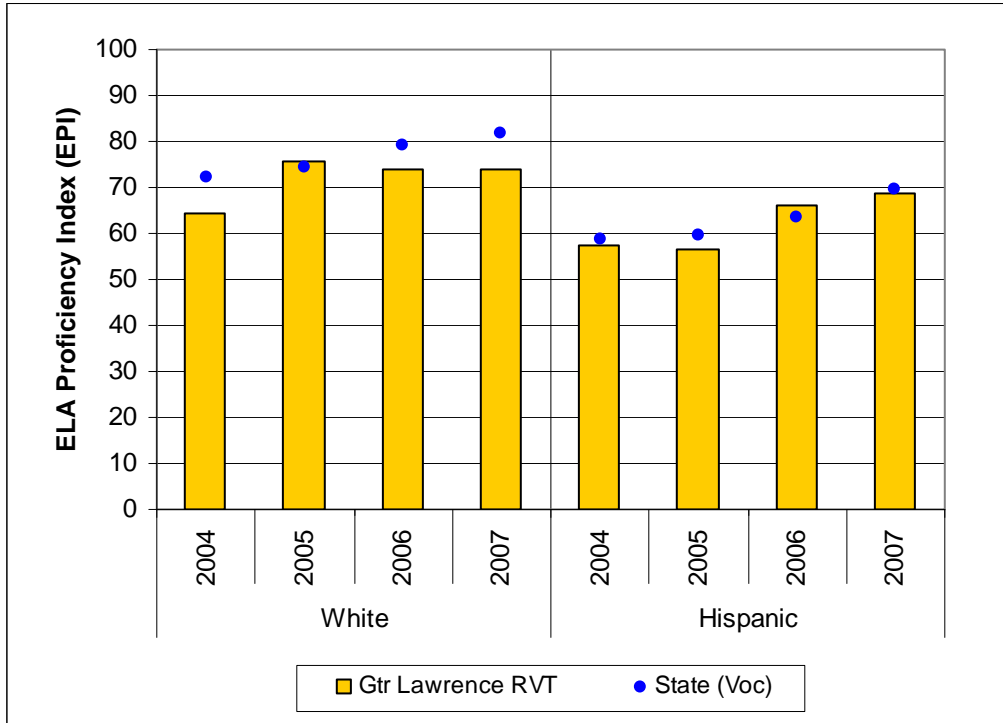
A. ELA Proficiency Index (EPI) by Student Status and Free or Reduced-Cost Lunch Subgroups



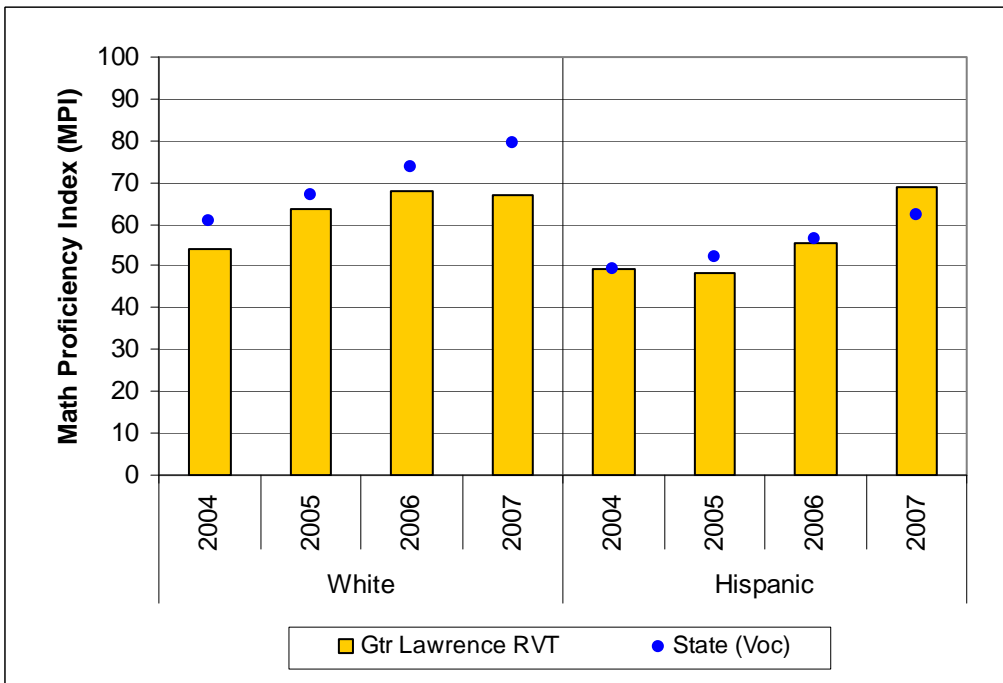
B. Math Proficiency Index (MPI) by Student Status and Free or Reduced-Cost Lunch Subgroups



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



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

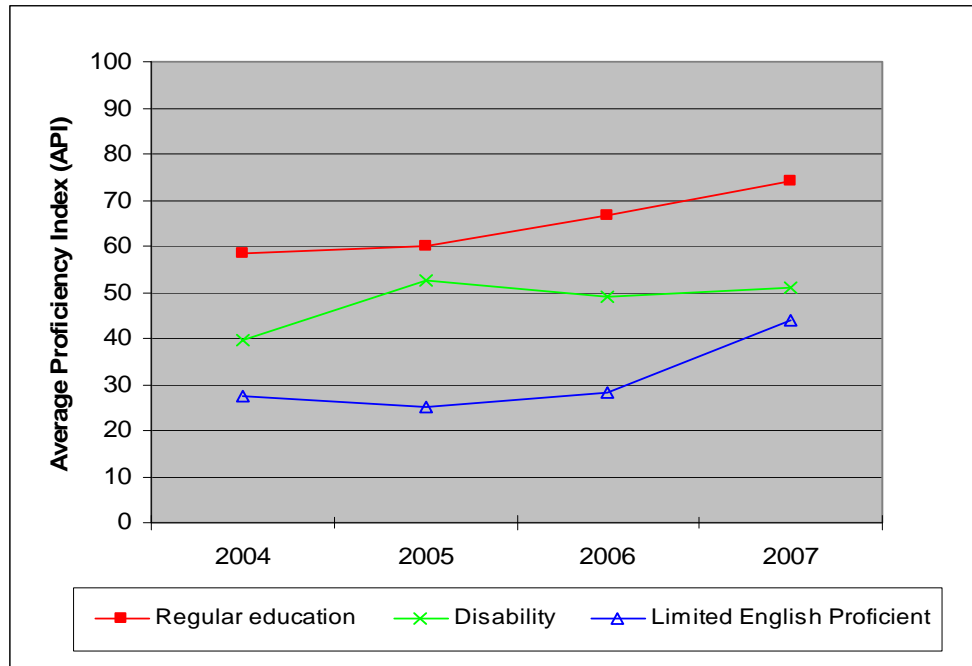


State (Voc)				Gtr Lawrence RVT			
Subgroup	Year	EPI	MPI	Subgroup	Year	EPI	MPI
Regular Education	2004	75.8	63.7	Regular Education	2004	64.0	53.2
	2005	78.0	69.3		2005	66.6	53.6
	2006	81.8	75.0		2006	72.9	60.4
	2007	85.0	81.8		2007	75.6	73.0
Disability	2004	54.2	44.8	Disability	2004	40.1	38.8
	2005	57.9	53.6		2005	50.0	54.8
	2006	63.2	58.7		2006	48.6	49.6
	2007	65.1	61.9		2007	49.6	52.8
LEP	2004	37.4	50.2	LEP	2004	25.0	30.0
	2005	37.6	41.1		2005	22.8	27.2
	2006	39.4	47.8		2006	31.3	25.0
	2007	55.1	56.3		2007	37.5	50.0
FRL/N	2004	72.3	60.8	FRL/N	2004	62.9	51.3
	2005	75.2	67.4		2005	66.1	56.2
	2006	79.6	73.7		2006	71.6	64.3
	2007	81.9	79.5		2007	77.8	76.2
FRL/Y	2004	61.9	52.5	FRL/Y	2004	56.6	49.5
	2005	64.3	57.8		2005	59.2	50.3
	2006	69.4	62.8		2006	65.5	54.6
	2007	75.3	70.2		2007	68.0	67.0
White	2004	72.0	60.7	White	2004	64.5	54.0
	2005	74.5	67.0		2005	75.7	63.5
	2006	79.3	73.5		2006	73.7	68.0
	2007	81.9	79.6		2007	74.1	66.8
Hispanic	2004	58.7	49.1	Hispanic	2004	57.5	49.3
	2005	59.4	52.0		2005	56.5	48.1
	2006	63.5	56.6		2006	66.0	55.4
	2007	69.5	62.2		2007	68.8	68.9

All student subgroups in Greater Lawrence had improved performance in ELA between 2004 and 2007. The most improved subgroups in ELA were non low-income students and LEP students. In math, all student subgroups also had improved performance between 2004 and 2007. The most improved subgroups in math were also non low-income students and LEP students.

The performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in ELA was 40 PI points in both 2004 and 2007, and the performance gap between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups in math widened from 24 PI points in 2004 to 26 PI points in 2007.

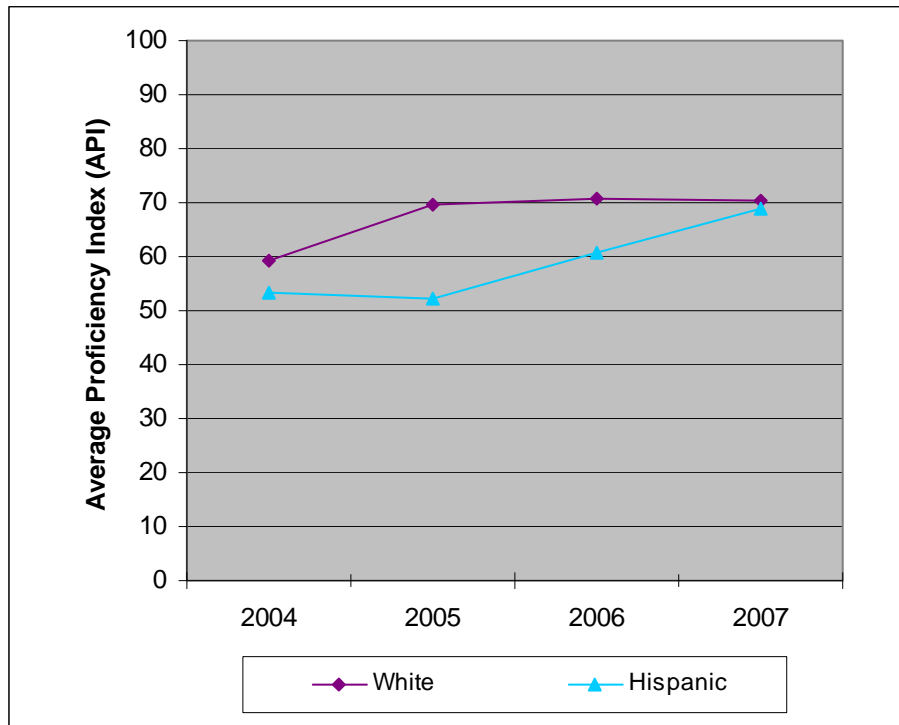
Figure/Table 15: MCAS Test Performance by Student Status Subgroup, 2004-2007



		API	EPI	MPI	Percent Attaining Proficiency ELA	Percent Attaining Proficiency Math
Regular education	2004	58.6	64.0	53.2	64	54
	2005	60.1	66.6	53.6	70	51
	2006	66.7	72.9	60.4	75	53
	2007	74.3	75.6	73.0	72	64
Disability	2004	39.5	40.1	38.8	23	18
	2005	52.4	50.0	54.8	34	31
	2006	49.1	48.6	49.6	37	25
	2007	51.2	49.6	52.8	30	31
Limited English Proficient	2004	27.5	25.0	30.0	0	7
	2005	25.0	22.8	27.2	2	10
	2006	28.3	31.3	25.0	7	3
	2007	43.8	37.5	50.0	8	10

Regular education students, students with disabilities, and LEP students in Greater Lawrence had improved overall performance on the MCAS tests between 2004 and 2007. The average proficiency gap for Greater Lawrence’s regular education students narrowed from 41 to 26 PI points, for students with disabilities it narrowed from 61 to 49 PI points, and for LEP students it narrowed from 73 to 56 PI points. These gains resulted in improvement rates of 38 percent for regular education students, 19 percent for students with disabilities, and 23 percent for LEP students. The average performance gap between regular education students and students with disabilities widened by four PI points, and between regular education students and LEP students it narrowed by one-half PI point during this period.

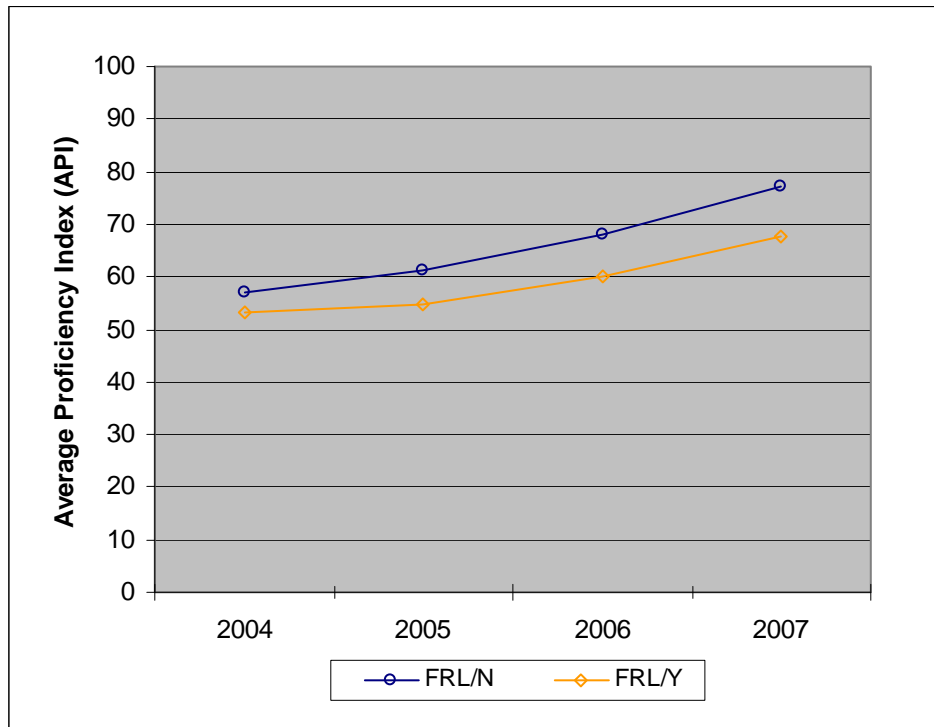
Figure/Table 16: MCAS Test Performance by Race/Ethnicity Subgroup, 2004-2007



		API	EPI	MPI	Percent Attaining Proficiency ELA	Percent Attaining Proficiency Math
White	2004	59.3	64.5	54.0	31	16
	2005	69.6	75.7	63.5	46	31
	2006	70.9	73.7	68.0	39	43
	2007	70.5	74.1	66.8	42	40
Hispanic	2004	53.4	57.5	49.3	21	14
	2005	52.3	56.5	48.1	18	16
	2006	60.7	66.0	55.4	30	26
	2007	68.8	68.8	68.9	30	39

Both White students and Hispanic students in Greater Lawrence had improved overall performance on the MCAS tests between 2004 and 2007. The average proficiency gap for White students narrowed from 41 to 30 PI points, resulting in an improvement rate of 28 percent. For Hispanic students, the average proficiency gap narrowed from 47 to 31 PI points, an improvement rate of 33 percent. Between 2004 and 2007, the average performance gap between White and Hispanic students narrowed by four PI points.

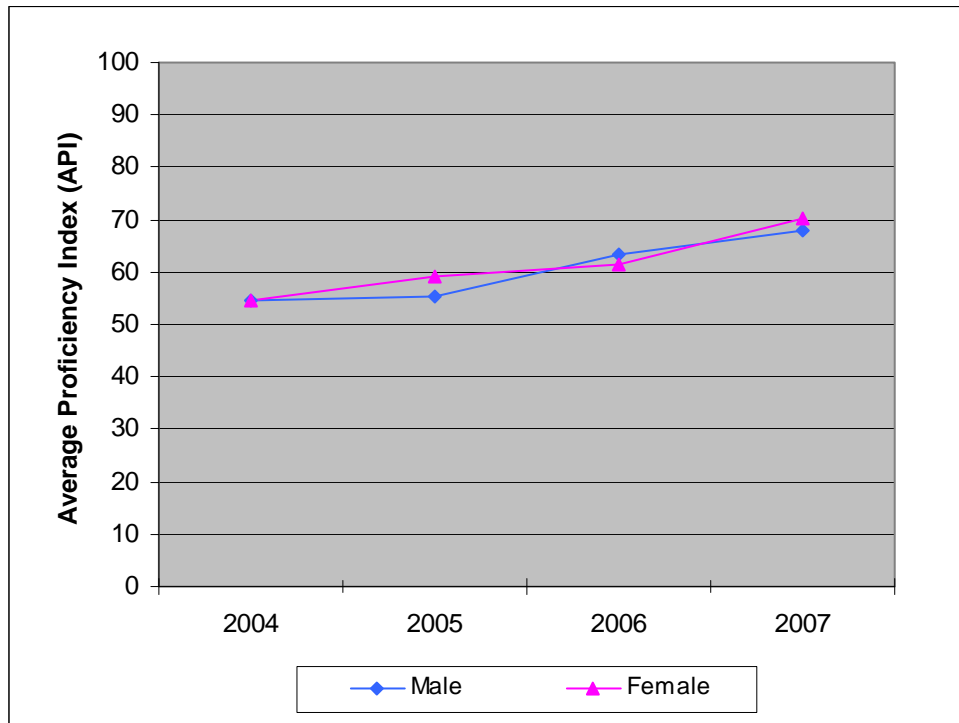
Figure/Table 17: MCAS Test Performance by Socioeconomic Status Subgroup, 2004- 2007



		API	EPI	MPI	Percent Attaining Proficiency ELA	Percent Attaining Proficiency Math
FRL/N	2004	57.1	62.9	51.3	28	15
	2005	61.2	66.1	56.2	33	25
	2006	68.0	71.6	64.3	39	38
	2007	77.0	77.8	76.2	48	52
FRL/Y	2004	53.0	56.6	49.5	54	46
	2005	54.8	59.2	50.3	60	46
	2006	60.1	65.5	54.6	69	46
	2007	67.5	68.0	67.0	67	60

Both the low-income (FRL/Y) and non low-income (FRL/N) subgroups in Greater Lawrence had improved overall performance on the MCAS tests between 2004 and 2007. The average proficiency gap for low-income students narrowed from 47 to 33 PI points, and for non low-income students it narrowed from 43 to 23 PI points. These gains in performance resulted in improvement rates of 31 percent for low-income students and 46 percent for non low-income students. Between 2004 and 2007, the average performance gap between low-income students and non low-income students widened by five PI points.

Figure/Table 18: MCAS Test Performance by Gender Subgroup, 2004- 2007



		API	EPI	MPI	Percent Attaining Proficiency ELA	Percent Attaining Proficiency Math
Male	2004	54.6	56.7	52.5	21	18
	2005	55.3	58.1	52.4	18	20
	2006	63.3	66.2	60.4	30	33
	2007	68.0	68.3	67.6	30	39
Female	2004	54.4	61.1	47.8	53	43
	2005	59.3	66.3	52.3	55	43
	2006	61.5	68.8	54.1	63	42
	2007	70.4	71.1	69.7	62	57

Both gender subgroups in Greater Lawrence had improved overall performance between 2004 and 2007 on the MCAS tests. The average proficiency gap for male students narrowed from 45 to 32 PI points, and for female students it narrowed from 46 to 30 PI points. These gains in performance resulted in improvement rates of 30 percent for male students and 35 percent for female students. Over this period the average performance gap between male and female students changed from less than one PI point in favor of male students to over two PI points in favor of female students.

Participation

Are all eligible students participating in required state assessments?

Finding:

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

n-Values by Subgroup and Performance Level, 2007

Subgroup	Performance	ELA	Math
Gtr Lawrence RVT	ALL LEVELS	326	321
	Advanced	10	38
	Proficient	97	89
	Needs	173	137
	Warning/Failing	46	57
Regular Education	Advanced	10	37
	Proficient	90	76
	Needs	144	111
	Warning/Failing	16	33
Disability	Advanced	0	1
	Proficient	6	12
	Needs	26	21
	Warning/Failing	24	20
Limited English Proficient	Advanced	0	0
	Proficient	1	1
	Needs	3	5
	Warning/Failing	6	4
White	Advanced	5	7
	Proficient	18	15
	Needs	25	22
	Warning/Failing	7	11
Hispanic	Advanced	5	29
	Proficient	74	70
	Needs	145	113
	Warning/Failing	38	45
African- American	Advanced	0	1
	Proficient	3	3
	Needs	3	1
	Warning/Failing	0	1
Asian	Advanced	0	0
	Proficient	1	1
	Needs	0	1
	Warning/Failing	1	0
Free or Reduced-Cost Lunch/No	Advanced	8	8
	Proficient	22	24
	Needs	27	23
	Warning/Failing	5	6
Free or Reduced-Cost Lunch/Yes	Advanced	2	29
	Proficient	74	65
	Needs	146	114
	Warning/Failing	41	51
Male	Advanced	4	16
	Proficient	41	41
	Needs	80	59
	Warning/Failing	25	30
Female	Advanced	6	21
	Proficient	55	48
	Needs	93	78
	Warning/Failing	21	27

Notes

Subgroup inclusion is based on the number of students and the number of schools in the district. To be included as reportable, a subgroup must have at least 10 times the number of schools in the district. Subgroup inclusion for all years of the trend data is based on the 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 Greater Lawrence Regional Vocation Technical School District. It reports on only those 2002 and 2005 indicators that received a ‘Poor’ or ‘Unsatisfactory’ rating and that the EQA team reassessed. The table below displays the prior 2002 and 2005 ratings and the 2007 reassessments. The narrative that follows presents the relevant 2002 and 2005 indicators, followed by the ratings for 2002 (where applicable), 2005, and 2007 and corresponding evidence for the ratings. Because of the changes in the EQA standards and indicators, the 2002 and 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 reexamination.

Standard I: Leadership, Governance, and Communication										
	2002 Indicators			2005 Indicators					2007 Indicators	
Ratings ▼ Indicators ►	7.6	9.3	9.5	1.5	1.6	1.8	1.10	1.11	13	14
Excellent										
Satisfactory	2007			2007			2007	2007	2007	2007
Needs Improvement	2005	2007	2007		2007	2007				
Poor	2002			2005				2005		
Unsatisfactory		2005 2002	2005 2002		2005	2005	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:

- Administrators were required to meet with their supervisors to set goals, including the improvement of student achievement, and were held accountable for achieving them.

