

*How Is Your
School District
Performing?*



*A closer look at
Holbrook 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 (EOA), were established by the Massachusetts Legislature in July 2000 to examine public school districts in the commonwealth. The mission of the EMAC and EOA 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 Holbrook Public Schools, Susan E. Martin; the school department staff; and the town officials of Holbrook.

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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 district's 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 October 2005, the EQA conducted an independent examination of the Holbrook Public Schools for the period of 2002–2005. This school district was selected for Tier I and Tier II reviews. In the Tier I review, the EQA analyzed Holbrook 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 Tier II, 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 Holbrook 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

Holbrook, MA



DISTRICT

Population: 10,785

Median family income: \$62,532

Largest sources of employment:

Educational, health, and social services; and, retail trade

Local government: Representative Town Meeting

SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS

School committee: 5 members

Number of schools: 3

Student enrollment:

Total: 1,389

White: 82 percent

Hispanic: 4.5 percent

African-American: 9.6 percent

Asian-American: 3.7 percent

Native American: 0.3 percent

Limited English Proficiency:

3.5 percent

Low income: 20.4 percent

Special education: 14.8 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 accepted its findings at its meeting on April 14, 2006.

MCAS Performance at a Glance, 2005

	DISTRICT	STATE
Average Proficiency Index	76.5	78
English Language Arts Proficiency Index	83	83
Math Proficiency Index	70	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?

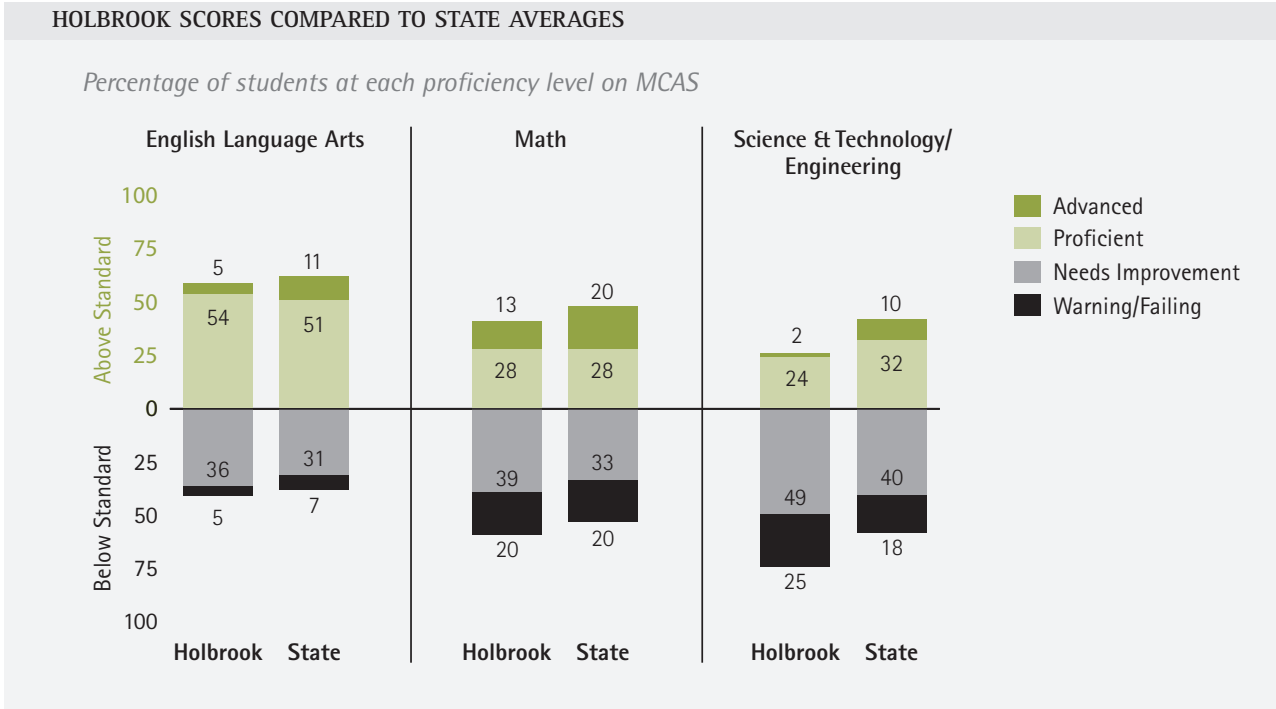
Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) Test Results

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 ELA tests, eligible students did not participate at required levels in Holbrook.
- On the 2005 math and STE tests, eligible students participated at required levels in Holbrook.
- In Holbrook, the 92 percent student participation rate on the 2005 MCAS ELA test was 3 percentage points lower than the state's 95 percent requirement.
- In Holbrook, the 99 percent student participation rate on the 2005 MCAS math test was 4 percentage points higher than the state's 95 percent requirement.
- In Holbrook, the 99 percent student participation rate on the 2005 MCAS STE test was 4 percentage points higher than the state's 95 percent requirement.



