



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

School District Examination Report: Winchendon Public Schools



data driven

standards based

learner centered →



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

October 1, 2003

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Office of Educational Quality and Accountability

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The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability would like to acknowledge the professional cooperation extended to the audit team by the Department of Education; the Superintendent of the Winchendon Public Schools, Dr. Robert O' Meara; the school department staff of the Winchendon Public Schools; and the Town of Winchendon officials.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary4

Part I: Overview of the EQA Review Process and the District9

Part II: Tier I Analysis of Student Achievement and MCAS Data.....10

Assessment of MCAS Results 1999-200212

Part III: Summary and Preliminary Findings by Domain29

Appendix: Proficiency Index59

Executive Summary

The Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA) examined the Winchendon Public Schools in mid May of 2003. During 1999-2002, it had been one of the 50 lowest performing school systems in the Commonwealth. The following provides a summary of the findings of the examination and the district's performance on the 2002 Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) test.

Proficiency/Achievement:

- Winchendon's Combined Proficiency Index (CPI) of 64.4, based on the 2002 MCAS results, placed the district as the twentieth lowest performing academic school district in the Commonwealth. The state's average for the CPI was 74.3 in 2002. On the ELA Proficiency Index (EPI) and math Proficiency Index (MPI), the district scored 75.3 and 53.4, respectively. The state average for EPI was 81.6 and MPI was 67.0.
- On the 2002 MCAS test, 66.3% of the students in Winchendon scored in the 'Needs Improvement' and 'Warning/Failing' categories. This figure was 16.1 percentage points above the state's average percentages.
- On the 2002 MCAS test, in ELA, 52.5% of the students and, in math, 79.8% of the students in Winchendon scored in the 'Needs Improvement' and 'Warning/Failing' categories. These figures were 12.3 percentage points in ELA and 19.4 percentage points in math above the state's average percentages.
- On the MCAS retest administered in December of 2002, 87% of the Winchendon Class of 2003 had earned a Competency Determination (CD), as compared to 90% of the statewide Class of 2003.
- On the MCAS retest administered in December of 2002, 82% of the Winchendon Class of 2004 had earned a Competency Determination, as compared to 84% of the statewide class of 2004.

Equity of Achievement/Proficiency:

- On the 2002 MCAS test, 61.2% of the regular education and 97.6% of the special education students in Winchendon scored in the 'Needs Improvement' and 'Warning/Failing' categories. These figures were 16.8 and 14.7 percentage points above the state's average percentages for these subgroups.
- On the 2002 MCAS test, 78.7% of the FRL/Y students in Winchendon scored in the 'Needs Improvement' and 'Warning/Failing' categories. This figure was 2.6 percentage points above the state's average for FRL/Y students.

- On the 2002 MCAS test, FRL/Y and special education students in Winchendon scored between 13 and 30.5 PI points below the district's average PI.

Improvement:

- Between 1999-2002, on the MCAS test, Winchendon experienced a 4.4 PI point increase in its PI rating in ELA. During this same period, the state experienced a 7.9 PI point increase in its PI rating in ELA.
- Between 1999-2002, on the MCAS test, Winchendon experienced a 0.5 PI point increase in its PI rating in math. During this same period, the state experienced an 8.6 PI point increase in its PI rating in math.

Equity of Improvement:

- Between 2000-2002, the subgroups in Winchendon had experienced increases in their ELA and math PI ratings. However, despite these increases, Winchendon's subgroups rated lower than the state's subgroups during the same period.

Participation and Access:

- On the 2002 MCAS test, Winchendon's student test participation rates in ELA and math were 96% and 96.7%, respectively. These figures were both above the state's 95% participation rate for test participation.

Summary of Preliminary Findings by Domain

Assessment and Evaluation:

- The EQA examiners rated the district as ‘Unsatisfactory’ on all eleven of the eleven performance indicators this domain.
- For the period under examination, the district did not use data analyses to make decisions related to improved student achievement.
- For the period under examination, the district had sources that could have provided data to assess student progress; however, the district did not fully utilize the data to improve curricula or instructional practices.
- For the period under examination, the district did not consistently evaluate staff and faculty.

Curriculum and Instruction:

- The EQA examiners rated the district as ‘Satisfactory’ on five and ‘Poor’ on nine of the fourteen performance indicators this domain.
- For the period under examination, the district lacked a formal staff position responsible for district-wide curriculum articulation.
- For the period under examination, the district’s ELA and math curriculum were not completely aligned with state curriculum frameworks.
- For the period under examination, the district lacked an effective plan to guide the development of curriculum within the system to meet the needs of all student populations.
- For the period under examination, curriculum development was constrained by the instability of the district’s finances.
- For the period under examination, the district lacked a professional development plan based on student assessment results and current educational research.

Student Academic and Support Services:

- The EQA examiners rated the district as ‘Satisfactory’ on four, ‘Poor’ on four, and ‘Unsatisfactory’ on six of the fourteen performance indicators this domain.
- For the period under examination, the district provided academic services in the areas of ELA and math for students who were not meeting grade-level expectations; however, these programs lacked a comprehensive evaluation to determine their effectiveness.
- For the period under examination, the policies and practices within the district did not address student attendance in a way that had a positive impact on student achievement.
- For the period under examination, the district did not make a concerted effort to involve parents in all aspects of the school community.

Leadership and Governance:

- The EQA examiners rated the district as ‘Satisfactory’ on one and ‘Unsatisfactory’ on fifteen of the sixteen performance indicators this domain.
- For the period under examination, the school committee did not hold the superintendent accountable for the implementation of the goals in the District Improvement Plan.
- For the period under examination, the lack of leadership within the district interfered with the institutionalization of the district’s improvement plan.
- For the period under examination, the district’s improvement plan focused more on developing student character than on improving student performance.
- For the period under examination, the district’s improvement plan lacked full implementation; therefore, results were neither evaluated nor shared annually with the staff, school committee, or community.
- For the period under examination, the contractual termination of the former superintendent resulted in a void in leadership within the district.
- For the period under examination, the void in district leadership resulted in the building principals assuming a disproportionate degree of responsibility for leadership.
- For the period under examination, communication between central office and building-level administrators had deteriorated.
- For the period under examination, there was very little analysis of student performance data used to inform the improvement of curriculum and instruction.

Business and Finance:

- The EQA examiners rated the district as ‘Poor’ on one and ‘Unsatisfactory’ on twelve of the thirteen performance indicators this domain.
- For the period under examination, there was no systematic budget planning and development process.
- For the period under examination, the superintendent did not provide the school committee with sufficient, timely information in order for them to execute their responsibilities.
- For the period under examination, the ineffectual district leadership (the former superintendent) prevented the school committee from maintaining clear communication with town government.
- For the period under examination, the district did not maintain adequate accounting and financial reporting procedures to inform district-level and school-level decision-making. Furthermore, the district did not maintain adequate accounting and financial reporting procedures to ensure effective managerial control over the use of funds or to facilitate public accountability.

Part I: Overview of the EQA Review Process and the District

On May 13-14, 2003, the EQA conducted an independent examination of the Winchendon Public Schools for the period between 1999-2002. This examination applied the standards related to the EQA's five major domains of inquiry, which include: A, Assessment and Evaluation; B, Curriculum and Instruction; C, Student Academic Support Services; D, Leadership and Governance; and E, Business and Financial Management. The EQA's examination process for school districts involves two tiers of investigation and utilizes ten standards. The basis of this report is the result of the source documents, correspondence sent prior to the on-site visit, interviews with the representative from the school committee, district leadership team, school administrators, and additional documents submitted while in the district. The report does not include documents, revised data, or comments that may have surfaced after the on-site visit.

Winchendon is a small town located in northern Worcester County in central Massachusetts. Manufacturing is the largest source of employment in Winchendon, followed by education, healthcare, and social services. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, it has a population of 9,611 people and a median family income of \$50,086, while the median family income in Massachusetts is \$61,664. Winchendon has a Town Administrator/Board of Selectmen form of government and a five-person school committee. According to recent Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE) data, the Winchendon Public Schools have three schools serving Grades PreK-12. The most recent DOE figures indicate that there were 1,881 students enrolled in the district in FY2002. The demographic/subgroup composition in the Winchendon Public Schools is: White, 94.6%; Hispanic-American, 2.6%; African-American, 1.5%; Asian-American, 1.3%; Limited English Proficiency (LEP), 0.0%; Free or Reduced Lunch (FRL), 23.6%; and Special Education (SPED), 18.9%.

This report finds the Winchendon Public Schools to be a 'Low' performing school district, which is marked by student achievement that is 'Moderate' in ELA and 'Very Low' in math on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) test. Since 1999, Winchendon demonstrated some slight improvement in MCAS test scores, but in the 2002 administration of the MCAS test, 66.3% of its students scored below standard on the test.

Part II: Tier I Analysis of Student Achievement and MCAS Data

At Tier I, while particular attention was paid to the 2002 MCAS test, the EQA review of Winchendon's MCAS test results (1999-2002) is framed by the following five essential questions:

1. **Proficiency/Achievement:** To what extent is the MCAS test performance of all of the district's students meeting or exceeding state proficiency standards?
2. **Equity of Achievement:** How does MCAS test performance vary among the district's student subgroups?
3. **Improvement:** How has MCAS test performance for all students in the district changed over time?
4. **Equity of Improvement:** How has MCAS test performance for the district's student subgroups changed over time?
5. **Opportunity and Access:** Are all eligible students attending and participating in all required programs and assessments?

