

REPORT OF TWO YEAR FOLLOW-UP REVIEW

Office of Educational Quality and Accountability

White Street Elementary School

Springfield Public Schools

The White Street Elementary School in Springfield has continued to perform far below proficiency levels, has never made adequate yearly progress (AYP) in English language arts (ELA), and student performance has continued to decline. The school has not been effective in using a school improvement plan (SIP) due to inadequate focus on math, inadequate monitoring and use of data, and because a significant portion of the SIP had focused on behavior. Despite the latter, the school had not consistently implemented a school-wide plan to improve classroom and school management, and behavior continued to be a major distraction in the school. The Reading First program has contributed to the school's ability to implement its plan in ELA in grades K-3, but staffing issues impeded SIP implementation in ELA in grades 4-5 and in math. At the time of the site visit, the White Street Elementary School did not have conditions in place to improve student achievement due to staff instability, inconsistent implementation and inadequate monitoring of SIP implementation, and the lack of a sense of urgency throughout the school to make priority changes to improve student achievement.

Priority Findings

1. Low achievement and inadequate improvement are chronic problems at White Street Elementary School.
 - White Street is currently in 'Restructuring' status for ELA and 'Corrective Action' status for math. In Cycle IV the school's performance declined and was 'Very Low' in both ELA and math.
 - White Street Elementary School has never made AYP in ELA for the aggregate student population or for all subgroups. White Street has never made AYP in math for all subgroups, and the aggregate population made AYP in only three years: 2001, 2002, and 2004.
2. A disconnect exists between faculty and administrator understanding of student performance and what is needed to ensure students meet proficiency.
 - Ineffective resource allocation is a major issue in this school.
 - Goals for improving student learning were not grounded in a clear understanding of student strengths and needs.
 - Priority-setting and planning does not focus on student performance needs.
 - Faculty did not articulate understanding of the differences between improvement and adequate improvement in mid-year student assessments.

3. The school lacks the capacity to support conditions for improved student achievement.
 - The district did not sufficiently support this school from the beginning of the declaration of ‘underperformance’ to create the conditions for achievement at White Street.
 - The leadership lacks the capacity to ensure that instruction is of high quality throughout the school.
 - Teachers are not all prepared to provide the instructional strategies to support higher achievement for their students.
 - However, the school has some instructional leadership capable of raising instructional skills.
4. The school lacks a teaching and learning climate conducive to improvement in student achievement in any content area or grade level.
 - Staffing issues, the ineffective use of substitute teachers, the school’s lack of stable instructional leadership, student behavior, and inadequate systems and structures undermine the ability of the school to implement an improvement plan.
 - The school lacks mechanisms and structures to create consistency.
 - Significant inconsistencies exist in teaching and learning.

Two Year Follow-up Review Process

The Two Year Follow-up Review is the fourth and final stage of the process used to assess school performance under the Massachusetts School and District Accountability System. The first stage identifies schools in the lowest MCAS performance categories that are in need of improvement. Stage two, the Panel Review, involves the visitation of a review team to assist the Commissioner of Education in determining whether a school identified as in need of improvement is underperforming and in need of state guidance to improve student performance. The Panel Review of the White Street Elementary School occurred on February 23, 2004. Schools declared to be underperforming are required to undergo the next stage of the process, the Fact-finding Review, to assist both the school and the Commissioner in determining the reasons for low student performance and in developing a factual basis from which to develop a plan to improve student performance. Following the Fact-finding Review on May 11, 2004, the White Street Elementary School developed such a plan, and the Commissioner and Board of Education accepted the plan on October 26, 2004. The district is required to direct the implementation of this plan, and within two years the school must demonstrate significant improvement.

The Underperforming Follow-up Review reports on progress at the end of this two-year period of implementation. The Follow-up Review was conducted on March 13, 2007. The Commissioner and Board of Education will use the Follow-up Review report to issue a judgment on the question of chronic underperformance at the White Street Elementary School.

The panel’s charge was to analyze data and written information on the school’s performance and improvement efforts, visit the school, and meet with school and district officials in order to advise the Commissioner on the answers to the following four key questions:

1. Has the school shown improvement in student performance?
2. Is the school effective in using a school improvement plan that results in the continuous improvement in student performance?
3. Are there other factors (changes in conditions or circumstances, i.e., policies, practices) in the school or district that have contributed to or impeded the school's ability to implement its plan?
4. Are the conditions in place to sustain the gains achieved and support continued improvement in student performance?

The panel's responses to the above key questions that defined the scope of the review are included in this report. These findings and conclusions are the product of the panel's analysis, discussion, and observation, based on the evidence available to it. Appendix A provides a list of panel members who participated in the review. Appendix B provides a detailed schedule of the panel's activities.

The panel's findings and conclusions on the four key questions will be forwarded to the Commissioner of Education for consideration, together with the school's status reports and student performance data, in determining whether White Street Elementary School should be deemed chronically underperforming. The panel was not asked to formulate a sound plan for school improvement where such a plan does not presently exist or to recommend a course of action to create the conditions for successful implementation of sound improvement strategies where such conditions at present do not appear to exist.

White Street Elementary School Profile

White Street Elementary School is one of the 30 elementary schools in the Springfield Public Schools serving students through grade 5. A unique feature of the school is that it is physically located in two separate adjacent buildings.

White Street enrolled 382 students in grades K-5 in the 2006-2007 school year. The majority population in the school is Hispanic (46.3 percent), followed by African-American (25.7 percent) and white (13.1 percent) students. The school is overwhelmingly low income, with 91.4 percent of the students receiving free or reduced-cost lunch, and White Street has a much higher percentage of low-income students compared to the district (77.5 percent). In 2006, the school's percentage of low-income students was higher than that in 20 of the 30 elementary schools. In 2007, the school's percentage of special education students was lower than the district (13.1 compared to 22.0 percent), and in 2006 the school's percentage of special education students was lower than that in 20 of the 30 elementary schools. Other school populations were comparable to those in the district and the other elementary schools. In 2007, the school had a somewhat higher percentage of African-American, Asian, multi-race, first language not English (FLNE), and limited English proficient (LEP) students, and a lower percentage of Hispanic and white students. See Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Composition, 2007
White Street Elementary School Compared to Springfield and the State

