



**2009-2010**  
**STATE OF THE DISTRICT**  
*Statistics Reflect 2008-2009 School Year*



**A Legacy of Continuing Educational Excellence**



## Ten Steps to Success

In a recent essay in *Education Week*, noted public-education scholar Allan Odden, from the University of Wisconsin, wrote about the 10 critical steps for fixing failing schools. While few in our community would describe our amazing schools as failing, we all know and regret that we are falling short in our aim of educating all of our students to high common standards. Mr. Odden's essay is encouraging, because the 10 steps are all reflected in the 2009-10 District Goals that now serve as the administration's strategic road map. And most of the steps have been or are being implemented in our schools and classrooms. Here they are.

1. **Create a sense of urgency.** The Board of Education has tried to do this by establishing the District Goals and then communicating them broadly and repeatedly.
2. **Set ambitious—even “eye-popping”—goals.** Objective A, Goal One of the District Goals is to eliminate the gap in state tests between our diverse district and our peer group of (mostly white) affluent New Jersey districts.
3. **Create new curriculum and build, over time, a common understanding of effective instruction.** Last year's audit of English Language Arts and this year's rollout of a completely revised ELA curriculum, along with a comprehensive math audit that is currently under way, are three major steps.
4. **Move beyond state tests and introduce a battery of assessments.** At nearly every grade level, new assessments are in use this school year.
5. **Implement an intensive and ongoing professional-development program.** While there is still much room for improvement, administration has made a concerted effort to collaborate with the teachers union and make better, more strategic use of professional-development time.

## LETTER FROM THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Greetings from your Board of Education. As our schools enter 2010, the board is full of optimism and impatience, in equal measure. Under Superintendent Brian Osborne, the district has embarked on a number of initiatives that will—when well executed—enhance students' educational outcomes for decades to come. But the pace of change, here and elsewhere in public education, is often painfully slow. Besides fiscal constraints, there are unfunded mandates and state regulatory obstacles standing in our way. And there's our less than perfect understanding of where and how our schools are falling short.

Make no mistake: Our schools gave us many reasons to be proud in 2009. For the first time, all enrolled kindergarten students received full-day schooling. At the other end of our student body, Columbia High School graduates enrolled at an impressive array of postsecondary institutions, and an astounding number earned National Merit, Advanced Placement and other national honors. Hundreds of students of all ages excelled in academics, sports, music, theater, chess and a wide range of other activities. A larger and more diverse number of students participated in and performed well in AP classes. Across the district, three of our teachers joined an exclusive cohort of New Jersey teachers certified by the highly regarded National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Our physical education department won a large grant to build on its already pioneering programs. Our student lunch program won national accolades for its emphasis on healthy eating. One of our principals was tapped to be superintendent in Mendham. And all of this was accomplished with the smallest local school-tax increase in 30 years.

At the same time, our schools continued to fail too many students. These students, mostly black, have not achieved proficiency on state assessments of learning that do not set the proficiency bar very high. While they are a small segment of the overall student population, they are far too large a number light of our mission to educate every child. As we have for each of the 15 years I've lived here, we struggled with the achievement gap.

Your Board of Education is committed to providing greater transparency to the district's stakeholders. For years, our district has been among the most proactive nationally in sharing budget information with the public on a timely basis. More recently, we have rebuilt the district website and added an e-newsletter to facilitate timely communications. Rekindling a practice from years ago, we have begun holding annual “State of the District” meetings in January and publishing this report at the same time.

Yet transparency doesn't necessarily mean clarity. In this report and the appendix, you will find a tremendous amount of data on our schools. Much of this data will make the depth and intransigence of our achievement gap easy to see. What it will not do is make clear how and why our many attempts to narrow this gap over the years have failed to make a dent.

We are not to the point of consistently and effectively using data to narrow our achievement gap. We are still too reliant on once-a-year state tests that get reported out six months after students take them. And we have only begun implementing the assessments needed to track, analyze and learn from data on individual students and classes in real time—which we must use to adjust how students and cohorts are taught, and to gauge the worthiness of new programs, approaches and curricula. Our shortcomings in individualizing data are limiting our abilities to individualize instruction.

Please know that your board recognizes these shortcomings and holds district leadership accountable for addressing them. In fact, Mr. Osborne and his staff already have taken significant steps to capture more useful and timely information about student learning. Many elementary teachers now utilize hand-held reading-assessment tools that enable them to judge students' progress on the fly. In middle school and high school, students are taking common assessments that enable teachers and supervisors to compare results across a variety of classroom approaches to the same subjects. Professional learning communities—a fancy way of saying teachers meeting to analyze data and to compare strategies and frustrations—have been formed in a number of our schools.

It is our expectation that within a few years, this annual report will be less of a data dump and more a lucid presentation of data that will show 1) how our enhanced understanding of the nature of our achievement gap is leading to new staffing and teaching models and revised resource allocations, and 2) how our staff are deploying more granular data and other tools to systematically eradicate the gap—one student at a time. In the meantime, please study what's here and feel welcome to submit your questions to the superintendent and/or the board. You may do so by emailing the superintendent's office: [chackett@somsd.k12.nj.us](mailto:chackett@somsd.k12.nj.us).

Mark Gleason  
President, Board of Education

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\*This report and all appendices are available at:  
[www.somsd.k12.nj.us](http://www.somsd.k12.nj.us) or [www.southorangemaplewood.org](http://www.southorangemaplewood.org)

6. **Provide extended learning time for struggling students.** In the past two years, with teacher and volunteer support, the district has expanded opportunities for after-school and summer-school education.
7. **Use time in the classroom more effectively.** New schedules at the middle and high schools were designed with this principle in mind. The opportunity remains for greater innovation with regard to time, especially for struggling students.
8. **Build out dense leadership.** Augment principals and supervisors by enabling and nurturing “teacher leaders” as mentors and leaders of professional learning communities. As we succeed in implementing the prior steps, we can build toward this.
9. **Insist on professionalism in the best sense of the word.** It's important for our staff to keep current on the latest research and trends, and they do.
10. **Ensure the best human capital.** Goal Two of the District Goals is squarely focused on recruiting the best, developing them to be even better, and evaluating carefully to ensure that they reach and maintain high levels of performance.

Achieving these 10 steps in unison cannot be an overnight accomplishment. But we have a committed and professional staff and are well on the path toward implementing these reforms. None of these alone will make a difference, but together, over time, these steps will lead to dramatically better educational results.



## A Snapshot of the South Orange and Maplewood School District

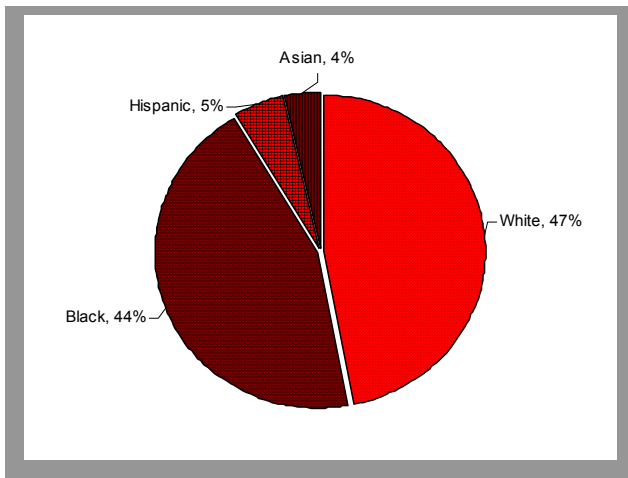
As of October 15, 2008, the South Orange and Maplewood Public Schools served more than sixty-one hundred students. The district manages 11 learning sites, 6 elementary schools and 1 annex, 2 middle schools, 1 senior high school and 1 alternative campus.

SOMSD students are diverse, coming from countries throughout the world and speaking more than 35 languages and dialects. 1.2% of SOMSD students are English Language Learners. The staff of 775 is experienced and dedicated.

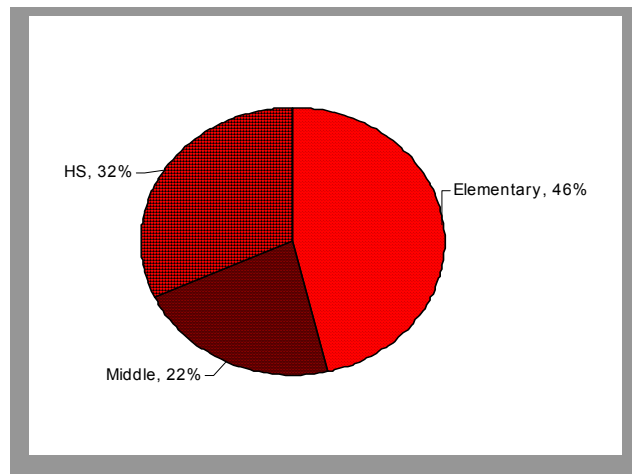
The district provides students with the opportunity to learn through partnerships and collaborations, including those with local museums, the arts and many community organizations.