In order to respond accurately to these questions, the EQA did several types of analyses on the most current test data: a comparative analysis of the MCAS test data using state and district results by grade, ethnicity, and student category, a school-based analysis, a "performance gap" analysis, and a series of analyses to determine whether the mean responses for students in the district differed significantly from those of the state and between student subgroups within the district. Descriptive analyses of the test results for 2002 MCAS test revealed significant differences between students in the district and the average scores of students in Massachusetts. A discussion of the analyses follows.

Winchendon vs. Massachusetts:

- The aggregate of students in Winchendon scored *lower* than the aggregate of the state's students.
- White students in Winchendon scored *lower* than the state's White students.
- Regular education students in Winchendon scored *lower* than the state's regular education students.
- Special education students in Winchendon scored *lower* than the state's special education students.
- Free and Reduced Lunch Program (FRL/Y) students in Winchendon scored *lower* than the state's FRL/Y students.

Winchendon's totals vs. Winchendon's subgroups:

- Free and Reduced Lunch (FRL/Y) students in Winchendon scored *lower* than all other subgroups in Winchendon except special education students.
- Special education students in Winchendon scored *lower* than all other subgroups in Winchendon.

Assessment of MCAS Results 1999-2002

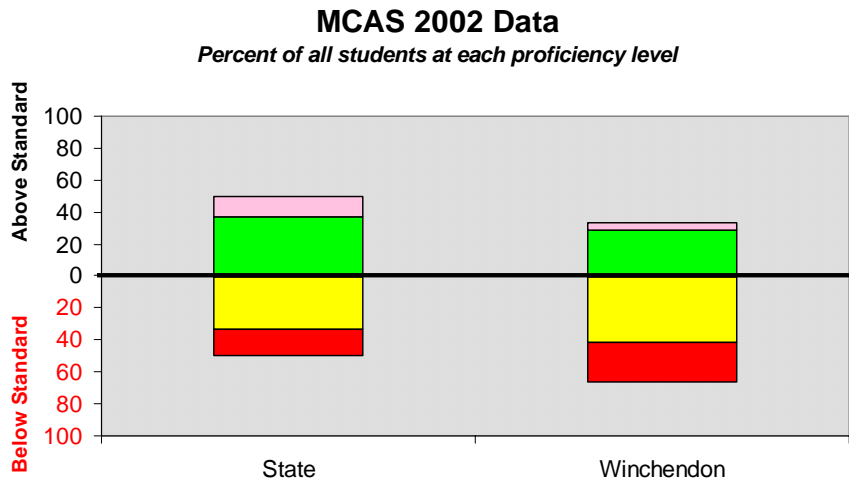
1. **Proficiency/Achievement: To what extent is the MCAS performance of all the district's students meeting or exceeding state proficiency standards?**

Preliminary Finding(s)

- On the 2002 MCAS test, 66.3% of the students in Winchendon scored in the 'Needs Improvement' and 'Warning/Failing' categories. This figure was 16.1 percentage points above the state's average percentages.

- On the 2002 MCAS test, in ELA, 52.5% of the students and, in math, 79.8% of the students in Winchendon scored in the 'Needs Improvement' and 'Warning/Failing' categories. These figures were 12.3 percentage points in ELA and 19.4 percentage points in math above the state's average percentages.

Figure/Table 1:

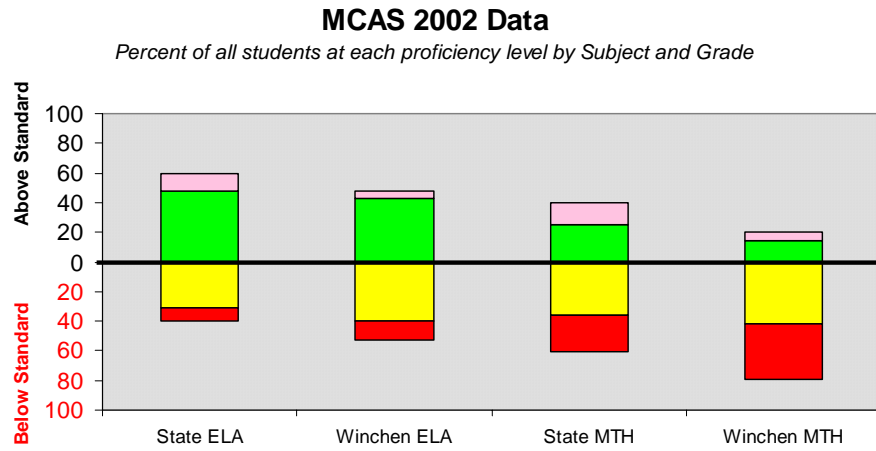


	Advanced	13.1	4.9
	Proficient	36.7	28.8
	Needs Improv.	33.3	41.3
	Warning/Failing	16.9	25.0

Analysis of Figure/Table 1:

- Winchendon had 8.2% and 7.9% fewer students score in the ‘Advanced’ and ‘Proficient’ categories than did the state on the 2002 MCAS test.
- Winchendon had 8% and 8.1% more of its students score in the ‘Needs Improvement’ and ‘Warning/Failing’ categories than did the state on the 2002 MCAS test.

Figure/Table 2:



Advanced	11.8	4.3	14.4	5.5
Proficient	48.1	43.2	25.3	14.6
Needs Improv.	30.7	40.3	36.0	42.3
Warning/Failing	9.5	12.2	24.4	37.5

Analysis of Figure/Table 2:

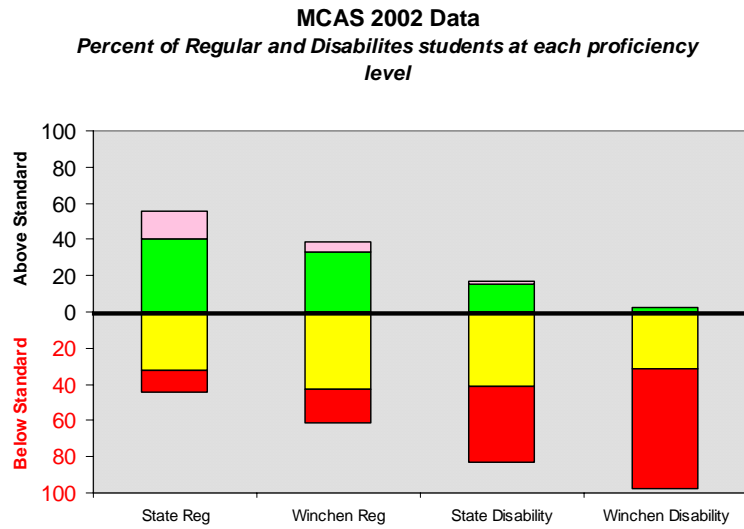
- Winchendon had 7.5% and 4.9% fewer of its students score in the ‘Advanced’ and ‘Proficient’ categories in ELA than did the state on the 2002 MCAS test.
- Winchendon had 9.6% and 2.7% more of its students score in the ‘Needs Improvement’ and ‘Warning/Failing’ categories in ELA than did the state on the 2002 MCAS test.
- Winchendon had 8.9% and 10.7% fewer of its students score in the ‘Advanced’ and ‘Proficient’ categories in math than did the state on the 2002 MCAS test.
- Winchendon had 6.3% and 13.1% more of its students score in the ‘Needs Improvement’ and ‘Warning/Failing’ categories in math than did the state on the 2002 MCAS test.

2. Equity of Achievement: How does MCAS performance vary among the district's student subgroups?

Preliminary Finding(s):

- On the 2002 MCAS test, 61.2% of the regular education and 97.6% of the special education students in Winchendon scored in the 'Needs Improvement' and 'Warning/Failing' categories. These figures were 16.8 and 14.7 percentage points above the state's average percentages for these subgroups.
- On the 2002 MCAS test, 78.7% of the FRL/Y students in Winchendon scored in the 'Needs Improvement' and 'Warning/Failing' categories. This figure was 2.6 percentage points above the state's average for FRL/Y students.
- On the 2002 MCAS test, FRL/Y and special education students in Winchendon scored between 13 and 30.5 PI points below the district's average PI.

Figure/Table 3:



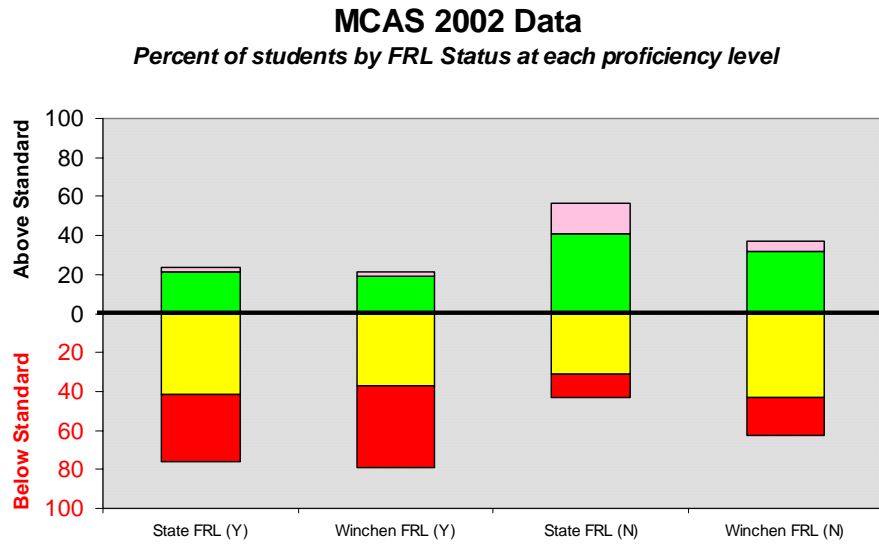
Advanced	15.1	5.3	1.8	0.0
Proficient	40.5	33.1	15.3	2.1
Needs Improv.	32.1	43.0	40.8	31.2
Warning/Failing	12.3	18.2	42.1	66.4

Analysis of Figure/Table 3:

- Winchendon had 9.8% and 7.4% fewer regular education students score in the ‘Advanced’ and ‘Proficient’ categories than did the state in that same subgroup on the 2002 MCAS test.
- Winchendon had 10.9% and 5.9% more of its regular education students score in the ‘Needs Improvement’ and ‘Warning/Failing’ categories than did the state in that same subgroup on the 2002 MCAS test.
- Winchendon had the 1.8% and 13.2% fewer of its special education students score in the ‘Advanced’ and ‘Proficient’ categories than did the state in that same subgroup on the 2002 MCAS test.

