Analysis of MCAS Performance
New Bedford Public Schools

UMass Dartmouth Urban Initiative
White Paper

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The New Bedford Education Roundtable
at the Community Foundation of Southeastern Massachusetts

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Our Mission

The University of Massachusetts Dartmouth stands at the forefront of many of the major public policy issues that currently confront the regional communities we serve and the entire Commonwealth. With its thumb on the pulse of a wide range of issues including environmental and sustainability concerns, increasing regional educational achievement, and innovative approaches to energy conservation, the University has a history of uniting its educational, research, scientific, and technological resources toward positive efforts that contribute to the progress of our state.

Recognizing higher education’s further potential to pursue and promote constructive statewide growth, the University’s Chancellor, Dr. Jean F. MacCormack, commissioned the establishment of the Urban Initiative in November 2007, specifically to act on behalf of the many older urban communities throughout the Commonwealth that continue to struggle with the transition from manufacturing to today’s knowledge-based economy. Since then, the urban revitalization movement throughout the state has garnered significant momentum and has earned the Urban Initiative a prominent role in its progression.

Considering that the University serves a region that contains several such cities, including Fall River, New Bedford, Brockton, and Taunton, the existence of the Urban Initiative makes not only regional, but also statewide sense. The presence of various policy challenges that have hindered progress in these urban areas represents an opportunity recognized by Chancellor MacCormack to further embed and engage the University in these and other communities in order to promote and affect the necessary policy changes that can lead to their revitalization and an improved quality of life for their residents.

The Urban Initiative’s affiliation with the Center for Policy Analysis, a well-established research unit of UMass Dartmouth, is in keeping with the Center’s long-held desire to bring a greater focus on urban policy to its own work.

The Urban Initiative’s mission encompasses a fusion of research, project development and implementation, technical assistance, and policy analysis that supports the work of municipalities, state and local agencies, private and non-profit entities, and other organizations. Specifically, the Urban Initiative seeks to accomplish these goals by engaging our elected leaders, issuing research reports, hosting events and conferences, offering technical assistance and training to policy leaders, encouraging civic participation, and linking the University’s resources to the region and beyond.

Fields of Focus

- Economic Development
- Workforce Development
- Municipal Organization and Finance
- Leadership
- Urban Education
- Urban Policy
- Civic Engagement
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New Bedford Public Schools

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The New Bedford Education Roundtable
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Executive Summary

At the request of the New Bedford Education Roundtable, the Urban Initiative at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth undertook a cursory analysis of 2010 Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) scores for the New Bedford Public Schools (NBPS). Readers are cautioned to recognize that while a review utilizing MCAS as the sole indicator provides useful comparisons that can help detail the current performance of NBPS students and their respective schools, it should not be used to draw broad conclusions unless combined with a more thorough review that includes other indicators and adjusts for specific challenges unique to New Bedford and similar communities.

This brief analysis was not designed or intended to identify the root causes of stagnating academic performance, higher-than-average dropout rates, or any other “symptom” of a struggling, urban school district - symptoms present in New Bedford and many other older, industrial cities. Such an exercise, in addition to being beyond the scope of this report, is often fraught with challenges given the difficulty of proving causal relationships in educational settings and the complexity and multiplicity of causes. Despite this, additional research has the potential to assess the effectiveness of policy changes, curriculum realignment, personnel training and assignment, and other interventions in an attempt to change systems and outcomes that the NBPS and the community might find unsatisfactory. Such analysis can also identify existing programs and policies in urban schools where students are experiencing greater success - either in New Bedford or elsewhere - that can be replicated in ways that expand success to all students.

Key Findings

I. Areas of Concern

Overall, the snapshot provided us by the 2010 MCAS scores for the NBPS do not convey a positive story. Moreover there are several reasons for concern:

- New Bedford Underperformed in Comparison to its Peer Communities. In comparisons to the state’s Gateway Cities, over the last five years New Bedford has:
  - lost ground in both ELA and math, falling behind the average of Gateway Cities in ELA;
  - lost ground among 7 of 10 subgroup categories, with the exception of special needs students in ELA and math and Hispanic students in math; and
  - lost ground against the state average in ELA, even though the Gateway Cities, as a group, experienced a gain.