### October 15, 2008

SOMSD Students



Students by School Level



### State of the District Background

The annual State of the District is a culmination of months of planning, research, community input, staff work and leadership by the administrative team under the leadership of Superintendent Brian Osborne. This plan draws on:

- » Findings from the Vision 2010 Strategic Plan
- » Several staff and community strategic plan input and work sessions
- » Community conversations with the superintendent and a wide range of groups throughout the district

- » School Board approval of vision, goals and outcomes
- » Research about successful educational practices

This plan is driven by the need to meet board policy, state standards, the federal mandate to reach No Child Left Behind student achievement goals by 2014 and the district's commitment to its community. The ultimate goal is continued excellence for each and every one of South Orange and Maplewood's students.

# FRAMEWORK



## Mission (what we do)

The South Orange-Maplewood School District prepares each student to be a productive member of society by offering a quality, comprehensive education within a diverse learning community that values academic excellence. As a productive member of society, a student of South Orange-Maplewood will be:

- Responsible, caring, collaborative and ethical
- A critical thinker and problem solver
- An effective communicator, both orally and in writing
- A lifelong learner

## Core Values (what we think is important)

- We value equity and excellence in achieving our mission
- We value effective communication and active collaboration
- We value investments in early childhood as the foundation of good education
- We value the renewal of our secondary schools as vibrant and rigorous learning environments

## Vision (what we strive for)

The South Orange-Maplewood Schools will foster an equitable learning environment that inspires and supports excellence among all our students.



## Goals (what we want to accomplish)

- Promote the intellectual, social, emotional and physical growth of all students
- Maintain a world-class professional staff
- Promote effective communication within the schools and throughout the greater community
- Manage fiscal and facilities resources effectively and efficiently

## Objectives (how we will achieve our goals)

1. Ensure high academic achievement for all students
2. Ensure a rigorous curriculum
3. Eliminate variations in achievement among student groups (race, socioeconomic status, and special needs)
4. Improve student conduct
5. Recruit, hire and retain diverse, high-quality professional staff
6. Ensure processes that help district faculty to become the best of the best
7. Link a performance evaluation and compensation system tied to student learning and school/district goals
8. Improve district communications
9. Develop strong partnerships with parents, local businesses, and community organizations
10. Develop a transparent, efficient budget that is aligned with district goals
11. Ensure that facilities are updated and well-maintained in an architecturally sensitive and fiscally responsible manner
12. Ensure effective operation of transportation, food service, purchasing, payroll, security, custodial, and facilities services
13. Support environmentally responsible facilities operations
14. Collaborate with the village and township in shared services projects



### Indicators (the way we will check progress toward our goals)

1. Improve state assessment proficiency for student groups when compared to District Factor Group I (DFGI)
2. Implement a valid, reliable, and fair growth model
3. Ensure a consistently implemented K-12 standards-based core curriculum reflecting world class standards and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills
4. Provide academic intervention and acceleration for struggling and/or disengaged students
5. Increase number of full-day kindergarten sections annually
6. Eliminate gaps in rates of participation and achievement in advanced courses, extracurricular activities, graduation, etc
7. Ensure use of objective performance criteria for placement and advancement in levels
8. Develop preparatory programs to enable access to higher level classes
9. Examine student course assignment (level) disaggregated by prior academic performance, race, socioeconomic status, and special needs
10. Develop a student-centered districtwide code of conduct which honors positive behavior
11. Review number of diverse qualified candidates for employment
12. Measure retention of high quality staff
13. Rollout an initiative to stimulate and support faculty pursuit of National Board Certification
14. Provide high-quality professional development
15. Implement opportunities for teachers to exercise greater leadership without entirely leaving the classroom
16. Develop performance evaluation of administration driven by student achievement and district goals
17. Use a multi-rater, team approach to non-tenured and tenured personnel evaluations
18. Implement a user-friendly, information-rich district website
19. Provide multi-lingual, readable, information-rich regular publications
20. Develop satisfaction ratings survey tools for parents, staff and community
21. Outreach to welcome and engage parents who are new or marginally engaged in the school community
22. Outreach to local organizations and businesses to engage them in the school community
23. Ensure timely approval of budgets in accordance with the state spending cap
24. Examine rate of growth in health-insurance costs, energy costs, special education costs.
25. Pursue alternative funding sources and usage of alternative sources of energy
26. Gather feedback from parents, students, administrators and teachers on facilities
27. Track numbers of work orders and their completion
28. Track district spending on repairs, work orders, and building operations
29. Report progress on Long-Range Facilities Plan
30. Expand district recycling program
31. Increase specific shared services and the value or savings associated with them
32. Develop a plan coordinated with Maplewood and South Orange for use, preservation and improvement of school and community playing fields

## What is the State of the District

The State of the District Report represents the district’s contract with the community. It guides the school system’s work and consists of a series of four goals. These goals flow from the mission and the vision of the district and contain objectives and indicators of progress. The district will prioritize these goals based on the resources available and will align the annual budget to them.

The board has the responsibility to ensure that the district goals reflect community values, to establish the necessary policies to achieve the goals, and to communicate with the community about the goals and progress toward them.

The superintendent has the responsibility for progress toward the goals, through the management of all staff to achieve clearly stated indicators for each goal. His performance will be measured against the achievement of these goals, objectives and indicators.

### MISSION

The mission is a statement of what the district does – what we do.

To prepare each student to be a productive member of society by providing a premier education so a student will be:

- » Responsible, caring collaborative and ethical
- » A critical thinker and problem solver
- » An effective communicator, both orally and in writing
- » A lifelong learner

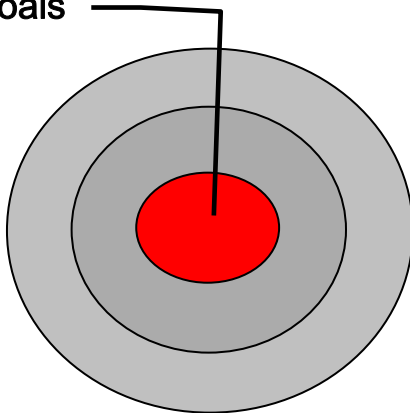
### VISION

The vision is a statement of where the district wants to be in the future – what it strives for.

The South Orange-Maplewood Schools will foster an equitable learning environment that inspires and supports excellence among all our students.

The School District of South Orange and Maplewood...  
*- A legacy of Continuing Educational Experience*

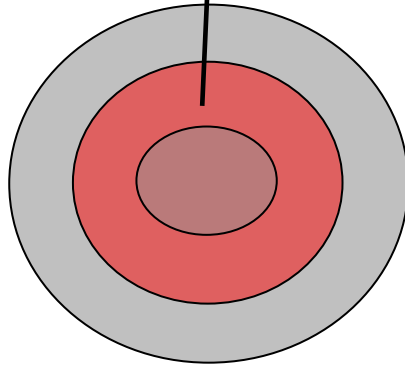
### Goals



These four goals are broad statements of what the district wants to accomplish to fulfill its mission and move toward its vision.

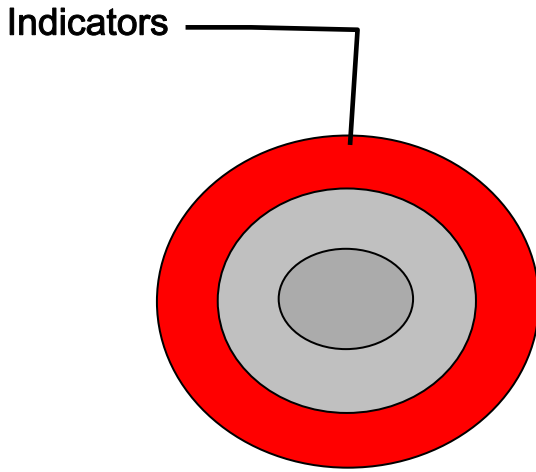
- 1 Promote the intellectual, social, emotional and physical growth of all students
- 2 Maintain a world-class professional staff
- 3 Promote effective communication within the schools and throughout the greater community
- 4 Manage fiscal and facilities resources effectively and efficiently

Objectives



These 14 objectives are the road map that explains how the district will reach its goals. Each of the objectives has a set of specific indicators that provide a more detailed explanation of exactly what needs to be done to implement that particular objective.