Student Subgroup	Percentage of Students		
	School	District	State
African-American	25.7	25.5	8.2
Asian	7.6	2.1	4.8
Hispanic	46.3	49.9	13.3
Native American	0.0	0.1	0.3
White	13.1	18.3	71.5
Multi-race, non-Hispanic	7.3	4.1	1.7
FLNE	24.6	21.8	14.9
LEP	17.3	13.7	5.6
Low Income	91.4	77.5	28.9
Special Education	13.1	22.0	16.9

Source: Department of Education

White Street’s 2006 attendance rate of 91.5 percent was the lowest among the elementary schools, along with Gerena Elementary School. In 2006, the school had the fifth highest rate of out-of-school suspension compared to the other elementary schools. Between 2004 and 2006, Department of Education (DOE) data reveal that the school had the sixth highest rate of out-of-school suspension over the three-year period. DOE data indicate that the school had no in-school suspensions, but the EQA team discovered on site that the in-school suspensions reported by the district to the DOE did not include student time spent in the room designated for behavior referrals. See Table 2.

Table 2. Demographics, Attendance and Discipline, 2006
White Street Elementary School Compared to Springfield

School	Enrollment	Minority	LEP	Low-Income	Attendance Rate	In-School Suspension	Out of School Suspension
Homer Street (K-5)	343	99	17	90	92.2	5.1	8.2
Washington (K-5)	256	83	23	90	94.3	0	4.7
White Street (K-5)	400	90	15	90	91.5	0	7.3
Kiley (6-8)	961	83	17	81	89.3	25.7	21.2
District	25,206	81.7	13.7	77.5	89.6	10.2	13.7
State	972,371	28.5	5.6	28.9	94.4	3.5	6.0

Source: Department of Education

Staffing

The school had one principal, 34 teachers, a school adjustment counselor, and a librarian. The district appointed the principal to lead the school after two years of experience as a vice principal in another district school; she was serving her third year at the time of the site visit. Two members of the principal’s leadership team were teachers who formally served in the role as teacher leaders/curriculum facilitators. Thirty-two of the teachers were certified, one was on waiver, and one long-term substitute had no certification.

The teaching staff was a dichotomy of very experienced and very new teachers; 14 had teaching experience ranging from 10 to 23 years, 14 had three years or less of teaching experience, and seven had five to nine years of experience. The staff had an average of 9.24 years of teaching

experience, but slightly less than one-third of the staff members were in their first or second year of teaching; six were first-year teachers and five were second-year teachers. Although the teachers had an average of six years in the building, over one-third of the White Street teachers (12) were in their first year in the building. See Table 3.

Table 3. Staffing, 2007
White Street Elementary School

Role	Total	Total with current certification in area/HQ if paraprofessional	Average years experience	Average years in school
Administrators	1	1	5	3
Teachers	34	32 (1 on waiver/1 no certification)	9.24	6
Other	2	2	13	10.5

Source: Data provided by school. "Other" includes the guidance counselor and librarian.

The average number of days of teacher absence for short-term illness and personal days at White Street was 12.87, higher than the district average of 11.02 for elementary schools. White Street teachers also had on average more days out of the building for professional development. Not including absences for long-term illness, the average teacher at White Street was away from the classroom for 14.87 days, compared to the district average of 12.11 days for elementary schools. The data for White Street did not include a teacher placed on administrative assignment whose classroom was staffed by a substitute teacher.

Table 4. Teacher Attendance Data, 2006
White Street Elementary School Compared to Springfield

School	Number of Teachers	Days Absent for Short-Term Illness	Days Absent for Other Reasons	Total Days Absent Excluding PD	Average per Teacher Excluding PD	Days Absent for PD	Total Days Absent Including PD	Average per Teacher Including PD
Homer Street (K-5)	40	333	126	459	11.48	52	511	12.78
Washington (K-5)	30	164	43	207	6.90	19	226	7.53
White Street (K-5)	38	398	91	489	12.87	76	565	14.87
K-5 Average	38.97	309.47	123.33	433.53	11.02	32.25	470.79	12.11

Source: Data provided by district. PD=professional development.

MCAS Results

White Street is currently in ‘Restructuring’ status for ELA and ‘Corrective Action’ status for math. In Cycle IV the school’s performance declined and was ‘Very Low’ in both ELA and math.

White Street has never made AYP in ELA for the aggregate student population or for all subgroups. White Street has never made AYP in math for all subgroups, and the aggregate population made AYP in only three years: 2001, 2002, and 2004.

**Table 5. ELA Adequate Yearly Progress Cycle Data, 2004-2006
White Street Elementary School**

Year / Cycle	ELA CPI	CPI change	AYP Aggregate	AYP Subgroups	School Status
2004 Cycle III (03-04)	63.1	-0.1	No in 2003 No in 2004	No in 2003 No in 2004	Low No Change Identified for Restructuring
2006 Cycle IV (05-06)	58.9	-4.2	No in 2005 No in 2006	No in 2005 No in 2006	Very Low Declined Restructuring

Source: Department of Education

**Table 6. Math Adequate Yearly Progress Cycle Data, 2004-2006
White Street Elementary School**

Year / Cycle	Math CPI	CPI change	AYP Aggregate	AYP Subgroups	School Status
2004 Cycle III (03-04)	48.7	-0.2	No in 2003 Yes in 2004	No in 2003 No in 2004	Very Low No Change Identified for Improvement
2006 Cycle IV (05-06)	43.1	-5.6	No in 2005 No in 2006	No in 2005 No in 2006	Very Low Declined Corrective Action

Source: Department of Education

In both 2005 and 2006, low-income and Hispanics students have lost ground. Changes to the composite proficiency index (CPI) for low-income students in ELA were -4.8 CPI points in 2005 and -4.6 points in 2006; in math, the changes were -7.2 points in 2005 and -5.9 points in 2006. Changes to the CPI for Hispanic students in ELA were -2.3 points in 2005 and -0.3 points in 2006; in math, the changes were not reported.

Subgroup Performance

Comparisons of student performance on the ELA and math tests administered in 2006 demonstrate how subgroups at White Street performed relative to their peers in the district and across the state, including on the tests that did not count for accountability purposes.