Additionally, New Bedford High School experienced a “churn” rate of 25 percent for the 2009-2010 school year, indicating that fully one-in-four students attending the school this past year transferred in or out of the high school at some point during the school year after the first day of school.

The rationale for offering such contextual information is to provide a basis for understanding some of the challenges facing urban school districts similar to New Bedford’s and is not intended to serve as an “excuse” for any change in or lack of performance.

Context

The NBPS have experienced significant change in the most recent decade, both in terms of leadership and in demographic makeup. While it has seen its overall student enrollment decline by over 10 percent since 1999, it has also experienced:

- a considerable increase in the number of non-white students, bringing the district close to majority-minority status,
- an increase of more than 40 percent in the number of students for whom English is not their first language,
- an increase of greater than 25 percent in the number of “special education” students it serves, and
- an increase of nearly 25 percent in the number of low-income students.

Additionally, New Bedford High School’s scores have declined in comparison to other Gateway Cities, with SGP in both ELA and math, falling behind the average of Gateway Cities in ELA; lost ground among 7 of 10 subgroup categories, with the exception of special needs students in ELA and math and Hispanic students in math; and lost ground against the state average in ELA, even though the Gateway Cities, as a group, experienced a gain.

Between 2009 and 2010, the high school’s SGP in ELA fell from 29 percent to 24 percent while in math, SGP scores increased only slightly from 22 percent to 24 percent.
New Bedford Failed to Meet Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) as defined by No Child Left Behind (NCLB). The NBPS’s performance in ELA and math for 2010 caused it to not only fail in meeting AYP for both ELA and math in the aggregate, but also fail in meeting AYP for each student subgroup as well.

There is Uneven Academic Progress from the 3rd Grade through the 10th Grade. While average scores at New Bedford’s elementary schools compare well to average scores among the Gateway Cities, the same cannot be said at the middle and high school levels. In particular, student scores at the 7th grade level in the NBPS appear to plummet in comparison to its peers. That drop is a phenomenon that continues through the 8th grade and onto the 10th grade, where NBPS scores rank near the bottom in comparison to its peer communities. The trend of strong performance in the elementary schools and decline in the upper grades is not a positive one and may not even tell the whole story given that10th grade MCAS scores do not include those students who often leave school before taking the 10th grade MCAS exam as a result of their poor academic performance.

Specifically:

- NBPS ELA scores go from a ranking of 2nd among the eleven Gateway Cities in the elementary grades to 9th at the middle school level to last place in the 10th grade.
- New Bedford is the only Gateway City whose ELA scores in the middle grades are lower than their elementary scores.
- The NBPS MCAS math scores go from the 2nd highest among the eleven Gateway Cities at the elementary level to 8th at the middle school level and 9th at the high school level.
- New Bedford and Lawrence are the only two Gateway Cities whose high school MCAS math scores are lower than their elementary scores (Lawrence by 2.6 points and New Bedford by 5 points).
- In ELA, for 2010, the 6th grade CPI score of 77.0 drops to 71.4 in the 7th grade, the most precipitous drop in any of the Gateway Cities. (While one year’s scores can be influenced by a single, underperforming cohort, the trend for New Bedford indicates that the middle school and high school scores generally mark the NBPS transition from high-performer to low-performer in comparison to other Gateway Cities. The break is particularly evident at the 7th grade level.)
- In Math, for 2010, the drop in CPI between the 6th grade (72.7) and the 7th (57.1) is the largest single drop in scores between grades in any of the Gateway Cities in any subject area.

Low Student Growth Percentiles (SGP). The state’s ability to assign student growth percentiles to MCAS performance gives us the opportunity to more fairly and accurately determine the progress schools make with students who possess scores similar to their “academic peers.” As such, SGP can control for differences in demographics and student achievement between schools and school districts.

Applying this method as the best way to measure the progress of the NBPS against its academic peers, demonstrates that the district does not perform well, particularly in the upper grades.