- The district included its strategic plan and School Improvement Plan (SIP) in its budget document, and was able to fund most elements of both plans.
- The district continued to base its budget on revenues from state aid, minimum contributions from member districts, and other revenue sources, and not on student needs.
- In 2007, major reallocations of funds from staff reorganization and grants enabled the district to improve its programs and services for needy and at-risk students and to increase certain vocational programs.
- The district increased its emphasis on the analysis and use of data to make instructional, curricular, and budgetary decisions, although it was just beginning to use data to evaluate the effectiveness of program changes.
- The district's administrators worked together as a team, and their individual duties and responsibilities were clearly defined and understood.
- Greater Lawrence developed numerous partnerships with local agencies. Through these reciprocal relationships, the school provided the services of its vocational students to the community, and Greater Lawrence students received training and social services.
- The district developed a comprehensive safety plan in collaboration with local officials, and conducted practice exercises as well as staff reviews to familiarize all building occupants with the protocol and procedures.

Summary

Greater Lawrence made improvements in the area of leadership, governance, and communication since the last EQA review. Of the eight indicators in this standard reexamined by the EQA in 2007, the district improved on all eight and received a rating of 'Satisfactory' on four. In addition, Greater Lawrence received a 'Satisfactory' rating on the two new indicators in this standard that were included in the reexamination.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), Greater Lawrence hired a new superintendent and principal. The priorities of the new superintendent were to ensure that all professional staff members were licensed, to improve building security, to appropriately evaluate

all staff members, and to increase the effectiveness of staffing, programs, and services. The superintendent made changes to address the concerns cited in the two previous EQA reviews.

The school leadership team addressed accountability by clarifying the duties and responsibilities of administrators and requiring them to set appropriate goals. Their goals were expected to reflect the new strategic and school improvement plans, especially the need to improve student achievement. All administrators were evaluated, and their evaluations were informative and, for the most part, instructive. All administrators held appropriate licensure. The administration worked together as a team, and although there was some ambiguity in the organizational chart, administrators were clear about their own responsibilities and who evaluated them.

The district had numerous partnerships with local agencies, municipalities, and school systems that took advantage of the school's vocational programs to construct and renovate buildings, repair vehicles, perform graphic design work, cater events, and provide meals to the elderly. Students gained valuable opportunities to learn appropriate trade skills through these partnerships. The school also took advantage of local social agencies and services for at-risk students, including counseling and training. Greater Lawrence prepared a comprehensive safety plan in collaboration with local safety officials. The principal reviewed the plan with the faculty at the opening of school, and copies of the plan were evident in every room of the school.

The district reallocated funds in the 2007 budget to improve student achievement and to implement other district and school goals, but the budget document did not explicitly detail the connections between budget line items and these goals and program changes. Although the district underwrote needed programs in 2007-2008 based on the savings from a staff reorganization and reallocations of funds, the budget continued to be based on expected state aid and minimum contributions from member districts. Administrators stated that this approach may not be adequate to sustain and improve programs and services in the future.

Greater Lawrence actively reduced costs but lacked a formal process for evaluating cost effectiveness. During the second review period, the district decreased the number of district vehicles and phones, sought and received corporate donations, and transferred responsibility for out-of-district special education tuitions to member districts.

The district began to analyze data more comprehensively in 2007, especially data on student achievement, and disseminated these data more broadly. A newly appointed data coordinator prepared reports of aggregated and disaggregated student performance results, including individual profiles for at-risk students, and shared appropriate reports with the faculty and school committee. While Greater Lawrence modified remedial programs and services for at-risk students as a result of an analysis of aggregated data, it was only beginning to use data to modify instruction and to evaluate or change programs.

2002 Indicators

7.6. Job accountabilities are established for the administrators and teachers in implementing the goals in district and school action plans.

EQA Rating from 2002: Poor

EQA Rating from 2005: Needs Improvement

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

In the initial review period (1999-2002), the superintendent evaluated the principal's efforts in coordinating the School Improvement Plan (SIP) with a rating of exceeds standards; however, no evidence was found that the district established administrator or teacher accountability for school improvement goals. The principal required administrators, cluster leaders, and department chairpersons to link new budget initiatives and supplemental expenditures to a specific goal, objective, or action item within the improvement plan.

During the first reexamination period (2002-2005), the EQA examiners found no criteria based upon student achievement data in a review of evaluations of the superintendent, principal, assistant superintendent for business, and program directors. The principal's evaluation was based in part upon goals outlined in the SIP during this time. For the review period evaluations were not completed consistently for all of the leadership team. At the leadership level, cluster chairs were not evaluated. Interviewees told the EQA examiners that the district had not developed an evaluation instrument for cluster chairs.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), all administrators were evaluated, including those newly hired in 2007. Administrators stated that they prepared annual goals based on the School Improvement Plan and the district's strategic plan, which served as the District Improvement Plan (DIP). The superintendent required administrators to base their goals on the SIP and strategic plan, and to address the improvement of student achievement. While the evaluation form for administrators did not lend itself to inclusion of these goals, administrators met with their supervisors at least twice yearly to review their goals and their progress toward achieving them. The SIP clearly identified the persons responsible for each activity related to each goal and an evaluation measure.

Interviewees reported that while in the past only the superintendent and school committee were aware of the DIP and SIP, all teachers in 2007 had copies and were able to summarize the priorities in each plan. Administrators reported that teachers also were required to set annual goals, half of which were related to student achievement and use of data.

9.3. The district has long-term goals, action plans, and improvement plans, which are used to integrate school and district-wide needs and goals in the budget development process.

EQA Rating from 2002: Unsatisfactory

EQA Rating from 2005: Unsatisfactory

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

In the initial review period (1999-2002), the district had long-term goals, action plans, and a SIP. A seven-year School Improvement Plan was approved in 2001. According to evidence, these plans were used, but not adhered to in the development of the budget. For example, a district-level administrator told the EQA team that funding limited the integration element of the School Improvement Plan. In developing the fiscal year 2001 budget, the district planned to implement two new initiatives: biotechnology and telecommunications. According to the minutes of the school committee meeting of April 25, 2000, the introduction of these two programs created difficulties in the budget process. In developing the fiscal year 2002 budget, the school committee meeting minutes of April 10, 2001 stated that the superintendent and principal "were not happy with the budget" and would have to "work within its [limited] means."

During the first reexamination period (2002-2005), an examination of school committee meeting minutes revealed that the committee annually voted a budget based upon minimum contribution requirements. Examiners found no evidence in school committee meeting minutes and copies of the annual budgets or through interviews with district staff and school committee members that action plans and/or improvement plans were used to build an educationally sound budget. The superintendent and school committee members advocated for a minimum contribution budget, but did not ask the community to fund improvements of school services based upon the School Improvement Plan.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), the budget document included the strategic plan and SIP, but made no specific references to funding plan goals. Increases and decreases in budget line items were not explained. Town and city officials did not cite plan goals when discussing the budget. According to the superintendent, the budget approved for 2007-2008 included a focus on security and discipline and a major reorganization of the staff. The reorganization plan presented to the school committee was related directly to the 2005 EQA report, the district's strategic plan, and the SIP, and improved student achievement was its primary goal. Both the reorganization plan and budget included funding for most of the goals.

The budget contained funding for additional teachers and tutors for mathematics and English to help achieve the goal to improve student achievement. Staff reallocations improved monitoring of halls and exterior doors to achieve the goal to make the school safer; the district also funded a state of the art security and surveillance system to accomplish this goal. A Spanish teacher and parent liaisons helped achieve goals to improve the achievement of English language learners and communication with their parents. In addition, the district required that all teachers be certified by June 2007 to achieve the goal for teachers to be highly qualified. Administrators reported that worksheets used to develop the budget were based on the availability of funds rather than program needs or goals. The superintendent planned to ask administrators next year what they actually needed.

9.5. The district employs a cost-effectiveness process in evaluating all of its programs, initiatives, and activities as part of the budget process.

EQA Rating from 2002: Unsatisfactory

EQA Rating from 2005: Unsatisfactory

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

In the initial review period (1999-2002), according to district-level administrators, the district did not evaluate the cost effectiveness of all of its programs, initiatives, and activities as part of the budget process. For example, one central administrator stated that there was no evaluation of the effectiveness of additional staffing and equipment for remedial services. Administrators were concerned about the level of student participation in remedial programs. The 1999-2000 auditor's management letter cited the district for maintaining a Health Insurance Trust Fund balance exceeding the annual expense of the claims.

For the first reexamination period (2002-2005), interviewees told the EQA team that the district relied on recommendations from the advisory committees for purchasing, but had not conducted an analysis of cost effectiveness. The then superintendent described a cost effectiveness analysis based upon a "continuous analysis of student achievement and instructional practices," but the district lacked formal procedures to evaluate curriculum and instruction.

For the second reexamination period (2005-2007), the EQA examiners found no systematic program review process with cost effectiveness as a criterion. Although not referenced in budget documents or minutes, administrators cited cost effectiveness and savings as advantages of certain program changes in interviews with the EQA examiners. For example, the superintendent's presentation to the school committee showed that the staff reorganization plan, while proposed for educational reasons, saved \$715,161. These savings were redirected to improve services for students. Administrators told the EQA team that they used enrollment data to adjust staffing for several shop areas, including building management, biotechnology, machine technology, and culinary. They were also in the process of evaluating the cost of commissioning the HVAC system against high utility costs. The district budgeted \$47,000 to replace light fixtures with energy efficient lamps and ballasts, and participated in collaborative contracts for utilities such as natural gas. Administrators discontinued the provision of cell phones to 60 staff members, and reduced the number of district-owned vehicles. Advisory committee members and administrators reported that local businesses had donated equipment for shop areas, and a corporate benefactor donated a new copy center that was open to the school staff and the public.

The district saved on color printing costs by reducing the number of color printers. Greater Lawrence also discontinued the practice of underwriting out-of-district tuition costs for special education students. According to regulation, these costs were the responsibility of the member districts.

2005 Indicators

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

EQA Rating from 2005: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the first reexamination period (2002-2005), the district reallocated resources to support English language learner (ELL) and at-risk students by hiring special education and Title I teachers, and eliminating a vocational coordinator and an auto body teacher. The school had moved to an inclusion model for special education students. In interviews, many teachers stated they believed the inclusion model needed more support. Non-instructional costs for medical insurance, expanded building costs, and contractual salary increases were rising at a rate of 15 to 20 percent in the district, but the operational budget was rising at a rate of 1.3 to 1.6 percent, and resources allocated to students with greater needs had decreased.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), administrators reallocated resources to needy and at-risk students. In interviews with the EQA examiners, they stated that they revised the Title I program to target grade 9 and 10 students at risk of failing the MCAS tests, with preference to those participating in the free or reduced-cost lunch program. Counselors used McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act funds to help homeless students, and alerted families whose children may have been eligible for free or reduced-cost meals. Administrators stated that they encouraged staff members to use donated and other funds to provide needy students safety glasses, uniforms, and interview attire, and transportation and tickets to field trips, school athletic events, and proms. Through a staff reorganization plan, the district engaged bilingual parent liaisons and a counselor. The district also employed two ELL teachers, a Spanish teacher, an

adjustment counselor, and an at-risk counselor to work with students and their families. Greater Lawrence reassessed the after-school remediation program at Middlesex Community College because attendance was low, and decided to increase after-school, Saturday, and summer remediation programs on site, requiring students at risk of retention or failing the MCAS tests to attend.

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

EQA Rating from 2005: Unsatisfactory

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

According to the minutes for the first reexamination period (2002-2005), the school committee annually voted a budget based upon state minimum contribution requirements. The EQA examiners found no evidence that the district used an analysis of student achievement to build an educationally sound budget. The superintendent and school committee members advocated for a minimum contribution budget, rather than a budget based explicitly upon student needs.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), the documented budget was based upon state aid and minimum contributions from member districts. Historically, these contributions were insufficient to keep pace with rising utility, collective bargaining, and health insurance costs. Budget documents contained no references to program needs. According to administrators, budget worksheets were based on projections of available funds; however, the district made funds available for student and program needs in 2007-2008 through a staff reorganization and the reallocation of Title I funds. The district used these funds to improve remedial services for at-risk students, engage a math coach, increase services for ELL students, improve parent communication through Connect-ED and parent liaisons, and strengthen security. Administrators and teachers told the EQA examiners that funds were sufficient for professional development, supplies, and technology.

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

EQA Rating from 2005: Unsatisfactory

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

According to a review of job descriptions and evaluations conducted during the first reexamination period (2002-2005), no administrator was responsible for requiring staff members to use student assessment data to improve instructional programs and services for all students. In interviews, teachers stated that they received the MCAS test results. While they were not required to use these data to plan instruction, some teachers stated they had changed teaching methods based on an analysis of student assessment data. Administrators gave examples of the use of student assessment data to change or add programs; however, these efforts were not systematic or regular.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), the district increased its efforts to analyze and use data to improve instruction and programs, but had not yet reached the point of using data to evaluate the effectiveness of program changes. Goals to collect and use data, to measure changes, and to improve programs were in the strategic plan and School Improvement Plan (SIP). According to administrators, the supervisor of data and assessment, hired in 2007 to improve the analysis and dissemination of achievement and other student data, made presentations to staff members and the school committee. Beginning in 2007, the supervisor disseminated achievement data to teachers on individual students, classes, and subgroups, and created profiles consisting of results from the MCAS tests, the Stanford Achievement Tests, and the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) for the Individual Student Success Plans (ISSPs) of at-risk students. These profiles included raw scores and an analysis of areas of strength and weakness on each assessment. The district purchased and began using software to facilitate analysis of achievement data and to improve instruction. This software included the Pearson Assessment System, TestWiz, Riverdeep Mathematics, Scholastic Reading Inventory, READ 180, Study Island, and the SMART MCAS generator.

While district professional development focused more on classroom management and instructional strategies than use of data to modify instruction, teachers received an overview of assessment results and other available data in faculty meetings. Administrators told the EQA team that MCAS test data were used to identify areas for increased attention in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. Stanford 10 results were used for placement and not for diagnostic purposes. Teachers stated that they administered common midyear and final examinations, but had not yet analyzed or used the results to improve instruction, except in science where results were summarized on a spreadsheet. Administrators told the EQA team that they had introduced remedial and MCAS tutorial, summer, and after-school prep programs to improve student achievement. They went on to say that while they used data from the MCAS tests, Scholastic Reading Inventory, and Stanford assessments to place students in these programs, they had not yet used data to evaluate or modify the programs.

The district collected and analyzed other data. Staff and student attendance were areas of concern, and administrators described procedures to improve tracking and monitoring of both. Administrators gave attendance reports monthly to the school committee. Staff members met with students who were frequently absent, and called their parents. Administrators used enrollment data to make decisions about adding and reducing staff members and adding and eliminating programs; for example, they added mathematics, social studies, and English teachers to improve student achievement in these areas. Administrators reduced programs in office technology, machine technology and graphics, building maintenance, and electronics and added biotechnology and carpentry. They also replaced the Middlesex Community College remedial program with an on-site program to increase participation and attendance.

Administrators began using a walk-through procedure and form in 2007 to collect data on teaching strategies. They surveyed teachers and parents and modified discipline policies and procedures, entrance requirements for students, and professional development programs based on an analysis of the survey results. Based on a review of utility usage and costs, administrators replaced light fixtures, shut down kitchens and other parts of the building in summer, and initiated a study to commission the HVAC system.

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

EQA Rating from 2005: Unsatisfactory

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

For the first reexamination period (2002-2005), examiners found no criteria based upon student achievement data in a review of evaluations of the superintendent, principal, assistant superintendent for business, and program directors for the review period. Although school committee members stated that they understood their responsibility to evaluate the superintendent, these evaluations were based upon goals provided by the superintendent, and did not address student achievement. In an interview with the EQA team, the superintendent stated that the evaluation results had not been shared with the full school committee.

The principal's evaluation was based in part on the accomplishment of the goals in the School Improvement Plan. For the review period, the district had not evaluated all members of the leadership team annually. Administrators told the EQA examiners that the district had not developed an instrument to evaluate cluster chairs. As a result, cluster chairs had served for up to seven years without a performance evaluation in that role.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), all administrators were evaluated. Administrators stated that although the evaluation form did not lend itself to use of student achievement data or strategic plan and SIP goals, they were required to set goals based on these criteria. Administrators met with their evaluators at least twice each year to review their goals and progress toward achieving them. In this way, they were held accountable for improving student achievement and implementing school goals.

School committee members reported that the chairman contacted them about their evaluations of the superintendent and prepared a composite. They went on to say that they wanted the superintendent to pay full attention to the academic and vocational programs of the school.

Contracts stated that raises for the superintendent and other administrators were to be based on evaluations, and administrators reported that goals to improve achievement and other strategic plan and SIP goals were also a factor. The superintendent planned to negotiate with the administrators on a new evaluation form.

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

EQA Rating from 2005: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

For the first reexamination period (2002-2005), administrators confirmed in interviews with the EQA examiners that the superintendent effectively delegated the educational and operational leadership of the school to the principal, and through the principal to the directors of programs.

The superintendent stated that the success of the leadership delegation was assessed through observation of the climate of the school, the safety and security of the school, and through meetings with the administrative staff.

In interviews, and through a review of administrators' evaluations and other documents furnished by the district, the EQA team found no formal use of student achievement data to assess leadership. However, the principal's evaluation was based in part on the attainment of goals outlined in the School Improvement Plan.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), responsibilities were assigned on the basis of written duties and goals. Contracts for administrators and lead teachers specified their responsibilities, and these responsibilities were included in the teachers' manual so that staff members would know whom to ask for what. Administrators and lead teachers stated that they set goals annually. Their evaluators expected them to include goals to improve student achievement, and held them accountable for achieving their goals. The organizational chart revealed some confusion about who reported to whom. For example, the comptroller worked under the business manager but reported to the superintendent, and the directors reported to both

the principal and superintendent. Administrators told the EQA team, however, that they knew who was responsible for evaluating them. They also described a leadership team that met frequently and worked closely together. The principal or superintendent assigned responsibilities based on strengths. For example, the superintendent had a curriculum background and the principal had a special education background, and they used these skills to complement each other. Professional development included monthly mentoring by a consultant on supervision and evaluation, and off-site planning meetings as a leadership team.

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

District and local officials cited partnerships with a number of community and human service agencies. The budget document listed 41 agencies served by student programs in the member city and towns, and city and town officials reported on them as well. For example, the auto repair and auto body shops repaired local police and municipal vehicles, and carpentry, electrical, and plumbing students renovated and built numerous municipally-owned buildings and some owned by nonprofit agencies. Culinary students catered to the local rotary club and chambers of commerce and assisted with the Merrimac Valley Nutrition Program. The district provided graphics and printing services for the chamber of commerce and many other nonprofit groups. Andover used the school's athletic fields and pool for its youth programs and fireworks.

The district also collaborated with local agencies to provide services to students. Administrators cited local businesses that have provided training and employment for students, including local restaurants, electricians, and carpenters. Andover's recreation programs included an after-school program for at-risk students. The Lawrence Public Library offered a literary and remedial reading program. Middlesex Community College offered a remedial after-school program. The Valley Works Career Center Alliance provided career services, and Phillips Andover Academy included the school in a visiting artists program. School staff members reported on referrals to

local human service agencies such as Merrimac Educational Collaborative (MEC), Massachusetts Department of Social Services (DSS), and the Lawrence Housing Authority. The district collaborated with Andover police and fire officials on emergency and safety procedures, and in conjunction with the neighboring hotel and Knights of Columbus hall made the school building available as an emergency shelter. Administrators also told the EQA team that they collaborated with MEC and local towns on bids for utilities.

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: Satisfactory

Evidence

According to administrators and school committee members, security and safety were priorities for the district. The EQA examiners found a comprehensive safety plan in every room, including offices and conference rooms. Administrators told the EQA team that they prepared the safety plan in collaboration with the Andover police, and both the police and fire departments approved it. The SIP included the goal that security and health and safety committees update safety protocols. The plan included emergency phone numbers and detailed procedures for lockdowns, medical emergencies, fire emergencies, threats, gas leaks, hazardous materials, power failure, violent actions, bomb threats, dangerous and threatening behaviors, and suspected child abuse.

These procedures and additional safety policies were include in the teachers' manual which also addressed safety procedures for the shops, such as safety goggles and equipment, MSDS sheet updates, and disposal of hazardous waste. The teachers' manual also included school policies on ID badges, locked doors, drugs, and weapons. Administrators stated that the school resource officer reviewed the safety plan with staff members on opening day, and that the principal conducted two fire drills and a lockdown in the fall of 2007. Administrators had worked collaboratively with the local fire department on fire drills and with police on the lockdown.

Standard II: Curriculum and Instruction								
	2002 Indicator	2005 Indicators						2007 Indicator
Ratings ▼ Indicators ►	3.3	2.4	2.5	2.7	2.8	2.9	2.10	9
Excellent								
Satisfactory		2007		2007	2007			2007
Needs Improvement	2007 2005		2007			2007	2007 2005	
Poor	2002	2005		2005	2005	2005		
Unsatisfactory			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:

- Greater Lawrence had developed a leadership team with defined roles, a shared vision of good instruction, and protocols and procedures for supervising and monitoring instruction.
- The district had an infrastructure for curriculum development and revision and an articulated plan for standardizing the components and completing the documentation in each area. The academic curriculum was still incomplete.
- Greater Lawrence did not have a curriculum review cycle for the academic disciplines, but intended to develop one as soon as the curricula were completed.
- The district had many supplemental programs and services in regular education, but had not yet integrated them into a network governed by an access plan in order to reduce reliance on special education.
- Student achievement clearly drove curriculum development, methodology, teacher training, and resource acquisition in the vocational areas.
- Curriculum development, instruction, professional development, and resource acquisition were closely affiliated but not yet systematically linked in the academic disciplines.

Summary

Greater Lawrence made incremental progress in all seven deficient areas in curriculum and instruction cited in the prior EQA reviews. Of the seven indicators in this standard reexamined by the EQA in 2007, the district improved on four and received a rating of ‘Satisfactory’ on three. In addition, Greater Lawrence received a ‘Satisfactory’ rating on the one new indicator in this standard that was included in the reexamination.

The 2007 EQA reexamination found that Greater Lawrence had an outline of a curriculum accommodation form rather than a fully documented curriculum accommodation plan describing a continuum of regular education programs and services intended to reduce reliance on special education. However, many components of such a plan were in place, and school leaders were providing purposeful direction and an integrated approach.

Greater Lawrence had an annual cycle for review and revision of vocational curricula. Curriculum guides in the vocational areas were current, detailed, and complete. The documented academic curriculum was still in preliminary form, lacking many essential components. Greater Lawrence had a phased plan for development of the missing components, but lacked a review cycle for each academic discipline.

Greater Lawrence students used current technology in the career and vocational areas, and the use of technology in the academic disciplines was increasing. The school had state-of-the-art equipment in the technology-based fields, and made appropriate applications of technology in many other career and vocational areas. In the academic disciplines, teachers were observed making use of the computer labs, LCD projectors, and television monitors in instruction. The student-to-computer ratio at Greater Lawrence improved from 3.3 students per computer in 2003-2004 to 2.3 students per computer in 2005-2006, according to Department of Education data.

Since the prior review, Greater Lawrence enhanced the active monitoring of teachers’ instruction. The current leadership improved instructional supervision by engaging highly qualified personnel; redefining roles; increasing the number of evaluators; standardizing lesson components; providing teacher training, coaching and mentoring; and developing supervision protocols.