Subgroups generally performed more poorly at White Street than at other district schools; this was especially the case for African-American and low-income students. In ELA and math in grades 3 and 4, all of White Street’s subgroups performed below the district and the state. In grade 5 ELA, all subgroups performed below the district and state except for special education and LEP students. In grade 5 math, all subgroups performed below the district and state except for special education students (14 students). See Tables 7-10.

In grade 3 reading, the largest gaps between school and district performance were for the African-American subgroup (17.1 CPI points) and the low-income subgroup (9.5 points). See Table 7.

**Table 7. Grade 3 Reading MCAS Subgroup Performance (CPI), 2006
White Street Elementary School Compared to Springfield and the State**

Subgroup	Composite Proficiency Index (CPI)		
	School	District	State
African-American	56.3	73.4	72.0
Asian	–	79.3	84.8
Hispanic	65.5	68.3	66.6
Native American	–	–	79.5
White	–	82.4	87.5
LEP/FLEP	52.5	58.1	64.5
Low Income	61.1	70.6	71.3
Special Education	–	63.3	69.4

Source: Department of Education

In grade 4 ELA, the largest performance gaps were for the African-American (10.3 CPI points), Hispanic (10.2 points), and low-income (8.5 points) subgroups. See Table 8.

**Table 8. Grade 4 ELA MCAS Subgroup Performance (CPI), 2006
White Street Elementary School Compared to Springfield and the State**

Subgroup	Composite Proficiency Index (CPI)		
	School	District	State
African-American	56.3	66.6	65.1
Asian	–	74.5	82.2
Hispanic	52.0	62.2	62.2
Native American	–	–	73.4
White	–	78.3	82.9
LEP/FLEP	–	57.1	60.1
Low Income	55.9	64.4	65.5
Special Education	50.0	52.6	59.8

Source: Department of Education

In grade 5 ELA, the largest performance gaps were for the African-American subgroup (17.7 CPI points) and the low-income subgroup (8.7 points). Special education students outperformed the district by 9.0 CPI points, and LEP/FLEP students outperformed the district by 2.7 points. See Table 9.

**Table 9. Grade 5 ELA MCAS Subgroup Performance (CPI), 2006
White Street Elementary School Compared to Springfield and the State**

Subgroup	Composite Proficiency Index (CPI)		
	School	District	State
African-American	52.9	70.6	71.0
Asian	–	76.3	85.6
Hispanic	56.9	61.1	65.6
Native American	–	–	80.5
White	–	81.7	88.1
LEP/FLEP	54.2	51.5	62.0
Low Income	56.9	65.6	70.4
Special Education	62.5	53.5	65.6

Source: Department of Education

In grade 3 math, the largest performance gaps were for the African-American subgroup (10.3 CPI points) and the low-income subgroup (9.0 points). See Table 10.

**Table 10. Grade 3 Math MCAS Subgroup Performance (CPI), 2006
White Street Elementary School Compared to Springfield and the State**

Subgroup	Composite Proficiency Index (CPI)		
	School	District	State
African-American	53.1	63.4	63.0
Asian	–	80.6	83.7
Hispanic	53.4	61.7	60.1
Native American	–	–	75.8
White	–	77.7	82.3
LEP/FLEP	50.0	54.4	61.6
Low Income	54.3	63.3	64.4
Special Education	–	50.3	61.5

Source: Department of Education

In grade 4 math, the largest performance gaps were for the Hispanic (16.7 CPI points), low-income (12.1 points), special education (11.4 points), and African-American (11.2 points) subgroups. See Table 11.

**Table 11. Grade 4 Math MCAS Subgroup Performance (CPI), 2006
White Street Elementary School Compared to Springfield and the State**

Subgroup	Composite Proficiency Index (CPI)		
	School	District	State
African-American	42.2	53.4	57.9
Asian	–	71.8	81.8
Hispanic	38.5	55.2	57.0
Native American	–	–	69.9
White	–	71.1	77.2
LEP/FLEP	–	48.5	58.2
Low Income	44.0	56.1	60.3
Special Education	37.5	48.9	57.1

Source: Department of Education

In grade 5 math, the largest performance gaps were for the LEP/FLEP subgroup (6.2 CPI points) and the Hispanic subgroup (4.5 points). Special education students outperformed the district by 16.6 CPI points and the state by 5.9 points. See Table 12.

**Table 12. Grade 5 Math MCAS Subgroup Performance (CPI), 2006
White Street Elementary School Compared to Springfield and the State**

Subgroup	Composite Proficiency Index (CPI)		
	School	District	State
African-American	47.1	48.8	52.4
Asian	–	71.9	80.8
Hispanic	40.5	45.0	50.4
Native American	–	–	66.0
White	–	68.7	75.0
LEP/FLEP	33.3	39.5	52.4
Low Income	43.1	48.4	54.3
Special Education	55.4	38.8	49.5

Source: Department of Education

MCAS Trends

Grade 3 reading results remained flat and the school performed below the district between 2004 and 2006. Although proficiency rate increased from 17 to 33 to 22 percent, the percentage of students in the ‘Warning/Failing’ category increased during the period from 17 to 13 to 25 percent. See Table 13.

**Table 13. Grade 3 Reading MCAS Results, 2004-2006
White Street Elementary School Compared to Springfield and the State**

Year		n	Percentage of Students				
			A	P	A/P	NI	W
2004	White Street Elem	70	NA	17	17	66	17
	District	2,085	NA	40	40	45	16
	State	73,332	NA	63	63	30	7
2005	White Street Elem	70	NA	33	33	54	13
	District	1,934	NA	41	41	46	13
	State	71,463	NA	62	62	31	7
2006	White Street Elem	59	2	20	22	53	25
	District	1,920	9	29	38	45	17
	State	70,751	18	40	58	34	8

Source: DOE. n=number of students tested, A=Advanced, P=Proficient, A/P=Advanced/Proficient (at or above the proficiency level), NI=Needs Improvement, W=Warning/Failing.

Grade 4 ELA proficiency declined and the percentage of students in the ‘Warning/Failing’ category increased over the three-year period as the school continued to perform below the district. The rates of proficiency in 2004, 2005, and 2006 were 20, six, and 15 percent, respectively. The percentage of students in the ‘Warning/Failing’ category increased from 20 to 35 to 35 percent over this period. See Table 14.