- Winchendon had 9.6% fewer and 24.3% more of its special education students score in the 'Needs Improvement' and 'Warning/Failing' categories than did the state in that same subgroup on the 2002 MCAS test.

Figure/Table 4:

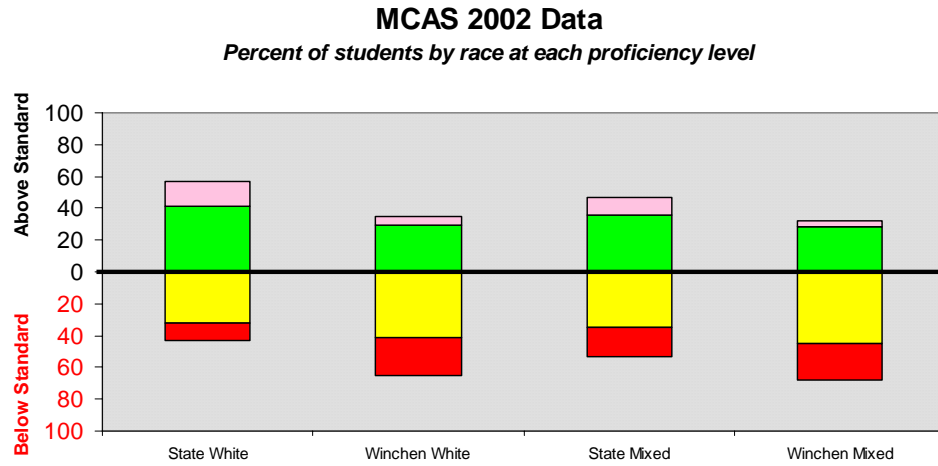


	Advanced	2.8	2.4	15.9	5.7
	Proficient	21.1	18.9	40.9	31.7
	Needs Improv.	41.9	36.9	31.0	42.7
	Warning/Failing	34.2	41.8	12.2	19.9

Analysis of Figure/Table 4:

- Winchendon had 0.4% and 2.2% fewer of its FRL/Y students score in the ‘Advanced’ and ‘Proficient’ categories in ELA than did the state on the 2002 MCAS test.
- Winchendon had 5% and 7.6% more of its FRL/Y students score in the ‘Needs Improvement’ and ‘Warning/Failing’ categories in ELA than did the state on the 2002 MCAS test.
- Winchendon had 10.2% and 9.2% fewer of its FRL/N students score in the ‘Advanced’ and ‘Proficient’ categories in math than the state on the 2002 MCAS test.
- Winchendon had 11.7% and 7.7% more of its FRL/N students score in the ‘Needs Improvement’ and ‘Warning/Failing’ categories in math than the state on the 2002 MCAS test.

Figure/Table 5:

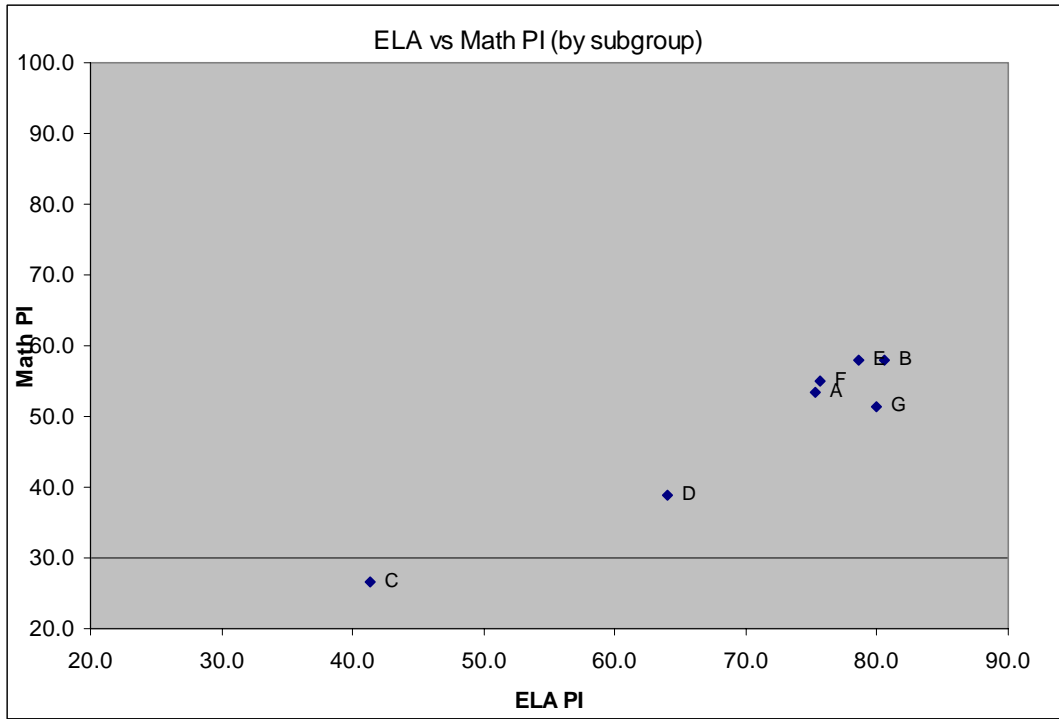


Advanced	15.4	5.1	11.2	4.1
Proficient	41.4	29.7	35.4	28.4
Needs Improv.	31.8	41.4	35.3	44.6
Warning/Failing	11.4	23.8	18.2	23.0

Analysis of Figure/Table 5:

- Winchendon’s White students scored 10.3% and 11.7% lower than the state’s White students in the ‘Advanced’ and ‘Proficient’ categories on the 2002 MCAS test.
- Winchendon’s White students scored 9.6% and 12.4% higher than the state’s White students in the ‘Needs Improvement’ and ‘Warning/Failing’ categories on the 2002 MCAS test.
- Winchendon’s Mixed race students scored 7.1% and 7% lower than the state’s Mixed race students in the ‘Advanced’ and ‘Proficient’ categories on the 2002 MCAS test.
- Winchendon’s Mixed race students scored 9.3% and 4.8% higher than the state’s Mixed race students in the ‘Needs Improvement’ and ‘Warning/Failing’ categories on the 2002 MCAS test.

Figure/Table 6:



		ELA	Math
A	WINCHENDON	75.3	53.5
B	Regular	80.6	58.0
C	Disability	41.3	26.5
D	Free Lunch (Y)	64.0	38.9
E	Free Lunch (N)	78.6	58.0
F	White	75.6	55.0
G	Mixed	79.9	51.3

Analysis of Figure/Table 6:

- On average, in Winchendon, the math PI was 21.8 PI points below that for ELA system-wide. The statewide average for this gap was 12.6 PI points.

- In Winchendon, regular education, FRL/N, and White students scored higher on the MCAS test in both ELA and math than did special education, and FRL/Y, and African-American students in the district.

Table 7:

Appendix (n-values by category)

		ELA	Math
WINCHENDON	Advanced	19	25
	Proficient	191	66
	Needs Improv	178	191
	Warning/Failing	54	169
Regular	Advanced	19	25
	Proficient	189	65
	Needs Improv	151	179
	Warning/Failing	23	117
Disability	Proficient	2	1
	Needs Improv	27	12
	Warning/Failing	31	52
Free Lunch (Y)	Advanced	2	3
	Proficient	33	6
	Needs Improv	38	38
	Warning/Failing	27	59
Free Lunch (N)	Advanced	17	22
	Proficient	158	60
	Needs Improv	140	153
	Warning/Failing	27	110
Afr-American	Proficient	4	0
	Needs Improv	1	2
	Warning/Failing	2	5
Asian-American	Proficient	2	1
	Needs Improv	2	2
	Warning/Failing	0	2
Hispanic-American	Advanced	1	1
	Proficient	0	1
	Needs Improv	3	3
	Warning/Failing	4	8
White	Advanced	16	23
	Proficient	167	60
	Needs Improv	156	161
	Warning/Failing	44	138
Mixed	Advanced	2	1
	Proficient	17	4
	Needs Improv	13	20
	Warning/Failing	4	13

Analysis of Table 7: The table above illustrates how Winchendon's various student subgroups scored on each category of the 2002 MCAS test.