Specifically:

- New Bedford’s SGP of 39 percent for all grades in ELA ranks it tied for last amongst the Gateway Cities and in the bottom 5 percent of school districts statewide.
- Its three-year average for ELA scores ranks as the lowest among all the Gateway Cities.
- Its 40 percent SGP for math ranks it 10th among the eleven Gateway Cities.
- Its 24 percent SGP in both ELA and math at the high school level is among the lowest in the state.

All of these indicators, in combination, convey a situation that is serious and requires immediate attention. There are many strengths indicated in the data that can be used as a springboard for action. Unless there is a commitment to act aggressively, systemically, and with the support of the entire community, however, the trends indicated here do not bode well for the NBPS and its students in the immediate future.

II. Reasons for Hope

It is important, however, to realize that there are positives upon which to build:

New Bedford’s Elementary Schools Outperform Their Gateway City Peers. This is an incredibly positive strength given the growing body of research that indicates that success in a student’s later years is
predicated on their early academic history, particularly their ability to read by the third grade. MCAS CPI scores and SGPs for the elementary schools suggest that there are strong practices in place that can be replicated across all elementary schools and that can lay the foundation for success in the upper grades. Most importantly, this level of success at the elementary level suggests that intervention on the part of the NBPS to address stagnating system-wide scores has the potential to be successful in the short-term and that a return to steady progress is retrievable.

**The Leadership of the NBPS has Shown a Commitment to Introspection and New Planning.** An openness to utilizing this data and other analyses has been demonstrated by the Superintendent and key personnel in the school district. In effect, while the district has experienced significant change in key positions, those changes afford an opportunity for new leadership to establish a clear and strong approach early in their tenure that is based on a systemic philosophy and high expectations for students and staff.

**Recommendations**

As previously stated, developing recommendations based on an analysis consisting primarily of one year’s MCAS scores is an inexact process. The following represents some initial thoughts and suggestions for next steps.

**Action Should be Immediate, Systemic, & Community-Wide.**

- Immediate from the perspective that the trends appear to be downward and that the district and community, by acting quickly and decisively, can produce short-term positive results, particularly given the good news emanating from the scores at the elementary level. Delay will make turnaround efforts more difficult.
- Systemic from the perspective that, while performance across grades appears unbalanced, it is the entire district that must participate in a review of policies and philosophies that will create an environment to support turnaround strategies.
- Community-wide from the perspective that these results are not solely a reflection of the performance of the school district and its students, but are representative of a challenge for the entire community and stakeholders from a wide range of sectors.

**Focus on a Vision Rather than Programs.** It is important for the leadership of the NBPS to approach the work of ensuring a district-wide understanding in the importance of addressing current performance levels by establishing a vision that clearly portrays the necessity to confront practices and policies that are not working with earnest change. Specific interventions can and should be applied but only within a larger vision that promotes student success.

**Consider an Expansion of Student-Centered Thinking and Programming.** While more research should be conducted to determine some of the causes of poor performance and the challenges identified by declining scores at the middle and high school levels, a common factor in urban districts that often contributes to declining student performance is the increased size of the school settings in the upper grades - a setting sometimes considered too impersonal to meet the needs of many urban students who possess social/emotional challenges external to schools. Of course, school size does not always predict results. In fact, it is a challenge that some urban districts have tackled successfully. Even though this analysis offers some control for the school size factor given the similar nature of middle schools and high schools in the other Gateway Cities, a review of policies and programs at those grade levels should be conducted to ensure a strong focus on a student-centered philosophy that can work to overcome the effects of school size. (The creation of career academies at the high school is an example of ways in which to implement such a philosophy.)

**Support Additional Research to Allow for Data-Driven Decision-Making.** As previously stated, an ongoing process of research and assessment should be implemented to take a greater in-depth look at a variety of policies and practices and their potential impact on student performance. The community should embrace the creation of a process that establishes a commonly-held set of standards to be achieved, a baseline of data upon which to build, and an annual “report card” of sorts to measure progress in reaching certain benchmarks.

