

*How Is Your  
School District  
Performing?*



*A closer look at*

*Quincy  
Public Schools*

2002-2005

EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT AUDIT COUNCIL  
*Office of Educational Quality and Accountability*

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

*The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability would like to acknowledge the professional cooperation extended to the audit team by the Massachusetts Department of Education; the superintendent of the Quincy Public Schools, Richard De Cristofaro; the school department staff; and the city officials of Quincy.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Test scores provide one method of assessing student achievement, but a variety of factors affect student performance. The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA) was created by the state Legislature in July 2000 to examine many of these additional factors by conducting independent audits of schools and districts in Massachusetts. The agency uses these audits to:

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

In March 2006, the EQA conducted an independent examination of the Quincy Public Schools for the period of 2002–2005. This school district was selected for both data and on-site reviews. The EQA analyzed Quincy students' performance on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System test and identified areas where students were performing significantly better or worse than the state average. In the on-site review, the EQA examined critical factors that affected student performance in six major areas: leadership, governance, and communication; curriculum and instruction; assessment and evaluation; human resource management and professional development; access, participation, and student academic support; and financial and asset management effectiveness and efficiency.

The review was based on source documents supplied by the Massachusetts Department of Education and Quincy Public Schools; correspondence sent prior to the EQA team's on-site visit; interviews with a representative from the school committee, the district leadership team, and school administrators; and additional documents submitted while the EQA team visited the district. The report does not take into account documents, revised data, or comments that may have been supplied after June 2005. However, district leaders were invited to provide more current information.

## Putting the Data in Perspective

Quincy, MA



## DISTRICT

*Population:* 88,025

*Median family income:* \$59,735

*Largest sources of employment:*

Education, health, and social services, and finance, insurance, and real estate rental and leasing

*Local government:* Mayor-Council

## SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS

*School committee:* 7 members

*Number of schools:* 18

*Student enrollment:*

Total: 8,763

White: 62.5 percent

Hispanic: 4.2 percent

African-American: 4.6 percent

Asian-American: 27.6 percent

Native American: 0.4 percent

Limited English Proficiency:

11.5 percent

Low income: 34.3 percent

Special education: 16.1 percent

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

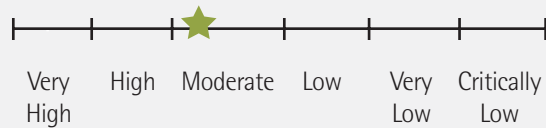
## EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT AUDIT COUNCIL ACTION

After reviewing this report, the Educational Management Audit Council voted to accept its findings at its meeting on December 1, 2006.

## MCAS Performance at a Glance, 2005

	DISTRICT	STATE
Average Proficiency Index	78	78
English Language Arts Proficiency Index	84	83
Math Proficiency Index	72	72

### Performance Rating



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

## HOW DID STUDENTS PERFORM?

### Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) Test Results

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

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

#### 1. Are all eligible students participating in all required programs and assessments?

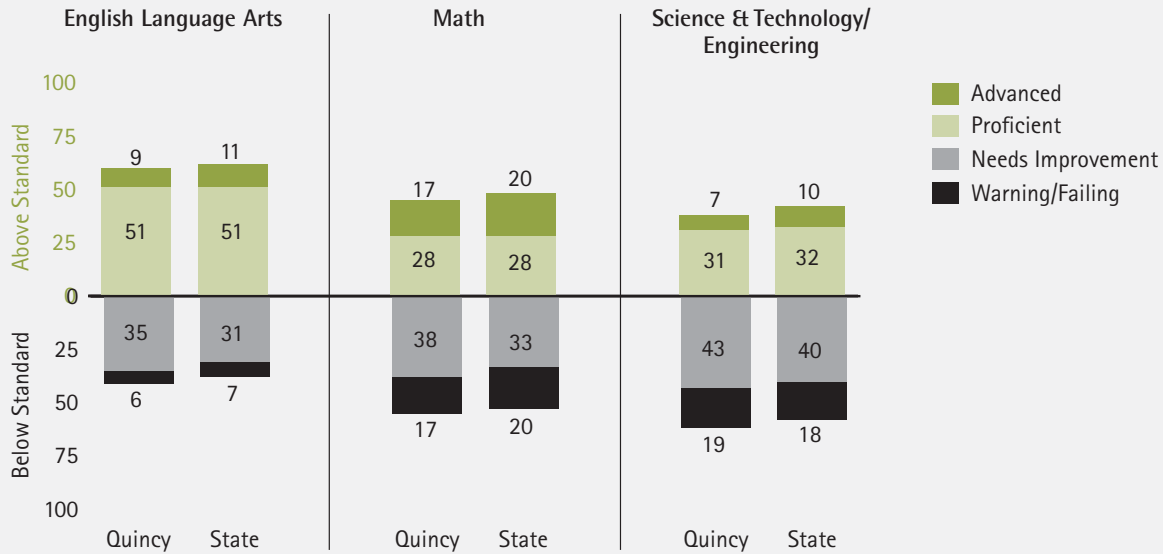
On the 2005 MCAS tests in English language arts (ELA), math, and science and technology/engineering (STE), eligible students in Quincy participated at levels which met or exceeded the state's 95 percent requirement.

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

On average, approximately half of all students in Quincy attained proficiency on the 2004 and 2005 MCAS tests. This proportion was the same as that of the state on the MCAS tests in 2004, but slightly lower than that statewide in 2005. More than half of Quincy's students attained proficiency on the 2005 MCAS ELA tests, less than half attained proficiency on the math tests, and more than one-third attained proficiency on the STE tests.