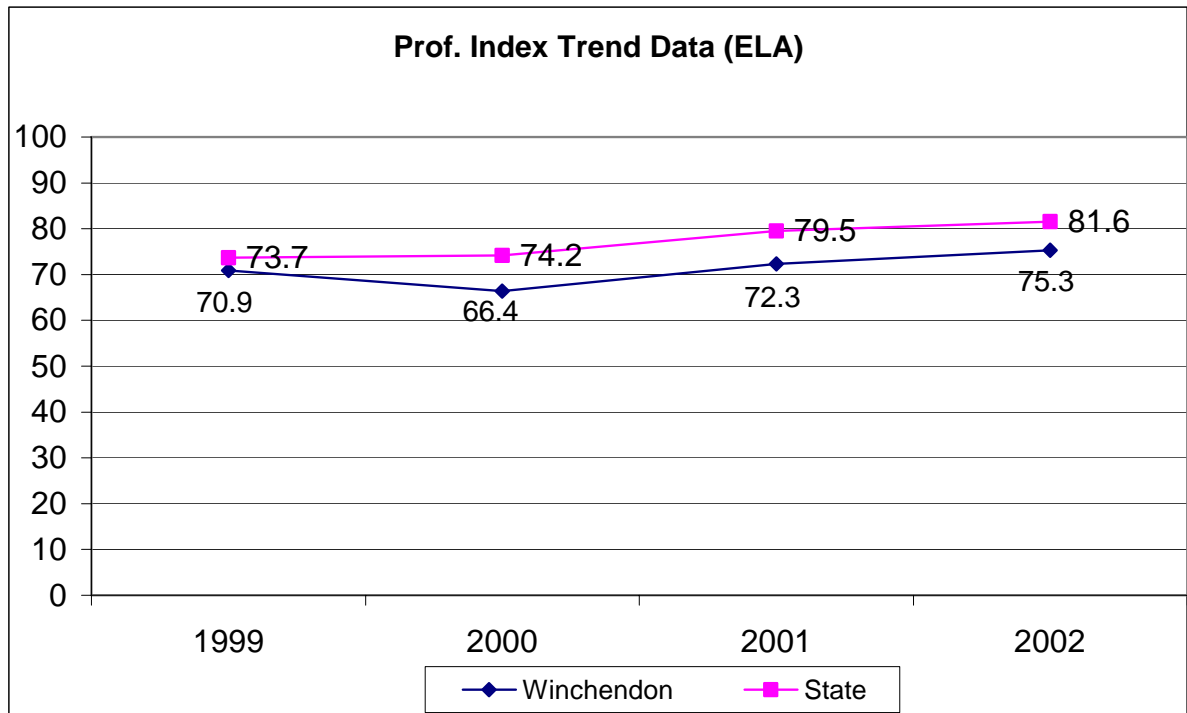
4 Improvement: How has MCAS performance for all students in the district changed over time?

Preliminary Finding(s):

- Between 1999-2002, on the MCAS test, Winchendon experienced a 4.4 PI point increase in its PI rating in ELA. During this same period, the state experienced a 7.9 PI point increase in its PI rating in ELA.
- Between 1999-2002, on the MCAS test, Winchendon experienced a 0.5 PI point increase in its PI rating in math. During this same period, the state experienced an 8.6 PI point increase in its PI rating in math.

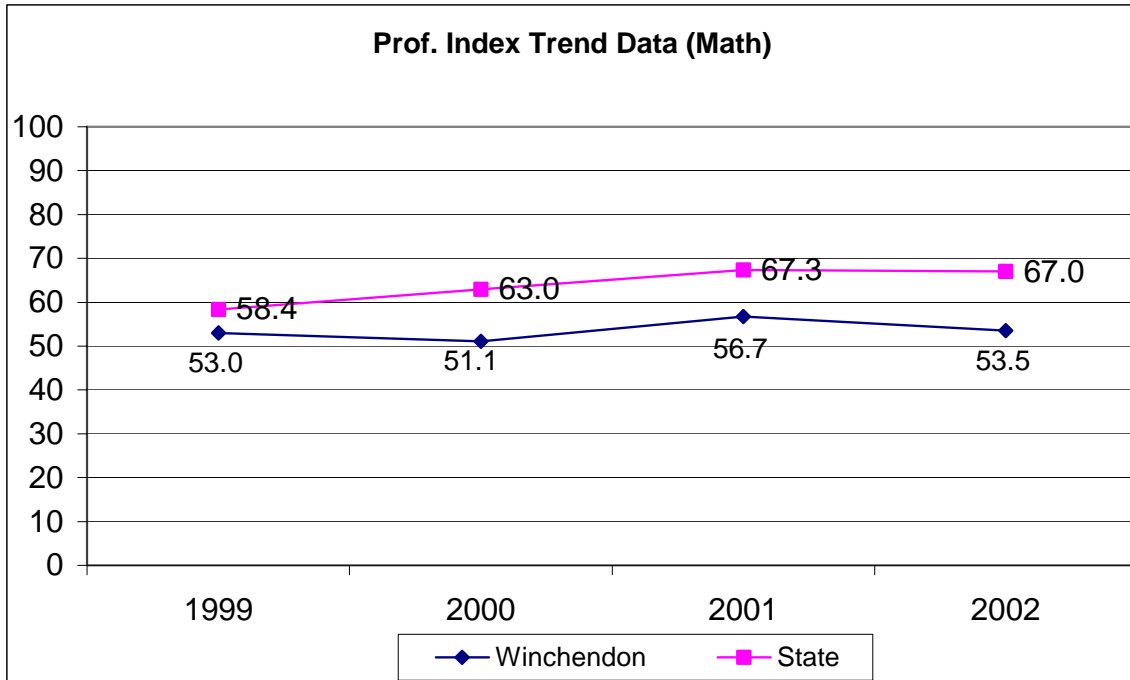
Figures/Tables 8A-B:

Proficiency Index Trend Data MCAS 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002



8A. Proficiency Index Trend Data MCAS 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002 (detail)

	ELA (Winchendon)				ELA (State)			
	1999	2000	2001	2002	1999	2000	2001	2002
Advanced	1.4	1.0	3.0	4.3	4.0	6.1	9.7	11.8
Proficient	40.1	36.2	38.8	43.2	44.1	44.1	47.2	48.1
Needs Improv.	40.3	38.2	44.1	40.3	33.6	31.4	31.7	30.7
Warning/Failing	18.3	24.6	14.2	12.2	18.4	18.4	11.5	9.5



8B. Proficiency Index Trend Data MCAS 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002 (detail)

	Math (Winchendon)				Math (State)			
	1999	2000	2001	2002	1999	2000	2001	2002
Advanced	2.8	3.6	3.9	5.5	9.4	12.2	13.4	14.4
Proficient	16.6	15.1	19.3	14.6	20.7	24.0	25.0	25.3
Needs Improv.	42.1	37.6	42.8	42.3	34.1	31.3	37.8	36.0
Warning/Failing	38.6	43.8	34.0	37.5	35.8	32.6	23.9	24.4

Analysis of Table 8A:

- Between 1999-2002, the number of students in Winchendon who scored in the ‘Advanced’ and ‘Proficient’ categories on the MCAS test increased by 2.9 % and 3.1%. These figures for the state during the same period increased by 7.8% and 4%, respectively.
- Between 1999-2002, the number of students in Winchendon who scored in the ‘Needs Improvement’ category was unchanged and in the ‘Warning/Failing’ category decreased by 6.1% on the MCAS test. These figures for the state during the same period decreased by 0.7% and 8.9%, respectively.

Analysis of Table 8B:

- Between 1999-2002, the number of students in Winchendon who scored in the ‘Advanced’ and ‘Proficient’ categories on the MCAS test increased by 2.7% and decreased by 2%. These figures for the state during the same period increased by 5% and 4.6%, respectively.
- Between 1999-2002, the number of students in Winchendon who scored in the ‘Needs Improvement’ category increased by 0.2% and in the ‘Warning/Failing’ category decreased by 1.1% on the MCAS test. These figures for the state during the same period decreased by 4.7% and 11.4%, respectively.

4. Equity of Improvement: How has MCAS performance for the district’s student subgroups change over time?**Preliminary Finding(s):**

- Between 2000-2002, the subgroups in Winchendon had experienced increases in their ELA and math PI ratings. However, despite these increases, Winchendon’s subgroups rated lower than the state’s subgroups during the same period.