**Aspire Higher.** For this brief analysis, Gateway Cities were chosen as the comparison group. Going forward, it will not be enough for New Bedford to simply seek to be above the average for this set of communities. Future
benchmarks should allow the community to identify a
group of aspirant communities that it might seek to
measure its own performance against.

**Celebrate and Replicate Successes.** It is much easier to
critically analyze the success or lack thereof of urban
school districts than it is to unlock the strategies that
will meet the challenges faced by students in these
settings. It should not be minimized that the NBPS has
performed very well in comparison to its peers at the
elementary level, and in the category of special needs
has seen its students increase their comparative
performance. These positives should be noted and the
programs operating in those schools that have proven
most successful should be identified as best practices
that could be extended to relevant schools throughout
the district.
Introduction

At the request of the New Bedford Education Roundtable, the Urban Initiative at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth performed a primary analysis of 2010 Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) scores for the New Bedford Public Schools (NBPS). This brief analysis includes a review of the academic performance of the school system and its students (as measured by the MCAS); an appraisal of that performance in comparison to state scores and to those of similar cities; an assessment of performance disaggregated by student subgroups and grade levels; and an examination of trends as measured by MCAS scores for the most recent five-year period and by student growth.

The Urban Initiative cautions readers to avoid using or interpreting this analysis beyond its intended purpose of providing a review of one indicator of school performance. It should not be used to draw broad conclusions unless combined with a more thorough analysis that includes other indicators and adjusts for specific challenges unique to New Bedford and similar communities. This report can prove helpful, however, in providing a snapshot of where the city’s schools stand in terms of its current performance, the context within which it operates, and possible trends that might necessitate attention and action by the community.

Context

Since the implementation of MCAS in Massachusetts, New Bedford, like many similar cities, has performed at below average levels in comparison to statewide scores. The Commonwealth’s education leaders have acknowledged the presence of a persistent achievement gap that is concentrated in the state’s older cities. Despite efforts resulting from the Education Reform Act of 1993, urban students continue to achieve at much lower levels than their peers statewide.

The NBPS has experienced significant change in the most recent decade, both in terms of leadership and in demographic makeup. It has had four Superintendents in that time frame and has experienced leadership change at the high school as well.

The NBPS, like the schools of many other Gateway Cities, has also experienced significant demographic changes. While its enrollment declined by over 10 percent since 1999, the percentage of non-white students has increased significantly. The district is now close to reaching majority-minority status (See Figures 1 and 2).

The NBPS has also seen an increase of over 40 percent over the last ten years in the number of students for whom English was not their first language. During that same time span, the district also experienced an increase of over 25 percent in the number of “special education” students it serves (See Figure 3). Additionally, the percentage of low-income students went from 56.6 percent in 1999 to as high as 69.5 percent ten years later (See Figure 4).

New Bedford’s schools have also experienced a fairly high rate of “churn” in its student population during the course any given school year. The churn rate measures the number of students transferring into or out of a public school or district throughout the course of a school year. Churn represents the sum of all students who were mobile divided by all students reported as enrolled at any point in time during the school year. Each student is counted only once in the churn rate, regardless of the number of times during the year they transferred in or out.

New Bedford’s district churn rate for the 2009-2010 school year was 18.6 percent, which means that nearly one in five students...
transferred in or out of the district during the school year. High churn rates can have an impact on individual student achievement as well as school and district achievement given the disruptive nature of large numbers of students entering and leaving schools to the learning process. At the high school an even higher churn rate of 25 percent was recorded for the recently completed school year, representing a significant concern.

An initial comparison of churn rates places New Bedford in the middle range among cities with similar characteristics, indicating a higher rate than several other Gateway Cities but a rate not as high as cities known for having transient populations (See Figure 5).

The contextual information provided thus far provides a basis for understanding some of the challenges facing urban school districts similar to New Bedford’s. While many schools and districts have persevered in finding ways to close the achievement gap for certain groups of students, this often requires a greater level of resources to implement smaller class sizes, longer school days, and special tutoring interventions that cash-strapped districts find hard to provide in the current fiscal environment.