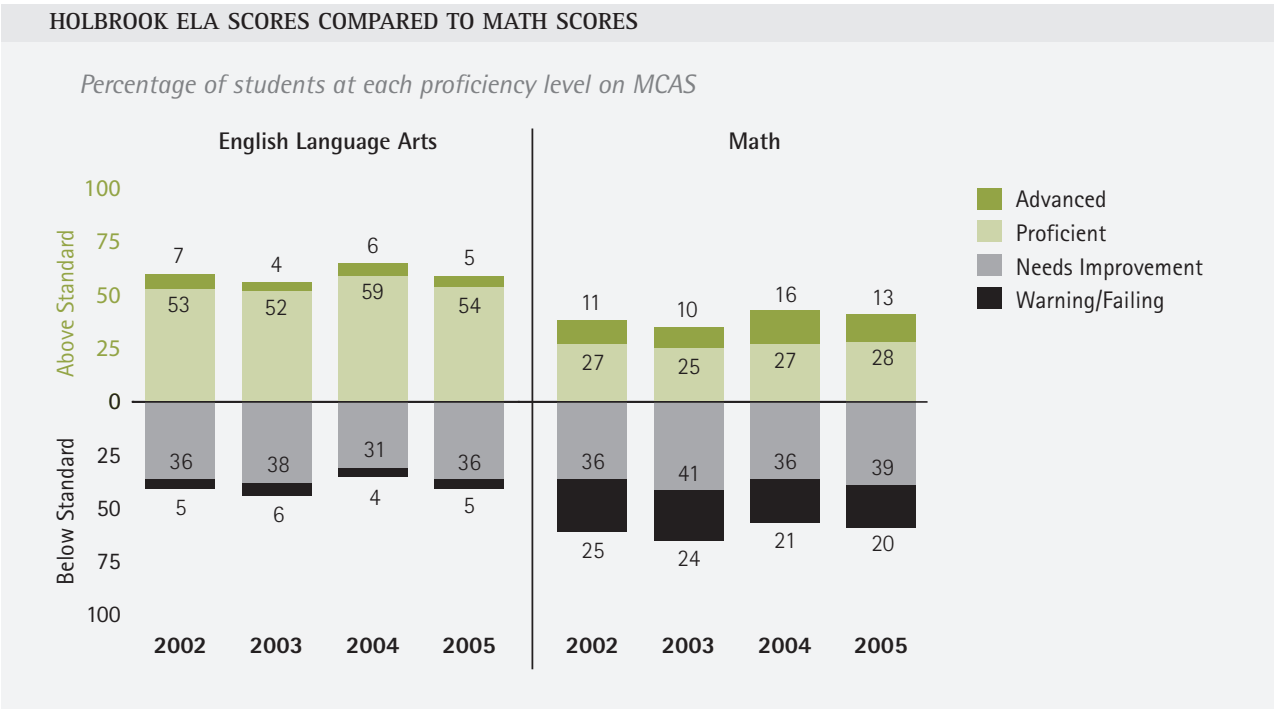
2. Are the district's students reaching proficiency levels on the MCAS examination?

- Approximately half of all students in Holbrook attained proficiency on the 2004 and 2005 MCAS tests.
- More than half of the students in Holbrook attained proficiency on the 2005 MCAS English Language Arts (ELA) tests and less than half attained proficiency on the math tests.
- Less than one third of all students in Holbrook attained proficiency on the 2005 MCAS science and technology/engineering (STE) tests, lower than the percentage of all students in the state on the STE tests.
- Less than one third of in Holbrook attained proficiency on the Grade 8 math test, lower than the percentage of all students in the state on the Grade 8 math test.
- Less than one third of students in Holbrook attained proficiency on the Grade 8 STE test, lower than the percentage of all students in the state on the Grade 8 STE test.
- Holbrook's proficiency gap in ELA was 17 Proficiency Index (PI) points; in math, the proficiency gap was 30 PI points; and in STE, this gap was 37 PI points.

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

Between 2002 and 2005:

- In ELA, the proficiency gap was the same in 2005 as in 2002, for an improvement rate of 0 percent.