Tables 9A-B:

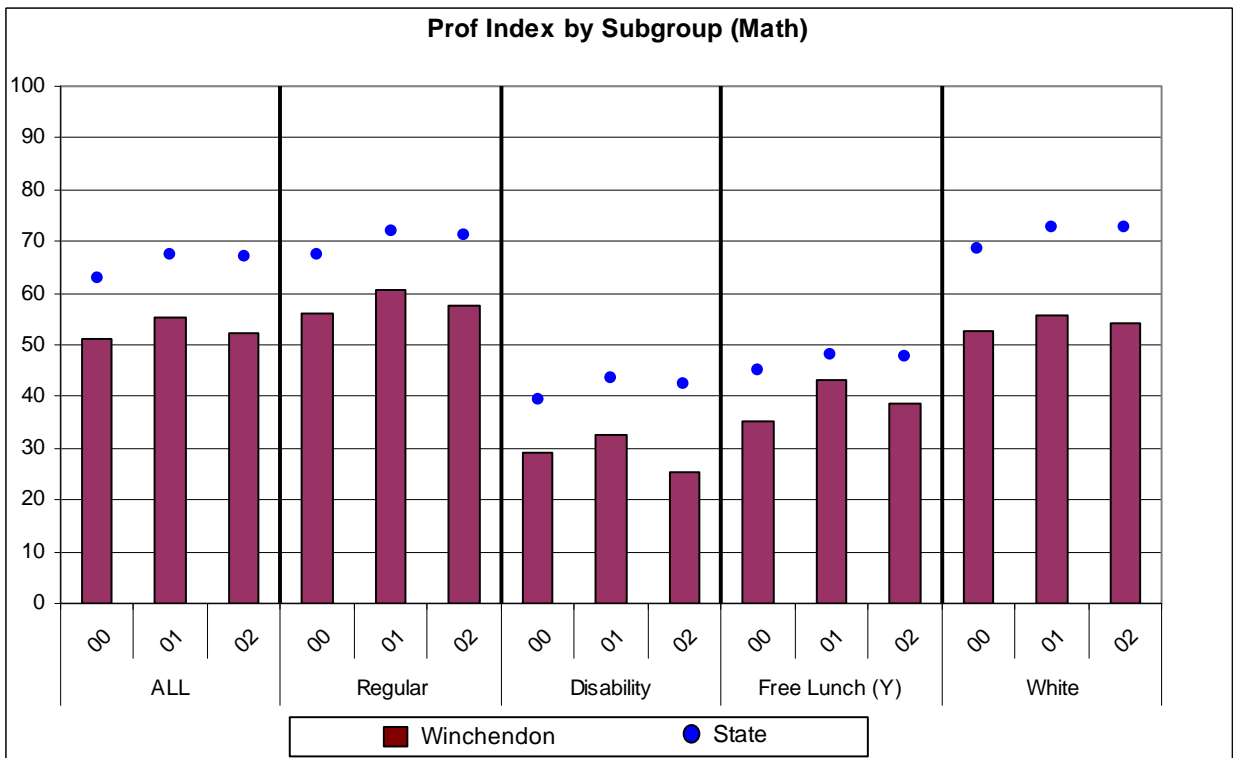
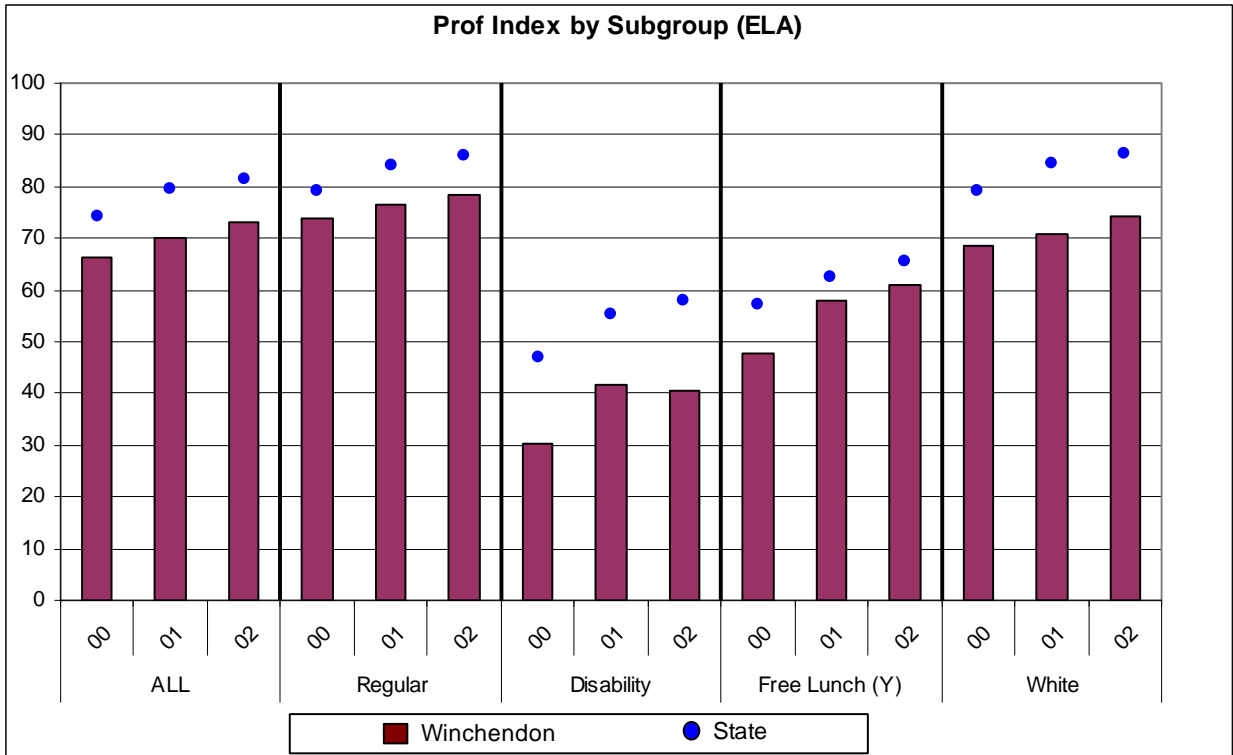


Table 10:

Proficiency Index Trend Data (by subgroup) MCAS 2000, 2001, and 2002

TABLE Format: Winchendon

		ELA	Math
Winchendon	'00	66.4	51.1
	'01	70.0	55.4
	'02	73.1	52.4
Regular	'00	73.9	56.1
	'01	76.5	60.6
	'02	78.4	57.4
Disability	'00	30.3	29.1
	'01	41.6	32.5
	'02	40.6	25.4
Free Lunch (Y)	'00	47.8	35.2
	'01	57.9	43.0
	'02	61.0	38.6
White	'00	68.5	52.6
	'01	70.9	55.8
	'02	74.4	54.3

TABLE Format: State

		ELA	Math
Winchendon	'00	74.2	63.0
	'01	79.5	67.3
	'02	81.6	67.0
Regular	'00	79.2	67.4
	'01	84.1	71.9
	'02	85.8	71.4
Disability	'00	47.1	39.4
	'01	55.3	43.5
	'02	58.1	42.6
FRL (Y)	'00	57.3	45.2
	'01	62.4	48.1
	'02	65.5	47.6
White	'00	79.1	68.4
	'01	84.3	72.8
	'02	86.4	72.7

Analysis of Table 10: The table above illustrates how the district's various student subgroups scored according to the Proficiency Index on the 2000, 2001, and 2002 MCAS tests.

- Between 2000-2002, the subgroups in Winchendon experienced increases in their ELA and math PI ratings between 2000-2002. However, despite these increases, Winchendon's subgroups rated lower than the state's subgroups during the same period.

5. Participation and Access: Are all eligible students attending and participating in all required programs and assessments?

Preliminary Finding(s)/ Analysis of Table 11:

On the 2002 MCAS test, Winchendon's student test participation rates in ELA and math were 96% and 96.7%, respectively. These figures were both above the state's 95% test participation standard.

Table 11:

	ELA	Math
Tested	96.04%	96.74%
NTA	1.10%	1.30%
NTM	0.22%	0.43%
NTO	2.64%	1.52%

Part III: Summary and Preliminary Findings by Domain

Domain A. Assessment and Evaluation

Standards ▼ Indicators ►	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Domain A – Assessment & Evaluation									
S1 - Student Assessment									
Excellent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	0
Satisfactory	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	0
Poor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	0
Unsatisfactory	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	N/A	7
S2 - Evaluation									
Excellent	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0
Satisfactory	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0
Poor	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0
Unsatisfactory	1	1	1	1	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	4

Standard 1. Student Assessment: District administrators and teachers regularly assess the performance of their students relative to state and local student performance standards, and analyze aggregate and individual assessment results to review and improve curricula, instructional practices, and supplementary remedial programs. The district regularly employs criteria-referenced tests, norm-referenced tests, and other standardized tests in addition to MCAS to assess student progress.

Preliminary Findings:

- For the period under examination, the district did not use data analyses to make decisions related to improved student achievement.
- For the period under examination, the district had sources that could have provided data to assess student progress; however, the district did not fully utilize the data to improve curricula or instructional practices.

Indicator 1. The district has clear assessment policies and procedures. Administrators and teachers are well informed about the content and purposes of the assessment programs.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with district and school administrators and a review of the district's documents indicated that although the district had a number of sources that provided evidence of student achievement, it lacked both policies and practices that integrated this available data into educational programs and services.

Indicator 2. Administrators and teachers use test results to improve curricula, instructional practices, and develop targeted support and remedial programs.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with building and school administrators and an examination of the district's documents indicated that the district lacked the mechanisms to provide the administrators and teachers the tools to analyze data. In addition, data had little to no impact on the curriculum and instruction reforms in the district.

Indicator 3. Administrators, teachers, students, and parents are well informed of the content, purposes, and benefits of the assessment program.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with building and school administrators and an examination of the district's documents indicated that the district did not disseminate information regarding the content, purposes, and benefits of the district's assessment program to parents.

Indicator 4. The district's schools consistently use the results of the MCAS test, other standardized test results, and classroom teacher assessments to improve the curricula and quality of instruction.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with district and school administrators and an examination of the district's documents indicated that the district administered the MCAS test, the Terra Nova, the IOWA, and teacher-generated assessments; however, little evidence was presented to affirm that the assessment results were used to improve the curricula and quality of instruction.