**Table 14. Grade 4 ELA MCAS Results, 2004-2006
White Street Elementary School Compared to Springfield and the State**

Year		n	Percentage of Students				
			A	P	A/P	NI	W
2004	White Street Elem	65	3	17	20	60	20
	District	2,050	5	31	36	43	21
	State	73,111	11	45	56	35	9
2005	White Street Elem	72	0	6	6	60	35
	District	2,016	3	25	28	50	21
	State	72,774	10	40	50	40	10
2006	White Street Elem	54	0	15	15	50	35
	District	1,895	2	26	28	48	23
	State	71,277	8	42	50	39	12

Source: DOE. n=number of students tested, A=Advanced, P=Proficient, A/P=Advanced/Proficient (at or above the proficiency level), NI=Needs Improvement, W=Warning/Failing.

Grade 4 math proficiency declined and the percentage of students in the ‘Warning/Failing’ category increased over the three-year period as the school continued to perform below the district. The rates of proficiency in 2004, 2005, and 2006 were 13, one, and six percent, respectively. The percentage of students in the ‘Warning/Failing’ category increased from 37 to 52 to 43 percent over this period. See Table 15.

Table 15. Grade 4 Math MCAS Results, 2004-2006
White Street Elementary School Compared to Springfield and the State

Year		n	Percentage of Students				
			A	P	A/P	NI	W
2004	White Street Elem	68	3	10	13	50	37
	District	2,066	6	19	25	47	27
	State	73,323	14	28	42	44	14
2005	White Street Elem	73	0	1	1	47	52
	District	2,018	5	16	21	50	29
	State	72,827	14	27	41	44	15
2006	White Street Elem	53	0	6	6	51	43
	District	1,897	4	15	19	49	32
	State	71,417	15	25	40	45	15

Source: DOE. n=number of students tested, A=Advanced, P=Proficient, A/P=Advanced/Proficient (at or above the proficiency level), NI=Needs Improvement, W=Warning/Failing.

The team considered District Formative Assessment (DFA) data to examine measures of school performance compared to other district schools in the 2006-2007 school year. In ELA, the school achieved a lower rate of proficiency of its students compared to the district and the three other Springfield elementary schools in the follow-up review cycle in 2006 and 2007, aside from outperforming one of the schools in grade 5 math and ELA in 2007’s second cycle DFA.

On the 2006 ELA DFA assessments (3rd cycle), the rate of proficiency for White Street students was 18 percentage points below the district in grade 3, and lower than the three other schools in the follow-up review cycle. The rate of proficiency for White Street students was 17 percentage points below the district in grade 4, and lower than the three other schools in the follow-up review cycle. The rate of proficiency for White Street students was 18 percentage points below the district in grade 5, and lower than the three other schools in the follow-up review cycle.

On the 2007 ELA DFA assessments (2nd cycle), the rate of proficiency for White Street students was 23 percentage points below the district in grade 3, and lower than the three other schools in the follow-up review cycle. The rate of proficiency for White Street students was 22 percentage points below the district in grade 4, and lower than the three other schools in the follow-up review cycle. The rate of proficiency for White Street students was 10 percentage points below the district in grade 5, and lower than two of the three other schools in the follow-up review cycle.

On the 2006 math DFA assessments (3rd cycle), the rate of proficiency for White Street students was 20 percentage points below the district in grade 3, and lower than the three other schools in the follow-up review cycle. The rate of proficiency for White Street students was 19 percentage points below the district in grade 4, and lower than the three other schools in the follow-up re-

view cycle. The rate of proficiency for White Street students was 20 percentage points below the district in grade 5, and lower than the three other schools in the follow-up review cycle.

On the 2007 math DFA assessments (2nd cycle), the rate of proficiency for White Street students was 17 percentage points below the district in grade 3, and lower than the three other schools in the follow-up review cycle. The rate of proficiency for White Street students was 22 percentage points below the district in grade 4, and lower than the three other schools in the follow-up review cycle. The rate of proficiency for White Street students was eight percentage points below the district in grade 5, and lower than two of the three other schools in the follow-up review cycle. See Table 16.

**Table 16. Proficiency on District Formative Assessments
White Elementary School Compared to Springfield
2006 3rd Cycle Test – 2007 2nd Cycle Test**

School	Grade	ELA			Math		
		2005-2006	2006-2007	Change	2005-2006	2006-2007	Change
Homer	Grade 3	36	24	-12	30	7	-23
	Grade 4	25	43	18	22	12	-10
	Grade 5	43	18	-25	17	4	-13
Washington	Grade 3	56	66	10	42	27	-15
	Grade 4	38	63	25	33	33	0
	Grade 5	63	57	-6	36	8	-28
White	Grade 3	33	16	-17	27	3	-24
	Grade 4	22	29	7	16	9	-7
	Grade 5	30	29	-1	6	7	1
District	Grade 3	51	39	-12	47	20	-27
	Grade 4	39	51	12	35	31	-4
	Grade 5	48	39	-9	26	15	-11

Source: District. Note: 2006-2007 scores represented the second of three assessment cycles. Upward trends mean improvement, but downward trends do not, since the chart compares the 3rd cycle of the 2005-2006 assessments with the 2nd cycle of the 2006-2007 assessments. The team used the information available from the district.

Panel Responses to the Key Questions

Key Question 1: Has the school shown improvement in student performance?

No. White Street Elementary School has continued to perform far below proficiency levels, has never made adequate yearly progress (AYP), and performance has continued to decline.

The school performed at the 'Very Low' level in ELA and math, and is in 'Restructuring' status for ELA. White Street has never made AYP in ELA for the aggregate population or for subgroups.

In 2006, proficiency levels were far below district and state levels on each MCAS test. The percentages of students failing to reach the benchmark of proficiency in 2006 in ELA were 78 percent in grade 3 and 85 percent in grade 4. In math, 94 percent of the students did not attain proficiency on the grade 4 exam.

The school's aggregate population and the subgroups underperformed their peers in the district and state in grade 3 reading, grade 3 math (the largest gaps were for low-income and Hispanic students), grade 4 ELA, and grade 4 math. Math is the subject for which the subgroup gaps were the largest. In grade 5 ELA, achievement of the special education and LEP subgroups was higher than the district, but the other subgroups had lower achievement than their district peers. In grade 5 math, the special education subgroup was the only subgroup that outperformed the district. It should be noted that the populations are small and differences are not necessarily statistically significant, yet the data indicate that the school's underperformance cannot be attributed to the school's higher percentage of traditionally lower-performing subgroups.