Greater Lawrence made a deliberate attempt to increase expectations for student learning and mastery consistent with its motto, “Reggies Moving Up.” Recent actions intended to raise student performance included increasing the overall quality and frequency of teacher supervision, coaching, and training; higher-level course offerings; more rigorous admissions, grading, and retention policies; celebrations of student achievement; new extracurricular offerings; and emphasis on passing the MCAS tests on the first administration.

Analysis of student achievement results, instructional monitoring, resource acquisition, and professional development were highly separate activities in the academic disciplines at Greater Lawrence, and more closely connected in the vocational areas. In the academic disciplines, student performance results were used primarily to identify students in need of services rather than to determine curricular and instructional effectiveness, in-service education needs, and budget priorities. In the vocational areas, student performance directly informed curriculum revision, use of instructional methods, staff training, and purchasing.

2002 Indicator

3.3. There is a comprehensive District Curriculum Articulation Plan that addresses the diverse student learning needs. The curriculum is modified to increase the success rate of all populations, including ELL, vocational education students, and students with disabilities.

EQA Rating from 2002: Poor

EQA Rating from 2005: Needs Improvement

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

In the initial review period (1999-2002), the evidence indicated that the district had a District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) that addressed each of the required components, and the curriculum was modified periodically. However, the district did not increase the success rate of all subgroups for the period of time under review.

During the first reexamination period (2002-2005), the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan had been in place since the prior visit. The John Collins reading curriculum, the Reading for Meaning initiative, and the “Math Moment” were all curriculum modifications that the district

had put into place to improve the success rate of identified subgroups. The District Curriculum Accommodation Plan indicated that curriculum review took place at the department level for each academic and career training area to align with the frameworks, with oversight by the director of curriculum and instruction.

Interviews with the directors of curriculum and cluster academies indicated that the principal was the instructional leader in setting the agenda and the direction, but the tasks of instructional leadership fell to the curriculum directors, department chairs, and cluster leaders. They indicated that the superintendent/director did not take an active role in instructional leadership. Interviews with academic teachers indicated that curriculum revisions were largely identified at the department level. Classroom teachers made curricular revisions during the summer. Administrators approved revised or new documents before implementation.

While district report cards from the DOE indicated consistent underperformance by the district's subgroups, interviewees indicated that they did not routinely focus on these groups in making decisions for curricular change. The ELL curriculum was not aligned with the state curriculum standards. Furthermore, it was not evident how the recommendations in the DCAP were used to make specific modifications for individual students who needed specific interventions. While students in all subgroups had improved in performance, there was little evidence presented that the needs of individual students were analyzed and that classroom interventions were implemented on the basis of individual needs.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), Greater Lawrence had a checklist form entitled District Curriculum Accommodation Plan that was a record of student-specific needs and interventions rather than a fully documented DCAP describing access to a continuum of programs and services to improve overall student achievement. While the district lacked a formal plan, some components of one were in place, and school leaders were now providing purposeful direction and a more integrated approach.

Greater Lawrence was beginning to build capacity in the regular education program to provide for a wider range of learner needs and differences, including direct instruction for struggling readers; support for students with behavioral and emotional problems interfering with learning; modification of the regular education program for second language learners and students under

special educational management; and training to help regular education classroom and shop teachers develop a repertoire of strategies to address learning style, cultural, and linguistic differences.

Administrators told the EQA examiners that in 2007-2008 Greater Lawrence began to institute a phased system of regular program modification based on the response-to-intervention model in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law. This model consisted of universal screening to identify students in need, provision of research-based instruction, and progress monitoring to determine the effectiveness of the instruction. Students who did not respond to increasingly intensive regular education interventions were referred for diagnostic assessment to determine their eligibility for special education services.

Administrators stated that they used the Stanford 10 and Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) assessments administered to entering grade 9 students in the spring of 2007 to identify skill-deficient students, and to provide services proportionate to their needs. For example, the 60 students most significantly below grade level in reading were enrolled in the district's READ 180 Program. Other students were assigned to classes with a more favorable teacher-to-student ratio, or with assistive personnel. Administrators told the EQA team that the spring re-assessments of the Stanford 10 and SRI would be used as summative measures of progress. When questioned about the frequency of progress monitoring, administrators stated that they had been too preoccupied with addressing numerous compliance issues in special education during the prior year to develop formative measures, but this would be a future focus. The goal was to assess incremental progress at four- and eight-week intervals.

Teachers and administrators told the EQA examiners that the at-risk counselor monitored compliance with individual student accommodation plans and consulted with teachers. Approximately 30 students were under the provisions of these plans in the current year. Since there was no presumption of a disability, the students were expected to make progress, and the plans contained mostly short-term interventions.

Central office administrators stated that the next phase of curriculum development would focus on implementation tools, such as strategies for accommodating second language learners and

students with diagnosed or suspected special needs, especially in the regular education academic program. They went on to state that the promising practices of the school's "best teachers" were currently undocumented and unavailable to other teachers. They added that dissemination of these practices would likely "raise the level of instruction at Greater Lawrence and overall student performance."

Administrators and teachers told the EQA team that students with behavioral and emotional difficulties were referred to the at-risk counselor. These students were identified by teacher referrals to the student support team and through periodic monitoring of attendance and disciplinary records. The at-risk counselor offered these students support and incentives under the terms of behavior contracts, and helped their teachers make appropriate modifications of content and expectations. Administrators and counselors told the EQA team that these interventions had kept some troubled students in school.

In interviews, teachers told the EQA examiners that district professional development sessions on classroom and behavior management, language acquisition and development, and effective instructional strategies had helped them to meet the needs of diverse learners. One teacher said that the new administration started to "give us the kind of training we needed to work with our kids." Another added that there was more targeted emphasis on subpopulations "because these kids hadn't achieved standards on the MCAS tests, but we all know they can."

2005 Indicators

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

EQA Rating from 2005: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the first reexamination period (2002-2005), teachers stated that the district supported many opportunities for them to increase their instructional skills through workshops, conferences, and courses. These offerings were not required. Interviewees stated that if they

attended an outside workshop, they were expected to share their learning with department members as a way of promulgating best practices.

In 2004 the district formed a professional development committee composed of teachers to identify themes for the 2004-2005 in-service days. These themes were special populations, literacy, technology, and varied teaching strategies. Interviews with teachers indicated that they had received instruction in these themes during 2004-2005, and that these topics continued in the subsequent year. Interviewees indicated that the district did not have a formal process holding teachers accountable for implementing the strategies presented.

The district supported numerous positions with some responsibility for instructional leadership as evidenced by the organizational chart and described by administrators and teachers. Directors of curriculum and cluster academies told the EQA team that instructional leadership began with the leadership team, including the principal and the directors of pupil personnel services and student services. Working with MCAS specialists and academic department chairs, administrators identified areas of instructional weakness and planned supports for improvement. Interviewees cited the institutional use of the John Collins Writing Program as an example of a set of instructional strategies offered to all to use to improve student achievement in English language arts. The district did not have specific instructional practices identified as priorities for math or science.

According to the job description, the MCAS specialist devoted approximately one-third of the time to modeling lessons and providing classroom coaching for mathematics and English teachers. Specialists also played a role in developing materials and providing instructional support to vocational teachers for the “Math Moment” and the “Reading for Meaning” initiative. Interviews with teachers and the MCAS specialists confirmed these activities.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), Greater Lawrence improved instructional leadership by engaging highly qualified personnel, redefining roles, increasing the number of evaluators, standardizing lesson components, providing teacher training, coaching and mentoring, and developing supervision protocols. Central office administrators told the EQA examiners that the superintendent reorganized the leadership team in the spring of 2007 with the cooperation of the teachers’ association and approval of the school committee. Under the

reorganization, the incumbent directors of curriculum and instruction and career and technical programs were replaced by highly qualified successors because they lacked the requisite credentials for their roles. Other leadership roles were redefined and retitled. Academy supervisors replaced cluster leaders. Unlike cluster leaders, academy supervisors evaluated teachers and were exempt from the teachers' bargaining unit.

Lead teachers replaced department heads. There were fewer lead teachers than department heads (20 versus 27) because of a consolidation of responsibility for smaller departments. Lead teachers worked a longer school year and had responsibilities for consulting with the principal about scheduling and teacher mentoring, in addition to daily department management. Most lead teachers had reduced teaching responsibilities. The lead teachers in the larger vocational departments, such as culinary arts, and in the academic disciplines of English and mathematics were full time in their roles and did not teach.

Under a Memorandum of Agreement between the Greater Lawrence Teachers' Association and the Greater Lawrence School Committee dated May 2007, the number of evaluators was increased to include "[s]upervisors of academies and other administrators." Central office administrators told the EQA team that this change doubled the number of administrators who could observe and evaluate teachers. They went on to say that professional development was provided in 2006-2007 to ensure that the enlarged leadership team had a common view of teaching and learning and was consistent with teachers.

Greater Lawrence was beginning to use a collaborative coaching model to improve instruction in high priority areas such as written language and mathematical problem solving. For example, the freshman academy supervisor had expertise in the John Collins Writing Program and taught demonstration lessons for teachers, and the MCAS math coach modeled problem-solving strategies and methods for teaching probability and statistics in mathematics classes. Administrators stated that coaching and modeling were largely ad hoc and at the discretion and initiation of individuals, rather than delivered according to a plan with monitoring and follow-up. They went on to say that they hoped to make more formal use of this model for improving instruction in the future.

The leadership team developed a protocol for lessons entitled “the daily agenda.” The components included an explicit listing of the curriculum standards to be addressed; the class activator consisting of a brief independent activity for students to do upon entering the room while the teacher collected homework and took attendance; the lesson taught by the teacher based on objectives; the closure, usually in the form of the homework assignment; and the summarizer, providing an opportunity for students to state what they had learned, what more they would like to know, and their questions.

The director of curriculum and instruction presented the rationale for and elements of the daily agenda to teachers in January 2007. In observations of classrooms and shops, the EQA team confirmed pervasive use of the daily agenda. It seemed to be embedded in the instructional routine at Greater Lawrence. One administrator stated that the agenda had standardized instruction based on research-based principles. In interviews, teachers said that it had provided uniformity of practice in a school that had previously “allowed teachers to do whatever they pleased.” One teacher stated that “having things tightened up with everyone on the same page” was a welcome change.

Administrators told the EQA examiners that they had developed a standard walk-through protocol approved for use by the teachers’ association. The protocol was in checklist form with yes and no ratings for the presence or absence of required postings, including curriculum strands and John Collins types of writing; resource binder contents, including student success plans and emergency plans; and instructional materials, including weekly lesson plans and curriculum guides. An attached questionnaire contained inquiries about the frequency of departmental meetings, use of MCAS and other assessment data to inform instruction, and other aspects of the instructional program.

In interviews with the EQA examiners, administrators and teachers agreed that that the information gathered through walk-throughs was intended to help teachers reflect about their practice. They went on to state that the data were not part of the official record, and could not be used in formal evaluations. Administrators and lead teachers were not in accord about some aspects of the walk-through procedure, including whether teachers were notified in advance, who completed the forms, and the subsequent use of the data. For example, central office

administrators stated that they compiled anonymous statistical data from the walk-throughs by department and career area as a way of monitoring compliance and trends. They stated further that these data were given to lead teachers to discuss with the teachers in their departments.

In interviews, lead teachers told the EQA team that they had not yet received complied walk-through data, and were unaware that this was part of the procedure. Some administrators said that teachers completed the checklist forms prior to the walk-throughs as a self-report, while others stated that observers completed the forms during the classroom or shop visit. While most administrators said that walk-throughs were announced in advance, several maintained that notification was a courtesy rather than a requirement, and occasionally none was given.

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

EQA Rating from 2005: Unsatisfactory

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the first reexamination period (2002-2005), the district did not have a documented process for the regular and timely review of curricula. Interviews with administrators and staff members indicated that the district did have an established practice of annually reviewing and revising curricula based on the results of MCAS tests. The purpose of these revisions was to better prepare all students for the MCAS tests and was not specific to any of the district's subgroups. In addition, the results of the common midterm and final examinations were used to assess the success of the written curriculum as taught by department members. Curricular changes often resulted because of these exams. Curriculum documents for the years under review in the tested core areas showed evidence of annual revision. Interviewees stated that results of other assessments, such as the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) or Stanford 9 assessments, were used for placement but did not inform curricular decisions.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), Greater Lawrence initiated an annual cycle for review and revision of vocational curricula. Curriculum guides in the vocational areas were current, detailed, and complete. Administrators told the EQA team that while work on the

academic curriculum had been in progress since 2003, the documented curriculum was still in preliminary form, lacking many essential components. Greater Lawrence now had a phased plan for development of the missing components, but lacked a review cycle for each discipline. Administrator stated that the review cycle would be established once the academic curriculum was in final form.

The EQA examiners reviewed guides for the tested core content areas of ELA, mathematics, and science. These guides varied in format and detail. The ELA and science guides contained the curriculum strands from the state frameworks, and related learning standards arranged by grade level and term. The mathematics guides were course outlines listing the strands and standards by unit and term. Some guides listed resources, activities, and generic assessment strategies, while others lacked many of these components. One administrator stated, “There’s not a lot there to go by because we’re still documenting our curriculum.”

The EQA team reviewed summative curriculum benchmarks in ELA, mathematics, and science, establishing what students should know and be able to do by the end of each grade. Administrators told the EQA examiners that work on these benchmarks began in the spring and concluded in the fall of 2007. In answer to questions by the team, they went on to say that there were as yet no intermediate benchmarks and no formative or summative benchmark assessments.

Administrators described an action plan for curriculum development in ELA, mathematics, and science for the current year. Under this plan, Greater Lawrence intended to form committees composed of teachers in each discipline to review curricular alignment. The committees would subsequently develop standards-based units and common assessments for courses within each discipline. Administrators stated, and teachers confirmed, that this work had begun. Administrators told the EQA team that the units and assessments would provide implementation tools to complete the academic curriculum.

The vocational curriculum was more fully developed and regularly revised. Academy supervisors and lead teachers reviewed vocational curricula annually, and made revisions to conform to licensure and certification requirements and prevailing codes. Modifications in curricular content and emphasis often resulted from recommendations made by the local

advisory committee for each area. Lead teachers provided examples of such revisions in the areas of auto body and plumbing.

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

EQA Rating from 2005: Poor but Improving

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the first reexamination period (2002-2005), in the 2004-2005 school year when the district's building expansion and renovation project was completed, teachers were able to begin to fully integrate technology into the instructional process. DOE data reported 3.3 students per "modern" computer and 100 percent connectivity in the district. The school's academic classrooms contained three student computers and one teacher computer. The teachers' computers were new. The students' computers were older. Six computer laboratories were available for whole class use in the academic wing, and interviewees indicated that these new facilities were used regularly. Evidence of the use of computer labs was not apparent during EQA examiners' visit to the school. In the majority of academic classrooms that were visited by the examiners, technology was not employed as a means of instructing students. Interviews with teachers and department leaders provided descriptions of the use of technology. Examples such as the incorporation of electronic calculators into math instruction, the use of laptop computers for data gathering in science classes, and the requirement that students produce PowerPoint presentations and utilize Internet research in English classes were offered as evidence of the incorporation of technology into the instructional process. It was also noted that the curriculum incorporated direct instruction in the use of Microsoft Word in grade 10 English and Excel in grade 11 math.

Technology in the career areas was appropriate and sufficient for instruction as observed by the EQA examiners and confirmed by interviews with vocational personnel. Professional development for teachers in the use of instructional technology had been offered during the review period to prepare teachers to incorporate updated technology made available through the building process.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), Greater Lawrence provided students access to current technology in the career and vocational areas. EQA examiners observed use of state-of-the-art equipment in the technology-based fields, and appropriate applications of technology in many other career and vocational areas. The EQA team also observed increased use of technology in the academic disciplines, especially LCD ceiling projectors and screens and television monitors equipped for DVD and VCR use. The student-to-computer ratio at Greater Lawrence improved from 3.3 students per computer in 2003-2004 to 2.3 students per computer in 2005-2006, according to DOE data. The gain was mostly attributable to acquisitions through the school building project.

Greater Lawrence had significant technology resources, including four computer labs with a total of approximately 100 stations. In addition, there were 15 labs in the career and vocational areas, and four science department labs. The library was equipped with 12 computer stations, and the special education department had a Kurzweil lab consisting of 20 stations. Greater Lawrence added a multiple-station READ 180 lab in the current year. Each academic classroom was equipped with at least one Internet connected computer, and most had several more.

Technology was intrinsic to certain vocational areas, such as computer-assisted design and graphics, but applications of technology were evident in other areas as well, including software programs for recording sales and inventory in culinary arts and estimating in auto body. Technology was also used as an instructional tool. For example, simulations were a key component of the marketing program. Through use of simulation software, students formed enterprises and used marketing strategies to compete against classmates as well as students in other schools throughout the nation.

Administrators told the EQA team that Greater Lawrence science department teachers had developed a number of simulated experiments and labs in biology and chemistry. The science department also offered Internet courses. The topics included investigating heredity and the human impact on the environment. Social studies teachers used the LCD projector to display key points and illustrations from the textbook series during mini-lessons in American history. Teachers and administrators said that this multi-sensory approach helped students use and remember information, and heightened their attention during classroom lectures.

Administrators went on to say that Microsoft Office Suite was embedded in the academic curriculum: Microsoft Word was taught and used in grade 10 English, Microsoft Excel in grade 11 math, and Microsoft PowerPoint in grade 12 science. These tools enhanced learning in literacy and numeracy and developed communication and presentation skills.

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

EQA Rating from 2005: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the first reexamination period (2002-2005), district policy I stated that “all staff activities shall be directed toward providing a high quality, effective, ever-improving instructional program.” The district’s staff evaluation forms for academic and vocational teachers included sections addressing “promotion of high standards and expectations.” However, few teachers of professional status were formally evaluated. Teachers reported that it was not uncommon for years to pass between evaluations, making it difficult to document active monitoring of teachers’ instruction for evidence of high expectations for student work and mastery. The EQA team found few current evaluations in a review of randomly selected teacher personnel files.

The teachers’ contract addressed the duties of cluster leaders and department heads and included the responsibility to “observe the learning process within the cluster and facilitate the self-evaluation and professional development plan.” Administrators and teachers stated that cluster leaders and department chairs made non-evaluative supervisory observations and the results were shared only with the teacher.

In interviews with the EQA examiners, teachers stated that members of the administration, including the superintendent, visited their classrooms daily. They went on to say that while there was no formal feedback from these walk-throughs, there sometimes were follow-up conversations about lesson content. Teachers told the EQA team that these visits constituted monitoring of their instruction in general. The district did not have a specific procedure to gather evidence of practices that reflected high expectations for students’ work and mastery.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), Greater Lawrence made a deliberate effort to increase expectations for student learning and mastery consistent with its motto, “Reggies Moving Up.” Recent actions intended to raise student performance included increasing the overall quality of teacher supervision, coaching, and training; higher-level course offerings; more rigorous admissions, grading, and retention policies; celebrations of student achievement; new extracurricular offerings; and emphasis on passing the MCAS tests on the first administration.

Consistent with the goal of raising student performance, Greater Lawrence recently added more highly qualified administrators to increase the frequency and effectiveness of teacher supervision and evaluation, and implemented the daily agenda schoolwide to standardize lesson organization. According to a review by the EQA team, recent observations of teachers without professional status contained specific recommendations for the improvement of instruction. Administrators also stated that in the current year two teachers without professional status were released for inadequacies during the 90-day probationary period. This was a major change. As one administrator stated, teachers were rarely evaluated over the last 10 years, and when they were “the evaluations were pretty meaningless, and didn’t really help them to improve.”

Both administrators and teachers told the EQA examiners that Greater Lawrence was “on the right path.” Nevertheless, they acknowledged that the system for monitoring teachers’ instruction was in need of further improvement. Many teachers with professional status had never received timely and constructive evaluations. One administrator commented that the evaluation procedure was “broken” and needed to be “fixed” in the impending teacher contract negotiations. Another said that providing every teacher with helpful feedback would sustain their commitment to higher standards and the “can do” philosophy developing in the school.

Greater Lawrence revised its admissions procedure to place more emphasis on the interview as an entrance criterion. Administrators and counselors stated that the interview helped to identify the most well informed and committed applicants. They went on to say that fewer students were admitted for the current year. This was because the school had selected motivated applicants who had chosen to attend Greater Lawrence for “the right reasons.” Preliminary analysis of the results of the MCAS tests, the Stanford 10, and the SRI for these students by the EQA team indicated

that they were higher performing than prior entering classes, but administrators stated that they lacked valid comparative measures and it was too early to tell how well they would do.

In 2007-2008, Greater Lawrence identified some higher performing students and made accommodations for them. Administrators stated that when they reviewed the grades and MCAS test performance of the entering 2007-2008 class and noted that a number of students were proficient in mathematics, they offered a grade 9 Geometry course for the first time. They added that they hoped to create Advanced Placement (AP) options for these students in grades 11 and 12. Teachers and administrators told the EQA team that courses such as Spanish, Journalism, and Finance had been added to provide more dimension and rigor to the academic program in order to attract higher performing students, especially from member communities with fewer enrolled students.

Greater Lawrence changed its promotion policy to require that every student pass English and mathematics each year. Summer school sessions were offered to rectify failures. The school also placed at-risk grade 9 and 10 students on Individual Student Success Plans (ISSPs) to increase the likelihood of their achieving the state competency determination on the first administration of the MCAS tests in grade 10. This was a new priority. Previously, only juniors and seniors who had yet to pass the MCAS tests were given services under ISSPs.

Teachers and administrators told the EQA team that grading had been instituted in each academic department, including requirements for class attendance and participation, homework and project completion, and quiz and test performance. The examiners confirmed these rubrics in a review of course syllabi.

Administrators and teachers identified acknowledgement of student performance as a way of increasing expectations. One stated that while recognition was not supported by the prior administration, the current leaders believed that it was important to “reward excellence and establish role models for students.” They went on to describe the “Reggie Hall of Fame,” consisting of photographs and displays in several locations throughout the school. Those recognized included honor roll students, VICA and Skills USA winners, athletes, and drama club members. The students escorting the EQA examiners to classrooms throughout the school pointed to these displays in passing, and remarked that they liked them.

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

EQA Rating from 2005: Poor but Improving

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the first reexamination period (2002-2005), the 2004 Needs Assessment Report, produced by two district teachers, contained item analyses of the 2002 and 2003 MCAS tests in ELA and math. The analysis of scores was disaggregated by career cluster for the 2003 data. According to the report, these data “opened the doors” to more collaboration among shop and related teachers and the MCAS specialists. Interviews with administrators and teachers supported this claim. In addition, the EQA examiners found evidence of increased collaboration and ownership of MCAS test success through practices such as the “Math Moment,” which incorporated daily direct instruction of math into the vocational areas beginning in 2004-2005, and the week-long reading and writing project that was piloted in the vocational areas in 2004-2005.

The academic departments instituted common midterm and final examinations in 2000-2001. The results of these examinations were used to assess the success of the written curriculum as taught by department members and learned by students. Curricular revision frequently occurred from the review of these results. Also, discrepancies among the results for teachers of the same subject prompted action by administrators. Interviewees stated that samples of these tests were submitted to the director of curriculum for review. In addition to the common midterm and final examinations, science and mathematics teachers also gave common unit tests and used the results to further monitor success in instruction and learning.