Indicator 5. As a matter of policy and consistent practice, the district focuses on the participation and the assessment results of all student population sub-groups: minority students, special needs, limited English proficient, and participants in free lunch programs.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators and a review of the district's documents indicated that because the district had not fully aligned its curricula to the state curriculum frameworks, it was unable to focus on the participation and the assessment results of all student population sub-groups: minority students, special needs, limited English proficient, and participants in free lunch programs.

Indicator 6. The district pays particular attention to the participation and assessment results of all subgroups: regular education students, minority students, students with disabilities, and students with limited English proficiency.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators and a review of the district's documents indicated that the district did not have curricula aligned to the state curriculum frameworks, so it was unable to focus on the participation and the assessment results of all student population subgroups: minority students, special needs, limited English proficient, and participants in free lunch programs.

Indicator 7. Classroom assessment standards and practices are linked with the state curriculum frameworks standards. The district regularly disseminates assessment analysis to appropriate staff. **EQA rating: Unsatisfactory**

Evidence: A review of the district's 2002 District Performance Rating Cycle II Report indicated that the composite results for the district's math ratings showed 'No Change' since the 2001 ratings and 'On Target' for ELA. The district's curriculum was not fully aligned with the state

curriculum frameworks. Furthermore, only in the latter part of the time under examination did the district disseminate analyses of student assessment data to the faculty and staff.

Standard 2. Evaluation: The district employs a system of school, program, and personnel evaluation that focuses on accountability and the improvement of student achievement. There is an ongoing process to monitor the quality and effectiveness of the curriculum and instruction and to implement strategies and action plans to improve leadership, instruction, and student performance.

Preliminary Findings:

- For the period under examination, the district did not consistently evaluate staff and faculty.

Indicator 1. The district regularly engages in an evaluation process at all levels that coordinates student assessment data, program, and personnel performance evaluation results. The district incorporates pertinent findings and recommendations from all external evaluations.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: A review of the district's documents and interviews with district and building administrators indicated that the district lacked systematic evaluation processes for teachers and administrators that were consistent with the requirements of the Massachusetts Education Reform Act of 1993.

Indicator 2. The district formulates strategies to improve leadership, instruction, and student performance as needs arise from evaluations.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Examination of the district's documents and interviews with district and building administrators indicated that the district did not have a formal process to respond to the needs identified through program and personnel evaluations.

Indicator 3. Through its evaluation system, the district consistently monitors the quality and effectiveness of existing programs and holds administrators and schools accountable for student performance and improvement.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Examination of the district's documents and interviews with district and building administrators indicated that the district's five-year evaluation cycle was not aligned with the state standards for the evaluation of professional status teachers; however, the district contends that the written component used to identify yearly goals was consistent with state standards.

Indicator 4. The district and each school annually evaluate the accomplishments of established goals and discontinue or change ineffective initiatives.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Examination of the district's documents and interviews with district and building administrators indicated that the district had no formal program evaluation to determine the effectiveness of their established goals or to determine whether goals should be discontinued or continued.

Domain B. Curriculum and Instruction

Standards ▼ Indicators ►	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Domain B – Curriculum & Instruction									
S3 - Curriculum									
Excellent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Satisfactory	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Poor	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	7
Unsatisfactory	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
S4 - Professional Development									
Excellent	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	0
Satisfactory	0	0	1	1	1	1	N/A	N/A	4
Poor	1	1	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	2
Unsatisfactory	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	0

Standard 3. Curriculum: The district and each of its schools have an academically sound, documented curriculum that prepares students to meet state learning standards. All teachers have complete curriculum guides that are aligned with the state curriculum frameworks and the local curriculum and are trained in their use. A regular analysis of student assessment data provides a sound basis for review and revision of the curriculum and the development of the district budget and the district, school, and individual improvement plans.

Preliminary Findings:

- For the period under examination, the district lacked a formal staff position responsible for district-wide curriculum articulation.
- For the period under examination, the district’s ELA and math curriculum were not completely aligned with state curriculum frameworks.
- For the period under examination, the district lacked an effective plan to guide the development of curriculum within the system to meet the needs of all student populations.
- For the period under examination, curriculum development was constrained by the instability of the district’s finances.

Indicator 1. The district has developed functional, high quality curriculum guides in all content areas that include the requisite information.

EQA rating: Poor

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators and a review of the district's documents indicated that the existing curriculum was developed by committees under the direction the curriculum coordinator. The district had performed some preliminary review of the curriculum in ELA and math; however, complete alignment with state curriculum frameworks had not been accomplished.

Indicator 2. Every teacher has full access to the curriculum guides, is trained in their use, and employs them in the classroom.

EQA rating: Poor

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators and a review of the district's documents indicated that teachers received copies of both the state and district curricula; however, the training for and implementation of these curricula were not consistent across the district.

Indicator 3. There is a comprehensive district curriculum articulation plan that addresses the diverse student learning needs. The curriculum is modified to increase the success rate of all populations, including ELL, vocational education students, and students with disabilities.

EQA rating: Poor

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators and a representative from the school committee and a review of the district's documents indicated that a district curriculum articulation plan had been developed by the previous administration, but it was never implemented within the district's educational programs and services. In addition, the articulation plan had never been integrated into the programs and services in order meet the needs of all student populations.

Indicator 4. The district has a process involving teachers in the annual review and revision of curriculum. **EQA rating: Poor**

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators and a review of the district's documents indicated that there was no consistent vehicle to review and revise the district's curriculum. Although time was established for teachers to analyze the results of various tests, the results of their analyses were not used to inform changes or revision in the curriculum.

Indicator 5. A curriculum leader guides every school in the district.

EQA rating: Satisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators and a review of the district's documents indicated that the district provided stipend positions to assist building administrators with the process of curriculum development.

Indicator 6. Instructional time in each content area meets the state requirements and the educational needs of students as indicated through an analysis of student performance.

EQA rating: Poor

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators and a review of the district's documents indicated an inconsistency of improvement in the rate of Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) from school-to-school. While instructional time met the state requirements, it did not meet the educational needs of all students.

Indicator 7. Funding levels are realistic for adequate staffing, professional development, textbooks, instructional materials, and equipment.

EQA rating: Poor

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators and a representative from the school committee indicated that building administrators and staff were reluctant to identify instructional and staffing needs, because regardless of the preliminary budget proposal, the

district's budget was always cut. Furthermore, it became clear that this reluctance was related to the instability within the district's business office.

Indicator 8. Instructional program articulation exists across Grades PreK-12 and is aligned with the state curriculum frameworks.

EQA rating: Poor

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators and a review of the district's documents indicated that the district had a curriculum director; despite this, however, at the time of the EQA's on-site visit, there still was no district-wide overview for curriculum articulation.

Standard 4. Professional Development: Administrators and teachers in the district collaboratively develop professional development programs and activities that will increase their knowledge and skills and the quality of the learning environment of students. The school committee and the community demonstrate support of sound professional development programs as vital to school reform and improvement of student learning.

Preliminary Findings:

- For the period under examination, the district lacked a professional development plan based on student assessment results and current educational research.

Indicator 1. The district has implemented a professional development plan based on the analysis of student assessment, MCAS data, district and school improvement plans, observations, and program evaluations. **EQA rating: Poor**

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators and a review of the district's documents indicated that, although the district had a number of initiatives that focused on the training of teachers, it lacked a professional development plan based upon student assessment results and current educational research.

Indicator 2. Teachers are involved in planning the professional development program.

EQA rating: Poor

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators and a review of the district documents indicated that it was clear that there were a number of areas where teachers needed assistance to develop their instructional methodology. The lack of a well-organized professional development plan prevented any initiatives from beginning until the latter portion of the examination period.

Indicator 3. The district and schools assist teachers to identify professional development needs and facilitate access to in-service programs, university courses, and professional conferences.

EQA rating: Satisfactory

Evidence: Recent initiatives had included training in differentiated instruction through *Teachers 21* and training in the *Skillful Teacher* through *Research for Better Teaching*.

Indicator 4. Administrators and teachers enroll in courses that are directly related to their assignments. **EQA rating: Satisfactory**

Evidence: The district promoted and supported a cycle of training in the areas quality instruction and supervision through its connection with *Research for Better Teaching* and *Teachers 21*. The district had been involved with LINKS for the past three years and is a member of the Hampshire Educational Collaborative (HEC).

Indicator 5. Administrators and teachers take an active part in professional organizations and committees that relate to improving education in the district.

EQA rating: Satisfactory

Evidence: A review of the district's documents and interviews indicated that both administrators and teachers had high levels of participation in professional organizations and committees within the district.

Indicator 6. The district offers incentives to staff for continued professional development and training. The professional development plan is assessed annually to ensure that the most useful and beneficial programs are included.

EQA rating: Satisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators and a review of the district documents indicated that although the district lacked a well-organized professional development plan, the school committee had approved five and a half days for professional development, with two days of sequential training in January. Teachers and administrators were surveyed annually regarding both the effectiveness of the professional development delivered and future needs.

Domain C: Student Academic and Support Services

Standards▼	Indicators▶	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Domain C – Student Academic Support Services										
S5 - Academic Support Services										
Excellent		0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	0
Satisfactory		0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	0
Poor		1	1	0	1	0	0	N/A	N/A	3
Unsatisfactory		0	0	1	0	1	1	N/A	N/A	3
S6 - Participation, Safety, & Discipline										
Excellent		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Satisfactory		0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	4
Poor		1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Unsatisfactory		0	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	3

Standard 5. Academic Support Services: The district provides academic support services in all core content areas for students who are not meeting grade level performance expectations. A comprehensive analysis of results from student performance assessments determines the content and scope of support services that are offered.