Math is the area in which the school has demonstrated the least capacity to improve. In year from 2003 through 2006, the school's largest declines in performance have been in math. The largest decline was in math in 2006, with a 5.6 CPI point decline, compared to 4.2 points in ELA. The largest subgroup gap in 2006 was for the special education subgroup in grade 4 math: 19.6 CPI points between the school and the state, 11.4 points between the school and the district.

The data point to factors that may have affected the lack of improvement. In 2006, of the 30 Springfield elementary schools, White Street had the second lowest attendance rate (along with another school) and the tenth highest rate of out of school suspension.

The school had not set reasonable goals for student performance in math, both for the aggregate population and for subgroups, that were achievable within a specified timeframe. Because the overall performance was very low and declining, the school's approach was to focus on aggregate improvement rather than content area and subgroup performance. The overarching goals focus more on ELA than on math and focus on science as much as on math, although math performance is the weakest.

The school is setting reasonable and achievable goals in ELA through grade 3, and as stated, the school is performing better in ELA than in math. Although the SIP ELA goals ostensibly apply

to all grades, only for grades K-3 was progress measured and the SIP implemented to make progress in reading. The school has implemented an annotated schedule for the 150 minute instructional block—an extended learning period allowing time for teachers to implement SIP strategies, particularly differentiated instruction informed by assessments. In fact, the school has begun a robust approach in ELA, especially for students up to grade 3. The ELA instructional leadership specialist (ILS), who was assigned to grades 3-5, and the Reading First coordinator provide professional development, coaching, and modeling for all ELA teachers, but the focus is on kindergarten to grade 3. The ILS and the Reading First coordinator have provided instructional leadership leading to the creation of clear and aligned structures and systems for providing effective instruction and assessment in reading. The school has also incorporated vocabulary and writing skill development into math instruction, with an emphasis on math vocabulary and implementing math journals.

However, the school is not setting achievable or reasonable goals in math. The root cause analysis of math performance is weaker, broader, less articulated, and less data driven than for ELA. The SIP math strategies that the school is implementing reinforce math vocabulary and explaining math processes in written form in general. However, the team did not find evidence that the school had implemented other specific math strategies across the classrooms to improve student performance in weak areas identified in the item analyses. Unlike in ELA, although the structure for the math instructional block is in the district math instructional guide (MIG), the EQA team did not find evidence in interviews with teachers or administrators, or in classroom observations, that teachers were held accountable for following the structure in math. Further, observations and interviews did not reveal evidence in math of differentiated instruction and effective strategies to promote learning of struggling students or students with diverse needs. Also, the school lacks assessments capable of diagnosing student weaknesses in order to target instruction on an ongoing basis. Although math is the area of the poorest performance, the school lacked instructional leadership in math until the district provided a math ILS to the school in February 2007, and the position is only part time (three days a week). Comparatively, two positions (the ILS and Reading First coordinator) support instruction in English language arts.

The SIP goals also do not identify specific subgroup goals and benchmarks, although low-income, special education, Hispanic, and LEP students are a large part of the population and subgroup gaps exist, and the school has not focused on a strategic instructional approach that focuses on the subgroup populations' needs. However, the SIP includes some strategies that address learners with diverse needs, although not specifically linked to subgroup or root cause analysis. For example, the SIP does state that teachers should differentiate instruction and focus on vocabulary.

Overall, the school's goals in ELA and math are not achievable for all grades due to lack of a clear and shared understanding or faculty ownership of strategies to improve student achievement. The team saw little evidence of faculty ownership or understanding of MCAS test data in interviews. In the SIP, the grade 4 ELA goals had incorrect data (see page 10 of the SIP). Teachers did not express knowledge that students at the school were performing at levels far below their district peers and the state standard. Teachers expressed that they understood that student achievement was improving because formative results indicated growth, but could not describe a standard for adequate growth during benchmarking periods. Some teachers expressed surprised

when the EQA team explained why it was visiting the school, saying, “I thought we were improving.” Faculty members who understood that the school had a goal to reduce the percentage of students in the ‘Warning/Failing’ category to improve the schools’ composite proficiency index (CPI) could not articulate the needs of these students as a distinct subgroup. Teachers indicated that all student subgroups showed the same weaknesses in the item analyses. The school had no shared knowledge of student proficiency data nor how to use those data to improve teaching and learning. Teachers did not demonstrate understanding of the meaning of data showing improvement mid-year. Rather, most teachers thought that the trends were positive because there was some improvement, not understanding whether it was enough improvement to meet MCAS goals. Other than using the MIG, teachers could not identify school improvement priorities and implementation strategies other than for K-3 ELA. Faculty understanding of data did not go beyond item analysis and the ability to group students based on items correct and incorrect. Teachers could not articulate how instruction could bridge learning gaps identified through item analysis and lead to MCAS test proficiency.

Key Question 2: Is the school effective in using a school improvement plan that results in the continuous improvement in student performance?

No. The school has not been effective in using a school improvement plan, and student performance has not improved.

Overall, White Street did not implement an improvement plan that put the school on a trajectory toward improved student achievement in math. A significant portion of the SIP focused on behavior, under “all content areas,” and neither the math nor “all content areas” portions of the SIP was effectively implemented in a manner likely to improve student achievement.

The school has improved reading instruction in grades K-3 through the implementation of the Reading First program. The three levels of tiered instruction based on assessed student levels allow differentiated instruction targeting identified areas of weakness. The implementation of the 2.5 hour ELA block, with the annotated schedule, has increased time on learning and structured the time for effective use. The Reading First coordinator and ELA ILS have coached teachers in providing effective instruction, such as helping teachers incorporate daily writing and guided practice into the schedule.

Grades 4-5 lack a clear definition of literacy instruction. The upper grades use Harcourt materials, and the EQA team observed textbook-driven instruction unadjusted for student needs. The ELA ILS provides support to grades 4-5, but the examiners found little evidence of rigor, high expectations, and support for growth in the upper grades given the lack of clearly defined expectations. The school had no dedicated ELA leadership for grades 4-5 in 2005-2006; the ELA ILS arrived in September 2007. Without an ILS for the school, it lacked district-level representation for grades K-5, which would allow access to the rich professional discourse in district-provided professional development on improving ELA practices and using program materials more effectively. Teacher modeling and guided reading lacked consistent implementation in grades 4-5.