**MCAS Comparisons**

**Comparing CPI.** In comparing New Bedford’s MCAS scores across communities and among student subgroups, the Urban Initiative utilized a state measure known as the Composite Performance Index (CPI). The CPI is a measure of the extent to which students are progressing toward proficiency in both the English language arts (ELA) and mathematics MCAS exams. The CPI

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![Figure 2: Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity](image)

![Figure 3: Percentage of Student Enrollment by Subgroup](image)

![Figure 4: Percentage of Low-Income Students](image)
is a 100-point index that combines the scores of students who take standard MCAS tests (the Proficiency Index) with the scores of those who take the MCAS-Alternate Assessment (the MCAS-Alt Index).

The data indicate that while the NBPS has closed the gap between its scores and the statewide average in math over the last five years, so too have the Gateway Cities. In fact, the NBPS, however, has lost a bit of ground in both subjects when compared to the Gateway Cities average. Additionally, New Bedford has failed to keep pace with the state’s increase in ELA scores, although not by a wide margin. Overall, while math scores for the NBPS remain slightly above the average for Gateway Cities, scores on the MCAS ELA have gone from slightly above to slightly below the Gateway Cities average (See Figures 6 and 7). Appendix A of this report also provides MCAS CPI scores in ELA and math for each of the Gateway Cities over the last five school years.

Comparing NBPS student performance across race and ethnicity on the 2010 MCAS indicates results that are not atypical in relation to the achievement gap that exists in student performance statewide. In math, while 56 percent of New Bedford’s white students failed to achieve a “proficient” score, 69 percent of both African American and Hispanic students failed to achieve that performance level (See Figure 9). In ELA, while 46 percent of white students received “needs improvement” or “warning/failure” scores, 63 percent of African American students and 67 percent of Hispanic students scored within the same two categories (See Figure 8). Rates for “warning/failure” in both ELA and math were higher among African American and Hispanic students than among white students.

Appendix B of this report provides student performance data for New Bedford, the Gateway Cities, and Massachusetts, and along five subgroups: limited English proficient (LEP), special education, low income, African American, and Hispanic. Scores for special education students in New Bedford improved at a rate higher than their Gateway City peers in both ELA and math as did math scores for New Bedford’s Hispanic students. All other subgroups, however, including the performance of Hispanic
Interestingly, average scores at New Bedford’s elementary schools compare well to average scores among the Gateway Cities. The same, however cannot be said at the middle and high school levels. As Figures 10 and 11 demonstrate, students in New Bedford’s middle schools and high school are not similarly outscoring their Gateway City peers.

Figures 12 and 13 further dissect these trends by disaggregating 2010 CPI scores for each grade level. In both ELA and math the trend is quite clear. While scores in the elementary years and in the 6th grade seem to keep pace with state figures and outpace the other Gateway Cities, students in ELA, declined in comparison to statewide scores. Conversely, MCAS scores for New Bedford’s white students increased in both ELA and Math in relation to the scores of white students statewide.

Overall, 2010 MCAS scores for the NBPS do not convey a positive story. As a result, the district failed to meet its Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) in the aggregate for both ELA and math. In addition, the district failed to meet AYP for each student subgroup in both subjects.

While MCAS scores over the last five years place New Bedford at or near the average score among Gateway Cities in both subject areas, there are two aspects of New Bedford’s scores that are troubling: the unevenness of academic progress from the 3rd grade through the 10th grade and the low rates of student growth.
student scores appear to plummet in the 7th grade and New Bedford’s edge over its Gateway City peers disappears while the disparity between the city and the state grows wider. The drop in 7th grade scores is a phenomenon that continues through the 8th grade and onto the 10th grade as New Bedford’s students appear to be unable to close the gap between themselves and the other Gateway Cities.

