

Comprehensive Urban District Improvement

Malden Public Schools

Overview

Malden is a culturally rich urban community, described by the schools superintendent as one of the most diverse districts in the state. The 6416 students speak 57 different languages and 54% of them are on free/reduced lunch.

In 2002, the Malden Public Schools entered into a partnership with Teachers²¹. Analysis of the district's performance data revealed that student achievement was low in several areas and many of the conditions that support school effectiveness were not in place. Relationships with the union were poor, the curriculum was disjointed, expectations for students were low management and evaluation structures were weak. A sustained and comprehensive multi-year plan was clearly needed.

Malden Public Schools	
District Profile	% of Dist.
First Language not English	39.1
Limited English Proficient	10.2
Low Income	54.0
Special Education	14.8
Free Lunch	43.8
Reduced Lunch	10.2
African American	19.4
Asian	21.7
Hispanic	18.4
Native American	.6
White	36.3
Multi-race, Non-Hispanic	3.6

Services Provided

The district's leadership involved all of the schools in the change effort. Teachers²¹ leaders and consultants supported the district's administrators and teachers as strategic plans were developed and implemented at each site. Teachers²¹ staff worked with the superintendent to establish a system-wide focus on instruction through strategic planning, professional development and coaching, and the strengthening of instructional leadership across the district. Consultants provided guidance and coaching to principals, and paved the way for open and honest communication between principals and department chairs, and between the superintendent and the school committee.

Teachers²¹ undertook a systematic approach to the improvement of the Malden district, guided by the belief that the education of students is affected not only by what happens in their classrooms, but within their school district as well.

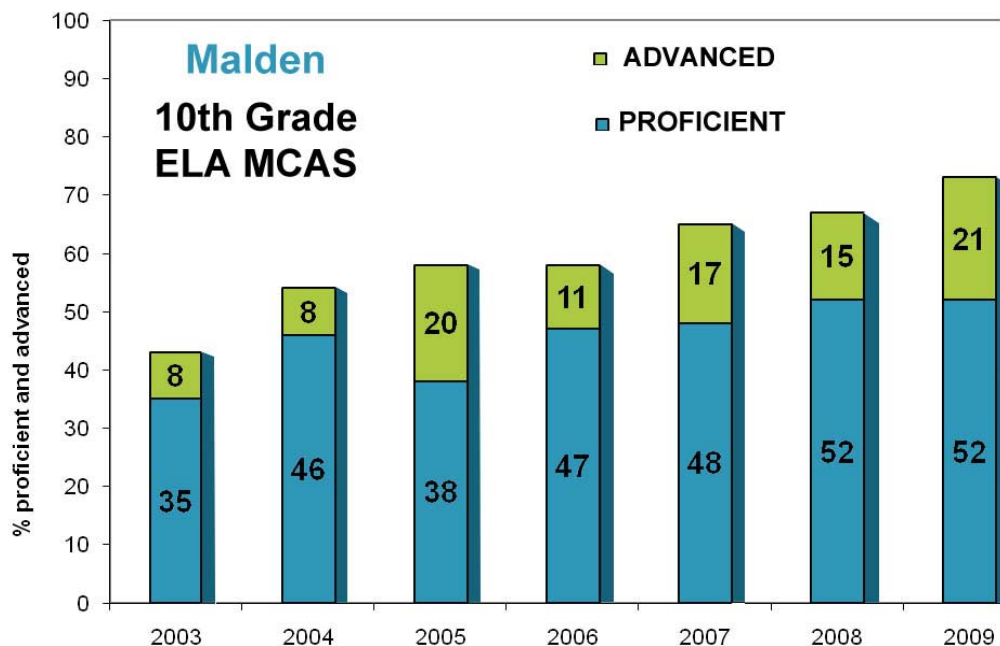
Eleven change actions underpinned the Teachers²¹ process:

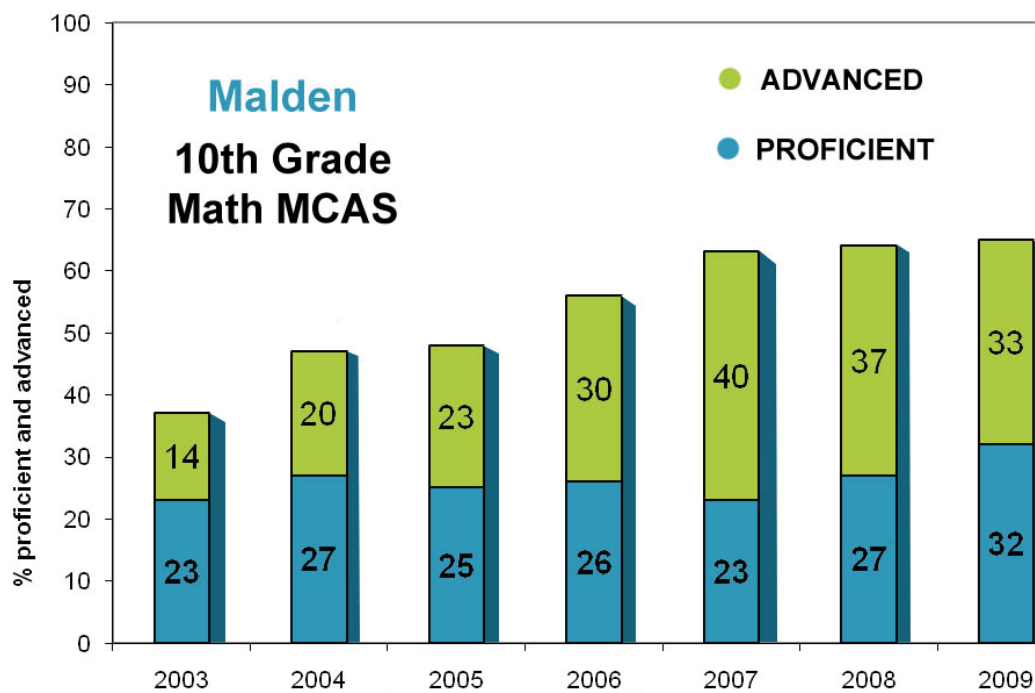
1. Ensure that the district's diverse study body is reflected in its curriculum, staff, communication styles, and teaching practices.
2. Develop a district-wide strategic plan and other comprehensive plans and align budget and resources with the plan(s).
3. Align and improve K-12 standards-based curriculum in all disciplines
4. Strengthen the school committee/superintendent partnership in shaping and owning the district improvement agenda
5. Strengthen union/management partnership in collaborating on the district improvement agenda
6. Institutionalize open, honest communication practices
7. Create a district professional development academy that uses performance data as the foundation for decision making on instruction and around clearly articulated goals, objectives, and progress indicators.
8. Coach school and district leaders
9. Implement a career ladder for teachers
10. Create schedules and policies that provide more time for teacher collaboration, planning, and instruction
11. Design school and district accountability systems that include regular formative assessments

Results—Progress in Student Achievement

Since the start of the reform effort, Malden students have made steady progress on the tenth grade MCAS in ELA and Mathematics. The percentage of students scoring proficient and advanced on the English Language Arts exam has risen from 43% in 2003 to 73% in 2009.

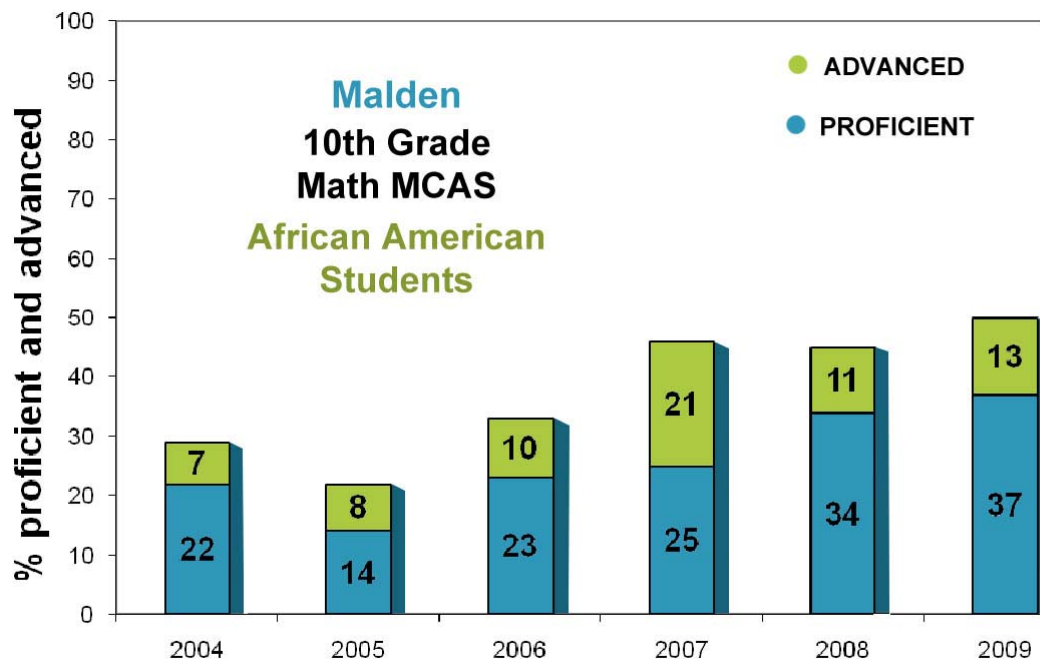
A similar rise in scores has also taken place on the tenth grade MCAS in mathematics. In 2003, the percentage of students scoring proficient and advanced in mathematics was just 37%, while in 2009 it had risen to 65%.