Additionally, the district provided a spreadsheet and bar charts showing aggregate math and ELA scores and Competency Determinations for 1999-2004. Interviewees stated that the schoolwide emphasis on literacy and the accompanying institution of the John Collins Writing Program was a major result of MCAS test data analysis. Interviewees indicated that scope and sequence charts

had been developed and were utilized in math and science and were in development in English. The undated MCAS Remediation Plan referenced additional plans for the development of scope and sequence charts and scoring rubrics for midyear and final examinations. Also contained were plans for additional assessments, including collecting samples of student work, creation of focus groups for analyzing student work, and continuation of efforts to provide information on course failures correlated for clusters, grades, and attendance. Interviewees also stated that reports correlating student assessments by grade, cluster, and attendance were distributed for the 2003-2004 and 2004-2005 school years.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), analysis of student achievement results, instructional monitoring, resource acquisition, and professional development were mostly separate activities in the academic disciplines, and more closely connected in the vocational areas at Greater Lawrence. In the academic disciplines, student performance results were used primarily to identify students in need of services rather than to determine curricular and instructional effectiveness, in-service education needs, and budget priorities. In the vocational areas, student performance informed curriculum revision, use of instructional methods, staff training, and purchasing.

Greater Lawrence used MCAS test results and the results of the locally administered Stanford 10 and SRI primarily to identify students in need of remediation. The school provided a range of programs and services for these students, including summer and after-school tutoring. There were few formative measures other than common midterms in the academic disciplines, but administrators stated that these results were not analyzed systematically to improve instruction. In the fall of 2007, Greater Lawrence developed summative benchmarks for student learning in the ELA, mathematics, and science indicating what students should know and be able to do, but there were as yet no benchmark assessments.

Formative assessments were used regularly and systematically in the vocational areas. EQA examiners saw vocational instructors using rubrics to measure student acquisition of competencies in most shops. Vocational teachers stated that they planned and individualized instruction based on these formative measures.

When asked about the process for data analysis in the academic disciplines, administrators described trend analysis of aggregated and disaggregated results, item analysis, and analysis by question type. Administrators stated that while they used data to identify individual student needs, they did not focus explicitly on the instructional implications of student performance data.

When a trend analysis of MCAS test results in literacy substantiated the need for a reading intervention program, Greater Lawrence instituted the READ 180 program. This intensive program improved decoding, fluency, and comprehension skills in reading and spelling and composition skills in written language. The school also created a ninth grade section of Geometry for entering students who had scored in the 'Proficient' or 'Advanced' categories on the 2007 grade 8 MCAS mathematics test.

In the vocational areas, curricula were adjusted in accordance with changes in codes and licensure and certification requirements. Academy supervisors also made revisions in the sequence and emphasis of curricula based on recommendations from the local advisory committees.

Administrators and teachers told the EQA team that trend analysis of aggregated and disaggregated MCAS test results was used to inform professional development, especially in academics. They went on to give examples of training intended to improve instruction for special education students and second language learners. Professional development was often a component of program adoption. For example, Greater Lawrence provided professional development sessions on the John Collins Writing Program. In 2006-2007, Greater Lawrence surveyed teachers to determine their preferences, and sessions on effective teaching strategies and classroom management were offered. Greater Lawrence was beginning to develop a required professional development program for teachers based on school priorities.

In the vocational areas, academy supervisors and lead teachers had arranged trainings for staff members by manufacturers' representatives on new equipment, and by spokespersons addressing new code, certification, and licensure requirements. Supervisors had also arranged summer workshops on methodology and teaching strategies.

In interviews, teachers stated that supplies for academic and vocational programs were more than sufficient. Many commended the administration and school committee for their manner of provisioning. Purchasing was loosely related to student achievement in the academic disciplines. One academic administrator told the EQA examiners that a student achievement rationale was usually “attached to requests,” but was not always the “basis for them.” This administrator went on to say, “We try to do what we think is best for our kids.” In the vocational areas, purchasing was related to industry needs and student performance. Academy supervisors gave the EQA examiners examples of purchases of equipment in auto technology and biotechnology to meet prevailing industry standards.

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

EQA Rating from 2005: Needs Improvement

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

At the first reexamination, the EQA team observed a total of 11 randomly selected classrooms and vocational laboratories and recorded the presence or absence of 27 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. At the second reexamination, the EQA examiners observed a total of 38 randomly selected classrooms and recorded the presence or absence of 33 attributes reflected in the Principles of Effective Teaching, grouped into the same five categories. 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.

Interpretation of the results of the classroom visits showed generally good classroom instructional practices within the district. Although the scores for classroom management

appeared to decline slightly between the first and second reexaminations, EQA examiners agreed that classroom instruction in most cases was managed effectively, and several positive comments were recorded. Examiner ratings for instructional practice improved slightly for the second reexamination. In the aggregate, examiners rated instruction in the ELA classes slightly higher than the mathematics classes observed. In all cases, instruction was teacher directed, but with frequent opportunities for active student participation.

An interesting discrepancy was noted between the academic and vocational realms in the area of expectations, however. Examiners rated the evidence of teachers holding high levels of expectation for student success good overall, but found it noticeably higher in the vocational areas than in academic classes. Similar results were seen when examiners rated student work and behavior, with vocational classes again receiving higher ratings. Samples of high quality student work were observable more frequently in vocational areas than in academic classrooms; fewer examples of high quality student academic work, rubrics, anchor papers or student work with teacher comments affixed were evident in the academic areas. There appeared to be an increased use of technology compared to the first reexamination. Also, the classroom climate remained positive and nurturing as in the first reexamination, although examiners did note a substantial increase in attention paid to student safety and building security throughout the visit.

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. Of the classrooms observed during the first reexamination, 86 percent demonstrated characteristics of positive classroom management. At the second reexamination, positive indicators of classroom management were evident in 77 percent of both the academic and vocational 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. Of the classrooms observed during the first reexamination, 65 percent of the classrooms were observed to be demonstrating those characteristics. At the second reexamination, positive indicators of instructional practice were evident in 70 percent of the academic and 67 percent of the vocational classrooms observed.

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. Of the classrooms observed during the first reexamination, evidence of high expectations was seen in 71 percent of the classrooms or shops. At the second reexamination, positive indicators of expectations for students were evident in 51 percent of the academic and 79 percent of the vocational classrooms observed.

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. At the first reexamination, examiners observed such evidence in 56 percent of the classrooms visited. At the second reexamination, positive indicators of student activity, work,

and behavior were evident in 56 percent of the academic and 78 percent of the vocational classrooms observed.

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. Of the classrooms observed during the first reexamination, 76 percent exhibited such a climate. At the second reexamination, positive indicators of classroom climate for learning were evident in 71 percent of the academic and 68 percent of the vocational classrooms observed.

Summary of Classroom Observations from Second Reexamination

Number of Classrooms					Average Class Size	Average Paraprofs. per Class	Computers		
ELA	Math	Voc	Science/ Other	Total			Total Number	Number for Student Use	Average Students per Computer
6	5	18	9	38	14.1	0.1	184	166	4.4

	Classroom Management	Instructional Practice	Expectations	Student Activity & Behavior	Classroom Climate
Total observations	138	286	126	181	131
Maximum possible	179	418	190	266	190
Avg. percent of observations	77%	68%	66%	68%	69%

2007 Indicator

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: Satisfactory

Evidence

Greater Lawrence had a philosophy of including special education students in the mainstream program, and the percentage of Greater Lawrence students under special educational

management in full inclusion programs exceeded the statewide average. Support for the inclusion model was evident in co-taught classes in the academic disciplines, and the provision of paraprofessional educators in certain vocational areas. The results of inclusion were favorable according to some measures: the graduation rate for Greater Lawrence special education students was higher than the statewide average for special education students, and the dropout rate was only marginally above.

Administrators stated that Greater Lawrence did not have substantially separate programs for special education students by design, although a few students with moderate to severe special needs were enrolled in special education academic classes for up to 40 percent of the school day. Administrators went on to say that the school planned to offer a professional development series for teachers on accommodating students with impediments to learning in regular education classes, especially those who were more difficult to teach. The goal was to build more capacity in the regular education program to provide for students under special educational management by expanding the co-teaching model. Central office administrators added that raising the quality of instruction for all students was the ultimate goal.

According to DOE statistics for 2006, Greater Lawrence had a higher rate of special education students enrolled in full inclusion programs (58.4 percent) than the statewide average (49.1 percent). The graduation rate for Greater Lawrence special education students (69.6 percent) was higher than the statewide average (61.1 percent), while the dropout rate was slightly above (5.8 percent versus 5.1 percent).

Standard III: Assessment and Program Evaluation											
	2002 Indicators				2005 Indicators						
Ratings▼ Indicators►	1.6	2.1	2.2	2.3	3.1	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.8
Excellent											
Satisfactory	2007				2007	2007	2007			2007	2007
Needs Improvement	2005	2007 2005	2007 2005	2007 2005	2005	2005	2005	2007 2005	2007 2005	2005	2005
Poor	2002	2002	2002	2002							
Unsatisfactory											

III. Assessment and Program Evaluation

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

Findings:

- The district designated personnel for the collection, analysis, and timely dissemination of data.
- Greater Lawrence collected and analyzed aggregated data and used summative assessment results to improve student achievement.
- The district began to use some disaggregated data and formative assessment to improve subgroup performance and instruction.
- Greater Lawrence used test results to identify individual students’ strengths and needs. Teachers and tutors provided students with targeted support in their areas of need.
- The district used summative and some formative data in decision-making. It assigned staff, prioritized goals, began new initiatives, and allocated time and resources using the data it collected and analyzed.
- The district’s leadership team used mandated external and internal program audits to identify strengths and weaknesses. It used the results to modify programs and services.

- Greater Lawrence communicated assessment results and other reports on student achievement to staff members, parents, the school committee, and the community through its website, parent portal, newsletters, parent orientations, and Connect-ED system.

Summary

Greater Lawrence improved in nearly half the areas in assessment and program evaluation rated ‘Poor’ or ‘Unsatisfactory’ in the prior EQA reviews. Of the 11 indicators in this standard reexamined by the EQA in 2007, the district improved on six, all of which received a rating of ‘Satisfactory.’

During the second reexamination period, the leadership and staff in Greater Lawrence collected, analyzed, and used student achievement data more systematically. The district used the results of the MCAS tests, the Stanford 10, the Scholastic Reading Inventory, and teacher-generated tests to improve its delivery of instruction and support services, and to monitor student progress. Greater Lawrence ensured that all students participated in assessments, and the district had an MCAS participation rate above the state average.

The district’s leaders reported on student progress to parents, the school committee, and the community. Parents received student progress reports and report cards regularly via mail. Other forms of communication included newsletters, the district website, and the Connect-ED system. The district also had two Spanish-speaking parent liaisons to improve communication with Hispanic families.

The district employed a coordinator of data and assessment and trained its administrative team and lead teachers in the use of TestWiz. The coordinator interpreted assessment data and provided teachers with in-depth analyses of student responses on the MCAS tests on an individual, classroom, or schoolwide basis. The district disseminated these analyses to the staff, and staff members used these data to target students’ needs and to strengthen instructional practices.

The district engaged in mandated external program reviews and contracted for program reviews of special education and Title I services. It was beginning to plan and implement an evaluation cycle to measure the effectiveness of its instructional and support programs. For example, the

READ 180 program adopted in 2007 had an inherent assessment component to provide the district with data to evaluate its effectiveness.

The district's vocational programs were fully developed and regularly reviewed. Greater Lawrence revised its programs to satisfy licensure and certification requirements and to meet prevailing codes. The district conducted and used surveys of business and industry to determine emerging needs and to keep its equipment current. The district adjusted its career and vocational programs to meet industry standards and local employment trends.

2002 Indicators

1.6. The district pays particular attention to the participation and assessment results of all subgroups: regular education students, minority students, students with disabilities and students with limited English proficiency.

EQA Rating from 2002: Poor

EQA Rating from 2005: Needs Improvement

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

In the initial review period (1999-2002), the district did not meet the state required participation rate of 95 percent for all students tested in mathematics, except in 1999.

During the first reexamination period (2002-2005), administrators told the EQA examiners that Greater Lawrence contracted with the Center for Resource Management (CRM) during the 2002-2003 school year. Administrators stated that data from CRM correlating attendance with achievement led to the decision to reduce allowances for classroom and school absences and to condition promotion on attendance as well as grades.

The district met the state's standard for participation for all students. Administrators and pupil personnel services staff members told the EQA examiners that the MCAS tests were the primary source of student achievement data at Greater Lawrence, and that content area specialists in mathematics and English language arts performed the data analysis. The content area specialists presented their preliminary findings and recommendations to the core administrative team, the vocational cluster leaders, and academic department heads. The cluster leaders and department

heads subsequently discussed the data with the vocational and academic teachers. Following a review of documentation, the EQA examiners determined that the specialists' reports consisted fundamentally of an item analysis correlated with the state framework strands to identify and address student and curricular strengths and weaknesses.

In interviews, administrators and teachers cited examples of changes in the regular education program resulting directly from analysis of student performance data, including requiring Algebra and Geometry in grades 9 and 10, and the introduction of writing and reading across the curriculum to increase time-on-task for literacy skill development.

Teachers and administrators stated that while there had been no formal, documented analysis of the needs of district limited English proficient (LEP) students, their low performance on the MCAS tests resulted in part from the lack of correspondence between the district English as a second language (ESL) curriculum and the state frameworks. Many ESL students did not have access to a curriculum based on the frameworks prior to taking the MCAS tests. Administrators stated that the Hispanic student subgroup had not been analyzed separately since Hispanic students predominated in the Greater Lawrence population.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), according to DOE data, Greater Lawrence met the state's required participation rate for all students, with 98 to 100 percent of district students participating in the ELA, mathematics, and science MCAS tests.

The district analyzed MCAS test results by subgroup to improve student performance. For example, administrators stated that when the special education subgroup did not make adequate yearly progress (AYP), they reviewed an item analysis of the results for all district students and the special education subgroup to identify the gaps. In the fall of 2007, the coordinator of data and assessment reviewed these data with special education teachers so that they could improve student performance in areas of weakness.

The district added qualified staff members and provided them training to address the needs of English language learner (ELL) students. This subgroup had not made AYP in ELA and mathematics in 2006. Administrators told the EQA team that while Greater Lawrence previously had only one certified ELL teacher, it now had three certified teachers and a paraprofessional,

and all staff members administering the MELA-O and MEPA were trained and licensed. The district also improved supervision of the ELL program by assigning responsibility to the lead teacher of the ELA program. Greater Lawrence ELL students made AYP in both ELA and mathematics in 2007.

Greater Lawrence used assessment data to create Individual Student Success Plans (ISSPs) for grade 11 and 12 students scoring in the 'Warning/Failing' category on the MCAS tests. Beginning in 2007, the district also wrote ISSPs for at-risk students in grades 9 and 10. Administrators stated that the goal was for students to pass the MCAS tests on the first administration. They went on to say that they used student data to target areas of weakness for teachers and tutors to address in remediation.

In interviews, administrators and teachers attributed a change in the scheduling of academic and shop classes for freshmen and sophomores to an analysis MCAS test data. Administrators stated that while students required daily instruction in academics to improve their performance, the schedule of alternating weeks of academics and shop created inconsistencies. Administrators changed the schedule to ensure that district freshmen and sophomores took academic and shop classes daily on a half-day schedule.

2.1. The district regularly engages in an evaluation process at all levels that coordinates student assessment data, program, and personnel performance evaluation results. The district incorporates pertinent findings and recommendations from all external evaluations.

EQA Rating from 2002: Poor

EQA Rating from 2005: Needs Improvement

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

In the initial review period (1999-2002), the EQA examiners found that while the district collected assessment data and program and personnel evaluation results, these results were not coordinated in any systematic manner.

During the first reexamination period (2002-2005), however, the district made improvements in this area. It began to address issues uncovered during the current and previous years in program

evaluation. Since data were now collected and analyzed, teachers had been involved in the professional development planning, and some internal and external program evaluations had been conducted and the results analyzed. However, district analysis of the results lacked coordination, and there was limited correlation of the results with personnel evaluations. During the first reexamination period, the collective bargaining agreement was reopened solely for the purpose of negotiating salary issues, and no effort was made to address the personnel evaluation system.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), the district continued to make improvements in collecting assessment data systematically, assessing the effectiveness of its programs, assigning personnel evaluations to appropriate administrators, and using data to improve instruction. Recently employed administrators told the EQA examiners that they found that personnel evaluations were not timely when they began working at Greater Lawrence, and were working diligently to complete them. An administrator who entered the district in January 2007 completed 19 evaluations by March. Administrators participated in training with a consultant to improve their skills as evaluators. At the time of the EQA review, the district had completed the evaluations of all administrators and teachers without professional status, although most evaluations of teachers with professional status were still not timely.

In 2006-2007, the district began to use classroom and shop walk-throughs as ways of collecting data about instruction. Under the terms of the teachers' contract, the walk-throughs were not part of the evaluation process. Administrators used both a checklist and a teacher questionnaire. Administrators told the EQA examiners that they used the questionnaire to look for trends and patterns in instruction that could be addressed with professional development. The district required teachers to have a visible daily agenda. Administrators told the EQA team that the agenda was "a good organizational tool" for lesson planning. EQA classroom observations confirmed that teachers posted daily agendas.

The district used mandatory external evaluations to identify and correct deficiencies. For example, Greater Lawrence prepared a report detailing district progress in each area cited as in need of improvement in the 2005 EQA report. Greater Lawrence also used the Department of Education Coordinated Program Review (CPR) as a guide to correct deficiencies in its ELL

program. Administrators stated that there was still a need to provide additional professional development to help staff members meet the needs of English language learners.

2.2. The district formulates strategies to improve leadership, instruction, and student performance as needs arise from evaluations.

EQA Rating from 2002: Poor

EQA Rating from 2005: Needs Improvement

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

In the initial review period (1999-2002), a review of a random selection of 28 files of teachers with professional status determined that only five had completed evaluations during the two years prior to the examination. Of the 28 files that were reviewed, 20 contained evaluations. Since evaluations had not been conducted in a timely manner, the district was unable to use them to help determine strategies to improve leadership, instruction, and student performance.

During the first reexamination period (2002-2005), the EQA team determined that the district had demonstrated some growth in meeting this standard, but more work was needed. All non-professional status teacher evaluations appeared to be in order. Of the 21 faculty personnel folders randomly selected for review, half were informative, half were instructive, 29 percent were timely, and none contained recommendations to foster further professional growth.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), according to administrators and a review of records by the EQA team, the district was continuing to make improvements in conducting and completing teacher evaluations, but had not yet completed them all. In a randomly selected sample of the files of teachers subject to evaluation, 34 of 39 had completed evaluations. Of the 34 evaluations reviewed by the EQA team, 56 percent were instructive, 21 percent were informative, 44 percent were timely, and 21 percent contained recommendations to foster professional growth. The most current evaluations contained recommendations for instructional improvement such as “vary your teacher style from teacher-centered to student-centered by providing group activities,” and “try to provide closure to the lesson before the bell rings, and prepare students for oral reading by giving them the sections the day before.”

Administrators and teachers told the EQA team that the district's priorities and professional development programs focused on classroom management, improving instruction, and improving administrators' supervisory skills. Staff, departmental, and leadership meetings focused on implementation of the school's priority goals. During the 2006-2007 school year, the district began to organize and use evaluations, walk-throughs, and professional development as means to improve leadership, instruction, and student achievement. Teachers stated that walk-throughs were positive and that they learned from them, and added that professional development intended to improve instructional strategies provided them with tools to improve student achievement.

2.3. Through its evaluation system, the district consistently monitors the quality and effectiveness of existing programs and holds administrators and schools accountable for student performance and improvement.

EQA Rating from 2002: Poor

EQA Rating from 2005: Needs Improvement

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

In the initial review period (1999-2002), the district's documentation indicated that with the exception of the grade 9 exploratory program, the district did not consistently monitor the quality and effectiveness of existing programs. The district's administrative contracts did not address accountability for improving student performance.

During the first reexamination period (2002-2005), the EQA examiners found no mention of accountability for student performance or enhancement of student improvement in a review of administrative contracts and job descriptions. In interviews with staff members, the examiners found no evidence of consistent evaluation of programs for effectiveness and quality during the first reexamination period, although the district collected, and to some extent analyzed, student assessment data.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), teacher evaluation was not the primary means of monitoring program quality and effectiveness. District administrators told the EQA

examiners they not all teacher evaluations were timely. The new superintendent established a system of teacher evaluation with the leadership team. According to interviewees, the superintendent delegated evaluation responsibilities to appropriate supervisory personnel, and ensured that the responsibilities for each were reasonable and manageable. Academy supervisors were responsible for evaluating their staff members. In academies with larger numbers of staff members, an assistant principal and the vocational director assisted with the evaluations. Administrators stated, and a review of personnel files confirmed, that the district made progress in evaluating administrators and teachers without professional status in 2006-2007. Performance reviews for administrators included goals addressing the improvement of student performance.

The district made progress in monitoring and improving the quality and effectiveness of some programs through analysis of assessment data, leadership meetings and discussions, and direct observations of programs. Academy supervisors used walk-throughs to ensure that teachers taught the prescribed curriculum, posted daily agendas, and developed lesson plans connected to the standards. Academy supervisors also provided feedback and supported teachers in improving their daily instruction, although walk-throughs were not a component of the teacher evaluation procedure.

After a review of its Title I program, the district changed the service delivery model from an all-school enrichment program to targeted remediation for at-risk students. District vocational curricula and programs were reviewed annually. The Greater Lawrence special education department contracted for annual external program audits. Common midterm and final examinations were used to determine how well students progressed in academic programs.

2005 Indicators

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

EQA Rating from 2005: Needs Improvement

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

For the first reexamination period (2002-2005), a review of the district's policy manual and interviews revealed that the district did not have any written policies about the assessment of students. During the review period, the district used a battery of standardized assessments to place entering students and monitor their progress. The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) were administered to entering grade 9 students to guide placement decisions. The Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE) and the Stanford 9 were administered in a pre- and post-test methodology to measure the progress of grade 9 students in ELA and mathematics, respectively. The MCAS tests were used to determine diploma eligibility for all students.

Administrators explained in interviews that in addition to these tests, all students were given midyear and final examinations in their various academic classes. These tests were developed departmentally and were common for all students at the same level. Discrepancies among the results for teachers of the same subject prompted action by the administration. Interviewees stated that samples of these tests were submitted to the director of curriculum for review. In addition to the common midterm and final examinations, science and mathematics teachers also gave common unit tests and used these results to further monitor success in instruction and learning. Furthermore, the district provided a spreadsheet and bar charts showing aggregate mathematics and ELA scores and Competency Determinations for the school years 1999-2004.

In the vocational areas, teachers and administrators explained that the school used a competency-based model, and had recently started using the Skills Plus system for tracking them. In some shop areas third-party testing and certification were available. For example, Business Communications offered certification in Microsoft Office Specialist (MOUS), and the National Automotive Technology Educational Foundation (NATEF) certified the automotive program. Finally, specific assessments were given to ELL students and special education students for monitoring purposes.