QUINCY SCORES COMPARED TO STATE AVERAGES

Percentage of students at each proficiency level on MCAS

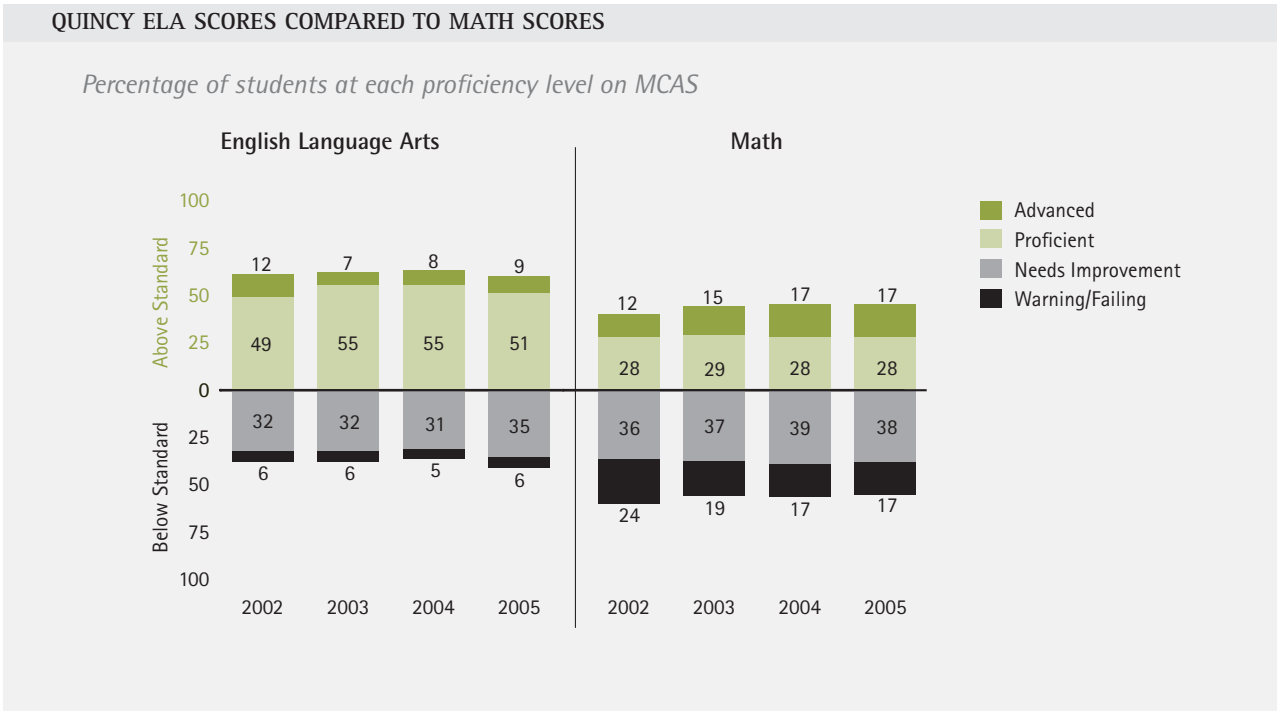


- In 2005, Quincy's proficiency gap in STE was 31 Proficiency Index (PI) points, wider than the state's average proficiency gap in STE. Quincy's proficiency gap in math was 28 PI points, the same as the average proficiency gap in math statewide. These gaps would require an average improvement in performance of more than three PI points annually in each subject to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP).
- Quincy's proficiency gap in ELA was 16 PI points in 2005, slightly narrower than the state's average proficiency gap in ELA. This gap would require an average improvement in performance of less than two PI points annually in ELA to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP).

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

Between 2002 and 2005, Quincy's MCAS performance showed little improvement overall, slight improvement in math, and no improvement in ELA.

- The number of Quincy students scoring in the 'Advanced' and 'Proficient' categories rose by three percentage points between 2002 and 2005, while the number of students at the 'Warning/Failing' performance level decreased by six percentage points.
- Over the four-year period 2002-2005, Quincy showed no improvement in ELA performance, resulting in no closing of the proficiency gap.
- Math performance in Quincy improved by four PI points between 2002 and 2005,



or a little more than one point annually. This resulted in a closing of the proficiency gap of 12.5 percent, a rate lower than that required by AYP.

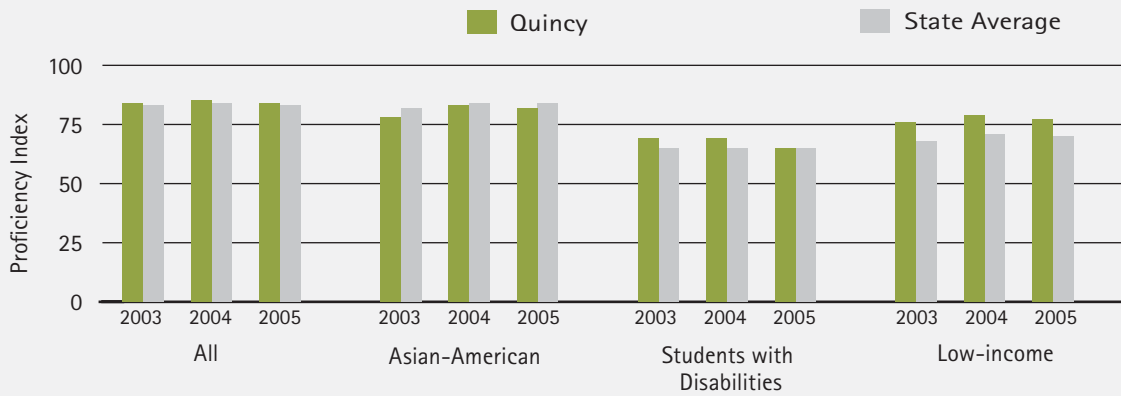
4. Do MCAS test results vary among subgroups of students?

MCAS performance in 2005 varied substantially among subgroups of Quincy's students. Of the seven measurable subgroups in Quincy, the gap in performance between the highest- and lowest-performing subgroups was 25 PI points in ELA (regular education students, students with disabilities, respectively) and 34 PI points in math (Asian students, students with disabilities, respectively).

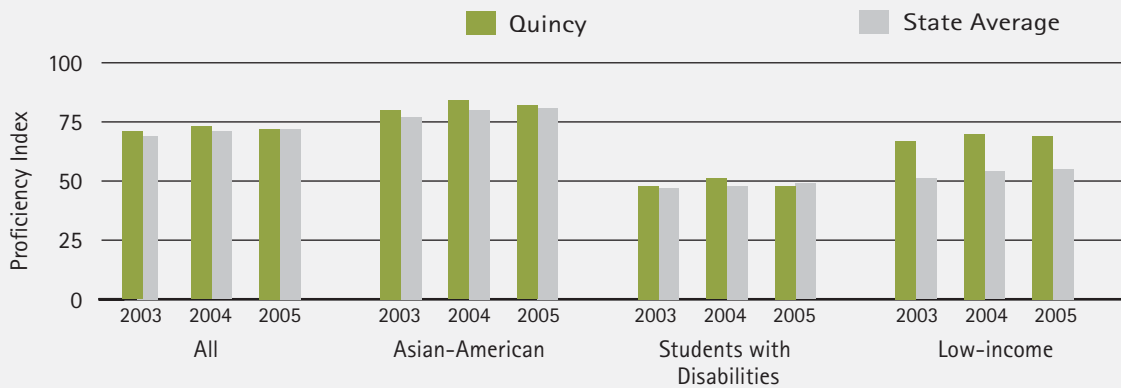
- In Quincy, the proficiency gaps in 2005 in both ELA and in math were wider than the district average for the following subgroups: students with disabilities, students with limited English proficiency (LEP), and students participating in free or reduced-cost lunch programs. For these subgroups, less than half the students attained proficiency in 2005.
- The proficiency gaps in both ELA and math were narrower than the district average for Quincy's students in 2005 for the following subgroups: regular education students and students not participating in free or reduced-cost lunch programs. For

QUINCY STUDENTS' IMPROVEMENT OVER TIME, COMPARED TO STATE AVERAGES

English Language Arts



Math



these subgroups, more than half the students attained proficiency.