Preliminary findings:

- For the period under examination, the district provided academic services in the areas of ELA and mathematics for students who were not meeting grade-level expectations; however, these programs lacked a comprehensive evaluation to determine their effectiveness.

Indicator 1. The district uses data from classroom teachers and standardized tests for Grades K-12 to identify students who are not meeting grade level performance expectations and provides them with supplementary and remedial services.

EQA rating: Poor

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators and a review of the district documents indicated that the district used data from the IOWA and Terra Nova; however, the district discontinued administering the IOWA, and they had since restricted the use of the Terra Nova to Grade 2.

Indicator 2. Early intervention reading programs are provided at the primary level to ensure that all students are at the proficiency level on the MCAS test at the end of Grade 3.

EQA rating: Poor

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators and a review of the district documents indicated that programs such as Title I, Reading Recovery, and a literacy program administered through Lesley College were implemented. The evidence indicated, however, that not all students were meeting proficiency standards by the end of Grade 3.

Indicator 3. The district has developed a well-staffed, comprehensive support services program at all levels to address the needs of under-performing students.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators and a review of the district documentation indicated that student academic support services focused on summer programs, which were poorly attended.

Indicator 4. The district has allocated funds for each of its schools to initiate and implement these programs. **EQA rating: Poor**

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators and a review of the district documents indicated that available funding had been allocated to the Aim Higher program at the elementary level and the MCAS test remediation programs at the middle and high school levels during the school year. Between 1999-2002, despite modest improvement on the EPI and MPI the district did not experience significant improvement overtime. Furthermore, the district's improvement lagged behind statewide improvement on the EPI and MPI.

Indicator 5. The district successfully applies for all eligible federal and state grants.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators and a review of the district documents indicated that the district lacked a grants administrator, and, therefore, did not access sufficient numbers of state and federal grants which would have been available to the district.

Indicator 6. District policies and practices conform to the requirements of the Education Reform Act and provide services for under-performing students.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators and a review of the district's documents indicated that the district did not have a curriculum articulation plan or a well-organized professional development plan; therefore, the policies and practices of the school committee did not reflect the needs of under-performing students.

Standard 6. Participation, Safety, and Discipline: The district has documented attendance, absenteeism, mobility, retentions, dropouts, codes of conduct, and school safety practices and ensures consistent and effective implementation in all district schools. Codes of conduct and school safety rules are reviewed with all students and made available to parents and other interested parties. The staff stresses that in order to succeed, student must be present, participate and have a safe learning environment, all must share responsibility to achieve that goal.

Preliminary Findings:

- For the period under examination, the policies and practices within the district did not address student attendance in a way that had a positive impact on student achievement.
- For the period under examination, the district did not make an effort to involve parents in all aspects of the school community.

Indicator 1. The district ensures that all its schools have a clear, written code of conduct and expectations for attendance, participation in programs, retention, and promotion, including a process for resolving student conflicts that is communicated to all staff and students.

EQA rating: Poor

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators and a review of the district's documents indicated that the district had a clear, written code of conduct; however, the district lacked clear expectations for attendance and had not explored the relationship of poor attendance to student achievement.

Indicator 2. The district ensures that behavioral problems in each of its schools do not interfere with instructional and learning time.

EQA rating: Satisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators and a review of the district's documents indicated that the student handbooks addressed all of the areas dealing with student behavior.

Indicator 3. Schools have well-documented and well-planned programs to encourage attendance and participation.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators and a review of the district's documents indicated that there was a lack of attention to attendance policies by the school committee, central office, and building administration.

Indicator 4. The district tracks students who have ceased to participate in school programs and provides them and their families with information and assistance to return to school.

EQA rating: Satisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators and a review of the district's documents indicated that the district evidenced a concerted effort to determine why students ceased to attend by involving both the student and the parents in a formal meeting with the principal. Alternative options were reviewed in a meeting with students and their parents (i.e., job corps, the GED program, etc.).

Indicator 5. The district maintains accurate records on attendance, suspension, discipline, and dropouts and analyzes these records to improve participation and involvement of all students.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators and a review of the district's documents indicated that while the district did track dropouts and offer alternative options, it did not focus the same attention on attendance and suspension problems.

Indicator 6. Safety procedures within schools are well understood and practiced regularly.

EQA rating: Satisfactory

Evidence: The handbooks provided by each of the schools indicated that safety procedures were clearly articulated.

Indicator 7. The district makes a concerted effort to involve parents in the discipline of their children. **EQA rating: Satisfactory**

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators and a review of the district's documents indicated that the principals made an effort to include parents in the discipline of their children.

Indicator 8. The district works cooperatively with other municipal groups and agencies to insure the safety and participation of all students in schools and in the community at large.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: A review of school handbooks did not indicate any evidence of a memorandum of agreement with municipal agencies to ensure the safety of student within schools.

Domain D: Leadership and Governance

Standards ▼ Indicators ►	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
Domain D – Leadership & Governance									
S7 - Vision and Planning									
Excellent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Satisfactory	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Poor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unsatisfactory	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	8
S8 - Organizational Structures, Policies & Practices									
Excellent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Satisfactory	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Poor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Unsatisfactory	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	7

Standard 7. Vision and Planning: The district and each of its schools have clear, credible, and academically sound improvement plans that are based on a detailed analysis of student performance data and reflect the District Vision Statement. The results achieved through implementation of these plans are shared annually with the staff, school committee, and community.

Preliminary Findings:

- For the period under examination, the school committee did not hold the superintendent accountable for the implementation of the goals in the District Improvement Plan.
- For the period under examination, due to the lack of leadership within the district the district improvement plan was never fully institutionalized.
- For the period under examination, the district’s improvement plan focused more on developing student character than on improving student performance.
- For the period under examination, the district’s improvement plan lacked full implementation; therefore, results were neither evaluated nor shared annually with the staff, school committee, or community.

Indicator 1. The leaders in the district have articulated a vision that reflects the values of the community and the educational needs of students.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators and a review of the district's documents indicated that the instability and absence of leadership in recent years resulted in the absence of clear vision reflecting the values of the community and the educational needs of the students.

Indicator 2. The vision is effectively communicated to all stakeholders and implemented in all district and school planning.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators and a review of the district's documents indicated that for the period under review, instability and the ultimate interruption of district leadership caused the focus of decision making to become more localized at the school-level and less evident at the district level. District leadership and building principals conveyed in interviews that schools became more separate and antonymous.

Indicator 3. The district and its schools have an inclusive, comprehensive planning process.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators, a representative from the school committee, and a review of the district's documents indicated that the district's strategic plan for 2000-2006 was prepared under the direction of a previous administrator and had never been institutionalized or used as a comprehensive planning process for the district.

Indicator 4. The District Improvement Plan (DIP) and the School Improvement Plans (SIP) reflect the district vision and are linked to the analysis of student data that drives development, implementation, and change of educational strategy.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators, a representative from the school committee, and a review of the district's documents indicated that the district had a district improvement plan and individual school improvement plans, but the school plans were not aligned to the district improvement plan. Neither the district improvement plan nor the school improvement plans evidenced clear linkage with an assessment of student performance data.

Indicator 5. Based on an analysis of student performance assessments, administrators and staff evaluate progress on the DIP and SIP goals of each school. Necessary changes are made.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators, a representative from the school committee, and a review of the district's documents indicated that the district's improvement plan was developed in 2000, but it had not been evaluated against student performance assessments. The lack of an institutionalized district improvement plan prevented any process of aligning school improvement plans to district goals. Any changes that took place within a school and reflected within that school's improvement plan were made independent of the district.

Indicator 6. Job accountabilities are established for the administrators and teachers in implementing the goals in district and school action plans.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators, a representative from the school committee, and a review of the district's documents indicated that the administrative structure was influx and job accountabilities were unclear.

Indicator 7. The district provides annual accountability and progress reports on district and school plans to the school committee and community.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators, a school committee representative, and a review of the district's documents indicated that the school committee operated under the belief that the previous superintendent was the chief educational officer, and they relied on him to provide direction and guidance in making decisions regardless of their responsibility to develop policy to govern the district. The former superintendent provided no written progress reports to the school committee or community.

Indicator 8. The school committee is highly involved in the planning process and gives high priority to the goals of the district and school improvement plans in the annual budget.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators, a representative from the school committee and a review of the district's documents indicated that the former superintendent did not provide the school committee with any written data or reports; consequently, the school committee was not involved in the planning process. Furthermore, the school committee did not take the initiative to exercise their responsibility until issues with the former superintendent's accountability became public.

Standard 8. Organizational Structures, Policies, and Practices: The district has an organizational structure that has clear lines of authority and responsibility, promotes efficient operations, and facilitates accomplishment of the goals of the district and schools to improve student achievement. An on going analysis of student performance data and the improvement of the curriculum and instruction are the focal points of the district leadership.

Preliminary Findings:

- For the period under examination, the contractual termination of the former superintendent resulted in a void in leadership within the district.
- For the period under examination, the void in district leadership resulted in the building principals assuming a disproportionate degree of responsibility for leadership.
- For the period under examination, communication between central office and building-level administrators had deteriorated.
- For the period under examination, there was very little analysis of student performance data used to inform the improvement of curriculum and instruction.