Data from the tests were collected and used by the various constituents. It was clear from interviews with both teachers and administrators that data were not distributed widely. Data from the MCAS tests were cited as being the most widely distributed. Interviewees stated that ELA and mathematics department teachers received copies of these data, whereas other teachers were

given a presentation of the data for discussion. One administrator explained that the district had recently begun to sort the MCAS test data by shop area to allow the vocational teachers to know how their students were doing. When asked, very few of the administrators or teachers had any knowledge of the postgraduate positive placement data collected on students.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), the district had established practices and procedures for collection, analysis, and use of MCAS and other student assessment data. Interviewees told the EQA team that the data collection and analysis was ongoing at all levels. According to interviewees, the district trained administrators and lead teachers to use TestWiz software for data analysis. The district also had engaged a coordinator of data and assessment and MCAS support specialists to collect, analyze, and disseminate data to staff members. Interviewees stated that assessment and other data were disseminated to staff members through staff, departmental, and other meetings. District staff members used Internet-based programs to review data and facilitate analysis of the implications for curriculum and instruction. The district distributed reports and spreadsheets by e-mail to administrators, academy supervisors, lead teachers, guidance counselors, and classroom teachers.

In addition to the MCAS tests, the district administered the Stanford 10, Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI), Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE), and Group Mathematics Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GMADE). The Stanford 10 and the SRI were used diagnostically and for placing at-risk students in the READ 180 program. Administration of the Stanford 10 was part of a pilot program for all vocational schools. In the vocational areas, teachers used a competency-based model, and third-party testing and certification were available.

Data analysis was used to identify students in need of support plans and programming. A review of Individual Student Success Plans (ISSPs) by the EQA team showed that the district used the results of MCAS test data analysis to identify students' strengths and weaknesses in ELA and mathematics. The MCAS support specialist identified at-risk students and provided tutorial support. The data were also used to help teachers and tutors target areas of curricular weakness in planning instruction

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

EQA Rating from 2005: Needs Improvement

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the first reexamination period (2002-2005), the district did very little in terms of district-generated reporting. Administrators explained that progress reports were sent to students' homes at midterm, followed by report cards at the close of each term. The student report cards showed each student's standing in all classes. Administrators told the EQA examiners that standardized assessment results were not included on the report cards. They explained that, in addition, parents received the MCAS test scores from the DOE through the mail. The district was developing a system to allow parents to access their student's assessment results via a secure web portal.

Each semester, the school published a principal's quarterly report. A review of a sample document showed that the district collected a great deal of student and school data, including teacher and student attendance rates; the number of suspensions; the number of disciplinary referrals; subject failure rates; and enrollment data. It was not clear from interviews with teachers or administrators, however, that these reports were used in an organized way to measure the attainment of goals, progress, or effectiveness.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), the district used summative and some formative assessments to measure student progress, and shared the results with all stakeholders. The district administered the MCAS tests, Stanford 10, GRADE, SRI, and other local assessments to measure student progress. The local assessments included teacher-generated tests, quizzes, projects, and common midyear and final examinations.

Greater Lawrence provided parents with progress reports and quarterly report cards by mail. The school also allowed parents access to their child's assessment results via a secure web portal. Parents could determine their child's progress by accessing these data.. In addition to the web

portal, the district had a comprehensive website that provided information to parents and the community. The district report card, school handbooks, the school calendar, and information about special events and the school's academic and technical programs were readily available on this site.

Greater Lawrence began communicating with parents through the Connect-ED program in October 2007. Administrators used Connect-ED to deliver important information about events and statewide testing, and to contact parents in emergencies. The school had two Spanish-speaking parent liaisons for outreach to the Hispanic community. Interviewees stated that the district provided multiple translations of almost all the information communicated to parents. Administrators told the EQA team that the district had the capacity to translate materials into eight languages.

School leaders presented MCAS results, data analyses, and recommendations to the school committee. School committee members verified that the superintendent and leadership team kept them informed of MCAS test results. School committee members stated that the school had improved in many areas since the last EQA review, and cited school safety, school climate, and mathematics achievement as measured by the MCAS test scores as examples.

The district coordinator of data and assessment furnished the EQA examiners with assessment reports used to identify individual students with skill weaknesses in order to provide them with appropriate academic support. The district provided additional support for at-risk students. For example, Greater Lawrence reviewed the Class of 2010 GRADE test results to identify students needing additional help in ELA and the GMADE test results to identify students needing help in mathematics. MCAS mathematics tutors collaborated closely with the MCAS mathematics specialist and based their lesson plans on student needs identified from an analysis of MCAS test data. Administrators and teachers told the EQA team that this targeted focus was a major factor in improving student achievement in mathematics as measured by the MCAS tests.

Other contributing factors included favorable testing sites, two staff members proctoring at each site, pep rallies, and the common expectation that students could meet the standards on the first administration of the MCAS tests. Interviewees told the EQA team that the district's mathematics scores improved significantly. According to a district report entitled GLTS

Performance on Spring Administration to Sophomores MCAS Math—Years 2003-2007, the percentage of district students scoring in the ‘Proficient’ and ‘Advanced’ categories on the MCAS mathematics test increased from 29 percent in 2006 to 40 percent in 2007, and the percentage of district students scoring in the ‘Warning/Failing’ category decreased from 37 percent in 2006 to 18 percent in 2007.

The Greater Lawrence 2007 SRI Proficiency Summary Report identified freshman students scoring at the ‘Basic’ and ‘Below Basic’ levels in reading. These students were given priority for placement in the district’s new READ 180 program, initiated in September 2007. The district intended to track the progress of these students electronically and provide reports to parents, teachers, and administrators through READ 180 software. Administrators also intended to analyze student progress in READ 180 to measure the effectiveness of the program.

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

EQA Rating from 2005: Needs Improvement

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the first reexamination period (2002-2005), common midterm and final examinations were administered to assess student progress. Discrepancies among the results for teachers of the same subject prompted action by the administration. Interviewees stated that samples of these tests were submitted to the director of curriculum for review. In addition to the common midterm and final examinations, science and mathematics teachers also administered common unit tests and used these results to further monitor success in instruction and learning. Furthermore, the district provided a spreadsheet and bar charts showing aggregate mathematics and ELA scores and Competency Determinations for school years 1999-2004. Interviews with administrators and teachers confirmed that the majority of the analysis of student assessment data was done in a centralized way. For example, two district administrators primarily analyzed the MCAS test data. They then would share their analyses with the district leadership as well as the heads of the ELA and math departments. It was then the responsibility of these department heads to further study

these analyses and develop strategies based on the trends revealed in the data. During the review period, the majority of these analyses were done using Excel. At the time of the examination the district had two to three staff members trained to use TestWiz; however, they explained that they were in the beginning stages of using it.

Administrators explained that they attempted to distribute the analyses of the assessment data, especially in the case of the MCAS tests. However, they told the EQA examiners that due to a reduced number of administrative team members, it was sometimes difficult to do this in a timely manner. Interviewees stated that ELA and mathematics department teachers received copies of the data, whereas other teachers were given a presentation of the data for discussion. One administrator explained that the district had recently begun to sort the MCAS test data by shop area to allow the vocational teachers to know how their students were doing. None of the personnel interviewed was able to recall having seen any data analyzed by subgroup and compared to the aggregate student population.

During the first reexamination period, two MCAS specialists were hired to provide support for students identified by unsatisfactory performance on the assessment. They were two of the district employees trained to use TestWiz. It was considered a part of their role to conduct the MCAS test data analysis and use the results in assisting students.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), the district had some common midterms, finals, and other assessments to measure student progress, and developed benchmarks. Greater Lawrence analyzed MCAS, GRADE, GMADE, Stanford 10, and SRI results and disseminated the findings to appropriate staff members. Staff members could also access test results and other student data from the district website.

The district developed benchmarks in the content areas through the collaboration of the staff and administrators. Lead teachers wrote the benchmarks under the supervision of the director of curriculum and instruction, using educational research, the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks, and input by content teachers as references. The director of curriculum and instruction and lead teachers were responsible for monitoring to ensure that students achieved the benchmark standards. At the time of the review, the district lacked formal benchmark

assessments, and it was unclear how teachers were measuring students' progress toward the accomplishment of benchmark standards.

The district also used the MCAS tests and local assessments to measure student progress. Teachers received reports electronically and at staff and departmental meetings. The district's leaders and lead teachers were trained to use TestWiz. At the time of the review, the district also offered teachers training in TestWiz through the professional development program. Administrators told the EQA team that while in the past teachers did not receive much data and the data were not timely, they now received comprehensive data immediately or could access them electronically from their classroom and home computers.

According to administrators and teachers, the district used and discussed data regularly. For example, Greater Lawrence administrators held meetings to give staff members a comprehensive review of the restructuring status of the school and a longitudinal history of the school's MCAS test results, and to discuss goals and priorities. Furthermore, the district had engaged a coordinator of data and assessment and MCAS support specialists to provide data to staff members in a timely manner.

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

EQA Rating from 2005: Needs Improvement

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the first reexamination period (2002-2005), in some cases the district used student assessment results to measure the effectiveness of instructional programs. Both the ELA and mathematics programs, for which MCAS test data were available, were analyzed for strengths and weaknesses. Department heads explained that when they reviewed the results of final examinations or unit examinations they conducted an error analysis to determine which questions were most frequently answered incorrectly. If the cause was attributable to a specific teacher, they tried to address the issue. Otherwise, it was assumed that there was a weakness in the curriculum requiring modification.

In the vocational shop areas, teachers and administrators were not aware of the shops' positive placement data. Most teachers felt that they were all close to 100 percent, but teachers could not recall having seen the specific data.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), the district used assessment results primarily for placement and monitoring students' progress in instructional support programs. Greater Lawrence was just beginning to identify some of the root causes of low student achievement. For example, the district engaged in deeper analyses of the MCAS test results to target specific areas of weakness in mathematics, enabling teachers and tutors to plan more effective instruction. The coordinator of data and assessment compared aggregate district student performance to the performance of district special education students in an item analysis to identify the most significant performance gaps. The coordinator subsequently presented a workshop to special education teachers based on the results of this comparative analysis, and the teachers used these data to make adjustments in the content and delivery of mathematics instruction for special education students.

When a review of SRI test data showed that 65 percent of the entering freshman class scored in the 'Basic' and 'Below Basic' categories, the district implemented the READ 180 program in the fall of 2007. Two staff members provided support to 60 students enrolled in the program. The EQA examiners observed this program. Students in the program read independently and met in small groups for teacher instruction. They then received targeted computer-assisted instruction and assessment based on their needs. The READ 180 program kept track of their progress and generated reports for parents, teachers, and administrators.

The MCAS support specialists used assessment results to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of individual students. They provided the data and specific strategies for improving student performance to the tutors and assisted teachers in planning lessons. Both academic and vocational teachers used the John Collins Writing Program. Supervisors monitored teacher use of the program through informal walk-throughs, plan books reviews, and formal observations.

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

EQA Rating from 2005: Needs Improvement

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the first reexamination period (2002-2005), the district and school leadership did not regularly engage in formal internal or external audits/assessments to inform the effectiveness of its program implementation or service delivery systems.

Some internal program assessments and audits were conducted on an informal or irregular basis. In 2004, for example, the district conducted a needs assessment. This resulted in the writing of a 16-page document that contained a breakdown of MCAS test data (by ELA and math, as well as by shop area) and data from the Stanford 9. In addition, in 2004 the district commissioned an external audit of its special education program. The evaluation was primarily conducted via questionnaire, and the report collated the responses from these questionnaires and made some preliminary findings.

The district conducted meetings of the shop areas' program advisory committees (PACs) as mandated by regulation. Administrators explained that these committees met at least three times per year (one general all-school meeting and two department-specific meetings). A review of the minutes from randomly selected PAC meetings did not reveal the use or discussion of any specific student assessment data that would indicate strengths or weaknesses of the specific shop program, but programs were discussed and numerous suggestions were made during these meetings to allow for improvement. PAC members were expected to inspect the shops periodically and to informally observe instruction.

In the academic areas it was clear, according to interviews with teachers and administrators, that analyses were done within the ELA and mathematics departments. As a result of these analyses a number of modifications were made to the structure of the program as well as to the curriculum. For instance, the school changed from reading lengthy novels to reading a greater number of short stories. Administrators explained that due to the school's week-about system it was

difficult to cover enough material during the school year to satisfy the various genre requirements. Short stories were thought to be an effective solution. In mathematics, the district implemented its schoolwide “Math Moment” program to help address some of the weaknesses by connecting math practice to the shop areas. These types of analyses were mostly done on an informal basis and were not typically documented. The results were discussed and shared with appropriate colleagues.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), the district began to evaluate its academic programs, and participated in mandated audits such as the 2005-2006 Coordinated Program Review and the 2005-2007 EQA reexamination. The district used the CPR report to review its programs and made changes to improve them. Greater Lawrence reassessed the delivery of instruction in its Title I program, and conducted yearly special education program audits. It also reviewed its career and vocational programs. While it was not clear whether all staff members received copies of district program evaluation results, staff members were aware of recommendations and changes in their own program areas.

The district used the findings of the Coordinated Program Review to bring its ELL program into compliance with state regulations. The district now had three certified ELL teachers, whereas it previously had none. Greater Lawrence developed and used language surveys, and hired two parent liaisons to reach out to the Hispanic community. The district identified ELL students at risk and provided them appropriate support.

The district contracted for audits of its special education programs. EQA examiners reviewed the findings and recommendations from audits conducted over the last two years. These evaluations were conducted primarily via questionnaire, and the evaluator collated the responses and reported the findings. According to administrators, the district purchased the Kurzweil text-reader and other assistive devices and equipment to accommodate students with special needs based on audit recommendations.

Following a review of its Title I program, Greater Lawrence eliminated whole-school participation. Previously, the Title I program offered enrichment for all students, with students participating once a month in ELA and mathematics classes on a rotating schedule. The district

determined that this was ineffective, and changed the service delivery model to provide targeted instruction and MCAS test tutoring for students with identified remedial needs.

Administrators stated that the district updated its vocational-technical program continuously. Greater Lawrence conducted and used surveys of businesses and industry to assess emerging needs and update equipment. Many career areas had either state or nationally certified programs, and students participating in these programs had the opportunity to be certified in a specific career major. The district purchased Bridges Career Development software to allow students to create electronic career portfolios. The portfolios contained competencies, work samples, resumes, and licenses and certifications that could be converted to PDF files.

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

EQA Rating from 2005: Needs Improvement

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

For the first reexamination period (2002-2005), teachers and administrators told the EQA examiners that teachers were typically assigned based on course-level needs. They went on to say, however, that teachers typically stayed in their assigned position unless they expressed a desire to change. The superintendent and principal both agreed that staff members could be reassigned if necessary, but the practice of the school had been not to move staff. Department heads explained that they made recommendations to the principals. These were typically based on teacher preferences with the idea that a teacher knew his or her strengths and weaknesses best. The department heads told the EQA team that the principal usually accepted their recommendations and trusted their judgments on teacher placement.

Administrators and teachers stated that departments were expected to set goals, but based on interviews the EQA team found that the departments did not typically monitor their progress toward achieving these goals. Administrators were not certain that teachers were conscious of these goals on a daily basis and actively working toward accomplishing them. Finally, the majority of interviewees told the EQA examiners that an end of year review of achievement of

goals was not conducted in their respective departments. They also stated that the previous year's goals were not necessarily reviewed as part of the process for the creation of the following year's goals.

Interviewees stated that changes had been made to allocations of instructional time based on an analysis of MCAS test data. They continued that more time was assigned to the areas of mathematics and ELA. However, there was no evidence that data were used to measure the allocation of resources or their effectiveness.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), the district used assessment results and other pertinent data to assign staff, prioritize goals, and allocate time and resources. Greater Lawrence leaders provided the EQA team with several documents showing how it had reviewed assessment results. These included GRADE, GMADE, Stanford 10, and Scholastic Reading Inventory results, and the GLTH Progress Report 2003-2006, a review of three-year trends.

Greater Lawrence reorganized its leadership team based on student achievement data. Under the reorganization, cluster leaders were replaced by academy supervisors, and department heads were replaced by lead teachers. The district clearly defined roles and responsibilities and listed them in the teachers' resource manual.

Greater Lawrence added and reassigned personnel to provide optimal learning opportunities for students. For example, the district assigned special education students to smaller classes. The leadership team reviewed personnel files to ensure that teachers had certifications and met the NCLB 'highly qualified' standard. The district replaced teachers who had not renewed their certifications, and provided professional development to ensure that students had highly qualified teachers. The school committee supported all of these initiatives.

The district strategic plan and the School Improvement Plan had measurable goals to improve student achievement. While the previous administration did not emphasize the importance of the MCAS tests and many students did not pass on the first attempt, the current leadership team set higher expectations for student performance, provided targeted support, added after-school clubs, and created a more positive school culture that fostered academic achievement. Students were expected to pass the MCAS tests on the first attempt, and were provided appropriate support and

encouragement. Leaders and staff members used the school's new motto "Reggies Moving Up" to nurture a school culture focused on student achievement.

The leadership team and staff met to discuss maximizing time to improve student academic achievement. A scheduling committee resulted from these discussions. Beginning in the fall of 2007, the district changed the freshman and sophomore program of alternating weeks of academic and career instruction to half-days of academic and career instruction. In one week, students were enrolled in academics in the morning and career instruction in the afternoon, and in the next week students were enrolled in career instruction in the morning and academics in the afternoon. Administrators told the EQA team that this provided greater continuity of instruction. The district also hired additional mathematics and ELA teachers. Administrators stated that while there had been many changes since the last EQA review, the district has not yet evaluated the newer initiatives, such as the schedule change or the READ 180 program, for effectiveness.

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

EQA Rating from 2005: Needs Improvement

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

For the first reexamination period (2002-2005), although interviews with teachers and administrators revealed that program evaluation had not been a consistent practice for all departments during the period under examination, the district used data to modify or improve the delivery of instruction and to evaluate the ELA and mathematics programs. Administrators explained that MCAS test data were reviewed and areas of weakness identified. One of these areas was literacy. As a result, the school initiated the John Collins Writing Program. In addition, the district identified number sense as a major issue in mathematics and initiated the "Math Moment" in vocational areas.

In the vocational shop areas, the program advisory committees reviewed all aspects of each of the technical programs. A review of meeting minutes from randomly selected vocational areas

showed that programs were being discussed and numerous suggestions were made to allow for improvement.

There were no examples found where the district discontinued a program or initiative based on student performance data. In cases cited by the district of programs that were discontinued, the reason was typically related to financial considerations.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), the district used MCAS test student performance data and other assessment data to review and improve programs, instruction, resources, and student achievement. Administrators stated that the new leadership team met regularly to discuss curriculum and instructional programs and practices. These discussions took place at leadership, staff, departmental, and other meetings and led to new initiatives, modification and termination of programs, instructional improvements, and gains in student achievement.

Interviewees indicated that the district reviewed its mathematics program because of low aggregate and subgroup MCAS test scores. The district increased instructional time in mathematics, and provided tutoring for at-risk students, specifically in areas identified by the MCAS math specialist as weaknesses. The MCAS specialist worked throughout the year with teachers and tutors providing them with data, lesson planning strategies, and coaching. In 2007, the district achieved AYP in mathematics, except for the White student subgroup. The percentage of district students scoring in the 'Advanced' and 'Proficient' categories increased from 29 percent in 2006 to 40 percent in 2007, while the percentage of students scoring in the 'Warning/Failing' category decreased from 37 percent to 18 percent.

The district initiated a READ 180 program in 2007 to provide remediation in reading when it found that 65 percent of entering students were reading at the 'Basic' or 'Below Basic' levels according to placement testing. Staff members used the Stanford 10 and the Scholastic Reading Inventory to diagnose students' needs. The READ 180 program provided daily instruction in reading.

In response to a review of its Title I program, Greater Lawrence changed its model. Previously, the Title I program offered enrichment classes to all students. Students participated once a month

in ELA and mathematics on a rotating schedule. The district found this ineffective and changed the program to provide targeted instruction and MCAS tutoring for students in need. When its ELL program was not in compliance according to the CPR report, the district responded to the issues cited and hired additional staff members to provide better services for this subgroup.

The district continually monitored its career programs with the assistance of advisory committees. Greater Lawrence modified programs and purchased new equipment when old equipment became obsolete. For example, the school purchased an alignment machine for the automotive program after surveying 30 automotive shops, and was in the process of phasing out machine technology and discontinuing building and project management because these career areas had low enrollments and fewer employment opportunities.

Standard IV: Human Resource Management and Professional Development

2005 Indicators										2007 Indicator
Ratings ▼ Indicators ►	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.7	4.8	4.9	4.10	4.11	4.12	13
Excellent										
Satisfactory	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007	2007		2007	2007	2007
Needs Improvement							2007			
Poor	2005	2005				2005			2005	
Unsatisfactory			2005	2005	2005		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 made major personnel changes in the spring of 2007 to ensure that all teachers and administrators were licensed for the jobs they performed. At the time of the second reexamination, all teachers and administrators were licensed as required.
- The district reorganized its administrative structure to improve teacher supervision and evaluation and to manage other supervisory requirements more efficiently.
- District administrators created and filled a new data management and analysis position, and department chairs, Academy leaders, guidance counselors, and two administrators were trained in TestWiz.
- A restructured teacher mentoring program and a new teacher induction program provided support for the majority of newly hired teachers in the district. Two newly hired teachers not performing according to expectation were terminated during the 90-day trial period.
- Administrators began using walk-throughs to improve the supervision of instruction. While walk-throughs were not a component of teachers’ evaluations, the walk-through checklist raised both supervisors’ and teachers’ awareness of best practices

- While the district evaluated all administrators as required, more than one-third of teachers with professional teacher status had no evaluations on file. Evaluation schedules for professional status teachers had been developed and all were notified when they will be evaluated.

Summary

Greater Lawrence made improvements in the area of human resource management and professional development since the last EQA review. Of the nine indicators in this standard reexamined by the EQA in 2007, the district improved on all nine and received a rating of ‘Satisfactory’ on eight. In addition, Greater Lawrence received a ‘Satisfactory’ rating on the one new indicator in this standard that was included in the reexamination.

During the 2006-2007 school year, the new Greater Lawrence superintendent reviewed the personnel files of teachers and administrators, and notified those whose licensure was in question. The district encouraged these staff members to contact the Department of Education to correct inaccuracies or misunderstandings. Greater Lawrence also offered professional development opportunities to meet certification requirements and counseled staff members about the appropriate steps to take to secure certification. The district reported that 46 staff members were terminated on June 14, 2007. Of that number, 21 were terminated for licensure issues, although seven were subsequently re-hired based on updated licensure confirmation or waivers requested by the district and approved by the Department of Education. Four other employees teaching in areas outside of their certification were transferred to appropriate positions internally.

The district recruited and hired 88 new staff members to complete staffing for the 2007-2008 school year. The newly hired teachers participated in an induction program that began with an intensive three-day program prior to the start of school and that continued throughout the school year. Teachers new to the district were assigned a mentor, who served as a part of a support team to help make them successful in the district. New teachers also participated in a required 36-hour graduate credit course funded by the district. Administrators new to the district were also mentored through the services of a consultant.