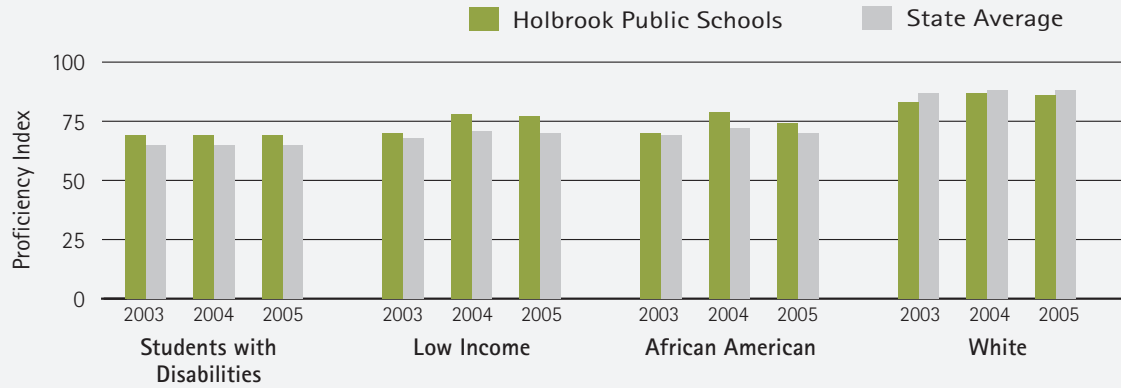
- In math, the proficiency gap was four PI points narrower in 2005 than in 2002, for an improvement rate of 9.2 percent.

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

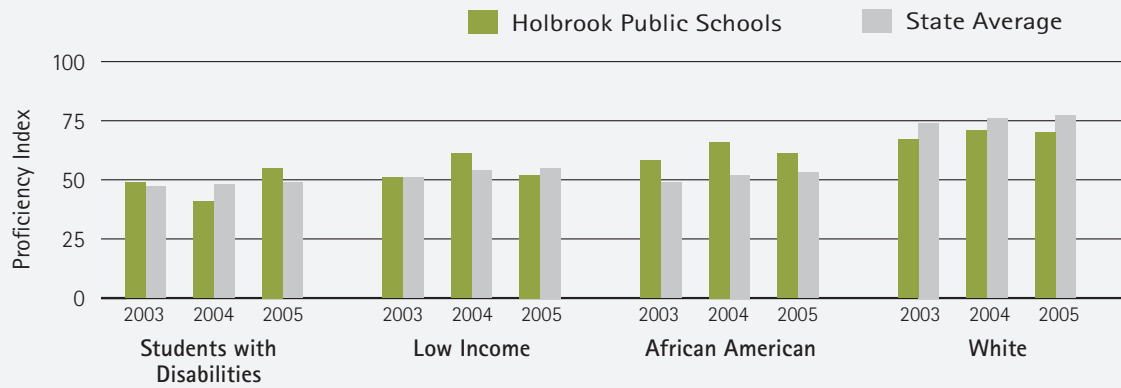
- Holbrook's performance gap in ELA was 24 PI points. In math, the performance gap was 25 PI points.
- For Holbrook's students with disabilities, the proficiency gaps in both ELA and math were wider than those of all students in Holbrook.
- Less than one third of students with disabilities in Holbrook attained proficiency on the 2005 MCAS tests, lower than the percentage of regular education students in Holbrook.
- For Holbrook's African-American students, the proficiency gap in ELA was wider than that of all students in Holbrook in 2005.
- Approximately one third of African-American students in Holbrook attained proficiency on the 2005 MCAS tests, lower than that of White students in Holbrook.
- For Holbrook's students eligible for free or reduced-cost lunch (FRL/Y), the proficiency gap in ELA was wider than that of all students in Holbrook in 2005.

HOLBROOK STUDENTS' IMPROVEMENT OVER TIME, COMPARED TO STATE AVERAGES

English Language Arts



Math



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

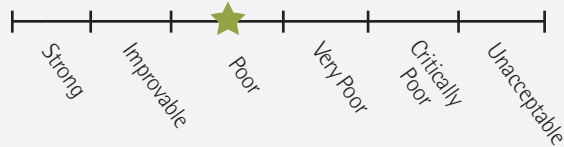
- In ELA, the proficiency gap was the same in 2005 as in 2002, for an improvement rate of 0 percent.
- In math, the proficiency gap was four PI points narrower in 2005 than in 2002, for an improvement rate of 9.2 percent.
- The improvement gap in ELA was three PI points wider in 2005 than in 2003 in Holbrook.
- The improvement gap in math was two PI points narrower in 2005 than in 2003 in Holbrook.
- The performance gap in ELA was the same in Holbrook in 2005 as in 2003.
- The performance gap in math was six PI points narrower in 2005 than in 2003 in Holbrook.