1. **On both an aggregated and disaggregated basis, the student body in South Orange-Maplewood will demonstrate academic achievement and breadth equal to or better than peer districts as grouped socioeconomically by the state (District Factor Group “I”)**
2. **Enactment of rigorous curricula and an aligned, value-added assessment system and the creation of expanded learning opportunities to enable the district to meet its goals**
3. **Elimination of variations in achievement among student groups correlated with race, socioeconomic status, and special needs**
4. **Improve student conduct**
5. **Recruit, hire and retain diverse, high-quality professional staff**
6. **Use professional development programs that help district faculty to become the best of the best**
7. **Develop a performance evaluation and compensation system driven by objective measures that are tied to student learning and school/district goals**
8. **Improve district communications for internal and external constituencies**
9. **Develop strong partnerships with parents, local businesses, and organizations in the community**
10. **Develop a transparent, efficient budget that aligns with and supports the attainment of district goals and that reins in spending on budget categories that are rising at a faster rate than the cost of living**
11. **Ensure well-maintained facilities that enable focused and effective teaching and learning, and are repaired and updated in an architecturally sensitive and fiscally responsible manner**
12. **Ensure an effective operating transportation, food service, purchasing, payroll, security, custodial, and facilities services**
13. **Support environmentally responsible facilities operations**
14. **Provide shared services in collaboration with the village and township**



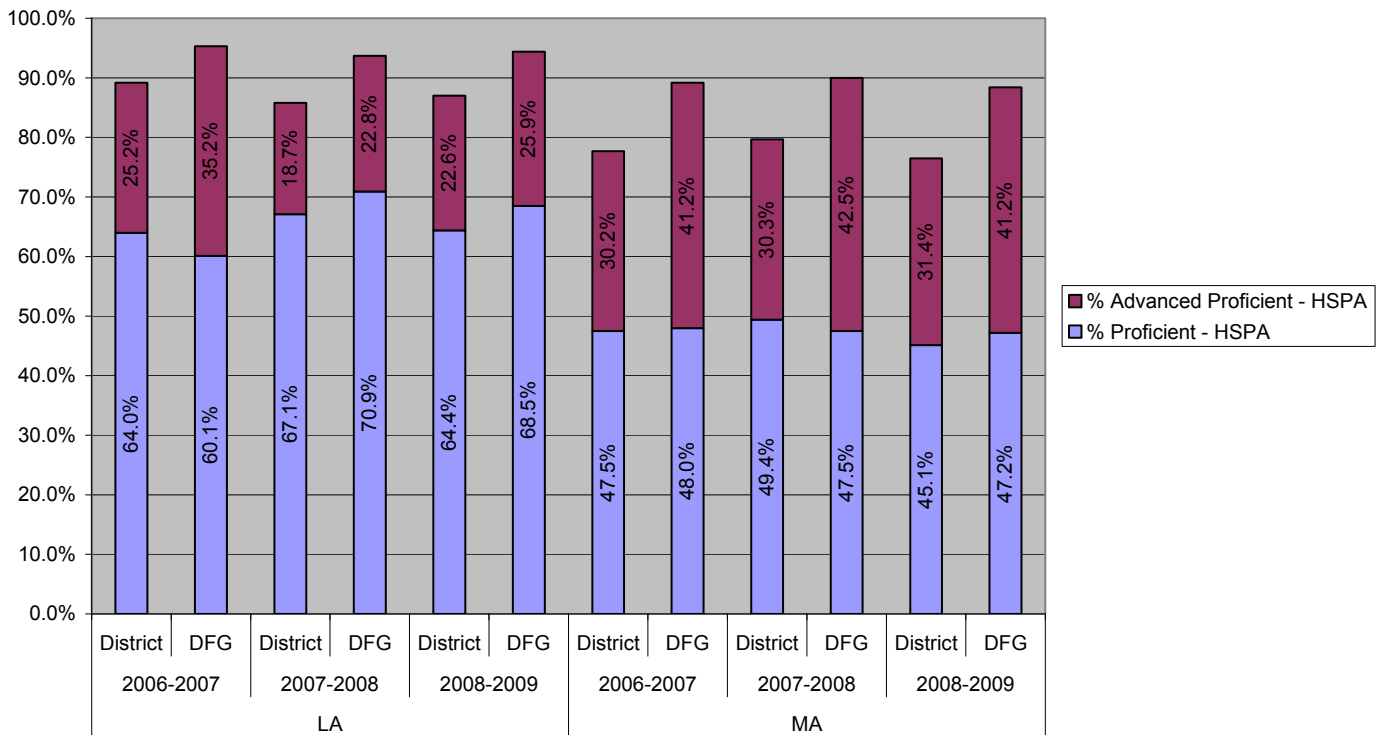
These 38 indicators identify ways the district can measure progress toward its goals. Each indicator includes data and targets that will be monitored. Examples of the measure outcomes are listed below.

Goal One: Student Learning

**Objective:** On both an aggregated and disaggregated basis, the student body in South Orange-Maplewood will demonstrate academic achievement and breadth equal to or better than peer districts as grouped socioeconomically by the state (District Factor Group "I").

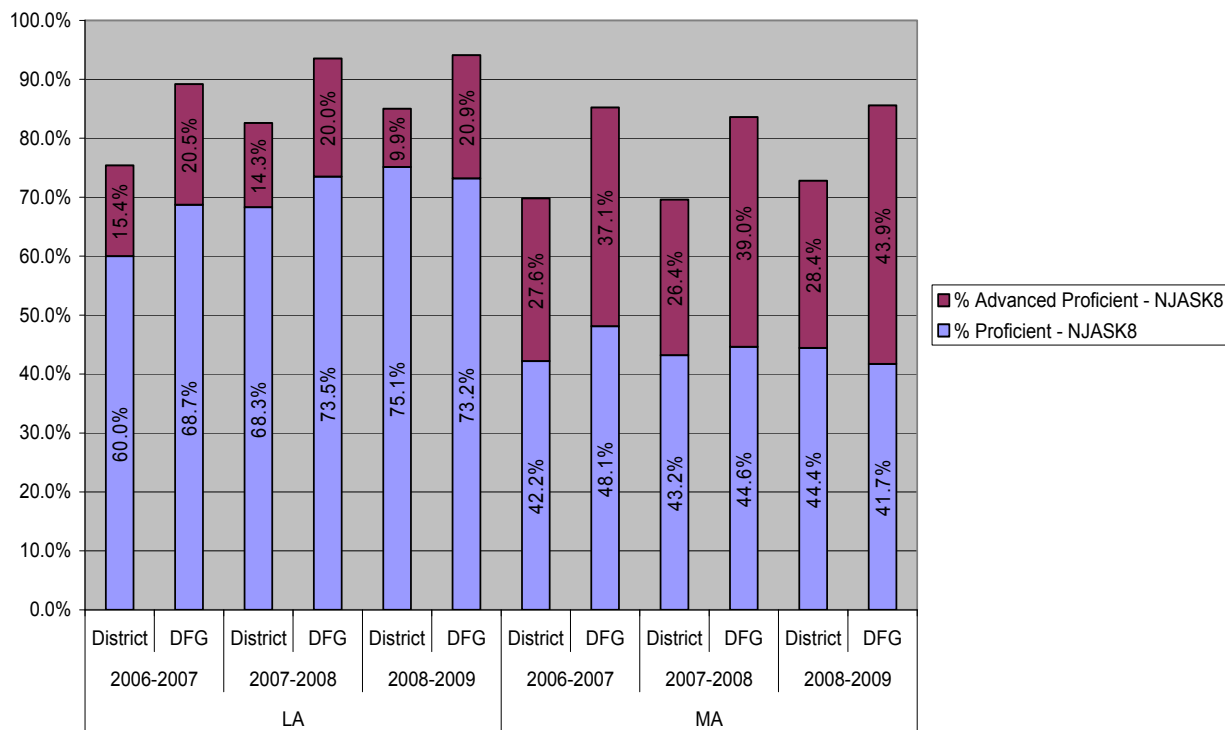
**Indicator:** Student performance comparisons to the District Factor Group I on both aggregated and disaggregated scores [comparing like to like] on state assessments in language arts, math and science. Close achievement gaps between student groups. (See Appendix for full set of data)