To further dissect these trends, the Urban Initiative focused on three cohorts of New Bedford students: those who were 7th graders in 2010 (cohort 1), those who were 8th graders in 2010 (cohort 2), and those who were 9th graders in 2010 (cohort 3). Longitudinally, MCAS CPI scores for these three cohorts show two common themes: unsteady progress in ELA from one grade level to the next and significant drops in MCAS CPI scores in math during the 7th grade (See Figures 14, 15, and 16).

Across all three cohorts, the 7th grade proved to be a significantly negative turning point for students in math. In the 6th grade, cohort 1 had a CPI score of 68.4. The following year, its score dropped to 57.1. The second cohort’s scores showed an even steeper decrease from 69.8 to 55.2. In addition, the drop in math scores at the 7th grade level appears to set the stage for further decline given the second cohort’s subsequent drop to 54.9 in the 8th grade. Cohort 3 exhibited a similar trend dropping from 58.0 to 53.0 in math between the 6th and 7th grades and decreasing further in the 8th grade to 52.8 points.

Comparing SGP. The state’s recently-developed capacity to track and report a “student growth percentile” (SGP) provides another longitudinal look at student growth from year to year on the MCAS ELA and math exams with the added advantage of basing determinations of growth on comparisons of student performance with “academic peers.” According to the DESE, the student growth percentile measures the magnitude of change in student scores relative to other students statewide with similar score histories from one year to the next (also known as “academic peers”). As such, the SGP method works independently of MCAS performance levels and the percentiles range from 1 to 99. Higher numbers on the SGP scale represent higher growth while lower numbers represent lower growth. For example, a student with an SGP of 75 in 7th grade ELA improved as much as or more than 75 percent of his or her academic peers from the 6th grade ELA exam. On flip side of this measure, only 25 percent of the student’s academic peers improved at a greater rate.1 According to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s (DESE) October 2009 MCAS Student Growth Percentiles Interpretive Guide, the development of

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the SGP grew out of an attempt to answer the question: “How much academic progress did students make in one year as measured by MCAS?”

While each student is assigned an individual SGP score on the MCAS ELA and math exams, the SGP can also be used to report aggregate student growth rates for subgroups, schools, or districts. The measure used by DESE for reporting such rates is the median student growth percentile. The median is the middle score if all individual student SGP scores are ranked from highest to lowest. Moreover, the typical school district would have a median SGP of 50. It is also important to note that since SGP scores are based upon individual student scores that are calculated using comparisons with their academic peers, these scores do not change if they are aggregated at the subgroup or district level. As such, if LEP students in a particular district have a median SGP of 60, that particular group of students, on average, performed better than 60 percent of their academic peers, which may or may not include LEP students. This particular SGP score of 60 does not tell us that a district’s LEP students improved more than 60 percent of LEP students statewide, nor does it tell us that LEP students performed better than 60 percent of non-LEP students statewide. The comparison group, according to the DESE will always be the individual student’s academic peers. The DESE suggests that schools and districts with SGP scores between 40 and 60 percent are in the average range. Scores below 40 are considered below average and those above 60 are considered above average.2

To determine the nature of SGP trends in New Bedford in the middle years, the Urban Initiative once again looked at two cohorts of students for whom at least

1. Ibid, p. 3.
three years of SGP data existed and for whom at least one of those three years included the 7th grade. As was the case in the previous cohort analysis, the 7th grade, appears to be a year when student growth either declines significantly or remains stagnant, particularly in math (See Figures 17 and 18). While SGP scores for cohort 1 dipped slightly in ELA from 39 to 35 between the 6th and 7th grades, math scores for this cohort dropped precipitously from 56 to 27. These scores tell us that while cohort 1 grew at a better rate than 39 percent of their academic peers in ELA from the 5th grade to the 6th grade, they only improved at a rate greater than 35 percent of their academic peers from the 6th grade to the 7th grade. In math, while these students improved from the 5th grade to the 6th grade at a rate that was better than 56 percent of their academic peers, between the 6th grade and 7th grade they were only able to improve at a rate that was greater than 27 percent of their academic peers (See Figure 17).