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. Holbrook received the following rating:

Performance Rating



WHAT FACTORS DRIVE STUDENT PERFORMANCE?

Overall District Management

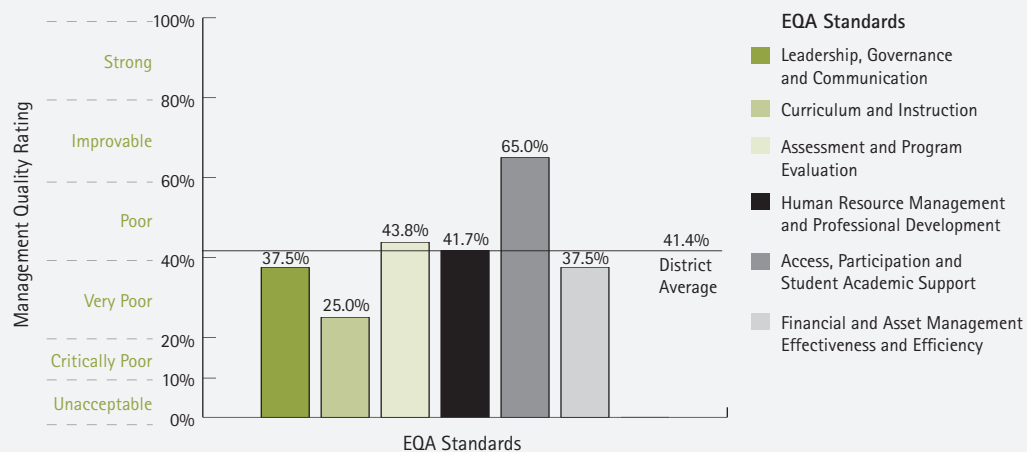
To better understand the factors affecting student scores on MCAS, the EQA analyzes district performance on 64 indicators in six areas: leadership, governance and communication; curriculum and instruction; assessment and program evaluation; human resource management and professional development; access, 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, Holbrook received an overall MQI score of Poor (41.4 percent). The district performed best in the area of access, participation and student academic support, scoring at the Improvable level. It was rated Very Poor in three areas, with curriculum and instruction receiving the lowest score. Given these ratings, the district is performing slightly better than expected on MCAS tests. However, it is not surprising that those scores have remained relatively steady and that the district has not made significant improvements in MCAS scores over the last three years. On the following pages, we take a closer look at district performance in each of the six areas.

A CLOSER LOOK AT MANAGEMENT QUALITY

Holbrook, 2002–2005



Leadership, Governance and Communication

Ultimately, the success or failure of district leadership was determined by how well all students performed. Holbrook's performance rating was 'Moderate,' but it improved its ELA and Math Proficiency Index scores between 2002 and 2005.

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

Planning

Plans for improving student performance need to start with a clear vision and set of priorities backed by in-depth data to inform decision-making.

The Holbrook school committee adopted a vision statement that guided the district throughout the entire review period. In the final year under review, this statement was connected to a strategic plan, the District Improvement Plan (DIP), and the individual School Improvement Plans (SIPs). The school committee had not approved a DIP or strategic plan in any of the years under review.

During school year 2004–2005, the new superintendent drafted a DIP with assistance from the leadership team. The DIP was used by the district as a reference when the 2006 school budget was being prepared.

Each school had school committee-approved SIPs for all of the years under review, and all schools in the district had school councils that participated in the process of producing a SIP dedicated to the needs of their building and students.

The superintendent presented all SIPs annually to the school committee for approval and each presentation included a review of the attainment of goals for the previous year.

Performance at a Glance

Ratings on Performance Indicators

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



Areas of Strength

- During the last year of the review period, members of the school committee included student achievement data in the budget process.
- Each school had school committee-approved SIPs for all of the years under review, and all schools in the district had school councils that participated in the process of producing a SIP dedicated to the needs of their building and students.

Areas for Improvement

- Significant leadership turnover during the review period hindered the establishment, review, and implementation of policies, procedures, and practices that supported high academic standards for students in the district.
- During the review period, the district had three superintendents, two business managers, three special education directors, and two co-curriculum directors.

Governance

The district had limited evidence of a sustained and meaningful evaluation process for both the superintendent and other administrators. In the first and final year under review, the school committee evaluated the superintendent with a tool that did not address student achievement data or the attainment of goals. The district went through three superintendents during the period under review, and the school committee opted not to evaluate the superintendents who were leaving the district at the end of the school year. During the final year under review, the new superintendent completed evaluations for all administrators that included assessments of the attainment of SIP goals as well as student achievement.

Communication

The district compiled annual reports with MCAS test results used as a measure of the progress of the district and specific grade levels. The leadership presented these reports to the school committee and shared them with members of the teaching staff, principals, and other administrators; however, the district did not have a formal process to address the gathering, selection, and use of such data.