HSPA  
Language Arts/Math  
Total Students



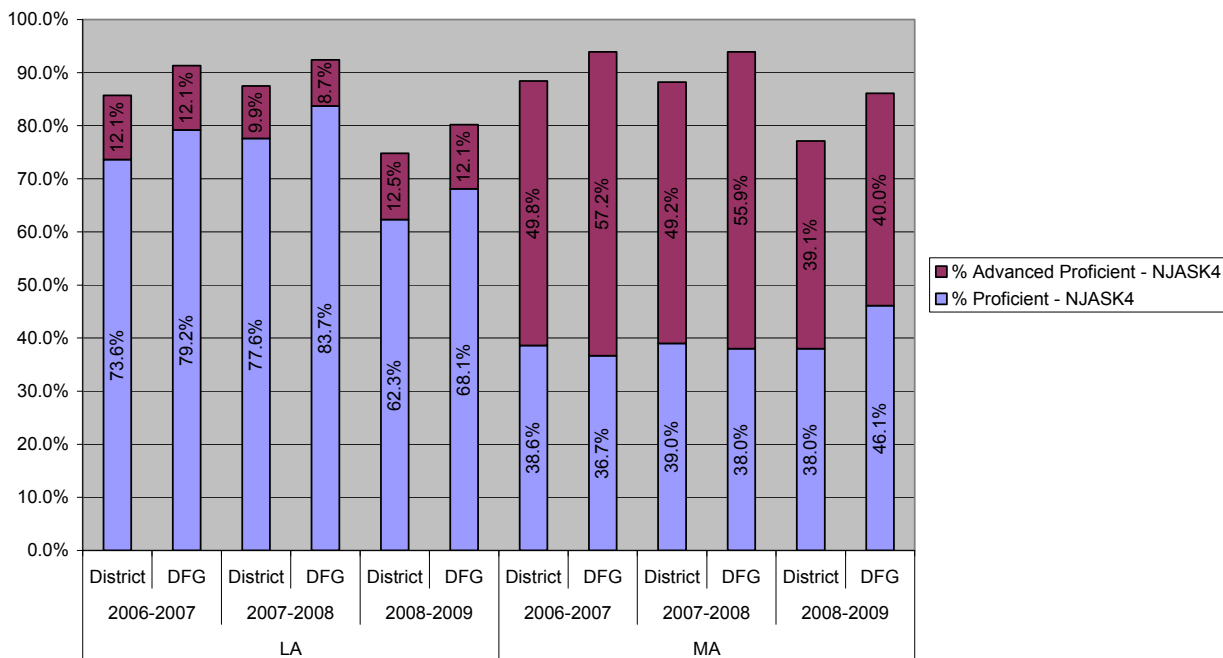
State Standards Test Changed for 2007-2008 School Year

**NJASK8  
Language Arts/Math  
Total Students**



**State Standards Test Changed for 2007-2008 School Year**

**NJASK4  
Language Arts/Math  
Total Students**



**State Standards Test Changed for 2008-2009**

Goal One: Student Learning

**Objective:** Enactment of rigorous curricula and an aligned, value-added assessment system; and the creation of expanded learning opportunities to enable the district to meet its goals.

**Indicator:** A consistently implemented K-12 standards-based core curriculum reflecting world class standards and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills.

The District's Program Assessment Model requires a periodic assessment of District programs. The assessment process includes investigating and recommending best practices and strategies and demonstrating that the curriculum associated with that program is properly aligned with both State and National Standards and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills. In the years between the program assessments, revisions/improvements are made to the program based on the recommendations and these revisions/improvements are implemented, monitored for consistency, and assessed.

**English Language Arts (Revise)**

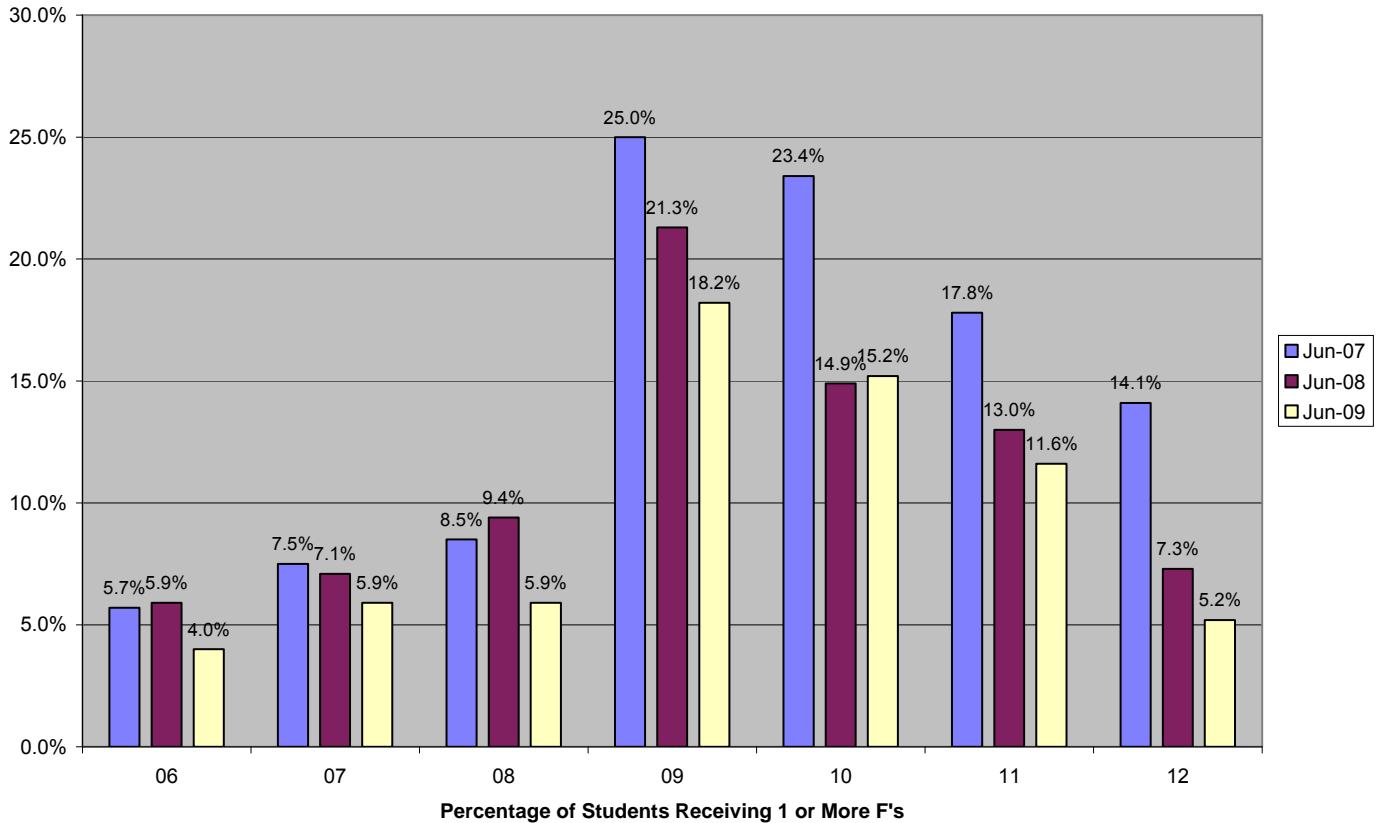
A comprehensive Language Arts Audit was conducted in spring of 2007-2008. Major findings included a need for substantial revisions to the K-12 curriculum, a need for consistency of program implementation, increased rigor for all students, and related professional development for all staff. The district began to address these findings by convening several groups of teachers to work with supervisors and outside consultants to revise the K-8 curriculum during the current school year. Grades 9-12 began revising this year. It is anticipated that addressing these findings will continue over the next 3 years.

Goal One: Student Learning

**Indicator:** Academic intervention and acceleration for struggling and/or disengaged students.  
(See Appendix for full set of data)

Milestone for 2008-2009: 10% decrease of students who scored partially proficient and/or failed academic courses

**Percentage of F's in Language Arts, Math, Science, Social Studies, World Language**



The State of New Jersey changed the standard for student achievement for grades 5-8 in 2008, resulting in fewer students scoring proficient. The decision was made to identify students for intervention and assistance earlier in their school careers, which has long been a goal of the State Board. The goal is to better prepare all students for success in high school and beyond. These new NJ ASK tests represent one component of a larger statewide initiative to raise the expectations for student achievement in New Jersey.

### **Project Ahead**

Project Ahead is a support program that provides additional instructional opportunities for children in grades 6-8 who perform below the District's minimum level of proficiency in mathematics and language arts. Children are identified for Project Ahead based upon a careful review of their academic progress. Students in grades 6-8 receive Project Ahead services based on scores attained on the *NJASK 6, 7* and teacher recommendation. For Project Ahead instruction, Project Ahead teachers focus on the foundational concepts and skills. The instructional approach provides a small group setting, which allows for a more individualized focus of study. Instructional materials include the best of regular classroom materials and additional resources that are selected to extend the student's opportunity to build understanding and offer more practice.

The K-5 Project Ahead program was decentralized during the 2008-2009 school year to allow schools to better address the individual needs of their students. At the end of grades 5, 6, and 7, all students are screened for placement in Project Ahead Mathematics and/or Language Arts in grades 6, 7 and 8 using *NJASK 5, 6, and 7* scores. Parents/guardians of students who are selected to participate in Project Ahead receive a letter from Central Office describing the criteria used for entrance.