- The proficiency levels of LEP students and students participating in free or reduced-cost lunch programs were respectively higher than the state average for those subgroups, more than double in the case of LEP students.

5. Has the MCAS test performance of the district's student subgroups improved over time?

LEP students, students participating in free or reduced-cost lunch programs, and Asian students showed improvement in ELA between 2003 and 2005, while the following subgroups showed improvement in math: regular education students, LEP students, students participating in free or reduced-cost lunch programs, students not participating in free or reduced-cost lunch programs, Asian students, and White students. The most improved subgroup in both content areas was LEP students.

Performance at a Glance

Management Quality Index

The Management Quality Index is a weighted average of the district's performance on 64 indicators that measure the effectiveness of a district's management system. Quincy received the following rating:

Performance Rating



WHAT FACTORS DRIVE STUDENT PERFORMANCE?

Overall District Management

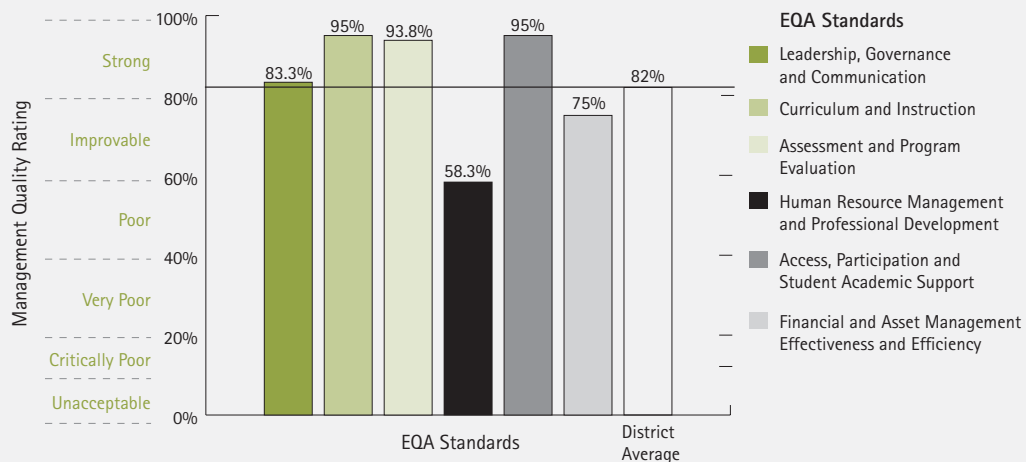
To better understand the factors affecting student scores on MCAS, the EQA analyzes district performance on 64 indicators in six areas: leadership, governance and communication; curriculum and instruction; assessment and program evaluation; human resource management and professional development; access, participation and student academic support; and financial and asset management effectiveness and efficiency. Taken together, these factors are a measure of the

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

In 2005, Quincy received an overall MQI score of Strong (82 percent). The district performed best in the areas of curriculum and instruction, and access, participation, and student academic support. It earned its lowest rating, 'Poor,' in the area of human resource management. Given these ratings, the district is performing as expected on the MCAS tests in ELA, but not in math. MCAS test scores have remained flat, with slight math progress, but some subgroup gaps remain. On the following pages, we take a closer look at district performance in each of the six areas.

A CLOSER LOOK AT MANAGEMENT QUALITY

Quincy, 2002–2005



## Leadership, Governance and Communication

Ultimately, the success or failure of district leadership was determined by how well all students performed. Quincy Public Schools was among the 'Moderate' performing school districts in the Commonwealth, with MCAS test scores that were 'High' in ELA and 'Moderate' in math.

### Governance and Communication

The leadership of the Quincy Public Schools consisted of the superintendent and the seven-member school committee. The EQA reported that the superintendent of schools had devoted his 32-year career to the Quincy Public Schools, in various positions. He concludes his second three-year term as superintendent on October 31, 2007, and had been formally evaluated only once as superintendent.

The district experienced a budget reduction for the 2002-2003 academic year; however, for each of the fiscal years 2004-06, the district experienced a minimum of a five percent increase. Salaries were average for the immediate geographic area, while fringe benefits remained very attractive and were the highest in the region.

There were many advocates for educational funding within the Quincy community. According to the superintendent, the school committee was "incredibly active." They and the superintendent individually conferred with the mayor and since the mayor was also chair of the school committee, they had another opportunity to lobby for financial support. The mayor was viewed by the school committee, administration, teacher association leaders, and faculty as an "education mayor."

The central administration also had a comprehensive School Community Partnership which formally involved over 75 public and private organizations. Each participated in one or more pathways which exposed partners to the needs and aspirations of the schools while provid-

## Performance at a Glance

### Ratings on Performance Indicators

In this area, districts are rated on 12 indicators. Quincy received the following ratings:



### Areas of Strength

- The central office administration designed a multi-faceted system of collaboration which involved a wide variety of stakeholders.
- The District Improvement Plan (DIP) documented numerous goals which were aligned with the six EQA standards.
- Each of the eighteen School Improvement Plans (SIPs) was formally presented to the superintendent and a sub-committee of the school committee.
- Resources were allocated to schools based on academic need.
- Assessment teams at each school were trained in aggregated and disaggregated data analysis and were responsible for incorporating achievement data into documented action plans.

### Areas for Improvement

- The last performance evaluation of the superintendent took place in November 2004, though the school committee indicated that an evaluation process would be implemented in 2005-06.

ing students with support and insight into careers. This collaborative effort was designed to "provide the very best for the workforce and leaders of tomorrow."