The director of curriculum and instruction supervised the planning of professional development for professional staff members under the direction of the superintendent and principal. The

professional development plan was based on a broad understanding of the implications of student achievement results, data from placement and other examinations, and teacher recommendations. Using the services of a consultant, professional development stressed classroom management and instructional practices. Consultant trainers visited classrooms to ensure that the techniques introduced in the training sessions were used. Professional development activities were scheduled on two professional development days at the beginning of the school year and on delayed opening and early release days. On some of those days teachers met in department or cluster groups to share best practices and participated in peer support sessions.

In addition to the regularly scheduled professional development activities, the district also supported cohort groups pursuing professional development and advanced degrees through the services of another outside consultant who arranged credit through a state college. The district also reimbursed teachers the tuition for approved courses related to their assignments, under the provisions of the teachers' contract.

The district provided training for administrators on effective supervision and evaluation. According to a review of teacher personnel files by the EQA team, administrators had observed the majority of teachers new to the district and wrote up their classroom observations. The new administrators had not yet been able to complete evaluations of teachers with professional status who lacked timely evaluations. The EQA team found timely evaluations in 68 percent of the teacher files examined. All administrative personnel had timely evaluations. The evaluations complied with the requirements of education reform, and the EQA examiners considered 86 percent to be informative and 32 percent to be instructive.

2005 Indicators

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

EQA Rating from 2005: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the first reexamination period (2002-2005), the district hired new teachers. Those not permanently or provisionally licensed already were hired under the waiver provisions of the licensure process. There were 32 teachers hired on waivers for 2004-2005. The teachers and superintendent reported that the principal met monthly with newly hired teachers, reviewed professional development plans, and collected action plans to ensure that teachers attained or maintained licensure.

The district did not have a formal mentoring program that met the guidelines of 603 CMR 7.12, which requires an orientation program for new teachers, followed by their assignment to a trained mentor within the first two weeks of the school year, assignment to a support team, and released time for classroom observations. No trained mentors were assigned to teachers, although department chairpersons took an informal role in their training. No support teams were assigned, although teachers reported that they always made sure that “an experienced teacher took the new person ‘under his or her wing’.” Although the district lacked a structured induction program, newly hired teachers did have some support. When asked, teachers reported that they “felt supported” by the administration and colleagues. In summary, the district did not have a formal mentoring program but met some of the perceived needs of its new teachers in an informal way.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), in a major restructuring Greater Lawrence reorganized both the faculty and the administration of the school. In June 2007, 21 teachers without licensure were terminated. Seven of the terminated teachers were subsequently rehired on waivers or upon receipt of licensure from the Department of Education. Four teachers working outside of their areas of licensure were transferred to the appropriate areas. The district also terminated 13 teachers without professional teacher status based on concerns about their performance, including two teachers in the current year during the 90-day probationary period. Greater Lawrence eliminated nine hall monitors and one paraprofessional because their positions were no longer needed. Seven MCAS tutor positions were also eliminated.

In all, 88 new staff members were hired for the 2007-2008 school year. The principal monitored new teachers on waivers, and planned to meet with them in January to track their progress toward certification. Administrators told the EQA team that Greater Lawrence established a

formal mentoring program during the summer of 2007. A consultant trained the mentors and met regularly with them and district administrators. The district also developed a mentoring handbook. Mentors met with their mentees monthly. In addition to mentoring, the district had an induction program for new teachers.

According to administrators, the principal visited all new teachers' classrooms at least twice prior to conducting any formal observations. These visits were intended to welcome new staff members, engender a friendly and supportive atmosphere, and prevent problems. Administrators stated that there were no plans to request extensions of one-year waivers.

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

EQA Rating from 2005: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

For the first reexamination period (2002-2005), administrators reported during interviews that new teachers were assigned to the principal "for mentoring." Department chairpersons reported that they "took responsibility" for the training of new teachers. Administrators confirmed that department chairpersons took responsibility for the mentoring of new professional staff members. Administrators said that the district held an orientation for new teachers, but no documentation was available to indicate topics discussed or conclusions reached. Under 603 CMR 7.12, the assignment of a "trained mentor" and the appointment of a "support team" are required; neither of these practices was in place during the review period.

Teachers stated that they felt supported and that their needs were being met. New teachers attended an orientation session prior to the start of the new school year, and the principal and department chairperson assigned each new teacher a mentor. In addition, the principal held monthly "Coffee and Conversation with the Principal" meetings with new staff. The superintendent and principal walked around the school daily. The administrative team met regularly, and department chairpersons met monthly with the principal. The faculty and staff met monthly with the superintendent. The principal and superintendent met regularly with the

leadership team of administrators and cluster leaders. New teachers and professional staff members stated that these practices met their needs.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), the district formalized and institutionalized its mentoring process. The district recruited and hired 88 new staff members to complete staffing for the 2007-2008 school year. Teachers were trained as mentors during the summer of 2007, and the district assigned mentors to both beginning teachers and teachers new to the district in the fall. The newly hired teachers participated in an induction program that began with an intensive three-day program prior to the start of school and that continued throughout the school year. New teachers also participated in a required 36-hour graduate credit course funded by the district. According to documentation, and confirmed in interviews with administrators, new teachers could rely upon a support team of mentors and colleagues. The informal relationships reported during the previous examination continued as lead and senior teachers assisted teachers new to the district within their departments. Administrators also met with new teachers monthly. New administrators were mentored by a consultant who met with them regularly and was available by telephone between meetings. Both newly hired teachers and administrators told the EQA team that they were well supported. The district appeared to be in full compliance with both the letter and the spirit of the regulations.

4.5. The district's professional development programs included development of data analysis skills and the use of item analysis and disaggregated data to address all students' achievement.

EQA Rating from 2005: Unsatisfactory

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the first reexamination period (2002-2005), the district provided evidence of a substantial and relevant professional development program. However, there was no evidence that any of the organized professional development activities included meaningful training in data analysis. Minutes of professional development meetings indicated that many of the professional development programs were designed to meet the needs of teachers as reported in interviews conducted during 2004. The current professional development plan was the result of

collaboration between teachers and administrators who used student assessment results in combination with an interest survey to help determine the topics to be addressed. The results of the survey were shared with the administration, which included its own agenda of items it believed would benefit the professional staff. There were several types of professional development events scheduled, covering many topics, predominately instructional. In interviews, teachers could name only three professional staff members who had received training in TestWiz.

The district began disaggregating data in 2002, but not systematically nor with broad participation. One teacher described himself as “the data guru” who provided student achievement data to the instructional staff. Teachers reported having seen MCAS test data in disaggregated form, but none reported making use of these data to make any instructional changes, or any formal training on use of data. They did report using aggregated data to modify programs. Teachers also told the EQA team that they used an item analysis of MCAS test and district midyear examination results, but there was no evidence provided that the district stressed data analysis skills in its professional development program. Further, the district presented no evidence that its professional development program addressed the development of subgroup analysis skills for the professional staff.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), Greater Lawrence created and filled the position of coordinator of data and assessment as part of an administrative reorganization in June 2007. This position was intended to help teachers use assessment results to improve instruction. In addition, department chairs, Academy leaders, guidance counselors, and two administrators were trained in the use of TestWiz, enabling them to analyze test results. The director of curriculum and instruction joined the administrative team early in 2007 and had little time to prepare a formal professional development plan. According to administrators, the district used the results of the Stanford Achievement Test, Form 10, administered to entering grade 9 students, and data on student progress in the READ 180 program to develop a preliminary plan.

Teachers stated that the district had two professional development committees during the second reexamination period. One consisted exclusively of volunteers. In January 2007, this committee was succeeded by a committee composed of teachers recruited by the administration and

volunteers who made their interest known to the new director of curriculum and instruction. According to teachers and administrators, professional development committee members used their broad knowledge of MCAS student achievement data and school improvement plan goals to target professional development activities for the year. In addition, the district conducted a needs assessment survey in early 2007 to determine teachers' professional development interests and needs. Some of these topics were incorporated in the professional development plan.

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

EQA Rating from 2005: Unsatisfactory

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the first reexamination period (2002-2005), teachers reported that a professional development council, consisting of participants from academic and vocational faculty as well as administrative staff, developed the professional development plan. Members of the council reported that the professional development plan was the result of a survey of teachers and an administrative review of teacher's professional development activities reported for salary and certification purposes. Copies of the survey were provided for review. Topics recommended by the teachers included items pertinent to re-licensure and personal interest. The administration reported that it had added "a few items of its own." None of the items added to the professional development plan by either the administration or teachers reflected the need for training in data analysis skills, or for instructional or curriculum planning skills that would make use of such training.

During its previous visit, the EQA determined that there was no faculty input or participation in the professional development process. An effective and enthusiastic professional development committee remedied this. Yet, the staff continued to have a need for training in the analysis of student achievement data.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), the district used multiple sources of information to inform its professional development program, including trends and patterns emerging from an analysis of student assessment results. The district adopted and provided training on the John Collins Writing Program based on the needs identified from an analysis of the results of the Stanford 10 Achievement tests and the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI). Informed by data from classroom observations, the district focused the 2007 professional development program on instructional strategies and classroom management techniques.

According to a review of teacher personnel files conducted by the EQA examiners, 21 percent of teacher evaluations contained recommendations for further professional development. The district scheduled professional development activities on delayed opening, early release, and full days during the school year. Administrators described other professional development opportunities, such as courses for credit through Salem State College and classes for professional development points (PDPs) offered by external consultants. The district continued to reimburse teachers for course tuition. Greater Lawrence also provided time for sharing best practices among teachers in its professional development program.

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

EQA Rating from 2005: Unsatisfactory

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the first reexamination period (2002-2005), there was no evidence that changes in the expectations for programs and practices resulted in changes in supervision and evaluation standards. Administrators reported that they used informal classroom observations in conjunction with professional development plans to make changes in programs and practices. Teachers supported the fact that programs had been changed based upon interpretation of aggregated MCAS test data, and by interpretation of data from midterm and final examinations, but none of the teachers interviewed reported that recommendations on program changes had come from administrators or coordinators based upon program supervision or classroom observations.

Administrators agreed that they “needed to do a better job with their evaluation and classroom observations.” The superintendent stated, “We get around a lot.” The superintendent also stated that he generally conducted his rounds of classrooms daily, and in interviews teachers reported that they saw the superintendent at least once per day. The district did not gather regular and systematic data from classroom observations or teacher evaluations to identify professional development needs in the school’s programs or instruction.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), the district began to improve its performance in conducting teacher evaluations in 2006-2007. Teachers stated that administrative walk-throughs occurred more frequently beginning at about this time. The teachers’ association initially objected to walk-throughs, but the matter was resolved by prior agreement, when association officers accompanied administrators on some walk-throughs. Administrators provided evidence that walk-throughs helped them to glean information on classroom management techniques as well as teachers’ use of instructional tools and practices from the district professional development program. Administrators expected teachers to display John Collins Reading posters in their classrooms and teaching areas.

Administrators also told the EQA team that the principal reviewed the individual professional development plans of all teachers scheduled for evaluation at the beginning of the year, and has a checklist of the plans reviewed.

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

EQA Rating from 2005: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the first reexamination period (2002-2005), administrators were evaluated using a form directly adapted from the Professional Standards for Administrators, 603 CMR 7.10. The form met the requirements of the Education Reform Act. The administrative evaluation instrument did

not include a specific reference to the use of student data. A review of personnel records for administrators indicated that administrative evaluations were timely.

When asked if administrative evaluations were linked to data of any kind, the superintendent replied, “We think so,” but went on to say that there was no formal linkage and administrators were not evaluated based upon student data. The superintendent felt that linking administrative compensation to student achievement data “would be an issue,” since the school committee had decided that all raises for teachers and administrators should be the same “across the board.” The evaluation procedure for administrators was aligned with the Education Reform Act and was informative, instructive, and used to promote individual growth and overall effectiveness. The superintendent stated that he had requested that student performance become part of the teachers’ contract and teachers’ evaluations in negotiations with American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Local 170, but he had not succeeded by the time of the EQA visit. The district’s five bargaining units had one-year contracts.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), examiners found that the district evaluated all administrators as required by regulation. As noted in the previous reexamination, the district evaluation procedure for administrators met the standards of the Education Reform Act, and was informative, instructive, and used to promote individual growth and overall effectiveness. The evaluation instrument was based on the Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership, and consisted of a checklist with limited space for narrative comments. Administrators told the EQA team that the process began in the fall with an individual conference between the administrator and the evaluator. Both the evaluator and the administrator agreed upon goals, and goal accomplishment was a major component of the overall evaluation of administrators according to their contracts. When asked, all administrators stated that the improvement of student achievement was one of their goals.

The EQA examiners found evaluations on file for all district administrators for the 2006-2007 school year, including an administrator hired in April 2007. All of the evaluations were signed and timely. All administrators were licensed for the positions they held. Examiners rated 94 percent of administrators’ evaluations as informative and 63 percent as instructive.

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

EQA Rating from 2005: Unsatisfactory

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the first reexamination period (2002-2005), the evaluation of non-professional status teachers was aligned with the Education Reform Act, but evaluations were not generally informative, instructive, and used to promote individual growth and overall effectiveness. The evaluations of teachers with professional status were not completed in a timely manner. Faculty evaluations, like administrative evaluations, were not linked to student data. Teachers reported that they were rarely evaluated. One teacher stated that she had been evaluated once in the previous nine years, and another told the EQA team that he had been evaluated once in the previous 21 years. The superintendent said, "We need to improve the quality of our evaluation system." The EQA examiners found evidence that both the superintendent and principal considered that evaluations of professional staff members were critical, and directed other administrators to make sure that evaluations were conducted in a timely manner.

The teacher evaluation system was based upon multiple layers of observation. Cluster coordinators and department heads routinely made observations, wrote up the observation visit, and held post-conferences. Following the post-observation conference, however, records were destroyed. The teachers' contract prohibited department chairs from evaluating teachers. Review of the teachers' contract indicated that the evaluation system was linked to the requirements of Chapter 11 of the Acts of 1985, rather than the Education Reform Act of 1993 that replaced it. Union officials and administrators were unaware that the district evaluation procedure was not in compliance with prevailing requirements.

Twenty faculty personnel folders were randomly selected for review. Of these evaluations, 29 percent were timely. All of the evaluations were signed. Almost all the evaluations reviewed

were of non-professional status teachers, and one was for a teacher who had just attained professional teacher status. Half of the evaluations were informative or instructive, and none contained recommendations to foster further professional growth. An “informative” evaluation included attention to instructional techniques beyond a simple description of the observation. An “instructive” evaluation included recommendations for the improvement of teaching technique, classroom management, content mastery, or the improvement of the educational climate. Student data were not used in evaluations.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), the district improved its performance in conducting evaluations of non-professional status teachers. The EQA examiners selected 39 teacher personnel files for review. Of the 39 teachers, five were hired in the current year. Twelve, or 35 percent of the remaining 34 teacher files reviewed, contained no current evaluations. Examiners found that 20 of the 22 evaluations on file were signed, 16 demonstrated characteristics of education reform, 19 were informative, and seven were instructive and promoted growth and overall effectiveness. Evaluation schedules for professional status teachers have been developed, and all have been notified when they will be evaluated.

The evaluation form consisted of a checklist with limited space for narrative comments. Examiners found checks distributed across the spectrum of choices, with the ‘average’ option predominating. Approximately 21 percent of the evaluations reviewed contained recommendations encouraging future professional growth and development.

4.11. Administrators in the district were held accountable for improving student achievement in their respective assignments as reflected in performance reviews and for the implementation of an effective staff supervision program that considered student performance and student achievement data.

EQA Rating from 2005: Unsatisfactory

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

For the first reexamination period (2002-2005), a review of the administrators’ performance evaluation instrument indicated no linkage to student achievement data. Representatives of the teachers’ union reported that the school did not have an agreed upon instrument for performance

reviews of cluster academy leaders. The evaluation instrument for administrators reflected the standards in the Education Reform Act, and was informative, instructive, and supportive of increased professional growth. All of the administrator evaluations were timely. None included accountability for student achievement.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), administrative evaluations focused on the attainment of goals. Both evaluators and administrators agreed upon the goals. According to all administrators in both group and separate interviews, these goals addressed the improvement of student achievement. Student achievement in the district improved continuously during the reexamination period. The percentage of students achieving proficiency on the MCAS tests rose from 23 percent in 2004 to 33 percent in 2007 in English language arts (ELA), and from 20 percent in 2004 to 40 percent in 2007 in mathematics. During the same interval, the percentage of district students scoring in the 'Warning/Failing' category declined.

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

EQA Rating from 2005: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the first reexamination period (2002-2005), the district's human resources, supervision, and professional development processes were not clearly linked. The EQA determined that there appeared to be sufficient resources to fund a satisfactory professional development program. Employment of new teachers was conducted according to policy, with provided incentives for growth and support. Administrators and cluster academy leaders stated that the district lacked a supervisor of vocational programs to help carry out staff supervision as required by district policy

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), the linkages among human resources, supervision, and professional development practices were more apparent. A consulting agency conducted professional development activities for faculty members, and visited classrooms with district administrators to monitor the use of the techniques presented. In addition, the district provided opportunities for teachers to share best practices during release time for professional

development. Administrators regularly recognized teachers' accomplishments during the morning announcements and on the district website.

Improved human resources practices allowed the district to engage, train, and support 88 new staff members during the 2007-2008 school year. Supervision of non-professional status teachers also improved, and the district conducted professional development activities focused on the increasing student achievement. According to financial records reviewed by the EQA team, the district expended \$56,027 on professional development activities in 2006-2007. It was not clear what professional development activities were covered by that amount, and whether additional funds were expended for professional development in its many forms. The EQA examiners estimated that the actual costs of the district's documented professional development program likely exceeded the amount it reported. The EQA examiners also determined that the district had increased its capacity to provide professional development internally based upon the qualifications of recently hired and promoted staff members.

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: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district developed a crisis management plan and distributed copies throughout the building, including meeting rooms. Greater Lawrence trained staff members on the procedures, and the principal conducted drills and practices during the fall of 2007. Crisis team members met immediately following the practice sessions to discuss the results, and revised the crisis management plan to maximize its effectiveness.

The district provided substitute teachers a handbook outlining the plan and explaining their role in the successful crisis response prior to their first assignment. There were no student teachers in the district, and parent volunteers were used rarely.

Standard V: Access, Participation, and Student Academic Support									
	2002 Indicator	2005 Indicators					2007 Indicators		
Ratings ▼ Indicators ►	6.2	5.2	5.5	5.6	5.8	5.9	4	5	6
Excellent									
Satisfactory	2007	2007	2007		2007	2007	2007	2007	2007
Needs Improvement	2005			2007					
Poor	2002	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:

- The district reviewed its discipline policy and handbook and made changes in its discipline policy and procedures that were responsive to the results of the teachers' survey. The new policy relieved some of the responsibility for discipline from the teachers.
- Greater Lawrence created the new position of vice principal in charge of discipline and placed two deans under the direction of the vice principal to assist with discipline.
- In order to address attendance issues and improve communication with parents, the district added two parent liaisons who telephoned parents on a regular basis about attendance as well as disciplinary issues.
- The dropout rate remained the highest of all the vocational schools in the state; however, the school has increasingly taken measures to prevent students from leaving before graduation. Examiners were unable to discover evidence of a dropout recovery program at the school.
- Staff attendance showed an improvement over the second reexamination period after the new superintendent addressed the importance of staff attendance, and a dedicated phone line was put in place to provide for improved administrative monitoring of staff attendance.

- Students showed a marked improvement in mathematics achievement on the 2007 MCAS tests. Beginning in 2006, the district made changes in services for students who had failed or were at-risk of failing the MCAS tests, ending some ineffective programs and adding services on site that more directly targeted these students.
- The district demonstrated its awareness of the economic needs of its students by automatically offering waivers for all school programs that required fees for students participating in the free or reduced-cost lunch program. In addition, the school provided uniforms and equipment needed for shops to these students.
- The district was in the process of revising its District Curriculum Accommodation Plan to align it with the federal guidelines of a three-tiered system, and it was beginning to closely monitor the progress of students at each of the tiers.

Summary

Greater Lawrence also made improvements in the area of access, participation, and student academic support since the last EQA review. Of the six indicators in this standard reexamined by the EQA in 2007, the district improved on all six and received a rating of ‘Satisfactory’ on five. In addition, Greater Lawrence received a ‘Satisfactory’ rating on the three new indicators in this standard that were included in the reexamination.

Greater Lawrence addressed the MCAS performance of its students by making a number of changes in the services offered to at-risk students. Title I funds which previously were used to sponsor a monthly enrichment program for all students in the school were reallocated to provide services to at-risk students on site, during and after school and on Saturdays. All students who were at-risk of failing the MCAS tests in grade 10 and all upperclassmen who failed the MCAS tests completed an Individual Student Success Plan (ISSP) with an at-risk counselor. The district also added mathematics and special education staff members and two certified ELL teachers to replace uncertified ELL teachers. To provide for consistency in the ELA program, the district placed the ELL staff under the aegis of the ELA department.

During the reexamination period, the MCAS proficiency rate in ELA improved from 25 percent in 2005 to 32 percent in 2006 to 33 percent in 2007. In mathematics, the proficiency rate rose from 20 percent in 2005 to 29 percent in 2006 to 40 percent in 2007. The aggregate student

population made AYP in both ELA and mathematics; however, the special education and White student subgroups did not make AYP in mathematics in 2006. Greater Lawrence initiated a student support team to address students who were failing. A referral to the team constituted the first step in a new three-tiered process to determine the needs of students at risk of failing. These meetings resulted in a plan for referred students and the provision of timely services. The at-risk counselors monitored student progress. At Tier II, the team placed students in inclusion classes that were smaller and often had a teacher's assistant. At Tier III, the students were referred for evaluation under the special education law.

A new computer-assisted reading program offered students three or more years below grade level with individualized remedial instruction. During the 2005-2006 school year, counselors updated all of the special education plans, many of which were missing or incomplete.

In response to a teacher survey on classroom management, the district made a number of changes. The position of vice principal in charge of discipline was created and two deans were placed under the direction of the vice principal. The vice principal worked with a group of teachers to make changes in the discipline policy and in some disciplinary procedures. This relieved teachers of some of the disciplinary responsibilities and placed them with the administration. The school council made the appropriate changes in the student handbook to ensure that it was in line with the new code. All teachers participated in an in-service on the policy, and the classroom management policy was posted in all classrooms. The vice principal reported that referrals to the office had decreased and suspensions were fewer. Teachers and students also reported that the students were demonstrating positive behaviors. In classroom observations, the EQA team noted the respectful behaviors of the students.

To increase communication with parents and involve them in the education of their students, two Spanish-speaking parent liaisons were added to the staff. The primary responsibility of the liaisons was attendance. They stated that an important part of their role was to build relationships with the parents and students. They called parents on a daily basis when students were absent, and send letters home when students were absent on consecutive days. The liaisons also called parents to invite them to school events, and to explain how to use the parent portal on the

school's website. Attendance improved from 89.7 percent in the last year of the prior reexamination period to 93.3 percent in 2006.

Greater Lawrence instituted a number of measures to prevent students from dropping out; however, its dropout rate remained the highest of the state's vocational high schools. The district instituted regular student support team meetings to ensure that students at risk of dropping out received remedial services in a timely manner. In addition, the new staff positions of at-risk counselors and the parent liaisons created capacity for close monitoring of these students. Although staff members held exit interviews with students who stated their intention of dropping out and informed them of the resources available in the community, the district had no recovery program for dropouts.