Indicator 1. The superintendent, in meetings with senior administrators and members of the school committee, develops a coherent vision statement and DIP designed to achieve it.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with a school committee representative and building administrators indicated that for the period of time under review, the lack of leadership demonstrated by the former superintendent provided no direction for the school committee or the district leadership team in developing a clear vision and planning process.

Indicator 2. The superintendent delegates the educational and operational management of the schools to the building principals.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with a school committee representative and building principals indicated that for the time under review, due to the former superintendent's lack of district leadership, school principals assumed the responsibility for a disproportionate degree of school leadership.

Indicator 3. The district leadership ensures that all principals have an opportunity to discuss published policies and district improvement plans. The district uses system-wide and inter-site communication systems to keep all staff well informed and to provide avenues for response.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with the district leadership and a review of the district's documents indicated that there was no evidence to suggest that principals were provided the opportunity to discuss published policies and the district improvement plan.

Indicator 4. The district publishes and makes available to all staff a current organizational chart that indicates lines of responsibility and job descriptions.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Interviews and a review of the district's documents indicated no evidence that the district had an organizational chart indicating lines of responsibility and job descriptions.

Indicator 5. The district ensures that all district records are carefully compiled and maintained and are available to all.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators, a representative from the school committee, and a review of the district’s documents indicated that the administration provided little to no written documentation. District records were not carefully compiled or maintained.

Indicator 6. The superintendent is evaluated annually using the DIP as one set of criteria and receives a written report that identifies strengths and weaknesses. This report serves as a basis for subsequent improvement goals and professional development plans.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: There was no evidence that the school committee evaluated the former superintendent on the implementation of the goals of the District Improvement Plan.

Indicator 7. School leaders organize the structure and schedules of their schools such that instructional practices are improved.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Despite some changes to instructional time, an examination of the Cycle II improvement ratings by school indicated that two of the three schools in the district showed ‘No Change’ or ‘Decline.’

Indicator 8. District employment policies and practices encourage skilled personnel to remain in the district’s employment.

EQA rating: Satisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators, a representative from the school committee and a review of the district’s documents indicated that the policies and practices of the district encourage personnel to remain in the district’s employment. Currently, 51% of all

certified teaches have reached the maximum step on the district’s salary scale. The agreement between the school committee and the teachers’ association reflected the district’s commitment to maintain competitive salaries.

Domain E: Business and Financial Management

Standards ▼ Indicators ►	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total
<i>Domain E – Business & Financial Management</i>									
S9 - Budget Planning and Development									
Excellent	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	0
Satisfactory	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	0
Poor	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	N/A	0
Unsatisfactory	1	1	1	1	1	1	N/A	N/A	6
S10 - Financial Accounting and Reporting									
Excellent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	0
Satisfactory	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	N/A	0
Poor	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	N/A	1
Unsatisfactory	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	N/A	6

Standard 9. Budget Planning and Development: The district has a budget planning and development process that ensures effective use of available resources for district and school improvement initiatives. The school committee, the superintendent, teachers, parents, and members of the community all have varying degrees of responsibility to ensure that the school budget meets the educational needs of all students.

Preliminary Findings:

- For the period under examination, there was no systematic budget planning and development process.
- For the period under examination, the former superintendent did not provide the school committee with sufficient, timely information in order for them to execute their legal responsibilities.

- For the period under examination, the ineffectual district leadership (the former superintendent) prevented the school committee from maintaining clear communication with town government.

Indicator 1. There are procedures for the development of the district budget to ensure input from all staff.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators, a representative from the school committee, and a review of the district’s documents indicated that there were no policies or written procedures to guide the preparation of the budget. The school committee depended upon the former superintendent to provide them with information in a timely manner, which was not always the case.

Indicator 2. Relevant budget decisions are premised on a systemic analysis of student performance data as well as other pertinent information.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators, a representative from the school committee, and a review of the district’s documents indicated that there was no evidence to suggest that a systemic analysis of student performance data was used to inform budget decisions.

Indicator 3. The district has long-term goals, action plans, and improvement plans, which are used to integrate school and district-wide needs and goals in the budget development process.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators, a representative from the school committee, and a review of the district’s documents indicated that the district had a district improvement plan; however, the plan was never institutionalized.

Indicator 4. The district allocated its resources to accomplish targeted initiatives and objectives at the district and school levels to improve student achievement.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators, a representative from the school committee, municipal officials, and a review of the district’s documents indicated that the disconnect between the municipality and the district was due to a lack of focus within the development of the budget for any given fiscal year.

Indicator 5. The district employs a cost-effectiveness process in evaluating all of its programs, initiatives, and activities as part of the budget process.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators, municipal officials, and a review of the district’s documents indicated that the district evaluated only programs and initiatives that required evaluations as a component of funding (Title I, special education, etc.).

Indicator 6. The budget document itself is clear, complete, and understandable and provides complete information on all fund sources as well as previous history and trends.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators, municipal officials, and a review of the district’s documents indicated that the former superintendent had sole discretion over the information presented to the school committee. The school committee was not provided with written financial reports.

Standard 10. Financial Accounting and Reporting: The district maintains adequate accounting and financial reporting procedures to inform district-level and school-level decision-making, ensure effective managerial control over the use of funds, and facilitate public accountability.

Preliminary Findings:

- For the period under examination, the district did not maintain adequate accounting and financial reporting procedures to inform district-level and school-level decision-making. Furthermore, the district did not maintain adequate accounting and financial reporting procedures to ensure effective managerial control over the use of funds or to facilitate public accountability.

Indicator 1. School committee policies and administrative procedures establish clear processes and expectations regarding the expenditure, transfer, and investment of funds, within the district budget.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators, municipal officials, and a review of the district’s documents indicated that the school committee had not set policies to determine processes and expectations regarding the expenditure and transfer of funds within district’s budget and the expenditure of any district funds.

Indicator 2. Regular, timely, and complete financial reports are made to the school committee and the community.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators, municipal officials, and a review of the district’s documents indicated that it is unclear how the school committee maintained an understanding of the budget.

Indicator 3. Required local, state, and federal financial reports and statements are filed in a timely and accurate manner.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators, municipal officials, and a review of the district's documents indicated that local, state, and federal reports were not filed in a timely and accurate manner.

Indicator 4. The district has efficient accounting technology that integrates district level financial information with the financial information of each school, and allows financial managers and principals to accurately track spending against the budget on a regular basis.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators, municipal officials, and a review of the district's documents indicated that the district did not have an internal networked accounting system. The Office of the Business Manager is currently networked to the Town Accountant's Office. There was, however, no evidence of an integration of district-level financial information with the financial information of each school and the Town Accountant's Office.

Indicator 5. The district reviews student achievement data and such reviews are reflected in its financial decisions.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators, municipal officials, and a review of the district's documents indicated that student achievement data was not considered prior to August, 2002 in developing or managing the district's budget.

Indicator 6. The district regularly employs appropriate independent financial audits and implements their recommendations to assure quality financial systems.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators, municipal officials, and a review of the district's documents indicated that an annual audit did occur through the Town Accountant's Office, and a Management Letter was sent to the school committee; however,

according to an interview with the former school committee chair, the superintendent did not provide the school committee with the letter.

Indicator 7. The district uses reliable forecast mechanism and control procedures to ensure spending is within fiscal budget limits.

EQA rating: Unsatisfactory

Evidence: Interviews with district and building administrators, municipal officials, and a review of the district's documents indicated that the district did not employ any mechanisms of forecast or control procedures to ensure that spending was within the limits of the fiscal budget. For example: the district had not determined a cost projection for the current teacher contract or capital improvement.

Appendix: Proficiency Index

The Proficiency Index is a metric used to measure and compare all schools and school districts regarding their performance on each of the MCAS tests. There are three indices: The Combined Proficiency Index (CPI), the English Language Arts Proficiency Index (EPI) and the Math Proficiency Index (MPI). The index is developed as follows:

The Proficiency Index is a measure of the level of achievement a district, school, grade, or subgroup has made in relation to the proficiency achievement level on the annual MCAS test. The Proficiency Index is calculated as follows:

Percentage of students scoring 200-208 on test	x	0	=	A
Percentage of students scoring 210-218 on test	x	25	=	B
Percentage of students scoring 220-228 on test	x	50	=	C
Percentage of students scoring 230-238 on test	x	75	=	D
Percentage of students scoring 240 or more on test	x	100	=	E

The Proficiency Index (PI) equals the sum of $A + B + C + D + E = PI$

Example: The Governor Ambrose High School had the following results for the 2001 MCAS test:

12% of all students scored 200-208; therefore,	12%	x	0	=	0
15% of all students scored 210-218; therefore,	15%	x	25	=	3.75
21% of all students scored 220-228; therefore,	21%	x	50	=	10.5
34% of all students scored 230-238; therefore,	34%	x	75	=	25.5
18% of all students scored 240 or more; therefore,	18%	x	100	=	18.0

The Proficiency Index is calculated by adding: $0 + 3.75 + 10.5 + 25.5 + 18 = 57.75$

The Proficiency Index for the Governor Ambrose High would be: 57.75

The MPI would use the same calculation for all students taking the math exam.

The EPI would use the same calculation for all students taking the ELA exam.

The 100 point Proficiency Index is divided into six Proficiency Categories as follows: 90-100 is 'Very High' (VH), 80-89.9 is 'High' (H), 70-79.9 is 'Moderate' (M), 60-69.9 is 'Low' (L), 40-59.9 is 'Very Low' (VL).