## Planning

The director of assessment served as the liaison for gathering, interpreting, and disseminating student achievement data. This information was initially presented to the Superintendent's leadership team (SLT), made up of central office administrators, for further input. It was then shared by the SLT with principals for a system-wide and individual school perspective. The next step in the process involved a presentation to the system's education leadership team (ELT), a group of seventy-five professionals with district-wide academic responsibilities. The observations and conclusions reached by the ELT were then passed to the district-wide assessment team. The district team forwarded data to site-based assessment teams charged with the task of documenting an action plan for their specific school. A template was designed by central office to ensure that action plans consistently addressed specific components. For example, plans had to include skill area, intervention, person responsible, target reached, and comments. Action plans were designed to promote clarity and embrace accountability.

The District Improvement Plans for 2004–2005 and for 2005–2006 were comprehensive documents and the latter incorporated alignment with the six EOA standards, but references to evaluative criteria were absent. One of the major components of the DIP was the analysis of student achievement data. Principals, department chairs, and lead teachers were trained in TestWiz as early as the 1999 school year. Site-based assessment teams were organized in each school. These standing teams also trained in TestWiz, were charged with monitoring student progress as measured by MCAS, and were responsible for conducting annual program reviews. These reviews were accompanied by recommendations not only in the content areas, but also in early childhood, talented and gifted, Title I, special education, and English language learner programs to name a few.

Of particular note during the period under review, literacy specialists were hired for each school and additional mathematics teachers were assigned to the middle schools not only to reduce class size, but also to intervene more effectively in this identified critical area of need. Other program modifications included increasing teacher/student contact by memorandum of agreement and for the 2006–2007 academic year, the implementation of full-day Kindergarten. It was revealed in an interview with the superintendent that the numerous goals identified in the DIP were not prioritized; however, class size, student achievement, and school safety were areas of emphasis. They were not accompanied by measurement notations or evaluative criteria.

## Curriculum and Instruction

The Quincy Public Schools excelled in the area of effective curriculum development and instructional practices — essential elements of efforts to improve student performance.

### Aligned Curricula and Effective Instruction

During the period under review, the K-12 curriculum in the tested areas consisted of course descriptions, scope and sequence, standards, benchmarks and assessments. In addition to comprehensive curriculum guides, separate documents consisting of grade level standards and expectations were shared with teachers, parents, and students.

Horizontal and vertical articulation was evident and achieved through a variety of mandatory professional development meetings. In grades K-12, early release days, ten contractual hours for professional development, and a mini-institute day enabled teachers to receive training in the areas of curriculum and instruction.

District-wide and school based horizontal and vertical meetings were the primary conduit used by teachers to share expectations and modify curriculum and instruction. Vertical team meetings were also held at least two times per year in grades 5-6 and 8-9, providing smooth transitions. Common programs in the tested areas were shared by all schools in grades K-12.

The district had a K-12 curriculum director who was assisted by principals and department chairs at the high school, principals, assistant principals, and academic facilitators at the middle school and principals, literacy specialists, and math focus teachers at the elementary level.

Data were widely used and analyzed in the Quincy School district to modify programs and instruction. A district-wide assessment team was supported by school-based assessment teams consisting of administrators and teachers. Members of

## Performance at a Glance

### Ratings on Performance Indicators

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



### Areas of Strength

- There was a well documented and articulated curriculum in grades K-12 in the tested areas of math, ELA and science.
- The district's curriculum coordinator, principals, and department chairs at the high school insured horizontal and vertical articulation through mandatory professional development meetings and informal annual curriculum revisions.
- Administrators and teachers trained in data analysis used student achievement results to assess the need for modifications in curriculum and instruction.

### Areas for Improvement

- The integration of technology into the curriculum was inadequate due to outdated hardware, software, and budgetary restraints.
- The district's clinical supervision model was not in compliance with state guidelines regarding evaluation.

both teams had been thoroughly trained in test analysis and were the link between the data and the teachers.

Modifications in time allotted in the tested areas were evident at the K-12 level, with additional time devoted to math and ELA during the school day, along with after-school and summer programs available to students who were experiencing difficulty on the MCAS assessments. At the K-5 level, math was increased from 45 to 60 minutes per day, while ELA increased from 60 to 90 minutes per day. At the middle school, math was increased from 42 to 55 minutes, while ELA was increased to 90 minutes in Grade 6 and 60 minutes in grades 7 and 8. The middle school complied with state standards regarding annual hours of instruction. At the high school, MCAS skills were imbedded into the Grade 10 math and English courses in preparation for the MCAS exam.

Teacher performance was adequately monitored by the administration. The principles of effective teaching were adhered to in the evaluation process for teachers without professional status. Teachers who had professional status were subject to a clinical model which was not in compliance with state guidelines.

Teachers were also monitored through the use of plan books. At the middle school level, all teachers used a prescriptive format including goals, standards, benchmarks, instructional strategies, and assessment for each lesson. In addition, middle school teachers were required to post content-based standards on their bulletin boards. Technology training in the area of data analysis was noteworthy.

Technology use in the classroom was not adequate. Fiscal restraints, antiquated hardware and software, and an inequitable distribution of technology resources hampered the effective integration of technology into the curriculum.

EOA examiners visited and observed 43 classrooms system wide and observed classroom management, instructional practices and expectations, student accountability and climate that were satisfactory.

## Assessment and Program Evaluation

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

### Student Assessment

The Quincy Public Schools did not have policies that related to student assessment; however, there were practices in place that had produced a continuous collection of student assessment results. The district had been one of the first to train its administrators in the use of TestWiz. In 2003-2004, the district received a 170 Technology grant that enabled them to create Assessment Teams in each school. The district also developed a district assessment team with a director of assessment. In interviews, district administrators said their goal was to empower teachers to both analyze and use data to drive their instruction.

The district administered a variety of assessments in addition to the MCAS including the Stanford 10, Stanford 9, the Otis Lennon, a group intelligence test; the Developmental Reading Assessment; the GRADE Reading Assessment; DIBELS; and Marie Clay Assessment at the early primary grades. The high school administered the CITE (Center for Innovative Teaching Experiences), and the SAGE (System for Assessment and Group Evaluation) to determine vocational aptitudes.

Student participation in assessments was not an issue in the district. The district distributed the results of assessments through its portion in the city's annual report to the community as well as in its reporting system to parents. Local assessments included the use of benchmarks as well as end of chapter tests; pre- and post-tests that were available through the math programs; a common department exam in algebra at the high school. The district also developed student profile sheets that were used as students passed from one level to the next.