2002 Indicator

6.2. The district ensures that behavioral problems in each of its schools do not interfere with instructional and learning time.

EQA Rating from 2002: Poor

EQA Rating from 2005: Needs Improvement

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

In the initial review period (1999-2002), interviews with administrators, cluster leaders, and teachers and a review of the district's documentation indicated that despite a systemic effort to curb misbehavior, behavioral problems interfered with instructional and learning time.

For the first reexamination period (2002-2005), administrators and teachers told the EQA examiners that in 2003 Greater Lawrence adopted an approach to reduce the number of office referrals, entitled the Classroom Management Plan. This approach made the classroom the first recourse for student discipline by equipping teachers to establish and enforce expectations. As a result, teachers were expected to deal with less serious misbehavior until it was recurrent or escalating. During the 2003-2004 school year, a behavioral expert provided training sessions for teachers on preventing and addressing student misbehavior. In observations throughout the school, the EQA examiners confirmed that management plans including expectations, positives,

consequences, and serious offenses were posted in classrooms and shops. Administrators stated that the office referrals for minor offenses declined significantly in the first year of the program, but had risen since. Teachers and administrators cited three likely reasons for the increase, leading to what one called “the collapse of the plan.” First, the management plan was inconsistent with the student handbook, and the conflicts were not resolved. Next, the plan was not fully implemented; for example, chronically misbehaving students were not required to get daily progress reports from all of their teachers as required in the plan. Finally, new staff members were not trained in the procedure, jeopardizing consistent schoolwide application of the approach.

According to Department of Education data, the Greater Lawrence three-year rates of suspension were above the state average. During the three-year interval 2002 through 2004, out-of-school suspensions averaged 15.4 percent at Greater Lawrence versus the state average of 6.2 percent, and in-school suspensions averaged 16.2 percent versus the state average of 4.7 percent. In interviews with the EQA examiners, administrators and pupil personnel services staff stated that two at-risk counselors were added to the staff during this interval to intervene with chronically misbehaving students. In addition, the school had attempted to recognize and reinforce good behavior through the Triple A Club, which provided incentives for attendance, attitude, and achievement, and the Student of the Month Program. Both were established in 2004-2005.

Pupil personnel services staff members told the EQA examiners that although Greater Lawrence kept records on student behavior, the data were not distributed to staff members. They had not seen the data on student suspensions, although they would have found it helpful in their work with students. In response to questions from the EQA examiners, administrators stated that the district had not analyzed data on suspensions to determine subgroup representation and root causes. School committee policy IHBH stated that “the school committee will provide alternative educational programs where needs have been identified. These alternative programs will seek to provide an appropriate academic social and vocational experience.” Administrators told the EQA examiners that some students needed an alternative program, but there were no current plans to develop one.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), the school administration addressed student behavioral issues in a number of ways initiated during the second year of the review period. The staff completed a survey to indicate their concerns and needs relative to classroom management and student discipline. Simultaneously, the leadership team reconfigured the administration office by replacing one of the deans and creating the position of vice principal in charge of discipline. The two remaining deans were placed under the supervision of this vice principal. The district also added the position of supervisor of the freshman academy to work closely with the vice principal on monitoring freshman disciplinary referrals and providing student support. Other positions added to monitor students and provide support included two at-risk counselors. In addition, two Spanish-speaking parent liaisons were hired. Both reported to the vice principal.

In response to the teacher survey, the vice principal met with a group of teachers and revised some procedures of the disciplinary code, making it more appropriate for the age group attending the school. The principal then reviewed the handbook with the school council, and the council subsequently rewrote parts of it to match the new code of discipline. In response to the results of the teacher survey, the new code and procedures relegated more of the responsibility for student discipline to the vice principal and less to the teachers. The procedural changes also provided for more consistent administration of the policy, in fulfillment of a need expressed by the teachers surveyed. At the opening of the 2007-2008 school year, administrators reviewed the new code of conduct and the handbook with all staff members during professional development time. One of the workshops presented to teachers by an outside consultant addressed the topic of classroom management. The district posted the accompanying PowerPoint presentation on-line and also mailed it to all staff members.

Administrators stated that that referrals to the office and suspensions had decreased, and the district provided data to the EQA that showed in-school and out-of-school suspensions had declined from 2005-2006 to 2006-2007, and were projected to further decline in 2007-2008 based on year to date data. Administrators, teachers, and students stated that they believed discipline had improved considerably in the 2007 school year. The code of behavior and the handbook were available to staff members on-line. Interviewees reported that the disciplinary code was consistently administered. They also stated that there was more ownership of behavior

among the students and greater school pride and spirit, which they attributed to regular school assemblies and the recognition of students who have gained honors, high honors, and the student of the month status. One student attributed an increase in positive student behaviors to the presence of many cameras and the visible increase in security within the building. In classroom observations, the EQA team noted that students were respectful of each other and the staff.

During the period under reexamination, the district's out-of-school suspension rate was relatively stable. According to DOE data, in 2005 the out-of-school suspension rate was 15.3 percent, and in 2006 it decreased slightly to 14.3 percent, compared to a three-year rate of 14.9 percent during the prior period under review and the statewide rate of 3.4 percent in 2006. In-school suspension rates also exceeded the state rate, which was 5.8 percent in 2006. In 2005 and 2006, the district's in-school suspension rates were 15.9 percent and 12.5 percent, respectively.

2005 Indicators

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

EQA Rating from 2005: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the first reexamination period (2002-2005), while MCAS test proficiency rates for Greater Lawrence students increased in the aggregate and for all subgroups with the exception of Hispanic students in mathematics, the district was identified for improvement by the state Department of Education because some subgroups did not make AYP. Specifically, limited English proficient students and Hispanic students failed to make AYP in both English language arts and math, and low-income students failed to make AYP in math. Although the performance of Greater Lawrence students improved over the last three administrations of the MCAS tests during this period, Greater Lawrence students continued to perform at a rate below the state vocational school average, both for aggregate population and all subgroups.

The District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) described a process for considering referrals of students at risk; however, according to a survey of regular education teachers reported in the SPED Final Evaluation Report (2004), 67 percent agreed that the district “does not have clearly defined referral procedures.” In interviews with the EQA examiners, regular education teachers confirmed that they did not understand or use the referral procedure.

During the review period, Greater Lawrence relied heavily on the inclusion model in special education. In fact, according to teachers and administrators, students under special educational management were served exclusively in regular education classes in 2004-2005. According to a survey of regular education teachers conducted in 2004 and reported in the SPED Final Evaluation Report, 50 percent agreed that inclusion worked, and the same percentage agreed that they received the IEPs of students in their classes and met periodically with the specialists serving their students to plan instruction and evaluate student progress. In interviews with the EQA examiners, some regular education teachers stated that they were well supported by specialists, while others said that they had minimal support or were left on their own.

According to documentation and confirmed in interviews with Greater Lawrence pupil personnel services administrators and staff, the district administered the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (ITBS) and the Stanford 9, and routinely and systematically administered diagnostic assessments in reading and math to all students. Pupil personnel services staff, content area specialists, and administrators reviewed the results of these assessments and the MCAS tests to identify skill levels for instructional purposes, and to recommend support for those students not achieving standards

In addition, course grades were reviewed at midterm, midyear and end of year intervals to identify students in danger of non-promotion because of credit deficiency. Administrators stated that common examinations were used formatively to regulate the curriculum and to identify students making unsatisfactory progress during the year.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), the MCAS proficiency rate in ELA improved from 25 percent in 2005 to 32 percent in 2006 to 33 percent in 2007. In mathematics, the proficiency rate rose from 20 percent in 2005 to 29 percent in 2006 to 40 percent in 2007. In both ELA and mathematics the district made AYP for the aggregate population. The

superintendent attributed this improvement to a change in the testing environment from a large group setting in the gymnasium to individual classrooms with smaller groups.

School leaders stated that there was a change in school culture since the last review period and that it was no longer considered acceptable to fail the MCAS tests. All students were taking the MCAS test requirement more seriously since the school changed the setting and certain administration procedures for the test, and emphasized its importance through a variety of means. Rather than merely moving students out of the 'Warning/Failing' category, Greater Lawrence also began to stress moving students from the 'Needs Improvement' to the 'Proficient' category.

In the second year of the reexamination period, the district made changes in its testing of students in order to monitor their needs more closely. The Stanford 10 was administered in June to the grade 8 students admitted to the school. In September, the same students took the SRI. Sixty students who tested three or more years below grade level participated in the new reading program, READ 180, based on the results of the two tests and teacher recommendation. In addition to this new program, the school shifted the focus of its Title I program from monthly enrichment classes for all students to targeted remedial services for skill-deficient students. Title I funds also provided an additional mathematics teacher to instruct in inclusion classes. Greater Lawrence hired certified ELL teachers to replace two uncertified teachers, and placed the ELL department under the ELA supervisor.

The district offered tutoring in the library to at-risk students through a program funded by the City of Lawrence. Middlesex Community College administered after-school, Saturday, and summer programs for juniors and seniors who failed the MCAS tests. When the program was poorly attended and discontinued, Greater Lawrence offered tutoring during school for students who failed the MCAS tests.

In the 2006-2007 school year, the district offered homework help through two programs: the computerized Mytutor.com, which provided tutoring services for all students, and an after-school program scheduled on site two days a week. Students who failed the MCAS tests were invited to participate in a Saturday morning program at the school, funded by an academic support grant.

The MCAS specialist met with all juniors and seniors who had failed the MCAS tests and completed an ISSP for each. The specialist assisted students in filling out an application for a library card in order to give them access to the computers at the city library, and informed students and parents of the homework assistance programs through mailings. Greater Lawrence also provided tutoring as part of the regular school day. Administrators told the EQA team that grade 10 students who failed the grade 8 MCAS tests would participate in this program beginning in December to prepare them for the grade 10 MCAS tests. Greater Lawrence recently arranged for all students in grade 9 who failed the MCAS tests to complete an ISSP with an at-risk counselor. ISSPs were available on-line and accessible to students, staff members, and parents. The newly hired Spanish-speaking parent liaisons targeted the parents of the students in grades 10-12 who had failed to stress the importance of passing the MCAS tests and informed them of the support services for students. Liaisons were part of a larger parent outreach program the new administration had initiated.

During interviews, administrators stated that the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan was responsive to the needs of all students. The director of pupil personnel services stated that in 2007 the school adopted a three-tiered procedure in compliance with federal guidelines for special education. At the Tier I level, students three or more years below grade level were enrolled in the READ 180 program. The at-risk counselors received weekly status reports on all students who were at risk of failing. The counselors monitored student progress in both the academic and vocational areas. At-risk students received support in the inclusion classes where classroom assistants worked with both special education students and at-risk students.

A student support team convened weekly to consider referrals by teachers of students having academic difficulty. The members of the team included the students' teachers, counselors, the educational team leader, and the nurse. The team offered suggestions to remediate the problem and set a date to reconvene. The at-risk counselors prepared weekly status reports on students at risk of failing. At Tier II, students were placed in inclusion classrooms, where additional instructional assistance was provided by classroom assistants and class sizes were lower. A consultant worked regularly with teachers on inclusion strategies. If there was no improvement in a student's performance, the special education referral process began, testing was initiated, and an Individualized Educational Program (IEP) was written for the student upon a finding of

special needs. The pupil personnel services director stated that because of its blind admissions policy, Greater Lawrence often did not have information on special education students initially. The director went on to say that the district actively sought the necessary records including an updated IEP. According to the director, the district lacked records on 44 special education students during the 2005-2006 school year. The DOE cited Greater Lawrence for numerous special education non-compliance issues, and the new director had focused on correcting them.

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

EQA Rating from 2005: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

For the first reexamination period (2002-2005), administrators and teachers told the EQA examiners that in 2003 Greater Lawrence adopted an approach to reduce the number of office referrals, entitled the Classroom Management Plan. This approach made the classroom the first recourse for student discipline by equipping teachers to establish and enforce expectations. As a result, teachers were expected to deal with less serious misbehavior until it was recurrent or escalating. During the 2003-2004 school year, a behavioral expert provided training sessions for teachers on preventing and addressing student misbehavior. In observations throughout the school, the EQA examiners confirmed that management plans including expectations, positives, consequences, and serious offenses were posted in classrooms and shops. Administrators stated that the office referrals for minor offenses declined significantly in the first year of the program, but had risen since. Teachers and administrators cited three likely reasons for the increase, leading to what one called “the collapse of the plan.” First, the management plan was inconsistent with the student handbook, and the conflicts were not resolved. Next, the plan was not fully implemented. For example, chronically misbehaving students were not required to get daily progress reports from all of their teachers as required in the plan. Finally, new staff members were not trained in the procedure, jeopardizing consistent schoolwide application of the approach.

According to Department of Education data, the Greater Lawrence three-year rates of suspension were in excess of the state average. During the three-year interval from 2002 through 2004, out-of-school suspensions averaged 15.4 percent at Greater Lawrence versus the state average of 6.2 percent, and in-school suspensions averaged 16.2 percent versus the state average of 4.7 percent. In interviews with the EQA examiners, administrators and pupil personnel services staff stated that two at-risk counselors were added to the staff during this interval to intervene with chronically misbehaving students. In addition, the school had attempted to recognize and reinforce good behavior through the Triple A Club, which provided incentives for attendance, attitude, and achievement, and the Student of the Month Program. Both were established in 2004-2005.

Pupil personnel services staff members told the EQA examiners that although Greater Lawrence kept records on student behavior, the data were not distributed to staff members. The staff had not seen the data on student suspensions, although they would have found it helpful in their work with students. In answer to questions from the EQA examiners, administrators stated that the district had not analyzed data on suspensions to determine subgroup representation and root causes. File IHBH stated that “the school committee will provide alternative educational programs where ... needs have been identified. These alternative programs will seek to provide an appropriate academic social and vocational experience...” An administrator told the EQA examiners that some students needed an alternative program, but there were no current plans to develop such a program.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), the district addressed the weaknesses in its classroom management policy by taking two initial steps. Greater Lawrence created the new position of vice principal in charge of discipline, and it surveyed teachers on disciplinary practices and policies. The district tabulated the results of the teacher survey and distributed them to the staff. The administration met with the school council and a group of teachers to change some aspects of the former policy. The principal stated that the changes produced more appropriate policies for the age group at the school and addressed the issues raised by the teachers in the survey. The handbook was reviewed and changed to include all aspects of the revised policy.

In addition to the new position of vice principal, in the 2006-2007 school year the school added two at-risk counselors, a supervisor of the freshman academy, and two Spanish-speaking parent liaisons and took measures to prevent escalation of student negative behaviors. A student support team met weekly to discuss students who were of concern to a member of the team, composed of the vice principal, at-risk counselors, the academic and vocational leader, and the school nurse. According to the vice principal, this meeting always resulted in an action plan for each student discussed. The student support team also served to identify circumstances that required attention and could result in negative student behavior, such as homelessness. The director of pupil personnel services presented a workshop to all staff members to raise their awareness of homelessness because it was often underreported. The parent liaisons, in addition to the at-risk counselors, contacted students and made calls to families to identify homeless students. According to the director, the operating definition of homeless was expanded to include families doubling up with other families.

Other steps taken by the district included the vice principal's identifying teachers making the most disciplinary referrals and working with them on ways to deescalate problems with students. The school reassigned some teachers to classrooms located near the vice principal's office, and also placed newer teachers nearer the administrative offices, relocating them from isolated areas of the building.

The district suspension rate declined slightly but remained well above the state average. The vice principal stated that disciplinary referrals had declined in the current year, but there were no data as yet to substantiate this assumption. A number of new initiatives began in 2007-2008.

The district also initiated a number of changes to address the retention rate and meet the academic needs of its students. In the 2006-2007 school year, the district added staff including two certified ELL teachers, a mathematics teacher, and two special education teachers. The district admitted a smaller freshman class, reducing class sizes, and scheduled a continuous academic and vocational program for freshmen and sophomores replacing the traditional model of alternating weeks of academic and vocational subjects.

Administrators stated that the new policy of mandatory summer school attendance for students who failed classes decreased the number of retentions. Furthermore, regular meetings of the

student support team resulted in early intervention for students in academic trouble. The district has been active in identifying students with excessive absences, utilizing parent liaisons and representatives of social services agencies to meet with the students and their families. The district retention rate declined from 3.5 percent in 2005 to 2.8 percent in 2006, compared to the state rate of 2.5 percent.

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

EQA Rating from 2005: Unsatisfactory

EQA Rating from 2007: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the first reexamination period (2002-2005), according to a report by the Massachusetts Department of Education entitled *Dropouts in Massachusetts Public Schools: 2003-2004*, “Students attending a vocational-technical high school dropped out at a lower rate than the students not attending vocational technical high schools.” According to DOE data, the dropout rate for Greater Lawrence was 2.8 percent in 2003-2004. While this was below the state rate of 3.3 percent, it exceeded the rate for state vocational-technical schools of 1.8 percent. In 2004-2005, the dropout rate at Greater Lawrence increased to 5.8 percent, when 86 students were reported as dropouts, most of them seniors. In 2004-2005, the Greater Lawrence rate exceeded both the state rate of 3.7 percent and the state vocational school rate of 2.0 percent. In fact, the Greater Lawrence dropout rate was highest among all the vocational schools in the state that year.

Pupil personnel services staff members stated to the EQA examiners that they worked with dropouts to ensure that they had a plan to go to work, enter the military, or continue in an evening program. Although there had been no formal survey to determine the most prevalent reasons for dropping out and the future intentions of the dropouts, pupil personnel services staff stated that most students discontinued because they no longer desired a vocational education and wanted to go to work. Pupil personnel staff members told the EQA examiners that, while there was no formal dropout recovery program, the “door was always open to returnees.” They stated that in their experience, however, very few returned.

In interviews, administrators stated that there had been no analysis of dropout data to determine trends and subgroup representation. One administrator stated that the new and more stringent attendance, promotion, and graduation requirements might be too difficult for some students to meet.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), according to DOE data the dropout rate decreased from 5.8 percent in 2004-2005 to 4.5 percent in 2005-2006. However, the dropout rate at Greater Lawrence remained the highest of all vocational schools in the state, which had an average dropout rate of 2.2 percent. As of the time of the site visit, the DOE had not yet reported data for the 2006-2007 school year. The director of pupil personnel services stated that the district submitted individual student (SIMS) data multiple times to the DOE because of confusion about tabulating students in a number of categories.

The district took a number of measures to decrease the dropout rate by addressing the academic and social needs of students through the follow-up actions of the student support team. Each of these team meetings resulted in an action plan for the student. With the additions of the at-risk counselors and the parent liaisons, student monitoring was more timely, and communication with parents increased through more personal contacts, phone calls, and meetings. The at-risk counselors made contracts with students to address their behaviors. Greater Lawrence formally reinstated its teacher-student mentor program. In 2007-2008, 90 staff members were mentoring 250 students. Teachers and administrators stated that this has been a successful program supported by the staff.

During the second year of the reexamination period, the district added a number of clubs and extracurricular activities to provide students with opportunities to explore and develop interests in a variety of areas including sports, drama, extreme sports, chorus, and dance. The cheerleading group, phased out in 2003, was restored. An administrator stated that the district was beginning to collect data on dropouts, looking for correlations with participation in school sports and clubs.

When students declared their intention to drop out, they participated in an exit interview with an at-risk counselor. The counselor presented students with their options, and advised them that once they dropped out they had to reapply to return. As part of the interview, counselors asked

students what they thought should be changed at Greater Lawrence. They also provided students a list of resources available in the area, including GED programs, set up appointments for them, and assisted them in writing a long-term plan.

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

EQA Rating from 2005: Poor but Improving

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the first reexamination period (2002-2005), according to Department of Education data, the Greater Lawrence three-year attendance rate during the interval 2002 through 2004 averaged 89.5 percent versus the state average of 94.1 percent. On average, Greater Lawrence students were absent 17.2 days each school year during this period. The incidence of student absenteeism in the district approached the rate for chronic absenteeism, defined by the state as 18 days. Administrators stated that the district set a goal to improve the attendance rate to 95 percent in 2004-2005. While the state has not yet issued official district attendance averages for the 2004-2005 school year, the EQA examiners reviewed district records, including quarterly class attendance reports. These records demonstrated an increase in daily and class attendance in comparison with the prior three years.

In 2004-2005, the district increased the stringency of its attendance policy by reducing the absence limit from 22 to 10 days per year. Students with five unexcused absences in a semester were placed on academic probation. Students exceeding the absence limit for the year were required to attend summer school to be promoted. In addition, students with 13 class absences, but passing, received a grade of 'P' for passing with the notation "but excessively absent." Students with 13 class absences whose work was not current received an 'F' and no credit. These revisions were included in the student handbook, and reviewed and reinforced by administrators in assemblies.

Pupil personnel services staff and administrators told the EQA examiners that attendance counselors monitored student attendance and notified students' parents when students were

approaching the absence limits. Guidance counselors and at-risk counselors worked in cooperation with the attendance staff to help students address and resolve attendance problems.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), the district's attendance rate improved from 89.7 percent in 2004 to 93.9 percent in 2005, then declined slightly to 93.3 percent in 2006. The state rate in 2006 was 94.5 percent. The attendance policy instituted during the last year of the prior period under review prevailed. If a student was absent more than 10 days without an accepted excuse, the student would automatically fail for the year. Rectification of failures in summer school was not an option for students who failed for reasons of attendance. Students with more than five unexcused absences in a semester were placed on academic probation.

In order to reach the goal of 95 percent attendance, school administrators stated that the primary responsibility of the Spanish-speaking parent liaisons hired for the 2006-2007 school year was monitoring of student attendance. Every morning, the liaisons compiled the data on student absences reported by individual teachers. After ensuring that the students were not tardy, the liaisons phoned all the homes of the absent students. In addition, all the calls were entered into the new Connect-ED software system, and parents received a second call in the evening that was also personalized. The liaisons also tracked incorrect numbers, disconnected numbers, and cell phone numbers. The school sent letters home in the student's native language when a student exceeded five absences. The liaisons were also active in outreach efforts to find missing students. They told the EQA team that they personalized the attendance and tardy policies and had some flexibility in applying them in extraordinary circumstances.

The student support teams also reviewed attendance data and provided support for students. Staff members received immediate notification of student support team findings through e-mail to ensure communication among all relevant staff.

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

EQA Rating from 2005: Poor

EQA Rating from 2007: Satisfactory

Evidence

During the first reexamination period (2002-2005), according to an analysis of raw data compiled and submitted by Greater Lawrence to the EQA, the average number of days a teacher was absent for any reason during 2004-2005 was 13.6. Discounting planned absences for professional development, the average was 11.8 days.

There was no reference to the correlation between teacher attendance and student achievement in district policy. Section 6.11 of the staff handbook described the procedure for reporting an absence and requesting a substitute, but contained no language on the importance of attendance or requirements for the provision of substitute plans. The teachers' contract provided 13 sick days each year, accumulating to 260 days. This agreement contained an incentive, permitting teachers who had accumulated at least 155 days to redeem 15 of these days each year at \$75 per day, provided that at least 140 days remained.