Cohort 2 exhibited its greatest drop in ELA SGP rate from the 5th grade to the 6th grade, going from 45 to 32 in the matter of one year. In math, while this cohort of students also experienced a slight decline in the SGP from the 5th grade to the 6th grade, their greatest drop came in 7th grade when SGP scores dipped sharply from 50 to 27 percent (See Figure 18).

District-wide, student growth rates as measured by the SGP have remained at or below the minimum average score of 40 in both ELA and math over the course of the 2009 and 2010 school years. In 2008, however, the NBPS did have SGP rates slightly above 40 in ELA and close to 50 in math. Yet, at the high school student growth has actually remained below 30 in both ELA and math in 2009 and 2010 (See Figures 21 and 22).

Taking a closer look at student’s academic growth at each of the city’s elementary and middle schools reveals significant differences among several of these schools. While thirteen of these schools exhibited growth in the average range in ELA in 2010, eight schools performed below average. Only two schools, the Hathaway Elementary Schools and the Swift Elementary School experienced significant gains that placed them slightly above average. In math, while eleven schools had average growth between 2009 and 2010, eight schools demonstrated below average growth during this time period. Four schools, Carney Academy, Devalles Elementary, Taylor Elementary, and Winslow Elementary grew at above average rates in math in 2010 (See Figures 19 and 20).

Isolating the city’s middle schools shows that while Roosevelt Middle School has performed in the average range over the past three years in ELA, their SGP has actually decreased each year. Normandin Middle School performed well in 2008 and declined sharply in 2009 but made gains in 2010 that place them close to the average
Mark. Keith Middle School, however, has consistently scored below average. While gains were made between 2008 and 2009, the school lost some ground in 2010 (See Figure 21 on page 12). In math, all three middle schools scored below average in 2010. As was the case in ELA, Roosevelt Middle School has consistently demonstrated SGP decreases in math over the past three years. Normandin Middle School’s growth in math for 2010 closely mirrors its 2008 rate after experiencing a 10 point drop from 2008 to 2009. Keith Middle School experienced stronger performance in 2008 and 2009, scoring in the average range each year. In 2010, however, their SGP declined by 11 points, placing them below average for the first time since SGP scores have been calculated by the DESE (See Figure 22 on page 13).

Examining growth rates among the city’s twenty elementary schools shows a mix of some bright spots and areas for significant concern. In both ELA and math, Carney Academy has shown some noteworthy growth since 2008 with its 2010 SGP math score inching toward 70. In math, the Devalles Elementary School showed the highest level of student growth in 2010 with an SGP score of 75. Hathaway Elementary also showed the greatest level of change in growth in math going from 32.5 in 2009 to 59.5 in 2010 (a 27-point gain). While the Lincoln School exhibited average levels of growth in ELA over the past three years, student growth in math has not only remained within the state-defined average, but has increased consistently between 2008 and 2010. The Swift Elementary School also made the second-highest gains in ELA with SGP topping 60 in 2010 after receiving an SGP of just 30 in 2009 (a 31-point gain). In math, Swift Elementary has made consistent and average gains over the last three school years. Although the Rodman Elementary school experienced a slight decrease in SGP math scores between 2009 and 2010, they continue to produce scores near 60 after receiving an SGP of just 28 in 2008. In ELA, Rodman Elementary continues to make gradual progress with an SGP of 57.5 in 2010. The greatest single-year gains in ELA were produced by the Winslow Elementary School with SGP growing from 22 in 2009 to 54 in 2010 (a 32-point gain) (See Figures 21 and 22).

On a less positive note, several schools have exhibited troubling below average SGP scores. In ELA the Dunbar, Gomes, and Hayden/McFadden Elementary Schools have consistently received below-average student growth rates over the past three years. Some of the schools that lost ground in 2010 included the Campbell, Hayden/McFadden, Pacheco, and Parker Elementary Schools. In math, several elementary schools have received below average SGP scores over the last two school years. These include the Ashley, Dunbar, and Kempton Elementary Schools. The schools with the greatest drops in SGP from 2009 to 2010 were the Hayden/McFadden Elementary School, which dropped by 28 points from 47 to 19; the Campbell School, which dropped by 24.5 points from 64.5 to 40;
Figure 21: School-Level SGP Scores in MCAS-ELA