### **Grade 6 Transition Program**

The Grade 6 Transition Program is designed to provide struggling students with smaller classes, more individual attention, and fewer transitions during the school day. To qualify for this program, a student's test scores and prior classroom performance are examined. Students placed in the Transition Program at each middle school meet at least one of the criteria as described in *Board of Education Regulation R2314*. All other grade 6 students who are not placed in the Transition Program are heterogeneously grouped in language arts, science, and social studies. In mathematics, students are assigned to a class based on their performance on the first five district-wide common assessments that they take in grade 5. These classes are designated level 3 or level 4. The criteria for this program are published in *Board of Education Regulations R2314* which are available to the public on the District website. These criteria are also stated in the *Level Letter* sent home from the middle schools to parents/guardians of grade 5 students.

### **READ 180 Program**

READ 180 classroom instruction is available to students in grades 7, 8, and 9. Students are recommended to the program based upon a computer-based reading comprehension test, NJASK scores, and teacher recommendation. The program is designed for struggling readers to increase students' Lexile Reading Level. Nine teachers have been trained to facilitate the program; they receive ongoing professional development support.

### **Columbia High School Supplemental Classes**

Students are scheduled for supplemental English and Mathematics in grades 10, 11, and 12 if they perform below the District's expectations based on their *NJASK8 and NJPASS* scores administered in grade 10. These classes are in addition to the student's regularly scheduled Mathematics and English classes and do not carry a level designation. The unduplicated count of students presently enrolled in supplemental classes is presently 365.

### Goal One: Student Learning

#### **Indicator: Number of sections of full-day kindergarten.**

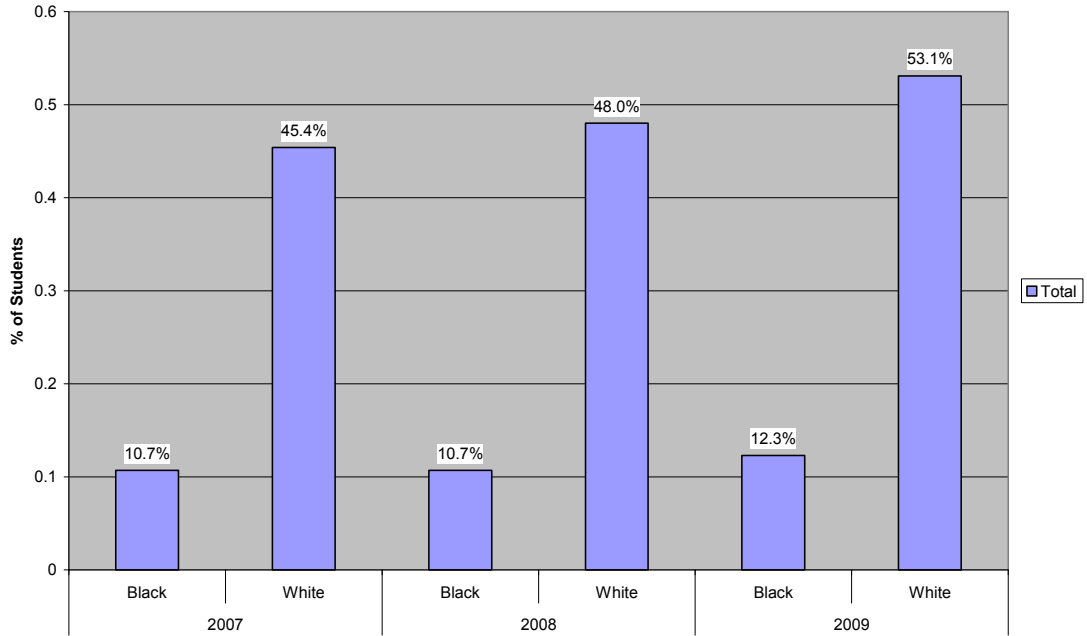
The district now has a universal full day kindergarten.

Goal One: Student Learning

**Indicator:** Aggregated and disaggregated rates of 1) student participation and achievement in: AP and advance classes, AP and SAT tests, arts, athletics, extracurricular activities, community service; and 2) graduation, and college matriculation. (See Appendix for full set of data)

Milestone 2008-2009: Update data in January state of the district. Reduce outcome and participation gaps correlated to demographics by 10% in all categories.

Students taking at least one level 5 or AP Course



Graduation Rate for June 2008 By Ethnicity			
Ethnic	Graduated		Total
White	177	97.8%	181
Black	252	96.6%	261
Hispanic	15	100.0%	15
Am-Indian	N/A	N/A	N/A
Asian	8	100.0%	8
Multi-Race	2	100.0%	2
Total	454	97.2%	467

Graduation Rate for June 2009 By Ethnicity			
Ethnic	Graduated		Total
White	178	97.3%	183
Black	258	95.2%	271
Hispanic	16	100.0%	16
Am-Indian			1
Asian	13	100.0%	13
Multi-Race	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total	465	96.1%	484

Graduation Rate for June 2008 By Economics			
ED	Graduated		Total
ED	88	97.8%	90
Non-ED	366	97.1%	377
Total	454	97.2%	467

Graduation Rate for June 2009 By Economics			
ED	Graduated		Total
ED	102	93.6%	109
Non-ED	363	96.8%	375
Total	465	96.1%	484

Graduation Rate for June 2008 by Special Education			
SpEd	Graduated		Total
IEP	49	92.5%	53
Non-IEP	405	97.8%	414
Total	454	97.2%	467

Graduation Rate for June 2009 by Special Education			
SpEd	Graduated		Total
IEP	64	90.1%	71
Non-IEP	401	97.1%	413
Total	465	96.1%	484

ED - Economically Disadvantaged  
 Non-ED - Non-Economically Disadvantaged  
 IEP - Individualized Education Program  
 SpEd - Special Education

Goal One: Student Learning

**Indicator: Development of preparatory programs to enable access for a greater number of students to higher level classes. (See measures in Appendix)**

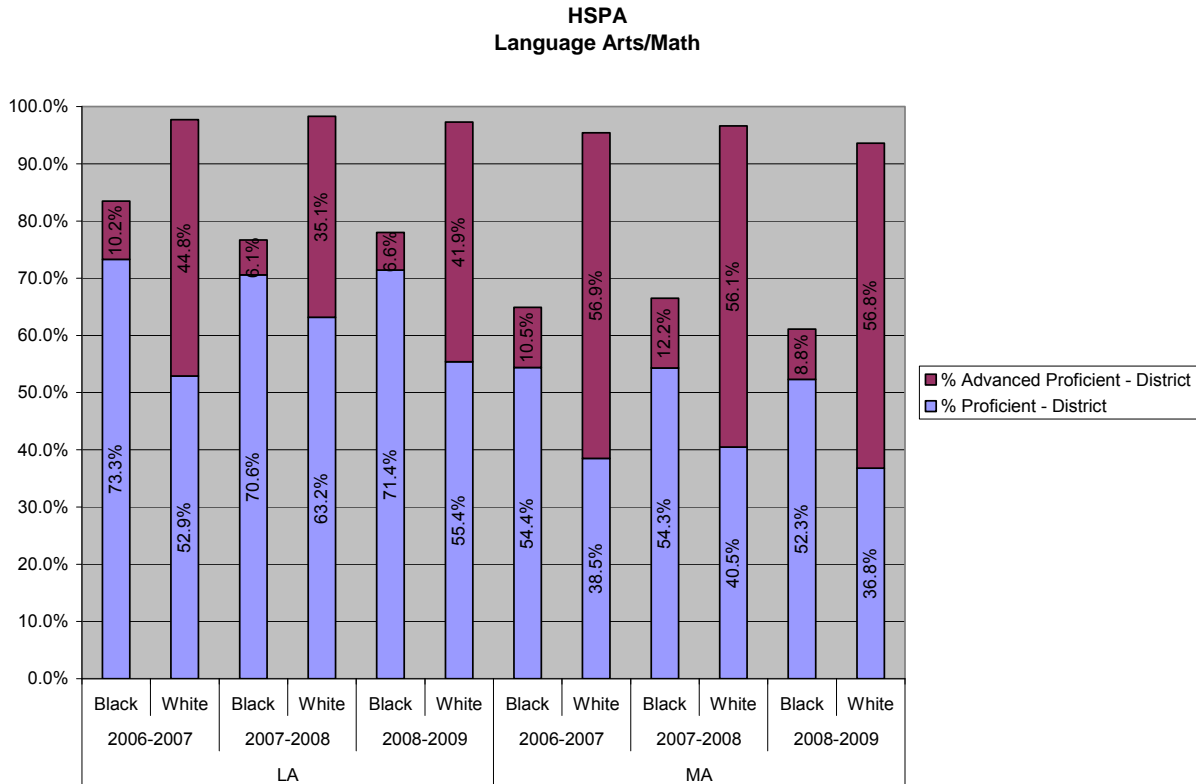
The district curriculum leadership team is continuing to develop several programs to prepare students for greater access to higher-level classes. These programs were piloted during the summer of '08 and/or during the school year and continued into the 2009-2010 school year.