During the final year under review, the superintendent guided the district in the use of analysis and the evaluation of programs using the generated data. In addition, the budget reflected the needs of the district and areas and programs deemed most needy received funding in the last year of the review period.

Curriculum and Instruction

The Holbrook Public Schools faced a number of challenges in the areas of effective curriculum development and instructional practice – essential elements of efforts to improve student performance.

Aligned Curricula and Effective Instruction

During the review period, high turnover in the central office staff accounted for the leadership's failure to develop and implement a K–12 curriculum in all tested core subjects. During the review period, the district had three superintendents, two business managers, three special education directors, and two co-curriculum directors. The directors were members of the teachers' union, reported to the superintendent, and were not accountable to building principals.

The district had curriculum documents in written form, but did not implement them nor widely distribute them on a consistent basis. Interviewees stated that the district had organizational structure and accountability issues.

The high turnover in building principals was one factor associated with the fragmentation and school-based nature of curriculum development and alignment. During the review period, the district employed three high school principals and four elementary principals. The district did not have consistent leadership to oversee the use, alignment, and effectiveness of the curriculum's delivery.

The high school, during the review period, had department heads and, upon the appointment of system wide co-curriculum directors, full time teachers at the high school took on the role of program specialists. According to focus group discussions and interviewees, the co-curriculum directors provided curriculum material to the principals, who implemented the material and monitored teachers.

Performance at a Glance

Ratings on Performance Indicators

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



Areas of Strength

- The district generated student achievement data during the review period.
- The district had curriculum documents in written form.

Areas for Improvement

- The district lacked a curriculum in the tested core content areas during the review period and district administrators and staff lacked a common understanding of the format of the district's curriculum documents.
- High rates of administrative turnover accounted for the lack of leadership to develop and implement a K–12 curriculum in core content areas and to evaluate the quality of instruction.
- The process of evaluation as a means to improve instruction was inconsistent during the review period.

At the elementary and intermediate levels, curriculum development and alignment was site based and teacher driven. The district lacked a curriculum in the tested core content areas during the review period and district administrators and staff lacked a common understanding about the format of the curriculum documents in the district.

During the review period, appropriate educational technology was not available, nor was its use an integral part of the instructional process. Parent volunteers at the elementary level donated, installed, and maintained computers in the classroom; however, they were old. The electrical system was less than adequate to support technology. The intermediate level had a computer lab and computer teacher, but they also had old machines and an electrical system that that could not handle all machines at one time. The junior/senior high school had a computer lab and every classroom had computers connected to the Internet. The server was old, often inoperable, and the electrical system could not handle the load.

The district had fragmented data analysis of student achievement. Although the district generated some student achievement data during the review period, it did not employ a formal process on a scheduled, regular basis. The co-curriculum directors were responsible for data analysis and subgroup item analysis. There was conflicting evidence about the distribution of analyses to the individual schools and to the individual teachers during the review period. In addition, the district's model for curriculum development did not include an assessment component.

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.

Improving Student Achievement

Between 2002 and 2005, the Holbrook Public Schools did not effectively use student assessment results, local benchmarks, or other pertinent data to improve student achievement and inform all aspects of decision making.

The district had site-based MCAS data and program analysis practices, but they were inconsistent and fragmented because of the lack of policy, processes, procedures, practices, and continuity of leadership.

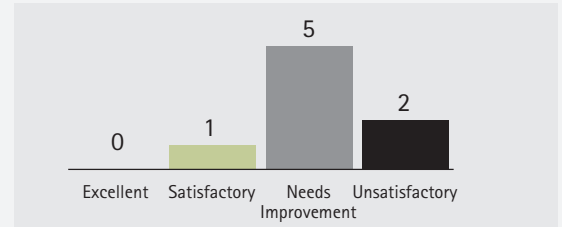
During the review period, the district experienced high administrative turnover. The district lacked a common understanding of what the district's curricula were, and a lack of agreement about the existence of district benchmarks.

Further, the district lacked policy, processes, procedures, and routines to guide its attempts at site based MCAS data and program analysis of student assessment results. In addition, the district's model for curriculum development did not include an assessment component.

Performance at a Glance

Ratings on Performance Indicators

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



Areas of Strength

- The district began to use the results of student assessment data in budgetary decision-making.
- The district's co-curriculum directors annually generated a formative district wide report based upon the MCAS results that contained aggregate and some disaggregated data, general comments, and included suggested directions for further, more in depth analysis at the school site level.