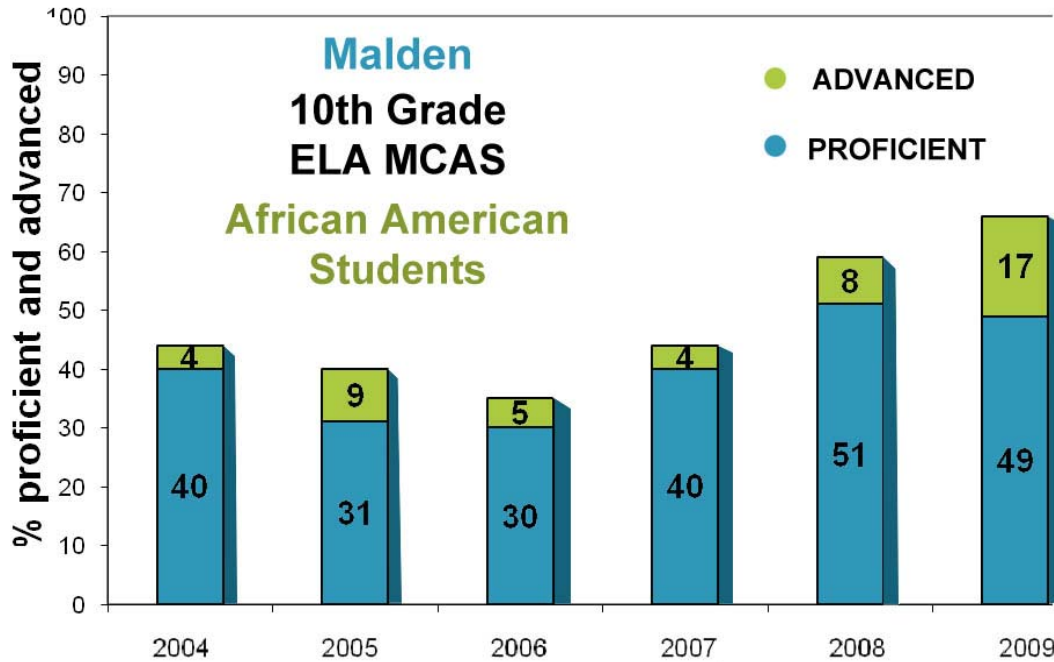


Results--Steady Progress for African American Students

Teachers²¹ consultants guided Malden teachers and administrators as they addressed equity issues in the district. There was a conscious effort to recruit new teachers who were more representative of the student population in the hope that students would be enticed to invest more in the academic program. African American students in Malden have improved significantly in their performance on the tenth grade math and ELA MCAS.



The percentage of African American students performing at proficient or advanced on the 10th grade math MCAS improved from 29% in 2004 to 50% in 2009.



In the same time period, scores on the tenth grade proficient and advanced ELA increased from 44% in 2004 to 66% in 2009.

In comparison to performance outcomes at the state level and in similar districts, Malden's growth rate surpasses many of its peers.

	ELA: All Grades		Math: All Grades	
	Growth	Proficient	Growth	Proficient
Brockton	53	51	43	36
Everett	49	51	46	37
Lynn	41	47	38	37
Malden	54	56	51	44
Medford	49	64	52	49
Mystic Valley Reg. Ch.	52	71	54	62
Revere	51	61	45	49