- Adding enrichment classes to the Columbia High School Summer School program.
- A summer science program for students entering grade 10. **Level 3 physics students scheduled for a Level 3 Physics students would have the opportunity to successfully complete a summer program and enroll in Physics level 4 rather than level 3.** (Note all students from the summer of 2008 moved to 4 level physics and successfully completed the class in 2008-2009).
- Providing an Academic Summer School in which any honors level Algebra 1 or Geometry student who earned an A average over the academic year was invited to take the next sequential course in an honors level course over the summer. This enables those students to reach Calculus as seniors at CHS. During the summer of 2008, 17 of 17 students successfully completed Geometry H, and 7 of 7 successfully completed Algebra 2 H. During the summer of 2009, 15 of 15 students successfully completed Geometry H and 12 of 12 students successfully completed Algebra 2H.
- During the summer of 2009, the Superintendent initiated the first Step-Up Program in mathematics. Freshmen who earned a B average or better in a Level 2 or Level 3 Algebra class were invited to participate in one of two classes designed to prepare them for the next level. This class, which spanned 6 weeks, provided additional work in Algebra and introduced important concepts and skills of the upcoming Geometry course. Students who earned a B in the class were recommended to move up a level. If they completed all tasks and scored well on assessments in the summer Level 2 class, they moved up to Level 3; If they completed all tasks and scored well on assessments in the summer Level 3 class, they moved up to Level 4. Now in the planning stages, this program will be expanded to offer the same opportunity to good math students at other grade levels. During the summer of 2009, 5 students moved from level 2 to level 3, and 4 students moved from level 3 to level 4.

Other departments are discussing similar opportunities for students both at the middle school and the high school.

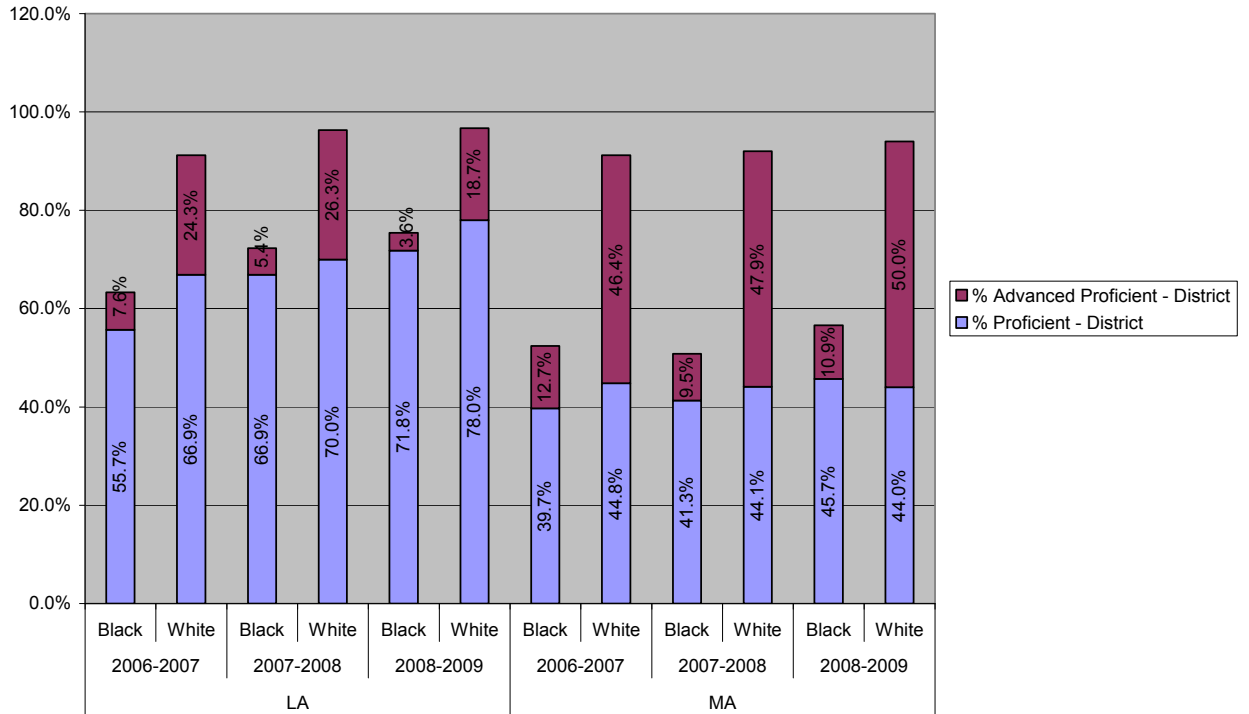
Goal One: Student Learning

**Indicator: Size of statistically significant differences in 1) student performance on standardized assessments, SAT and AP scores by race, socioeconomic status, and special needs; and 2) graduation rates, and college matriculation data. Improve proficiency for student groups (See Appendix for full set of data)**



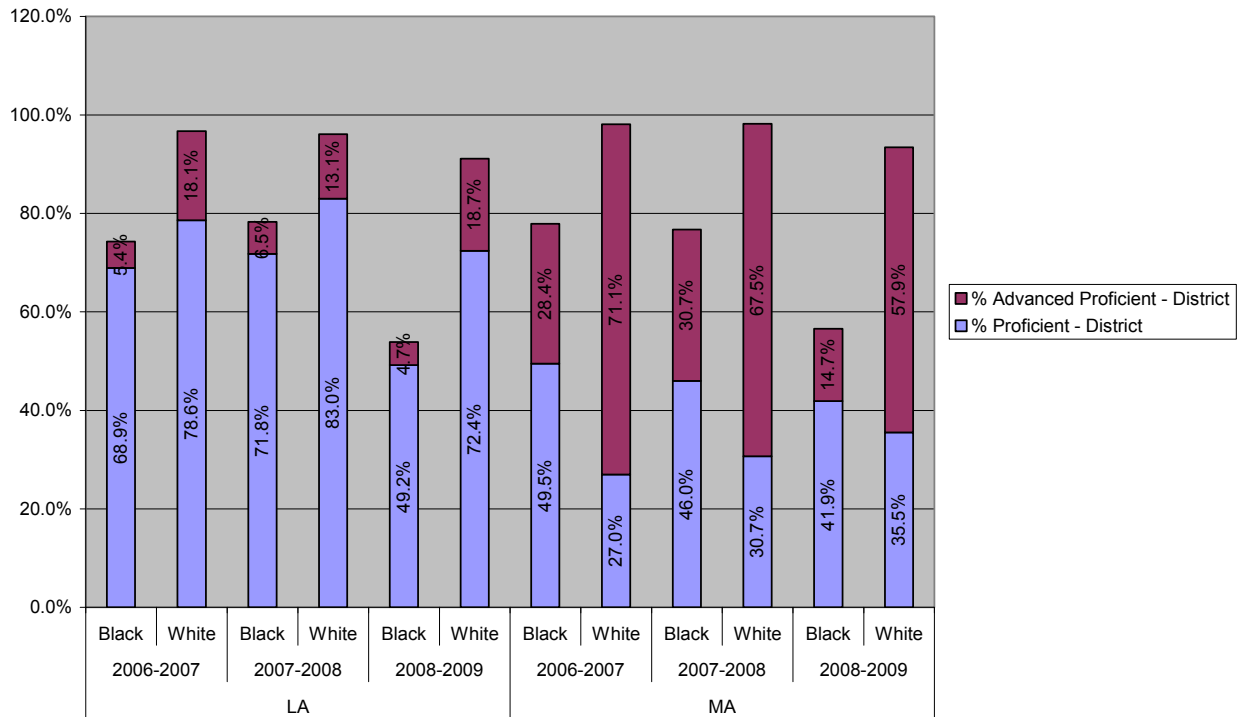
**State Standards Test Changed for 2007-2008 School Year**

**NJASK8  
Language Arts/Math**



State Standards Test Changed for 2007-2008 School Year

**NJASK4  
Language Arts/Math**



State Standards Test Changed for 2008-2009 School Year

Goal One: Student Learning

**Objective:** Improved student conduct

**Indicator:** A student-centered districtwide code of conduct, tailored as appropriate to different age groups in the elementary, middle and senior high schools, including a valid, reliable and fair method for honoring outstanding positive conduct.