The team observed that ELA grouping was classroom based, with six small groups per classroom creating 18 groups in total for each of grades 3 and 4, rather than across classrooms. Teacher

comments and observations by examiners revealed that the system increased teacher preparation responsibilities, limited teacher time with each group, and created difficulties in classroom management. Interviews with the school leadership revealed that the school had not analyzed the effectiveness of this costly grouping model. Also, the school used additional staff resources to support ELA rather than math instruction in spite of the identified areas of weakness. Most Title I teacher time was spent facilitating ELA groups. Special education teachers pulled students out for ELA rather than math instruction. Administrators did not conduct an assessment of issues such as: In forming groups that small, is the school restricting modeling for other students? Does the school provide teachers with adequate planning for preparing instruction for multiple groups? Are the sizes of the groups conducive to learning? Does the school use staff resources efficiently in this model?

In math, the most notable changes have been the extended math block and the use of the district's math instructional guide to guide teachers on pacing and content coverage to promote teaching to the standard. The length of the math block was inconsistent during the period of review. In 2005-2006, the school cut the original math time by 30 minutes. In 2006-2007, the district restored 30 minutes to the block, creating a 90-minute math instructional block again. When teachers were questioned on what they do when students were not mastering the standard, they stated that they had to continue to the next lesson regardless of the mastery by the group. Teachers did not have consistent strategies, such as re-teaching and regrouping, or providing additional assistance, to support struggling students. Teachers expressed the belief that the MIG is a spiral curriculum, so full mastery of a particular unit was not essential. They further expressed that the principal prioritized pacing to mastery. The school had no math ILS until February 2007. Differentiation of math instruction was lacking. Lacking embedded support and professional development, teachers did not consistently implement promising SIP strategies such as the understand, plan, solve, learn (UPSL) method, teaching of multi-step problems, and effective use of math journals. Math had few resources to support learners with diverse needs or at different levels.

The SIP includes root cause analysis that appropriately focused on instructional weaknesses, but the plan does not include a depth of data analysis that helps teachers understand where students are and where students need to be in order to attain proficiency on the MCAS tests. The SIP sometimes lacks clear links between root causes, instructional change objectives, student learning objectives, and student performance. For example, in math, the SIP has the overarching goal (page 2) for students to "Know and implement strategies to solve multi-step problems...by explaining and justifying their work in all five strands with particular emphasis on fractions and measurement." The SIP states this is important for all five strands, but does not specify the strands or provide data on the strands with the areas of most weakness. The performance goal has incorrect data, no subgroup goals, and bases increased achievement on moving students out of the 'Warning/Failing' category and moving students into the 'Proficient' and 'Advanced' categories. However, the SIP provides no analysis of students at different proficiency levels to determine what is preventing them from attaining the next level, such as whether students in the lowest performance categories have weaknesses in multi-step problems, fractions, measurement, or number sense. In ELA, the strategies and benchmarks are clearly stated for grades K-3, but not for grades 4-5.

The SIP planning process supported successful implementation, and the improvement plan has staff buy-in, but the implementation was compromised by other factors. The plan was developed through a SIP team with staff representation, unlike the previous improvement plan. The Reading First teacher, who focused on grades K-3, led the development of the ELA section of the SIP. The school did not have leadership for ELA in grades 4-5 at the time, having lacked an ILS or collaborative professional development teacher (CPDT) in 2005-2006.

Overall, the SIP was not managed to support school-wide improvement. Twelve teachers were new to building but lacked sufficient instructional support in math. The school had no professional development to implement the Scott Foresman program materials because the school did not have a math ILS until February 2007. The team did not observe a pervasive sense of urgency in the building to improve student achievement. Interviews with teachers revealed that grade-level meetings were inconsistent, and specialist teachers and special education teachers had not invested in implementing the SIP. The SIP team had one specialist teacher (instructional technology) representative, but because specialist teachers did not meet as a team, the other specialist teachers did not have opportunities for feedback and discussion on how to use the SIP in their classrooms, although SIP information was disseminated in whole faculty meetings. The school had one special education teacher on the SIP team, but special education teachers did not have professional collaboration or structures to support SIP implementation. Rather, when there were SIP discussions, the teachers were told to sit on a grade level team of their choice.

The largest sources of support for implementing the SIP were in ELA. The ELA program benefited from the Reading First program and coordinator (provided by a grant), targeted material resources for important instructional gaps in ELA (funds provided through Reading First and Title I), and 30 minutes of additional instruction (district mandate). However, according to the principal, the elimination of the class size reduction position two years in a row affected ELA interventions. Furthermore, the school had no ELA ILS in 2005-2006, only in 2006-2007.

The school has not focused on improving its poor math performance. Math lesson plans were focused on pacing (page number) and content blocks (time) in the attempt to follow the MIG. The school did not implement a consistent lesson plan template or other formal structures to support effective math instruction; although the structure for the math instructional block is in the district math instructional guide, the team did not find evidence in interviews with teachers or administrators, or in classroom observations, that teachers were held accountable for following the structure in math. The math program lacked sufficient support. The school had new staff members and a new Scott Foresman math program, but inadequate professional development to support successful implementation in the classroom. The part-time math ISL only began in February 2007. The school lacked math expertise from September 2006 through January 2007 in the building to inform effective use of assessments, MCAS data analysis, and construction of the SIP.

The school lacked a process and structure to improve instruction. Teacher and administrator interviews revealed that grade-level meetings were ad hoc, the school did not provide direction on how to use grade-level meeting time, and no administrative monitoring was in place. The district conducted learning walks and classroom walkthroughs and provided follow-up feedback to the principal on the quality of instruction in the building, but teacher focus groups and interviews

indicated that these learning walks had not affected this school because they were not used to improve teaching.

Behavior was a major distraction at the White Street Elementary School. Reactive rather than proactive work consumed a great deal of administrative time, and the need to react to student behavior distracted the school from building capacity. The school had one behavior specialist and one school adjustment counselor for the 382 students in grades K-5.