Areas for Improvement

- Assessment and instructional program evaluation decision making was hindered by the lack of common understanding among district personnel about the existence and format of district curricula.
- The district's site based MCAS data and program analysis practices were inconsistent and fragmented due to the lack of policy, processes, procedures, practices, and continuity of leadership.

From 2001 through 2005, the district had three superintendents, two business managers, three special education directors, three junior/senior high school principals, and four elementary principals. This resulted in a lack of continuity of both approach and direction.

The district's co-curriculum directors annually generated a formative district wide report based upon the MCAS results that contained aggregated and some disaggregated data, general comments, and included suggested directions for further, more in depth analysis at the school site level.

Human Resource Management and Professional Development

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

Hiring Practices and Certification

The town of Holbrook regularly delayed its June town meeting until July. Interviewees stated that, as a result, the district issued termination notices in May to members of the staff who did not hold professional status and the district had to delay hiring until after the town meeting in July. The late approval of the district budget delayed the recruitment of professional staff and led to the hiring of non-certified teachers.

In Holbrook, 69 out of 77 teachers were certified and 7 out of 8 administrators were certified. Interviewees stated that the lateness on the part of the town to have an accepted budget led to the hiring of staff who were not certified. Prior to the review period, the district received a grant to train teachers as mentors. A number of teachers who received training from this grant remained in the district. During the early part of the review period, the district had informally mentored new teachers.

Professional Development

The district lacked a specific professional development plan during the review period; however, the district had professional development committees during the years under review made up of administrators and staff members from each school.

Performance at a Glance

Ratings on Performance Indicators

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



Areas of Strength

- A number of teachers who received grant-funded training remained in the district.
- The district had professional development committees during the years under review made up of administrators and staff members from each school.

Areas for Improvement

- The late approval of the district budget delayed the recruitment of professional staff and led to the hiring of non-certified teachers.
- Administrator and teacher performance evaluations were uninformative, prescriptive, and not linked to student achievement.

During the review period, student achievement, staff evaluations, program assessment, and research-based practices informed the professional development program only in a limited way. According to staff, attendance data provided to the EQA, during 2004, teachers were absent, on average for 1.65 days for professional development.

Evaluation

The EQA team reviewed evaluations included in the personnel files of nineteen administrators employed in the district during the review period, including the three superintendents. During most of the review period, evaluations of administrators reviewed by the EQA team were uninformative, and generally stated only accomplishments. Most did not include recommendations to improve performance, nor were they linked to student achievement data.

An examination of the evaluations of a random sample of thirty-six professional and nonprofessional status teachers indicated that twenty-five received a summative evaluation every two years for a teacher with professional status or every year for a teacher with nonprofessional status. Seven evaluations were not performed in a timely fashion. All of the evaluations observed had signatures; however, the evaluation format did not follow the Principles of Effective Teaching. Accountability for student achievement results was not part of the evaluation process for teachers.

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

Although the Holbrook Public Schools had some early intervention programs to improve Grade 4 ELA scores, district Grade 4 MCAS ELA test scores ranged from 33 percent 'Proficient' in 2001 to 52 percent 'Proficient' in 2005. The 2005 statewide average for Grade 4 students scoring at the 'Proficient' level was 50 percent.

Discipline

The junior/senior high school had a three-year in-school suspension rate of 17.9 percent. The out-of-school suspension rate exceeded the state rate in 2002, 2003, and 2004.

The in-school suspension rate at the junior/senior high school in 2004 ranged from a low of 26.1 percent in Grade 12 to a high of 41.2 percent in Grade 10. In-school suspension rates in the district were more than twice the state average in 2003 and 2004.

Attendance

While all schools had policies and practices regarding attendance, a review of DOE data showed student district wide attendance rates were 92.2 percent in 2002, 92.7 percent in 2003, and 93.9 percent in 2004. During this same period, on average, students missed approximately eleven days of school per year. A review of DOE data provided to the EQA showed that chronic absenteeism at the high school averaged approximately 33 percent in grades 9–12.

Performance at a Glance

Ratings on Performance Indicators

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



Areas of Strength

- The district performed some data compilation and aggregate and disaggregated data analysis during the review period

Areas for Improvement

- Student district wide attendance rates were below the state average during the review period and chronic absenteeism at the high school averaged approximately 33 percent in grades 9–12.
- The district's early intervention programs did not ensure that all students in Grade 4 were proficient in ELA.

Subgroup Participation

Interviews with district administrators and a review of documents indicated that the district provided higher-level courses, such as honors and advanced placement (AP); however, they did not show proportionate participation for all subgroups in the district, and did not close the achievement gap.