Baseline: Schools have guidelines in handbooks; infractions and consequences not consistent across the district and not tabulated for data collection

Milestone 2008-2009: create a districtwide data collection system and a consistent code of conduct across schools

- Schools have guidelines in handbooks; infractions and consequences not consistent across the district and not tabulated for data collection
- Form multistakeholder group to develop a strategic plan addressing student conduct, including the encouragement of positive conduct; pilot new program(s); develop data collection system

Students Suspended As Of June 2008		
	Enrollment Oct. 15, 2007	# of Unduplicated Students Suspended
K-5	2901	77
6-8	1346	168
9-12	1843	326

Students Suspended As Of June 2009		
	Enrollment Oct. 15, 2008	# of Unduplicated Students Suspended
K-5	2965	78
6-8	1367	148
9-12	1856	225

Goal Two: Professional Staff

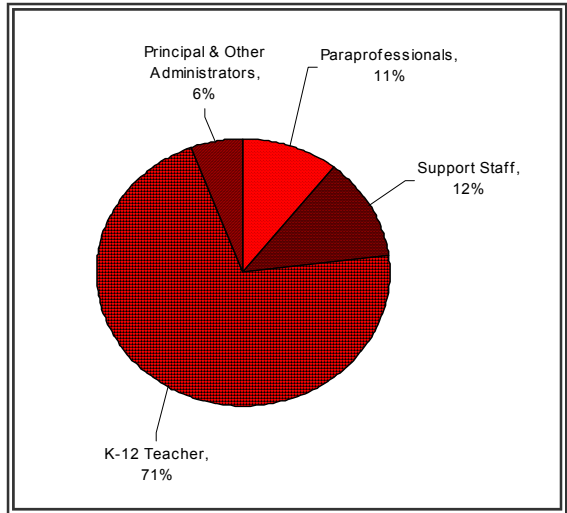
**Objective:** Recruitment, hiring and retention of diverse, qualified and high-performing professional staff.

**Indicator:** Number of qualified candidates for employment; percent of qualified candidates of color; number of qualified candidates, and percent of candidates of color who are hired that were the first choice by the hiring committee.

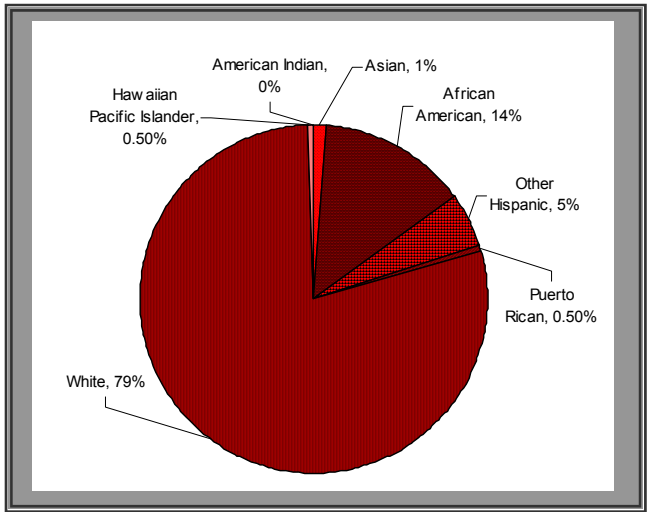
Of the new certificated teaching educational services staff, 32 had at least a Masters Degree while 54 had a Bachelors Degree. Forty-nine new hires had a standard certificate and experience in teaching, while 32 were new teachers with advanced standing and 10 had certificate of eligibility.

**June 2009**

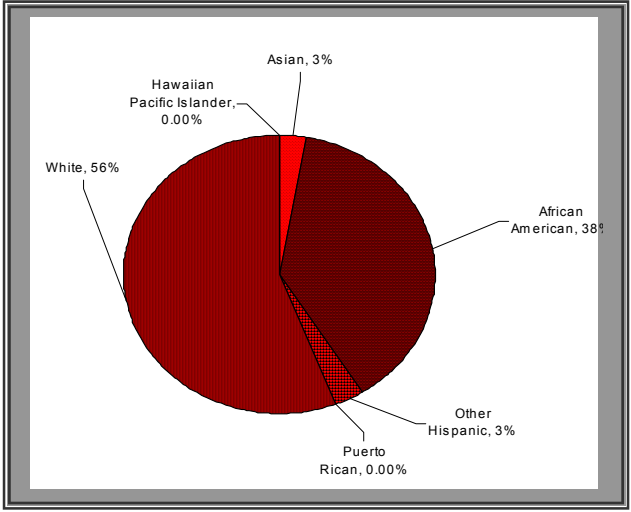
**SOMSD STAFF**



**Certificated Staff**



**Non Certificated Staff**



Goal Two: Professional Staff**Indicator: Retention of high quality staff.**

3.27 percent of certificated staff resigned before the start of the 09-10 school year. Most of these were for personal reasons. 1.96 percent retired.

Goal Two: Professional Staff

**Objective:** Professional development programs to equip district faculty to contribute to measurable improvements in student achievement.

**Indicator: Rollout of an initiative to stimulate faculty pursuit of national board certification (NBC).**

Of the 11 teachers who originally began the process in the summer of 2008 to work toward National Board Certification, three were recently notified that they have obtained National Board Certification, seven are continuing to complete the process, and one has opted out of the program. An additional ten teachers began the process in summer 2009.

Goal Two: Professional Staff**Indicator: Access to and provision of high-quality professional development, based on need as identified in the personnel evaluation, to all teachers, school leaders and central office staff.**

Milestone for 2007-08: A system to track the amount of professional development that each teacher, school leader and central office staff member participates in and a feedback system that enable the participating person to rate the quality, relevance and ability to apply what they learn to improve his or her teacher/leading and/or other tasks and responsibilities as tied to school and/or district improvement goals

Milestone for 2008-2009: Implement the tracking system, with data analysis to be done twice annually.

The implementation of a tracking system has been delayed due to the recent implementation of PowerSchool.

Goal Two: Professional Staff

**Objective:** A performance evaluation and compensation system driven by objective measures that are tied to student learning and school/district goals.

**Indicator: A valid, fair and reliable system for performance evaluation of principals, assistant principals and supervisors, driven by objective measures (student achievement and school/district goals) and linked to opportunities for incentive compensation.**

Milestone for 2008-2009: Finalize the performance evaluation to be implemented in 09-10.

A performance evaluation of principals and supervisors is being finalized.

Goal Two: Professional Staff**Indicator: A multi-rater, team approach to non-tenured and tenured personnel evaluations, using an evaluation format and procedures that are high-quality and aligned to student achievement and district goals.**

A written description of changes in evaluation and quality control were completed in early fall 2008 and are being implemented during the 2008-2009 and 2009-2010 school years. These changes include a team approach to the evaluation of non-tenured staff which will further enhance our efforts to increase inter-rater reliability in the evaluation process. The team approach looks slightly different at each grade level cluster depending on the number of administrators available to complete these evaluations. What it does ensure is that more than one administrator observes non-tenured teachers in their second and third year. The team approach further ensures that all summative evaluations will be the result of a collaborative effort between building administrators and supervisors/directors so there is agreement on all reappointments and recommendations for tenure.

Goal Three: Communications

**Objective:** Improved district communications for internal and external constituencies.

**Indicator:** Implementation of a user-friendly, information-rich district website.

The district's website is updated on a regular basis and has become the main communication tool for the community.

Goal Three: Communications

**Indicator:** Parent, staff and community satisfaction ratings from multiple survey tools, aggregated and disaggregated.

Surveys on communication, student satisfaction and parent satisfaction have been sent out to the community. The information received has been used to inform future plans and decisions.

Goal Three: Communications

**Objective:** Strong partnerships with parents, local businesses, and organizations in the community.

**Indicator:** Outreach to welcome and engage parents who are new to the district or marginally engaged in the school community.

- Packets of information about the school district are supplied to realtors, who pass it on to new residents. Local realtors also receive information about the district website and the e-newsletter, which helps them provide information to new residents.
- The 19<sup>th</sup> annual district calendar/handbook was published and distributed to the school community when school opened in September. It is also given to new parents when they enter the district. Much of the information found in the calendar is also posted on the district website.
- Articles about the district are regularly sent to the local print and on-line media for publication.
- Information about the district website and the ability to subscribe to the SOMSD e-newsletter enables neighborhood associations and other community groups to learn more about the schools.
- The community is invited to subscribe to the SOMSD e-newsletter, and obtain information about the schools from the district website.
- Many community organizations are encouraged to become involved in a variety of ways. The Rotary Clubs donate dictionaries to all 3<sup>rd</sup> graders and two local volunteer groups honor CHS seniors for their volunteer efforts, to name just a few.

Goal Four: Resource Management

**Indicator: Timely approval of budgets in accordance with the state spending cap.**

- Pass 2009-10 budget at cap.
  - The local tax levy in the 2009-10 general fund budget adopted by the Board of Education and submitted to the Board of School Estimate to raise the taxes was \$94,670,065. This amount was \$1,795,613 (2%) below the cap of \$96,465,678.
- Include no separate proposal items other than items required to achieve these goals.
  - There were no separate proposals.