According to administrators and confirmed by documentation, the district kept raw data on teacher absences, and computed the annual aggregate average. Administrators stated that Greater Lawrence did not analyze these data by teacher over time to detect patterns, trends, and needs. The principal conferred with teachers who were frequently absent to determine the causes, and documented these conversations if there appeared to be abuse.

Because there was no accumulation of personal days, teachers tended to take all of their allotted days each year. The principal attempted to restrict use of these days before a holiday or vacation. Administrators had not analyzed the effect of the attendance incentive in the teachers' contract. The February 2004 Memorandum of Agreement between the school committee and teachers' association created a joint committee "to study employee attendance and use of sick time." According to the agreement, the committee was to report its findings and recommendations by May 2004, but teachers and administrators were unaware of the outcomes of this study.

During the second reexamination period (2005-2007), according to data compiled and submitted by the district, staff attendance improved from an average of 13.6 absences for any reason during the last year of the prior examination period to 10.7 absences in the 2006-2007 school year. Excluding the number of absences for professional development, the average was 8.3 compared to 11.8 in the last year of the prior review period year.

The superintendent stated that although there was no change in the formal policy because of contract language, there was a change in the emphasis given to the regular presence of teachers in the classroom and in the monitoring of teacher absences. The newly hired principal in 2006 addressed all staff members on this topic at the beginning of the year. A new system was put in place to track teacher absences using a dedicated sick leave phone line, attended by a member of the office staff. Although the contract did not require a doctor's authorization, except for absences in excess of four consecutive days, the principal and the director of human resources continuously monitored teacher attendance records to identify patterns of absence of concern.

The principal attributed the improvement in teacher attendance to the changes in the way the district approached the issue. In the 2006-2007 school year, 25 percent of the staff was new to the district, and the stress on teacher attendance was part of their induction program. According to the director of human resources, teachers were aware that the district was paying attention to who was absent and when.

The superintendent said the administrators had a good relationship with the union and contacted the union president when a teacher's absences were excessive. The district developed a handbook for substitute teachers that was used in training. Teachers were required to submit lesson plans in advance when possible in order to ensure continuity of instruction when they expected to be absent.

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

All students entered Greater Lawrence through a formal admissions policy, including those transferring from another vocational school. The district's new admission policy was approved by the DOE during the 2006-2007 school year. This admissions policy stated that students would be admitted to the school based on interviews, previous grades, attendance and discipline records

and the recommendation of a guidance counselor. Points were assigned for each of the rating categories.

The district deliberately reduced the number of students admitted to the school for the 2006-2007 school year to 335, compared to the previous year's number of 380. Administrators stated during interviews that this reduction resulted in an entering grade 9 class that was more academically capable and motivated than prior entering classes. They went on to say that current grade 9 students were "happier to be here." Counselors encouraged students who were not admitted into the freshman class to reapply at the end of the school year for the sophomore class.

All grade 9 students participated in the Stanford 10 test in June of their grade 8 year and in the SRI assessment at the beginning of grade 9. Counselors used these results and teacher recommendation to make placement decisions. Special education staff members were involved as appropriate. The director of pupil personnel services stated that it was challenging to determine which students required educational plans, and to secure these plans from the sending schools. The director went on to say that the district had finally identified all of the special education students admitted and secured all of their records.

Greater Lawrence was aggressive in identifying homeless students, providing them services within the school and helping them to access services within the community. The district also provided these students free lunch and transportation. A number of teachers and administrators stated that staff members were generous and discreet in helping needy students. Parent liaisons and at-risk counselors were instrumental in securing support services for these students.

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

Greater Lawrence provided services to alleviate the adverse effects of poverty. The district offered free lunch and transportation to students in need. An administrator stated that fee waivers

were automatic for all students participating in the free or reduced-cost lunch program. Greater Lawrence encouraged students to see a counselor to make arrangements for reduced or free admission to all school events that required fees. Additionally, the district provided all required clothing and equipment to needy students such as goggles, boots, and uniforms for shops. Interviewees stated that teachers and administrators were generous in assisting needy students.

The parent liaisons stated that they became aware of difficult student situations because they had created relationships with the students. The guidance department arranged for lunch groups for students who benefited from interaction with peers and a counselor.

The district included in its strategic plan the mandate to create opportunities for minority students. Greater Lawrence added a grade 9 Geometry class in order to give these students the opportunity to enroll in advanced mathematics classes as upper classmen, and also added Journalism and Spanish courses. In order to give students an opportunity to understand the content of all shops, students now rotated among all 16 shops instead of only eight, as was the former practice. Administrators stated that this gave students more information to make better decisions, particularly students who had not been exposed to these occupations.

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

Greater Lawrence initiated a number of changes during the 2006-2007 school year to increase the involvement of parents in the education of students, and maintained its relationships with a number of community organizations. The administration created the positions of Spanish-speaking parent liaisons to provide for parental involvement in the education of their students. Both liaisons contacted parents on a regular basis to report on student progress, and to make parents aware of the services available at the school for their students and themselves.

The liaisons also called parents personally to invite them to the parent breakfast, the freshman lunch, and other school events. They also informed parents about how to access school records and information through the parent portal on the school network. To date, 400 parents had accounts. In addition, the newly purchased Connect-ED automated phone system communicated with parents on a regular basis to deliver current information about school events. The system also had the capability to record messages from parent liaisons left for parents during the day and to call parents in the evening leaving the same message. The school's website also afforded parents additional information and resources, and translated information into eight languages.

The district maintained a number of connections with community organizations. Northern Essex Community College provided continuing education classes at the school at night and participated in the Technical Education Program along with a number of area businesses. Other organizations which maintained a connection with the school included Andover Youth Services, The Home Building Project with Andover Community Trust, Massachusetts Restaurant Association, construction groups, and the sheriff's office. The school's students painted the fire vehicles and the undercover police vehicles. In addition, there were 16 advisory committees, one for each shop area, that met twice a year. The General Advisory Committee, composed of one member from each committee, convened once a year. Meals on Wheels used the school's space to prepare 1,600 meals daily.

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

Rather than reexamine the district only on those 2002 and 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:

- The Greater Lawrence budget was not developed using student assessment or achievement data.
- The district did not have a process to evaluate and determine the cost effectiveness of its programs, initiatives, and activities, nor did it have a system to pursue and acquire private and federal competitive grants.
- The district had an excellent safety and security plan in effect, and used state of the art equipment to manage safe and secure access to the building and promote security throughout.
- While the district did not have a formal preventative maintenance plan, the facilities were clean, well lit, and maintained in excellent condition.

- The district received adequate funds from the member communities, Chapter 70 aid, grants, and other revenue to provide a quality education.
- The district used modern business software to ensure accurate reporting, and the business office provided timely and complete monthly reports to the school committee, staff, and administrators.

Summary

The budget process in Greater Lawrence began annually in November with budget requests submitted by lead teachers in each department. The academy leaders collected the requests and forwarded them to the business office. The business office subsequently produced a budget workbook consisting of the collected requests for the superintendent and school principal. In December, the school leadership team met to review the requests. The business office estimated the funds available to meet the district's needs. In making these estimates, the district used sources of income such as tuition, excess and deficiency accounts, grants, and Chapter 70 aid. The district used municipal Medicaid and Medicare funds reimbursed for special education services to reduce member district assessments.

A two-member subcommittee of the school committee reviewed the superintendent's proposed budget at several meetings and made a recommendation to the full school committee. Following a public meeting, the committee voted to approve the budget and the assessments to the member districts. The member districts approved these assessments. There was little analysis of student performance data in budget development.

The superintendent stated that the budget and other available resources provided the students with a quality education. Officials of the member districts also stated that the assessments were fair and adequate to provide their students with a sound education. The district exceeded its net school spending requirements for the period under review.

Per pupil expenditures were above the state average. Analysis of the municipal revenue growth factor showed comparable increases with the communities' assessments. Use of the excess and deficiency account, tuition, and other funds held the assessments to an acceptable increase.

School administrators stated that the main facility, constructed in 1964 and renovated in 2004, was in excellent condition. A large addition was completed in 2005-2006. The facilities were well lit, clean, well maintained, and conducive to student learning and achievement.

The district had an extensive security system and a comprehensive safety plan providing for almost every contingency. The security system dispensed photo identification badges to all visitors and provided an immediate criminal background check. Students and faculty wore identification badges. The security desk at the main entrance was staffed throughout the day, and the school had a full-time resource officer and full- and part-time hall monitors. Over 50 surveillance cameras throughout the building were connected to a central monitor at the security desk. The district's emergency and crisis plan was developed in consultation with police, fire, and medical personnel. This plan was visible in every room or area in the school. The school conducted drills and practices routinely, and made necessary revisions in protocols and procedures.

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

In interviews with Greater Lawrence administrators, the EQA examiners found evidence that the budget was developed through a process that included all stakeholders. In policy DA in the category of fiscal management, the school committee stated an intent to "adopt the policies necessary which will support the honest and efficient management of the fiscal affairs of the school district." The policy went on to specify school committee fiscal responsibilities including adoption of and adherence to an annual budget; accurate keeping of accounts and the appropriate and secure retention of fiscal records; establishment of efficient purchasing and bid procedures for the school district; completion and publishing of the annual audit of all school accounts; protection and care of educational facilities and grounds through insurance and maintenance;

protection (by insurance) of school committee members and employees from the adverse effect of certain kinds of legal decisions; and establishment of policy control over all monies received by the district.

Under Policy DB on the designation of official depositories for funds received by the school district, the committee designated the superintendent to serve as budget officer and allowed the superintendent to delegate some of that responsibility to district staff members. As budget director, the superintendent was responsible for preparation, presentation, and administration of the budget.

Administrators stated that the budget development process began in November with a leadership team meeting to set goals for the coming year. The process was open to the teaching staff. Academy leaders compiled wish lists of department needs and forwarded them to the principal and superintendent for review and revision.

The business manager shared revenue projections with the superintendent and the school committee budget subcommittee. The subcommittee reviewed and revised the superintendent's recommended budget and forwarded it to the full school committee. The superintendent presented the recommended budget at a public meeting including representatives of the communities. This presentation was followed by a question and answer session. Following the public meeting, the school committee voted to approve both the budget and assessments of the member districts.

In interviews, district officials including a mayor, town manager, and city council member told the EQA team that the budget approval process was satisfactory, and that budget and assessment documents were clear, comprehensive, current, understandable, and included historical data for comparison.

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: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The EQA examiners found no references to an analysis of student assessment data in school committee budget meeting minutes, and the district did not keep minutes of its budget subcommittee meetings. The superintendent stated that poor MCAS test results had driven the reallocation of budget resources. Greater Lawrence was at the bottom of the state's vocational-technical schools in MCAS test performance. To substantiate that there was consideration of student assessment data in budget development, administrators furnished the EQA examiners copies of a presentation given by the superintendent to the school committee during the development of the 2006-2007 budget. While this presentation contained a justification of the superintendent's leadership reorganization plan and instructional account increases intended to improve the district's aggregate MCAS test scores, the EQA team found few specific and explicit references to student performance data.

The district used student achievement data to a limited extent in budget development during the 2006-2007 school year, but intended to develop the capacity to make greater use of data in the future. Greater Lawrence hired additional English, mathematics, and special education teachers for the 2007-2008 school year to improve student achievement as measured by the MCAS tests. The district also offered training for teachers on instructional and classroom management techniques through a combination of Title I and district funds. In 2006-2007, the district made plans to assess entering freshmen for the 2007-2008 school year to determine their capabilities and needs and to anticipate and provide special education services.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The superintendent told the EQA examiners that the district budget and supplemental funding were adequate to meet the educational needs of Greater Lawrence students. In addition, the district had sufficient funds for operational resources. In interviews with the EQA team, school

committee members, administrators, teachers, and officials from member districts confirmed that the district's financial resources were sufficient to ensure educationally sound programs.

The district exceeded its net school spending requirement for each of the years of the period under review. According to the 2005-2006 End of Year Pupil and Financial Report, the four member districts exceeded their required minimum contribution to the Greater Lawrence school district. Specifically, Andover contributed \$6,130, Lawrence contributed \$506,770, Methuen contributed \$77,310, and North Andover contributed \$5,790 in excess of the requirement, including transportation and capital dept expenditures.

According to the end of year reports, the school committee appropriated \$24,189,140 in 2003-2004, \$25,400,205 in 2004-2005, and \$26,017,238 in 2005-2006. Funding increased by approximately nine percent during this interval. Per pupil expenditures from all funds amounted to \$13,534 in 2004-2005 and \$15,070 in 2005-2006, representing an increase of \$1,536. The district 2005-2006 per pupil expenditure exceeded the state average by \$3,859.

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

Rating: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The EQA examiners determined that the district had no formal evaluation-based process to determine the cost effectiveness of all its programs, initiatives, and activities during the period under review. In interviews, administrators and teachers stated that the district used enrollment, career opportunities, successful placement rates, and other data to evaluate its occupational programs. Administrators told the EQA examiners that the painting and decorating program was eliminated, and the machine technology program was under consideration for termination because of low enrollments and limited career opportunities. They went on to say that they had initiated new programs such as biotechnology because of the possibility of new career opportunities for graduates.

In response to an analysis of energy costs, the district closed the school building earlier to conserve on heat and light. This required adjusting custodial shifts. Greater Lawrence purchased gas and electricity at the best rates through participation in a consortium, and used the state bid list whenever possible for purchases of equipment, materials, and supplies.

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: N/A

Evidence

Since this requirement does not apply to regional school districts, the Greater Lawrence Regional Vocational-Technical School District was not required to have a written agreement for indirect charges.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

In interviews, district financial staff told the EQA team that the district had exceeded its net school spending requirement in every year since its founding. According to Department of Education data, the district exceeded its net school spending requirements during the period under review.

During this period, Chapter 70 aid increased as a percentage of total district spending. According to financial reports, Chapter 70 aid constituted 74.8 percent of the district budget in 2003-2004; 78.7 percent in 2004-2005; 83.4 percent in 2005-2006; and 87.2 percent in 2006-2007. In 2007-2008, Chapter 70 aid would likely amount to 88 percent of the district budget, according to projections.

Fixed costs increased at a higher rate than revenue during this period. For example, the one-year increase in overall fixed costs from 2006-2007 to 2007-2008 amounted to \$652,328, or eight percent. Health care costs alone rose by more than 19 percent.

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 Greater Lawrence school committee received accurate and complete financial reports monthly. The district provided annual financial reports to the mayors and councils of the two member cities, and to the managers and selectmen of the two member towns. The business office provided budget information to all departments, and the staff could always contact the business office for clarification or to request further information.

The financial reports included encumbrances, payments, transfers, and account balances by line item. The business office also provided reports on federal grant expenditures to district program directors. Administrators told the EQA team that all federal, state, and local financial reports were timely and accurate in 2006-2007. According to documentation, the end of year report was filed on time last year with few required amendments. Findings from the annual auditor's reports were presented to the school committee. The few audit exceptions cited during the first two years of the period under review were resolved during the last year of the period under review.

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 interviews with the EQA examiners, financial administrators stated that the district used efficient accounting technology that integrated district-level financial information of each program. They went on to say that the district used forecast mechanisms and control procedures that ensured spending was within fiscal budget limits.

The district used Budget Sense Software developed by the Unifund Company, and the comptroller was familiar with this program. District administrators tracked spending through monthly reports from the business office and could call the office for updates.

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: Needs Improvement

Evidence

During the period under review, the district did not have a system for pursuing, monitoring, and coordinating all local, state, federal, and private grants. Greater Lawrence had a grants coordinator during the first two and one-half years of the period under review, but this position was eliminated for the 2007-2008 school year, and the Title I and special education directors and the academic and vocational coordinators had assumed responsibility for grant supervision and reporting.

District policy encouraged acquisition of all possible grant funds. Greater Lawrence applied for and received all entitlement grants but did not actively seek competitive grants during the period under review. In 2005-2006, the district received \$1,896,035 in federal entitlement grants, and \$156,304 in state grants.

The district used financial software to monitor grants and revolving accounts. The auditor's reports cited several exceptions during the first two years of the period under review, and the business department addressed and corrected these exceptions during the third year of the period under review.

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

Rating: Satisfactory

Evidence

The district business manager was appointed chief procurement officer by vote of the school committee. The manager was MCPPO certified by the state Office of the Inspector General and licensed as a school business manager by the Department of Education..

District policy DJE required competitive bidding for all purchases exceeding \$25,000 and encouraged bidding for all purchases in excess of \$5,000. The policy also stated that the that the superintendent should make the school committee aware of reasonable substitutes that might exist for items specified in the bid. The EQA examiners confirmed that the district routinely followed this policy in practice.

The superintendent or business manager approved all purchase orders, and the district complied with the requirements of MGL Chapter 30B. Greater Lawrence maintained an inventory of items over \$5,000 in value, as well as specialty items such as computers.

The EQA examiners reviewed financial statements, management letters, and end of year reports for 2005-2006 and 2006-2007. In interviews with administrative and clerical staff as well as reviews of applicable records, EQA examiners determined that all financial practices and procedures met acceptable standards.

The district did not competitively procure an independent financial service every five years. Greater Lawrence had engaged the same auditing agency for at least the last 10 years.

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: Needs Improvement

Evidence

The district had no formal written preventative maintenance program. The district provided the EQA examiners with a budget worksheet identifying the maintenance responsibilities of the custodial staff and contracted maintenance services. The worksheet listed projects such as build bathroom upstairs in the mezzanine, and costs such as \$4,800 for refrigeration and \$20,000 for machines. According to administrators, this was the district maintenance plan.

The district had completed a major renovation and building project at a cost of \$51 million, and it began planning a maintenance program during 2006-2007. The district contracted for HVAC maintenance, and for elevator, telephone, and certain electrical services. The HVAC system was in need of a complete overhaul and renovation. During the last two years, the district expended in excess of \$300,000 to keep the system functioning. Administrators told the EQA examiners that the district had received quotes for the work, but the school committee had not yet voted approval.

The EQA examiners determined that the Greater Lawrence facilities were clean, well lit, well maintained, and conducive to promoting student learning and achievement. The main building, constructed in 1974 and renovated in 2004, was in excellent condition.. An addition was completed in 2005-2006. A two-story building constructed at the back of the site in 1974 was 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: Needs Improvement

Evidence

Administrators furnished the EQA examiners with a document entitled 2006-2009 Capital Maintenance Improvement Plan, and stated that this was the district capital improvement plan. The examiners found and were presented with little evidence that this plan had been reviewed and revised with input from all appropriate stakeholders.

The plan listed five completed projects, including building the guard shack, installing bleachers on the football field, re-roofing the press box, and purchasing a fork lift. Three projects were in process, including purchasing a lighted roadside sign for school events, notices, and announcements; wiring seven garages for lighting; and building a four-post canopy for selling snacks during field events. Four projects were pending until quotes were secured, including updating automation for HVAC, installing air conditioning in the mezzanine and back up air conditioning in the server room, and installing light sensors in every room.

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

Rating: Excellent

Evidence

Greater Lawrence developed and implemented a comprehensive and extensive security and safety plan beginning in 2005-2006. The school was equipped with more than 50 security cameras at various locations throughout the building, routed to a monitor at the central security station located at the main entrance, which was staffed throughout the school day. According to the security plan, the district intended to add 40 more cameras. A central security system dispensed photographic identification badges to visitors registering at the security desk, and provided school personnel with an immediate criminal background check on each.

The Town of Andover assigned a police patrol officer to the school to serve as the school resource officer. This officer was present during the full school day and was available to attend after-school functions as well. Greater Lawrence also employed full- and part-time hall monitors, many of whom had training and experience in criminal justice.

The district developed a complete crisis and safety plan in consultation with the police and fire departments and local medical personnel. Evacuation plans included arrangements for housing

students off site. The principal scheduled fire and lockdown drills, and teachers told the EQA team that such drills were routine. All administrators were able to contact the resource officer through hand-held radios and could communicate with teachers through a central system.

During the site visit to Greater Lawrence, the EQA examiners were issued photo identification badges upon arrival at the school each day. The examiners checked out of the school at the security desk at the end of the day. All staff members and students wore photo identification badges in the school at all times. When the school restaurant and store were open to the public, other sections of the school building were restricted to prevent unauthorized access. The EQA examiners found that the district had informed the staff about security policies, and staff members stated that they knew what they were to do in the event of various emergencies. The school crisis and safety plans were visible in all rooms visited by the EQA examiners, including meeting rooms and the cafeteria.

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. The EQA computes 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 (API) for the Anywhere High School would be 57.75.

The EPI is calculated using the ELA results for all students taking the ELA exam. The MPI is calculated using the math results for all students taking the math exam. The SPI is 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	1,571	-0.3	15,150,488	3.6	5,203,850	10,188,623	8.2	15,392,473	7.2	15,403,003	6.6	10,530	0.1
FY99	1,620	3.1	15,824,872	4.5	5,320,821	10,794,575	5.9	16,115,396	4.7	16,053,954	4.2	-61,442	-0.4
FY00	1,682	3.8	17,011,579	7.5	5,418,580	11,885,647	10.1	17,304,227	7.4	16,878,492	5.1	-425,735	-2.5
FY01	1,634	-2.9	16,862,348	-0.9	5,048,951	12,332,578	3.8	17,381,529	0.4	18,221,780	8.0	840,251	4.8
FY02	1,707	4.5	18,344,292	8.8	4,576,204	13,802,543	11.9	18,378,747	5.7	17,899,147	-1.8	-479,600	-2.6
FY03	1,688	-1.1	18,883,200	2.9	5,199,137	14,163,663	2.6	19,362,800	5.4	18,790,326	5.0	-572,474	-3.0
FY04	1,693	0.3	18,886,085	0.0	5,323,558	14,135,001	-0.2	19,458,559	0.5	19,251,497	2.5	-207,062	-1.1
FY05	1,753	3.5	19,940,515	5.6	4,484,376	15,663,201	10.8	20,147,577	3.5	20,441,589	6.2	294,012	1.5
FY06	1,750	-0.2	20,801,927	4.3	3,447,460	17,354,467	10.8	20,801,927	3.2	21,166,733	3.5	364,806	1.8
FY07	1,677	-4.2	23,397,863	12.5	2,950,685	20,447,178	17.8	23,397,863	12.5	23,477,680	10.9	79,817	0.3

Dollars Per Foundation Enrollment

Percentage of Foundation

Chapter 70 Aid as Percent of Actual NSS

	Foundation Budget	Ch 70 Aid	Actual NSS	Ch 70	Required NSS	Actual NSS	Chapter 70 Aid as Percent of Actual NSS
FY98	9,644	6,485	9,805	67.2	101.6	101.7	66.1
FY99	9,768	6,663	9,910	68.2	101.8	101.4	67.2
FY00	10,114	7,066	10,035		101.7	99.2	70.4
FY01	10,320	7,547	11,152		103.1	108.1	67.7
FY02	10,747	8,086	10,486		100.2	97.6	77.1
FY03	11,187	8,391	11,132	69.9	102.5	99.5	75.4
FY04	11,155	8,349	11,371	73.1	103.0	101.9	73.4
FY05	11,375	8,935	11,661	75.2	101.0	102.5	76.6
FY06	11,887	9,917	12,095	75.0	100.0	101.8	82.0
FY07	13,952	12,193	14,000	74.8	100.0	100.3	87.1

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.