A review of documents, including district MCAS test reports and interviews with district personnel indicated that the district performed some data compilation and limited aggregated and disaggregated data analysis during the review period; however, interviews with district personnel indicated that data analysis for most of the review period was informal and site-based.

Financial and Asset Management Effectiveness and Efficiency

Both the Town of Holbrook and the Holbrook Public Schools struggled with increased administrative costs and decreased revenues. The district's budget decisions were not influenced by student needs, its facilities were in disrepair, and it did not submit financial documentation in a timely fashion.

Budget Process and Financial Support

Student needs were not the basis for budget development. Fiscal parameters, placed on the district by the town, forced the district to focus on allocating limited financial resources first and then on providing appropriate instructional services based on student needs.

During the 2002, 2003, and 2004 fiscal years, the district had no formal process for budget development. The use of budgetary history and trends in the development of the district's budget was limited.

The ongoing analysis of aggregate and disaggregated student achievement data was not the basis for the development of the district's budget and the allocation of resources. The school staff stated that the budget was not sufficient to support effective instructional practices or provide district-wide operational resources.

During the review period, the district did not have a formal review process to determine the cost effectiveness of its programs. Additionally during this time, the town and district struggled with the increased costs of health care, special education tuitions, transportation costs, and facilities maintenance issues.

District personnel indicated that financial reports were not always accurate, timely, or complete. During interviews with administrators, the school committee, and town officials, it was clear the turnover of staff in the district had a direct impact on budget processes and procedures.

Performance at a Glance

Ratings on Performance Indicators

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



Areas of Strength

- The district exceeded net school spending during the review period.
- The district integrated its five-year capital plan with that of the town though Holbrook's insufficient revenues prevented implementation.

Areas for Improvement

- The district had no formal preventative maintenance program and had no plans for facility emergencies in the budget.
- The maintenance budget had a reduction of \$360,000, and the condition of the district's schools ranged from poor to unsatisfactory.

The district did not have a formal preventative maintenance program and reacted to, rather than planned for, building emergencies. The district integrated its five-year capital plan with that of the town but did not implement it due to Holbrook's insufficient revenues. This situation resulted in poor to unsatisfactory conditions in the facilities.

Facilities

The community and town officials did not provide resources to support facilities, which directly affected student achievement and instruction.

Interviewees indicated that the district's facilities were not clean, were in disrepair, lacked maintenance, and did not promote student learning. During the review period, the maintenance budget decreased by \$360,000.

CONCLUSION

The EQA examination found the Holbrook Public Schools to be a 'Moderate' performing district, marked by student achievement that is 'High' in ELA and 'Moderate' in math on the MCAS tests. Approximately half of all Holbrook students scored above standard on the 2005 administration of the MCAS test.

The town of Holbrook and the school district struggled with the increased costs of health care, special education tuitions, transportation costs, and facilities maintenance issues. Fiscal parameters that the town placed on the district forced it to focus on allocating limited financial resources first and then on providing appropriate instructional services based on student needs. The school staff stated that the budget was not sufficient to support effective instructional practices or provide district-wide operational resources. The district integrated its five-year capital plan with that of the town but did not implement it due to Holbrook's insufficient revenues, resulting in poor to unsatisfactory conditions in the facilities. During the review period, the maintenance budget was decreased by \$360,000.

Interviews with administrators, the school committee, and town officials indicated that central office staff turnover directly impacted budget processes and procedures. The district employed three superintendents, two business managers, three special education directors, and two co-curriculum directors during the review period. In the final year of the review period, the newest superintendent completed evaluations for all administrators that included assessments of the attainment of SIP goals as well as student achievement. This superintendent guided the district in the use of analysis and the evaluation of programs using the generated data. Also during the final year of the review period, the budget reflected the needs of the district and areas and programs deemed most needy received funding.

During the review period, high rates of administrative turnover accounted for the leadership's failure to develop and implement a K-12 curriculum in core content areas and to evaluate the quality of instruction. The district lacked a curriculum in the tested core content areas during the review period and district administrators and staff lacked a common understanding about the format of the curriculum documents in the district. The district had site-based MCAS data and program analysis practices, but they were inconsistent and fragmented because of the lack of policy, processes, procedures, practices, and continuity of leadership.

APPENDIX A: EQA'S DISTRICT EXAMINATION PROCESS

EQA's three-tier examination process provides successively deeper levels of information about student performance. All school districts receive a Tier I review annually, but they do not all receive the full three-tier review every year.

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

Tier 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. The Tier I 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?

Tier 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 a Tier II 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.