Goal Four: Resource Management

**Indicator: Rate of growth in health-insurance costs.**

- Opt-out incentive program (2008-09).
  - Resolution 2341AK, passed by the Board of Education on December 17, 2007, authorized the submission of a request to the IRS for a Plan document to implement a Section 125 (Internal Revenue Code) Plan. The Plan documents were received and the BOE offered the incentive to employees. Fifteen employees waived their health benefits in 2007-08 resulting in an estimated net savings of \$94,000.
- Performed cost analysis of savings in similar NJ districts and then achieve equal or higher than average participation rate.
  - A cost analysis was performed.
  - The number of employees waiving their health benefits as of May, 2009 increased to 30 resulting in an estimated net savings of \$156,000.

Goal Four: Resource Management

**Indicator: Rate of growth in energy costs.**

- Limit increase or achieve a decrease in 2008-08 energy usage so that in the case of a comparable winter and energy costs rising at a rate comparable to or below cap district energy spending does not increase by more than cap (4%).
  - A summary of the comparison of energy usage over the past five years indicates that 2008-09 spending actually decreased.

	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
	Total	Total	Total	Total	Total
Budget:	\$ 1,582,405	\$ 1,745,433	\$ 2,213,583	\$ 2,291,797	\$ 2,342,378
Actual:	\$ 1,582,405	\$ 2,129,562	\$ 2,048,035	\$ 2,518,756	\$ 2,279,761
Over(Short):		\$ (384,129)	\$ 165,548	\$ (226,959)	\$ 62,617

- Work is ongoing to improve the condition of our buildings. Many projects have been undertaken that will significantly impact the energy usage in the district in the future.
- The district has taken measures to limit energy usage.
  - New energy efficient window shades installed on all windows.
  - Installation of new energy efficient windows in South Mountain Annex was completed
  - Installation of new energy efficient window replacements was completed in Montrose School.
  - Exterior improvements to “seal the envelope” of all district buildings have been undertaken over the past year.
  - Work was done on the heating generation (boilers) systems in a number of schools that has improved energy usage. In particular, work was completed in Tuscan, Marshall, Jefferson and Maplewood Middle School. This represents more than 70% of the heated space in the district.
  - The planning process with architects and engineers to upgrade and repair the heating systems in additional schools is ongoing.
  - Capital projects for improvements to the heating systems (distribution and control) in Columbia High School, South Orange Middle, Maplewood Middle and Marshall School are nearing completion.
- The District continues to contract with a consortium (ACES) to purchase natural gas and electric service from a third-party supplier through competitive bidding resulting in a discount. The fixed price has resulted in significant savings for the district as well as avoided uncertainty in the volatile natural gas market.
- Continuing to implement strategies for controlling or reducing energy spending in the budget.
  - An energy audit was completed in 2008.
  - The results of the study were used to plan the mechanical upgrade capital projects for Maplewood Middle School, South Orange Middle School, Columbia High School and Marshall Elementary School by identifying efficiencies that may be achieved through management of resources.

Goal Four: Resource Management**Indicator: Feedback from parents, students, administrators and teachers on facilities.**

- Introduce annual parent, student, administrator and teacher survey.
  - A number of surveys and evaluations have been developed to provide feedback on facilities.
    - A “Welcome Back” survey was distributed to all district staff in September to gather information about how they found their room at the opening of school. Results were compiled and used by TEMCO, the custodial services company, to identify areas in need of improvement.
    - A survey of was conducted of building administrators in December, prior to the holiday break. Results from this survey were used to identify projects for completion during the break. These requests will further inform areas in need of improvement on an on-going basis.
    - An independent quality assurance representative visits the district monthly and provides a computerized inspection report. A deficiency percentage of inspected items by area is compiled. Each principal can access the report on-line and track the status of their building’s improvement.
    - Staff and student surveys were distributed at the close of the school year to evaluate custodial services prior to contract renewal. Overall results were positive. Results were compiled and used by TEMCO to identify areas in need of improvement.
    - Surveys regarding all contracted services were distributed to building administrators for input into service evaluation.

Goal Four: Resource Management**Indicator: Progress on Long-Range Facilities Plan.**

- A \$10 million bond was issued for capital projects
  - A long-range, comprehensive master plan for capital improvements to district buildings was developed in 2002 to address projected enrollment shifts, academic program changes, health and safety factors, energy efficiencies, ADA, AHERA, PEOSH, OSHA, and Right-to-Know compliance, and major building repairs required due to years of deferred maintenance and aging infrastructure. The purpose of the plan was to bring together scheduling for capital projects, financing and debt service to produce a comprehensive master plan to provide an educational environment that is safe and conducive to learning.
  - Initial projects addressing space needs were begun in 2003 and completed in 2004-05. Improvements included the addition of 5 classrooms, conversion of the wood shop to the Black Box Theater and 1 classroom, reconfiguration of computer lab space and additional science lab at CHS, conversion of 2 sewing rooms to 3 classrooms and upgrade of 9 bathrooms to comply with ADA accessibility at SOMS.
  - In the next phase, completed in 2005-06, health and safety concerns were addressed by projects replacing all interior doors to comply with fire code regulations in all district buildings. In addition, three boilers were replaced with two new, more efficient boilers at Tuscan, kitchen improvements were made in both middle schools to update equipment and install additional serving lines to accommodate increased lunch participation and the entrance and foyer at CHS was historically renovated.
  - Projects completed in Summer 2007 addressed building integrity issues and a crumbling infrastructure. Major repairs, termed “sealing the envelope”, were made to windows, lintels, roofs, masonry and chimneys throughout the district. In addition, a major expansion and update to the kitchen and cafeteria was completed at CHS. The original kitchen (circa 1920) has been replaced with a modern food court serving area and open dining space consolidating two cafeterias into one space.
  - Projects are now underway for the next phase of improvements that address the environment and energy conservation throughout the district. Schematic plans have been approved by the NJDOE.
  - Resolution 2344A& B, passed by the Board of Education at its January 7, 2008 meeting authorized the submittal to the Board of School Estimate for the issuance of bonds to fund the 35 capital projects and application to the local finance board for approval of a debt maturity schedule to ensure as level debt service as possible.
  - Resolution 2344A authorized submitting the proposed capital projects to the Board of School Estimate to raise the money for completing the projects. The listing of capital projects and the estimated costs is attached to the resolution as Schedule A. A copy of the 35 capital projects totaling \$15 million is provided in Appendix M.
  - All of the projects and the estimated costs have been through the various state approval processes and previously accepted by the Board of Education via resolution.

- The Long Range Facilities Plan recognized that available resources are limited and decisions would have to consider that the major portion of the cost burden would be borne by local taxpayers. The scope of the projects would be determined by the taxpayers' ability to pay. Construction bonds would be issued in approximately \$10 million increments according to a schedule that attempted to maintain a level debt service in the annual budget in future years.
- Resolution 2344B authorized application to the Local Finance Board for review and approval of the issuance of bonds as required by law. Specifically, the review and approval is required for the maturity schedule proposed. It is our intention to structure a maturity schedule to maintain as level debt service as possible.
- The estimated cost for the 35 projects is \$15,502,095.
- A schedule of projected debt payments is included as well to demonstrate the level debt service. The proposed schedule of debt service is provided in Appendix M.
- See Appendix M for an update on the completed projects.
- All authorized and funded capital projects have been completed on schedule and within budget. A listing and status of completed projects is provided in Appendix M. Plans are currently underway for new projects to be funded by additional bond proceeds estimated to be sold in January 2011.

#### Goal Four: Resource Management

##### **Indicator: Expansion of district recycling program.**

- Implemented a recycling program to collect and recycle paper, glass and plastic in all schools and buildings.
  - A new recycling program has been developed in concert with both South Orange Village and the Township of Maplewood. The program relies on the participation of the staff and students to make it a success while teaching important values to all. School Administration is responsible for developing their building's recycling program to allow for maximum participation by the students and faculty. The building custodians coordinate the collection/pick-up process. Bins provided by the community are used to collect the recycled materials. The Department of Public Works in each community periodically picks up the materials from the school buildings for recycling.

#### Goal Four: Resource Management

##### **Indicator: Specific shared services and the value or savings associated with them.**

- Completed the SHARE grant feasibility study in partnership with the municipalities of South Orange and Maplewood.
  - The Board of Education passed Resolution 2254 to participate with the Township Committee of the Township of Maplewood and the Board of Trustees of the Township of South Orange Village in a joint grant application for a SHARE Program grant through the State of New Jersey SHARE Program of the division of Local Government Services in the Department of Community Affairs.
  - The Board of Education recreation is participating with the municipalities of South Orange and Maplewood in sharing scheduling and recreation facilities.
  - Expanded interlocal agreements to include vehicle maintenance and fuel.
  - Exploring areas of cooperative bidding opportunities such as lawn maintenance.