- 65.6% New Bedford Aggregate
- 44.9% New Bedford High*
- 77.9% Roosevelt Middle
- 55.6% Normandin Middle
- 77.0% Keith Middle
- 53.3% Ashley Elementary
- 67.6% Brooks Elementary
- 62.0% Campbell Elementary
- 77.8% Carney Academy
- 80.9% Congdon Elementary
- 80.5% Devalles Elementary
- 86.1% Dunbar Elementary
- 79.9% Gomes Elementary
- 89.6% Hannigan Elementary
- 80.8% Hathaway Elementary
- 87.1% Hayden/McFadden Elementary
- 77.3% Kempton Elementary
- 66.1% Lincoln Elementary
- 87.0% Pacheco Elementary
- 86.2% Parker Elementary
- 41.8% Pulaski Elementary
- 82.8% Rodman Elementary
- 46.4% Swift Elementary
- 64.7% Taylor Elementary School
- 38.8% Winslow Elementary

- 65.6% 77.9% 55.6% 77.0% 53.3% 67.6% 62.0% 77.8% 80.9% 80.5% 86.1% 79.9% 89.6% 80.8% 87.1% 77.3% 66.1% 87.0% 86.2% 41.8% 82.8% 46.4% 64.7% 38.8%

* No SGP score recorded in 2008

- Black lines delineate the state-defined "average" range for growth

% of Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch

- 2010
- 2009
- 2008
Figure 22: School-Level SGP Scores in MCAS-Math

- New Bedford Aggregate: 65.6%, 44.9%
- New Bedford High*: 77.9%, 55.6%
- Roosevelt Middle: 53.3%, 77.0%
- Normandin Middle: 67.6%, 53.3%
- Keith Middle: 62.0%, 77.8%
- Ashley Elementary: 38.8%
- Brooks Elementary: 80.9%, 86.2%
- Campbell Elementary: 80.5%, 86.1%
- Carney Academy: 89.6%
- Congdon Elementary: 79.9%
- Devalles Elementary: 41.8%
- Dunbar Elementary: 80.8%
- Gomes Elementary: 77.3%
- Hannigan Elementary: 46.4%
- Hathaway Elementary: 38.8%
- Hayden/McFadden Elementary: 87.1%
- Kempton Elementary: 87.0%
- Lincoln Elementary: 41.8%
- Pacheco Elementary: 86.2%
- Parker Elementary: 46.4%
- Pulaski Elementary: 66.1%
- Rodman Elementary: 64.7%
- Swift Elementary: 82.8%
- Taylor Elementary School: 38.8%
- Winslow Elementary: 80.5%

* No SGP score recorded in 2008

% of Students Eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch

Black lines delineate the state-defined “average” range for growth.
and the Gomes School, which dropped by 21.5 points from 61.5 to 40 (See Figures 21 and 22).

Overall, it is important to note that when looking at 2010 SGP scores for all of New Bedford’s schools, those that performed below average in both ELA and math included the New Bedford High School, Normandin Middle School, Keith Middle School, the Ashley Elementary Schools, the Dunbar Elementary School, and the Hayden/McFadden Elementary School.

Figures 23 and 24 also compare the performance of the NBPS with that of the Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School and the Global Learning Charter Public School over the last three school years. In ELA, the data shows that fewer New Bedford’s public school students are scoring at the proficient or advanced levels when compared to the vocational school and charter school. Growth rates in the public schools have also remained stagnant with 2009 and 2010 SGP scores dipping below the average range. In math, the story is quite similar with the New Bedford Vocational School and Global Learning Charter School realizing higher percentages of students scoring at the proficient or advanced levels. At the vocational school in particular, while the proportion of students scoring at these levels has increased by 14 percentage points between 2008 and 2010, the proportion of public school students scoring at least proficient has only increased by 3 percent since 2008. In addition to this student growth rates have also declined in the NBPS from a high SGP score of 47 in 2008 to 40 in both 2009 and 2010.