Tier III: District Diagnostic (Fact-Finding) Review

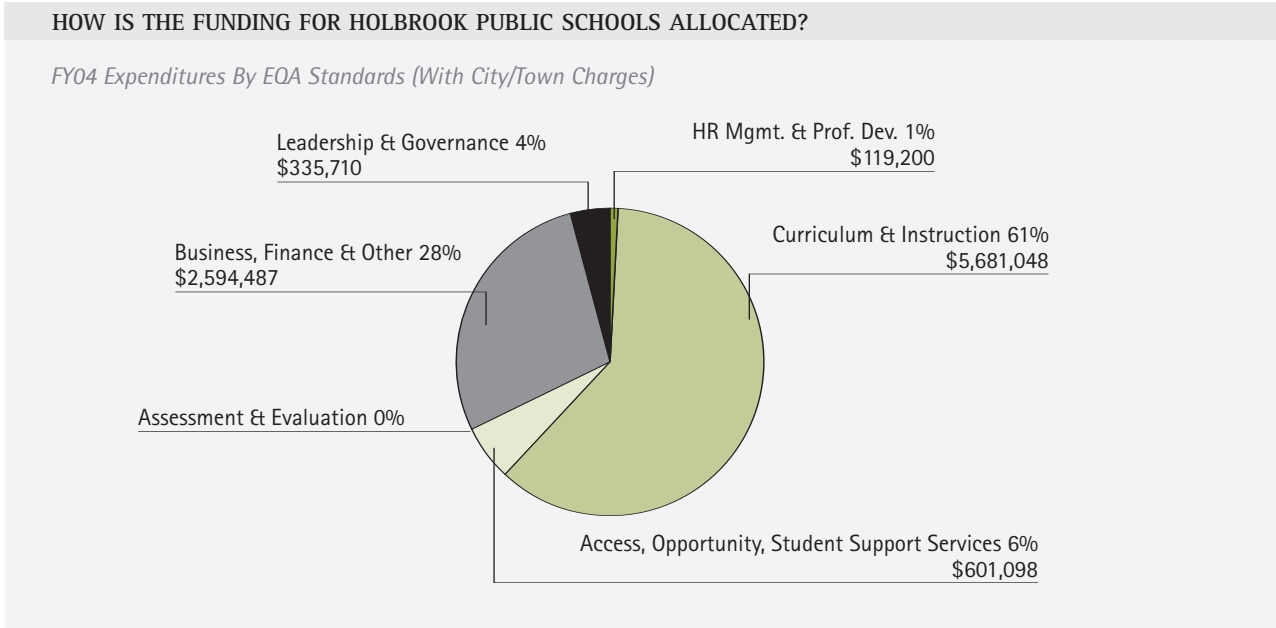
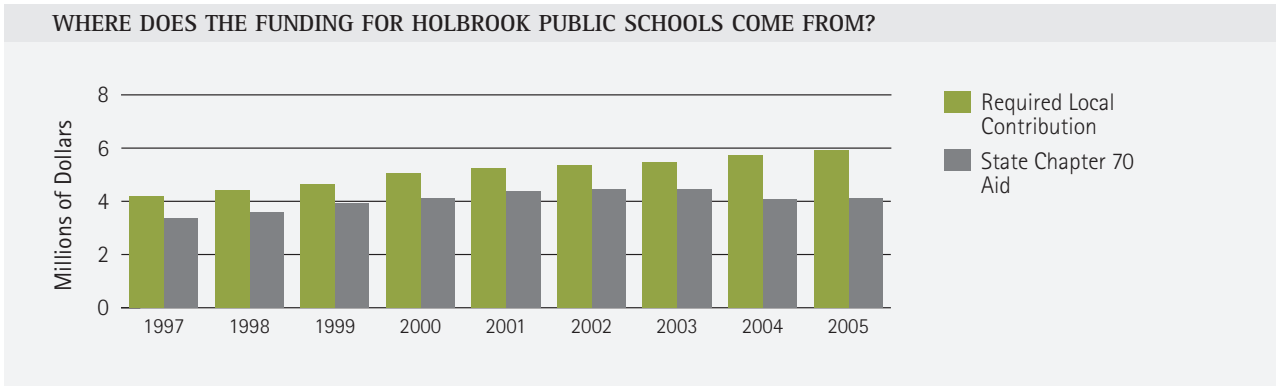
While the Tier II review looks at how district policies are implemented at the building level, the Tier III review goes a level deeper and looks at what is happening in the classroom and how that affects school performance.

APPENDIX B: GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN EQA TECHNICAL REPORTS

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

APPENDIX C: STATE AND LOCAL FUNDING, 1997–2005

The vast majority of a school district's funding is determined 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 Holbrook Public Schools' funding derived from the state and the amount that the town was required to contribute. Since 1997, the required local contribution has increased significantly. Since 2002, state Chapter 70 aid has leveled off.





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