One-fourth of the SIP addresses “all content areas” and focuses on behavior. Page two of the SIP states that “The team felt it is vital to the improvement efforts at White Street School to include an all content objectives aimed at improving student behavior.” However, the school has not effectively implemented strategies to improve classroom management of student behavior. The school did not provide adequate clarity, training, or professional development for teachers on classroom management. All teachers had the opportunity to receive training in the Responsive Classroom approach, but not all teachers participated, and classroom observations and interviews revealed that staff did not have a clear and shared understanding of how teachers should manage behavior in the classroom. Some teachers expressed that the school’s Second Step program required teachers to use progressive discipline and to manage classroom behavior unless it became unmanageable. Most others expressed that the policy required them to send out students to the CARES room (a time-out and behavior room) after a second warning, regardless of the age of the child or the seriousness, flagrancy, or manageability of the student’s behavior. The team observed some teachers sending out students because they did not raise a hand before speaking, and others only after children yelled at the teacher repeatedly. The CARES room had four students seated and five students waiting for processing during one observation. One staff member was attempting to manage the impatient students; the other reportedly was called to remove a student from the classroom. When asked about the grades of the students, the staff member stated they were all in grades 1 and 2. In spite of the investment of staff resources and student time to the CARES room, staff members could not describe positive benefits of the room or of the Second Step program. Second Step is a social skills curriculum that was being introduced to supplement the Responsive Classroom. Classroom observations and interviews revealed that teachers did not have a shared understanding of the expectations for implementing Second Step or Responsive Classroom, or the interaction between the two. While the school collected the data on discipline as recorded through a CARES log, staff members could not show positive improvement nor could they connect the discipline data to student achievement. Further, the school had reported no in-school suspensions by not including time spent in the CARES behavior room. The school leadership explained that the CARES behavior room was a short-term time-out room to allow a student to regain composure and return to be productive in the classroom. However, the team observed a substantial amount of activity in the room resulting in a significant loss of collective learning time for students.

Key Question 3: Are there other factors (changes in conditions or circumstances, i.e., policies, practices) in the school or district that have contributed to or impeded the school’s ability to implement its plan?

Yes. The Reading First program has contributed to the school's ability to implement its plan in ELA in grades K-3, but staffing issues impeded SIP implementation in ELA in grades 4-5 and in math.

Reading First, which has provided a clear direction and definition to the K-3 literacy program, is in its third year. Interviews with staff members and administrators and classroom observations indicated that the program and its leadership have contributed the most growth to the school in terms of using assessments and new strategies to improve instruction and to improve implementation of the SIP.

The school has had a 69 percent staff turnover since the Panel Review in 2004. Most new teachers in the school were also new to teaching. District and school administrators remarked that the lack of a contract and low pay affected the ability of the district to attract qualified, experienced teachers. The school lacked math instructional leadership from September 2006 through January 2007. The school lost a DOE planning grant because a teacher contract was a grant requirement. In the 2006-2007 school year, the grade 3 classes lacked a stable group of teachers, and mid-year teacher changes occurred for two-thirds of these students. The school lost teacher funding supporting class-size reduction due to the new district formula. In the 2006-2007 school year, the school added a new part-time (15 hour per week) parent facilitator to call parents to improve attendance and increase parental involvement, but the impact is still unknown.

The team questioned the staffing practices in the building. Almost one-third of the staff members were in their first or second year of teaching. The school did not have instructional leadership in math from September 2006 through January 2007. The appointed principal was in her first year of school leadership. The school used a teaching position to provide a counselor. The school lacked data-driven Title I funding allocation. In spite of the school's math performance, the school used Title I funds to provide a 1.0 FTE behavior interventionist and 2.5 ELA interventionists. Specialist teachers were not all integrated into curriculum to support ELA and math improvement.

The district's new boundary plan has had unknown affects to date. The plan has increased the number of students who walk to school, which could increase attendance and parental involvement. The school had a 50 percent student turnover rate in 2006-2007, which might affect student performance scores as more students tested in 2007 had previous educational experiences at schools other than White Street.

Key Question 4: Are the conditions in place to sustain the gains achieved and support continued improvement in student performance?

No. The White Street Elementary School did not have conditions in place to improve student achievement due to staff instability, inconsistent implementation and inadequate monitoring of SIP implementation, and the lack of a sense of urgency throughout the school to make priority changes to improve student achievement.

Grade 3 instruction lacked stability and grade 4 lacked resources and sufficient instructional support for ELA and math. Overall, math instruction suffered from lack of focus, direction, and

oversight. The school was consumed with responding to student behavior instead of instruction. The staff resource allocation was ineffective, with Title I teachers focusing on ELA instead of math in spite of student needs, two staff members focusing on behavior, and specialists and special education teachers not fully engaged in implementing improvement goals.

Overall, the staff is supportive of the goals and objectives articulated in the SIP, but the SIP is compromised by ineffective implementation and lack of focus on priority areas. School leadership encourages teams to collaborate, but they do not all plan together. Teacher interviews revealed low expectations for students, as well as the lack of distinction between adequate and inadequate improvement on formative tests. Teachers believed that progress on formative tests was evidence of improvement, although the level of proficiency and rate of improvement on the DFAs were lower than in other elementary schools. A negative tone overly focused on student behavior overwhelmed the school. Teachers used the CARES room and the Second Step social skills program inconsistently. The team observed one classroom for which half the class was sent to the CARES room; some teachers stated they only used the room once or twice the entire year.

School leaders and faculty did not focus on priority improvements in teaching and learning. Although Reading First is strong in grades K-3, with the potential to focus instruction on priority improvements in ELA, of the 12 teachers at these grades seven were new to teaching and needed help as new teachers. In general, the school is not engaged in adequate proactive work to improve instruction and student achievement.

Further, the school did not receive adequate guidance and support to ensure that the school had an experienced and stable leadership team in place throughout the period under review, or deployed staff resources effectively.

Conclusion

The EQA team found that low student achievement and inadequate improvement are chronic problems at the White Street Elementary School. A major problem at the school was the disconnect between faculty and administrator understanding of student performance and what is needed to ensure students attain proficiency. For example, the school's resource allocation was ineffective, and priority setting and planning did not focus on student performance needs. Further, the school lacked the capacity to support conditions for improved student achievement. The leadership lacked the capacity to ensure that instruction is of high quality throughout the school, and teachers were not all prepared to provide the instructional strategies to support higher achievement of their students. The instructional leadership specialists and Reading First coordinator were capable of raising instructional skills, but the high number of new teachers needing support and training strained the capacity of these positions. The school lacks a teaching and learning climate conducive to improvement in student achievement in any content area or grade level. Rather, the school had inconsistencies in teaching and in expectations for learning and behavior.