## Performance at a Glance

### Ratings on Performance Indicators

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



### Areas of Strength

- The district was one of the first to train its administrators in the use of TestWiz.
- The district and each building had an assessment team.
- The district administered a number of standardized assessments.
- MCAS participation rates for all students were generally high.
- The district reassigned staff based on student achievement results.

### Areas for Improvement

- The district did not have a policy for student assessment, though practices were in place to analyze student data.
- The district usually reported MCAS results to the community through the city's annual report; however, no report was published for the 2005 school year.

## Program Evaluation

Each year in May, the superintendent's District Leadership Team met to discuss each of the district's programs in terms of progress as measured by student achievement data. The district did not regularly engage in internal and external audits. It participated in mandated audits that related to the Early Childhood Program as well as a Coordinated Program Review by the DOE of its special education program. The district also had a NEASC visit in 1998 and the follow-up efforts during the review period.

Interviewees said the only voluntary external audit that the district had been involved with took place in 2002 and was conducted by Fresh Pond Education. The purpose of the study was to help teachers implement a study group approach to professional development by working together in Design Teams. As a result of reviewing assessment data, the district implemented several changes in reassigning staff. The School Committee had a lengthy policy, "Evaluation of Instructional Staff," but said that in practice there was no systematic plan in place for the evaluation of programs. During interviews principals said they had reassigned staff members who might have a stronger background in an area where student achievement needed to improve. In interviews with all groups, the EQA team was told that the district was committed to low class size, and this commitment had occurred as a result of its viewing student achievement data and becoming convinced that low class size would improve the achievement of students in the Quincy Public Schools.

The district was successful in applying for a grant that allowed them to develop the district and school site-based assessment teams. Interviewees said that these assessment teams had been highly successful in training teachers, principals and all staff in how to analyze student achievement. When math was recognized as an area needing improvement, the district provided math focus teachers at grades 3, 4 and 5. Also, interviewees at the middle school said that five new math teachers had been placed in the middle schools. Two math teachers were assigned to Grade 9. The district also provided additional support for the ELA programs at the elementary level by appointing literacy specialists in each school, some half time, and some full time. These specialists who have been in place during the past three years not only worked with small groups of students but also provided coaching for teachers. The district also provided funding for vertical teams that met at least twice during the school year. These teams existed at the 5-6 level in math and literacy and at the 8-9 level in math, science, and ELA.

## Human Resource Management and Professional Development

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

### Hiring Practices and Certification

There was a strong overtone of district loyalty to the city of Quincy in personnel matters. Virtually all Quincy administrators had some historical or familial connection to the city. According to interviewees, new teachers entered their employment through substitute teaching or student teaching. Several were well acquainted with the school district personnel.

Recruitment policies strongly proposed equal employment in hiring, but there were no standards for screening and interviewing diverse candidates. Minority employees accounted for less than 5 percent of the 1,225 employees.

### Professional Development

The district published a comprehensive professional development guide annually. Its content was developed as a result of an annual survey, interviews, and meetings across the district. It included district-wide interests, workshops that related to specific departments and goals from School Improvement Plans. There was a district professional development committee that acted as clearinghouse and broker to the various professional development needs of the district. In addition, for teachers in advanced lanes and columns of the teacher salary schedule, there were other opportunities for tuition reimbursed university courses. Workshops included the Collins Writing Program, Hands on Equations, Trophies, and Connected math. In addition, all teach-

## Performance at a Glance

### Ratings on Performance Indicators

In this area, districts are rated on 12 performance indicators. Quincy received the following ratings:



### Areas of Strength

- Each teacher who was new to the district was assigned a mentor.
- Each year, the district published a professional development guide for teachers, whose surveys provided input into the guide's development.

### Areas for Improvement

- The only threshold for measuring full teaching competency in the Quincy Public Schools was earning professional status. After reaching that status, teacher performance was not evaluated as required by CMR 35.00.
- Evaluations of administrative and teaching staff were not in compliance with CMR 35.00. They were not timely, nor were the current usage of the form and process in alignment with CMR 35.00.
- There was a policy on Equal Employment Opportunity, but the minority staff employed by the district was less than five percent.

ers were in the process of being trained in TestWiz.

The district provided release time for professional development. In addition, there were an additional 10 hours required for professional development. In addition, there were 75 operational teams in the district that provided connections to innumerable initiatives, such as assessment, MCAS analysis, and planning for DIP and SIPs. There were examples of workshops such as the Collins Writing Program, Hands on Equations, Trophies, and Connected math. In addition, all teachers were in the process of being trained in TestWiz. Assessment teams were active in the district and their work influenced training topics. Various recognition ceremonies were held from time to time by the school committee and by central administration. These included award dinners, celebrations for attaining professional status, and mini-grant celebrations. The professional development book contained hundreds of course offerings, a combination of district, school, and departmental offerings, both mandatory and voluntary. In addition, Individual Professional Development Plans reviewed by the team contained numerous references to workshops taken by staff.

### Evaluation

Reviews of personnel files and performance evaluations showed many non-compliance areas with CMR 35.00. For several years, there were no evaluations in files. In evaluations of administrators, when available, the comments were uniformly congratulatory with only one exception. The district administrator evaluation process was a clinical supervision process. It attached an amended listing of the CMR 35.00 Performance Standards for Professional employees as part of the common document used in the evaluation process, but allowed the administrator and the evaluator to negotiate which standards which would be the focus of the evaluation. The standards of administrative competencies were in compliance, but they were not used. In the EQA review of Administrator Personnel Files, none included references to or scoring of these performance standards. Many administrator annual evaluations were not available for review. Of 132 required evaluations during the period under review, only 26 were available for review.

Some principal evaluations contained detailed references to MCAS results and included goals to improve student achievement. Many principal evaluations were summaries of progress on portions of their school improvement plans. No sanctions were placed on principals who did not meet their goals, according to written evaluation data read by the EQA team. Teachers who earned professional status were allowed to pick and choose performance competencies upon which they would be evaluated. Administrators had annual contracts, although compensation for each varied. All evaluation documents reviewed rated the performance of 100 teachers and 27 administrators as satisfactory. Few were instructive or informative. No teacher evaluation included any reference to student achievement.

## Access, Participation and Student Academic Support

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

### Services

In the Quincy Public Schools, student academic support services addressed the needs of all students as determined by aggregated and disaggregated student achievement data. Student performance was carefully tracked by site-based assessment teams who were trained in TestWiz. Support services and programs were implemented to address the needs of all students. At the elementary level, a new reading program was piloted in the system and expanded to additional schools to provide students with a more comprehensive literacy experience. The program included regular assessment and timely intervention strategies to meet the needs of students. At all levels, schedules were adjusted to allow for expanded class time on ELA and math. Math staff was added to the middle and high school and all elementary schools had the services of a literacy specialist. In grades 3, 4, and 5, math focus teachers delivered the math curriculum. Teachers with math training and backgrounds were selected for these positions.

The district offered after school and summer programs for students at-risk of failing the MCAS, for students who failed the MCAS, for ELL students, and for special education students in substantially separate programs. At the high school, all 10th graders were scheduled for the Skills I class as a MCAS prep class for math and ELA. Students who failed the MCAS were enrolled in the Skills II class in Grade 11.

ELL students were screened and tested by teachers trained in the MELA-O and provided a sheltered English Program or an immersion program with

## Performance at a Glance

### Ratings on Performance Indicators

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



### Areas of Strength

- The district used aggregated and disaggregated data to adjust programs for at-risk populations and provided a number of additional programs and supports.
- The district used formative and summative assessments to identify students in need of remedial services and provided services.
- The district reduced its dropout rate by 50 percent during the last year under review.
- The district provided for the homeless population with a number of supports services for students and families both in school and in the community.

### Areas for Improvement

- MCAS test scores were comparable to the state's average, but generally flat at all levels. All subgroups were identified for improvement in 2005.
- Proficiency levels at Grade 4 were slightly lower than the state's average, and did not show improvement trends.

paraprofessionals who spoke the native language. Progress reports tracked student achievement and acquisition of English language skills. Parents were offered English classes on Saturdays and evenings.

The district offered a number of supports and services for the homeless population. The coordinator of the program reached out into the community for contributions and also involved older students to make the homeless students feel welcome in the community.

### **Attendance, Discipline, and Dropout Prevention**

The dropout rate decreased by 50 percent at Quincy High School as a result of a number of programs which were put into effect, including a focus on at-risk Grade 9 students. While the attendance rate of chronically absent students remained high at Quincy High School, the system tracked attendance closely and had a number of policies and procedures in effect to address this issue, including both consequences ranging from parent involvement to bringing in DSS and the courts, to an incentive at Quincy High School in which students with perfect monthly attendance entered a raffle for a car. To decrease the out-of-school suspension rate, Quincy High School reinstated in-house suspension and provided mentors for at-risk students who had entered the ninth grade. Students were well supported at all transition points by collaborative programs between the sending and receiving schools and the guidance counselors at all levels, many of whom were clinically trained.

### **Subgroup Participation**

Efforts were made at elementary and middle school levels to increase the diversity of the programs for gifted and talented students by waiving the qualifying scores and by adding to the diversity of the screening committees. At the high school, there were a disproportionate number of minority students in the Advance Placement (AP) programs. While the Asian students were 27 percent of the school population, they composed 54 percent of the students in the AP classes at North Quincy High School and 31 percent at Quincy High School. Hispanic and Black students were proportionately represented in the AP classes.

## Financial and Asset Management Effectiveness and Efficiency

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

### Budget Process and Financial Support

The Quincy Public Schools' budget was developed through an open, participatory process and began when all school principals presented their School Improvement Plans to the school committee early in the school year. These plans were the foundation for their budget requests. The district had a number of committees with budget matters on the agendas of their meetings. Budget development was on the agendas of the Superintendent's Leadership Team meetings. Individual school and program budgets were reviewed. The school committee, which included the mayor, had a budget sub committee and met to review budget preparation, and the full committee was well informed about budget matters.

During the first year under review, the district experienced a budget reduction that required significant operational adjustments. Because of this budget shortfall, the district implemented an evaluation review process that was recognized in an article entitled, "Budgeting in Hard Times," published in *The School Administrator*, a magazine with national circulation. In the two subsequent years, the operating budget increased by over 5 percent each year; the district exceeded its NSS spending requirements for each year during the review period.

During the review period, the district implemented a number of cost effective programs including the purchase of a building, located in the district, which was used for a special education program in which the district paid tuition for its students. The district, after analysis, purchased the building, staffed it with its own personnel, and realized a savings. The district, after evaluation, purchased ten vans to transport district special education stu-

### Performance at a Glance

#### Ratings on Performance Indicators

In this area, districts are rated on 12 performance indicators. Quincy received the following ratings:



#### Areas of Strength

- All principals presented their SIPs to the school committee early in the school year, and these formed the basis of their budget requests.
- The district exceeded its NSS spending requirements for each year during the review period.

#### Areas for Improvement

- The accounting program used by the district during the period under review did not conform to current DOE guidelines.
- Two of the district's buildings were in poor condition, particularly in flooring, tile work, ceilings, and restroom facilities.

dent to placements outside the district. The district estimated that a savings of \$90,000 per year was realized as a result of not using private contractors.

In fiscal year 2003, the city and the school district combined maintenance departments and the budgets for grounds maintenance, equipment maintenance, contracted services, and supplies were removed from the school budget and placed in the city budget within the control of a single director of maintenance. The budget for the salaries of school custodial and school maintenance personnel remained within the school budget.

Regular, timely, accurate, and complete financial reports were developed but were not distributed to building principals unless requested. The district was installing a new hardware program that would provide them with timely reports. The district had developed a written agreement that detailed the manner for calculating indirect costs; however, it was not executed and there was no evidence presented that it was in effect for the period under review.

A finding in the June 2003 independent audit report and continued in the June 2004 report cited the necessity of the district to revise their chart of accounts to meet DOE compliance. The accounting program used by the district during the period under review did not conform to current DOE guidelines. The June 2005 report was not available to determine if this finding had been corrected. The district leadership indicated that these issues were being addressed through the installation of new financial software and hardware.

### Facilities

The district was also attempting to upgrade or replace the two buildings that were self-assessed as being in "bad" condition. Applications to address these buildings had been submitted to the Department of Education and were currently being reviewed by the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

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## CONCLUSION

The EQA examination found the Quincy Public Schools to be a 'Moderate' performing district, marked by student achievement that was 'High' in ELA and 'Moderate' in math on the MCAS tests. More than half of all Quincy students scored at or above standard on the 2005 administration of the MCAS test. The district earned a management quality rating of 82 percent, or 'Strong,' receiving its highest score ('Strong') in both Curriculum and Instruction and Access, Participation and Student Academic Support, and its lowest score, 'Poor,' in Human Resource Management and Professional Development.