Appendix A Team Members

Eva Mitchell, Coordinator. Eva Mitchell has 15 years of experience in urban education. She was a founding member of a Boston public pilot school and her administrative roles have included Assistant Principal and Director of Student Support. Eva has taught in Boston and in Brockton public schools at the elementary, middle, and high school levels as a school social studies teacher, lead teacher in an alternative school for students with behavioral disabilities, and as an after-school program leader for a 21st Century grant-funded enrichment initiative. Eva has also worked on public school construction compliance teams, having led city-community urban development processes for a decade. For educational and community development organizations, she has served as a program developer, grant writer, and board chairman. Eva received her B.A. from Harvard University, and received her teacher certification through Harvard's UTEP program. She received her Master's in Education from Boston University under a Martin Luther King Fellowship, and her doctoral studies have focused on effective schooling in urban environments.

Lisa Bryant, Examiner. Lisa Bryant is in her second year as an examiner for EQA. She has been an educator in Massachusetts for over 40 years. Since leaving her most recent full-time position as Executive Director of the Lowell Middlesex Academy Charter School, she has served as an educational consultant, and adjunct faculty member at Salem State College. For 14 years, she was a K-8 and middle school principal at the Bartlett School in Lowell, and a middle school principal in Watertown. In Lowell, she was a special education supervisor and a bilingual (Spanish) school psychologist. She has taught in public and private schools at the elementary, middle and high school levels. She has served as an adjunct on the faculty of Regis College. Lisa has also served as co-chair of the Principal's Center at Harvard and as a board member of the New England Coalition of Educational Leaders. She has a degree in History from Boston University and a Master's degree in Education from the University of Massachusetts.

Kim Denney, Examiner. Kim Denney has over 24 years of experience in both the public and private sector. As a consultant for Arthur Andersen, she reviewed both information and management systems for large hospitals, financial institutions, and non-profit organizations. As an educator, she has served as a classroom teacher for an urban magnet school that pioneered public-private partnerships. She taught middle school math, science, and social studies in a multi-age, project-based setting. She was also selected as a Hiatt Fellow for the City of Worcester. While a teacher and administrator in Ware, Massachusetts, Ms. Denney successfully wrote and implemented many grants at the classroom, school, and district levels. As Director of Curriculum and Grants, Ms. Denney oversaw the Title I program, implemented a K-12 21st Century program and a Reading First grant. She also created a system of professional development that supported curriculum alignment with the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks for the first time in the district. Ms. Denney has a B.S. and M.P.A. from Carnegie Mellon University and an M.Ed from Lesley University.

James McAuliffe, Examiner. Dr. McAuliffe has worked in public education for 36 years. Prior to his 19 years of service as Student Services Director and Elementary School Principal in the Harvard Public Schools, he served as Administrator of Special Education in the Wachusett Re-

gional and Uxbridge school districts. He has extensive experience in curriculum and staff development, grant writing, budget preparation, and facilities design and management. In addition, he has been practicum supervisor for administrative interns, and taught graduate level courses in educational leadership.

Appendix B Two Year Follow-up Review Schedule Detailed Schedule for School Site Visit

Day 1 – March 13, 2007

- 8:00-9:00 a.m.* Team members met with the principal.
- 9:00-10:00 a.m.* Team members met with the assistant superintendent and school resource specialist for the district.
- 10:00-11:00 a.m.* Team members met with the school’s curriculum and instruction leadership team and members of the school site council.
- 11:00-1:00 p.m.* Team members met to discuss findings and to plan the remainder of the day (working lunch). Members used time to analyze findings and to gather more information; panelists conducted an informal walk-through with a focus on school culture and climate for learning.
- 1:00-2:30 p.m.* Team members met with teachers in focus groups.

	Reviewer A and Reviewer B	Reviewer C and Reviewer D
<i>1:00-1:30</i>	Teacher Focus Group #1 Five ELL/ESOL staff members	Teacher Focus Group #2 Four Special Education/Counselor Teachers
<i>1:30-2:00</i>	Teacher Focus Group #3 Four Subject Area Specialists	Teacher Focus Group #4 Classroom Teachers/Beh. Support Five Teachers
<i>2:00-2:30</i>	Teacher Focus Group #5 Four Student Support Specialists	Teacher Focus Group #6 Reading First Literacy Team Three Teachers

- 2:30-3:00 p.m.* Team members met with parents and students in focus groups.

	Reviewer A	Reviewer B	Reviewer C	Reviewer D
<i>2:30-3:00</i>	Parent Focus Group #1	Parent Focus Group #2	Student Focus Group #1	Student Focus Group #2

- 3:00-5:00 p.m.* Team members synthesized information, further defined findings, prepared questions, and developed a team strategy for second day of the on-site visit.

Day 2 – March 14, 2007

8:00-9:00 a.m. Team members met with the principal for follow-up questions

9:00-12:00 p.m. Team members visited classrooms and interviewed teachers.

	Reviewer A	Reviewer B	Reviewer C	Reviewer D
9:00-9:30	Observe Teacher 1	Observe Teacher 2	Observe Teacher 3	Observe Teacher 4
9:30-10:00	Interview Teacher 1	Interview Teacher 2	Interview Teacher 3	Interview Teacher 4
10:00-10:30	Observe Teacher 5	Observe Teacher 6	Observe Teacher 7	Observe Teacher 8
10:30-11:00	Interview Teacher 5	Interview Teacher 6	Interview Teacher 7	Interview Teacher 8
11:00-11:30	Observe Teacher 9	Observe Teacher 10	Observe Teacher 11	Observe Teacher 12
11:30-12:00	Interview Teacher 9	Interview Teacher 10	Interview Teacher 11	Interview Teacher 12

12:00-1:00 p.m. Team members met to discuss findings and to plan the remainder of the day (working lunch). Members used time as needed to analyze findings and to gather more information.

1:00-2:00 p.m. Team structured time.

2:00-2:30 p.m. Closing meeting with the principal to discuss next steps.

2:30-5:00 p.m. Team members deliberated and formed conclusions.