The superintendent, a 32-year veteran of the Quincy Public Schools, will conclude his second three-year term in October 2007. He described the school committee as "incredibly active," and noted that members confer with the mayor, who is also chair of the school committee, and is viewed by all stakeholders as an education advocate. This collaborative environment provides ample opportunity to secure financial support and community partnerships. The district is involved in a school-community partnership in which 75 representatives of municipal government, businesses, higher education and social service agencies work together to enhance the educational lives of students.

The district and school leaders prepared a District Improvement Plan which took at least five years to evolve before the superintendent found the format and content acceptable. The main objective of the plan was to foster and complement internal communications within the Quincy Public Schools. One of the major components of the DIP was the analysis of student achievement data. Site-based assessment teams have been organized at each school and were charged with monitoring student progress as measured by MCAS and by conducting annual program reviews. In addition, the DIP was the organizing document that provided guidance in the writing of the individual SIPs. Specific goals in the DIP were incorporated into the SIPs. The district had a comprehensive K-12 curriculum, and goals relating to these areas were part of the SIPs.

Student achievement data was monitored throughout the academic year. The director of assessment collected, analyzed, and disseminated the MCAS data. These data have been collated in three to four year cycles by district, school, and grade level as well as by content area. This information was then analyzed by principals and assessment teams at each school. These teams were responsible for developing an action plan that identified content area strengths, weaknesses, target areas, timelines, and personnel responsible for monitoring.

The district successfully decreased the number of dropouts. Data were collected and coun-

selors and deans at the two high schools developed a statistical picture of the students who dropped out each year. A task team met to recommend systemic changes. A Workforce Investment Board grant funded the Grade 9 Mentor program, which involved 80 students with a history of attendance or academic problems. The district reported a high number of chronically absent students starting at Grade 7. The Director of Student Support services said that the district was monitoring absences, but not the chronically absent.

The district exceeded its Net School Spending for each year during the period under review. The school committee members stated that they believed the Chapter 70 formula was not equitable for Quincy. The foundation enrollment was 8,632 pupils in fiscal year 2005 and the district received \$12,132,233 in Chapter 70 funding. However, samples of Chapter 70 funding in communities similar to Quincy for that same fiscal year were Taunton, with an enrollment of 8,166, which received \$38,760,434 and Weymouth, with an enrollment of 6,692, which received \$19,117,962.

A review of administrative personnel files revealed that required evaluations were incomplete. The school committee stated that the superintendent had not been evaluated annually, but said a process would be implemented during the 2005–2006 school year. There was only one review of the superintendent, dated November 2004. School performance as measured by the MCAS tests was referenced in at least two standards. Many administrator evaluations were not available for review. Out of 132 required evaluations for the examination period, only 26 were available for review.

The EQA team also reviewed 100 personnel files of both non-professional and professional status teachers. Of those files, 48 percent contained timely evaluations. The district had a three-year technology plan which allocated increased resources to each school and provided appropriate teacher training. The observation of classes and building inspections by the EQA team revealed that technology hardware varied from school to school. Despite the plan, adequate funds were not available to finance ambitious hardware programs at each school.

The superintendent recognized MCAS scores were stagnant and the district researched program modifications. Math instruction was identified for improvement, particularly in the middle schools. Math focus teachers were placed in grades 3, 4 and 5; additional math teachers were assigned to the middle schools in order to reduce class size; and after school time was made available at all schools for MCAS math. In 2004–05, MCAS results showed that all sub-groups had been identified for improvement in ELA and math.

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## APPENDIX A: EQA'S DISTRICT EXAMINATION PROCESS

EQA's examination process provides successively deeper levels of information about student performance. All school districts receive an annual review based on MCAS test results, but they do not all receive the EQA district review every year.

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

### *Level I: Data-Driven Assessment*

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

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

### *Level II: Standards-Based Examination*

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

The report analyzes district performance in six major areas: leadership, governance, and communication; curriculum and instruction; assessment and evaluation; human resource management and professional development; access, participation, and student academic support; and financial and asset management effectiveness and efficiency. EQA examines a total of 64 indicators to assess whether the district is meeting the standards and provides a rating for each indicator.

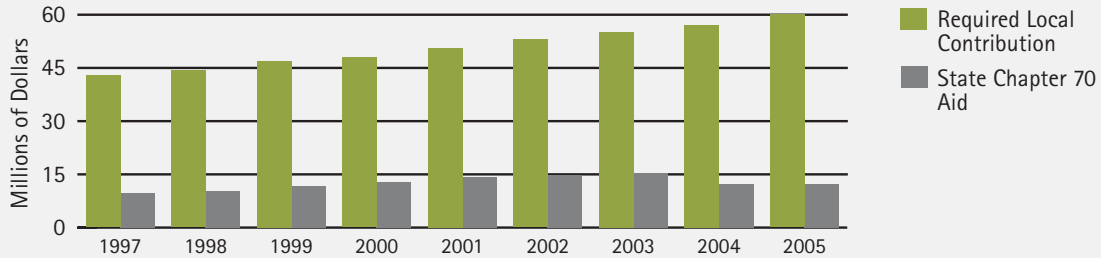
## APPENDIX B: GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN EQA TECHNICAL REPORTS

<b>ABA:</b> Applied Behavioral Analysis	<b>FTE:</b> Full-Time Equivalent	<b>MQI:</b> Management Quality Index – an indicator of the relative strength and effectiveness of a district’s management system
<b>ADA:</b> Average Daily Attendance	<b>FY:</b> Fiscal Year	<b>MUNIS:</b> Municipal Information System
<b>ALT:</b> MCAS Alternative Assessment	<b>Gap Analysis:</b> A statistical method to analyze the relationships between and among district and subgroup performance and the standard of 100 percent proficiency	<b>NAEYC:</b> National Association for the Education of Young Children
<b>API:</b> Average Proficiency Index (of the English Language Arts Proficiency Index and Math Proficiency Index for all students)	<b>GASB:</b> Government Accounting Standards Board	<b>NCLB:</b> No Child Left Behind
<b>ATA:</b> Accountability and Targeted Assistance	<b>GMADE:</b> Group Math Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation	<b>NEASC:</b> New England Association of Schools and Colleges
<b>AYP:</b> Adequate Yearly Progress	<b>GRADE:</b> Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation	<b>NRT:</b> Norm-Referenced Test
<b>CAP:</b> Corrective Action Plan	<b>GRADU:</b> The graduation yield rate for a class four years from entry	<b>NSBA:</b> National School Boards Association
<b>CBM:</b> Curriculum-Based Measures	<b>IEP:</b> Individualized Education Program	<b>NSS:</b> Net School Spending
<b>CD:</b> Competency Determination – the state’s interim Adequate Yearly Progress indicator for high schools based on grade 10 MCAS test passing rates	<b>Improvement Gap:</b> A measure of change in a combination of the proficiency gap and performance gap between two points in time; a positive improvement gap will show improvement and convergence between subgroups’ performance over time	<b>Performance Gap:</b> A measure of the range of the difference of performance between any subgroup’s Proficiency Index and another subgroup’s in a given district
<b>CMP:</b> Connected Math Program	<b>IPDP:</b> Individual Professional Development Plan	<b>PI:</b> Proficiency Index – a number between 0–100 representing the extent to which students are progressing toward proficiency
<b>CORI:</b> Criminal Offender Record Information	<b>IRIP:</b> Individual Reading Improvement Plan	<b>PIM:</b> Performance Improvement Management
<b>CPI:</b> Composite Proficiency Index – a 100-point index combining students’ scores on the standard MCAS and MCAS Alternative Assessment (ALT)	<b>ISSP:</b> Individual Student Success Plan	<b>POA:</b> Program Quality Assurance – a division of the DOE responsible for conducting the Coordinated Program Review process
<b>CPR:</b> Coordinated Program Review – conducted on Federal Education Acts by the DOE	<b>LASW:</b> Looking at Student Work	<b>Proficiency Gap:</b> A measure of a district or subgroup’s Proficiency Index and its distance from 100 percent proficiency
<b>CRT:</b> Criterion-Referenced Test	<b>LEP:</b> Limited English Proficient	<b>QRI:</b> Qualitative Reading Inventory
<b>CSR:</b> Comprehensive School Reform	<b>MASBO:</b> Massachusetts Association of School Business Officials	<b>Rate of Improvement:</b> The result of dividing the gain (improvement in achievement as measured by Proficiency Index points) by the proficiency gap
<b>DCAP:</b> District Curriculum Accommodation Plan	<b>MASC:</b> Massachusetts Association of School Committees	<b>SAT:</b> Scholastic Achievement Test administered by the Educational Testing Service to 11th and 12th graders
<b>DIBELS:</b> Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills	<b>MASS:</b> Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents	<b>SEI:</b> Sheltered English Immersion
<b>DIP:</b> District Improvement Plan	<b>MAVA:</b> Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators	<b>SIMS:</b> Student Information Management System
<b>DOE:</b> Department of Education	<b>MCAS:</b> Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System	<b>SIOP:</b> Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol
<b>DPDP:</b> District Professional Development Plan	<b>MCAS-AIt:</b> Alternative Assessment – a portfolio option for special-needs students to demonstrate proficiency	<b>SIP:</b> School Improvement Plan
<b>DRA:</b> Developmental Reading Assessment	<b>MCPPPO:</b> Massachusetts Certified Public Purchasing Official	<b>SPED:</b> Special Education
<b>ELA:</b> English Language Arts	<b>MELA-O:</b> Massachusetts English Language Assessment-Oral	<b>STE:</b> Science Technology Engineering
<b>ELL:</b> English Language Learners	<b>MEPA:</b> Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment	<b>TerraNova:</b> K–12 norm-referenced test series published by CTB/McGraw-Hill
<b>EPI:</b> English Language Arts Proficiency Index	<b>MPI:</b> Math Proficiency Index	
<b>ESL:</b> English as a Second Language		
<b>FLNE:</b> First Language Not English		
<b>FRL/N:</b> Free and Reduced-Price Lunch/No		
<b>FRL/Y:</b> Free and Reduced-Price Lunch/Yes		

**APPENDIX C: STATE AND LOCAL FUNDING, 1997-2005**

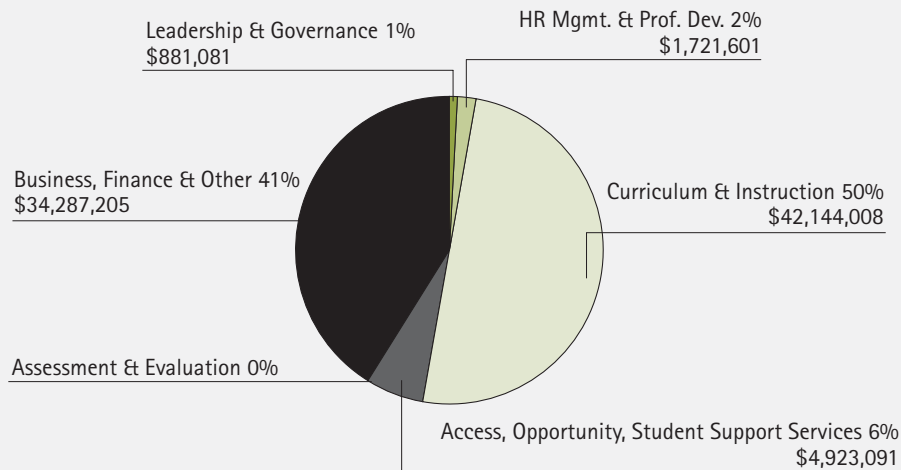
A school district's funding is determined in part by the Chapter 70 program – the major program of state aid to public elementary and secondary schools. In addition to providing state aid to support school operations, it also establishes minimum requirements for each municipality's share of school costs. The following chart shows the amount of Quincy Public Schools' funding derived from the state and the amount that the town was required to contribute. For the nine-year period, FY1997 to FY2005, Quincy met the state-mandated Net School Spending Requirement. For the period between FY1997 and FY2005, Chapter 70 Aid to Quincy increased 26.6 percent (from \$9,579,537 to \$12,132,223). Quincy's Required Local Contribution increased 40.2 percent (from \$42,364,233 to \$59,383,344). Since FY1997, Quincy received a total of \$112,470,031 in Chapter 70 Aid and was required to raise locally \$452,781,581.

**WHERE DOES THE FUNDING FOR QUINCY PUBLIC SCHOOLS COME FROM?**



**HOW IS THE FUNDING FOR QUINCY PUBLIC SCHOOLS ALLOCATED?**

*FY04 Expenditures By EQA Standards (With City/Town Charges), based on the district's submission to the DOE at the time of the EQA's on-site review.*





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