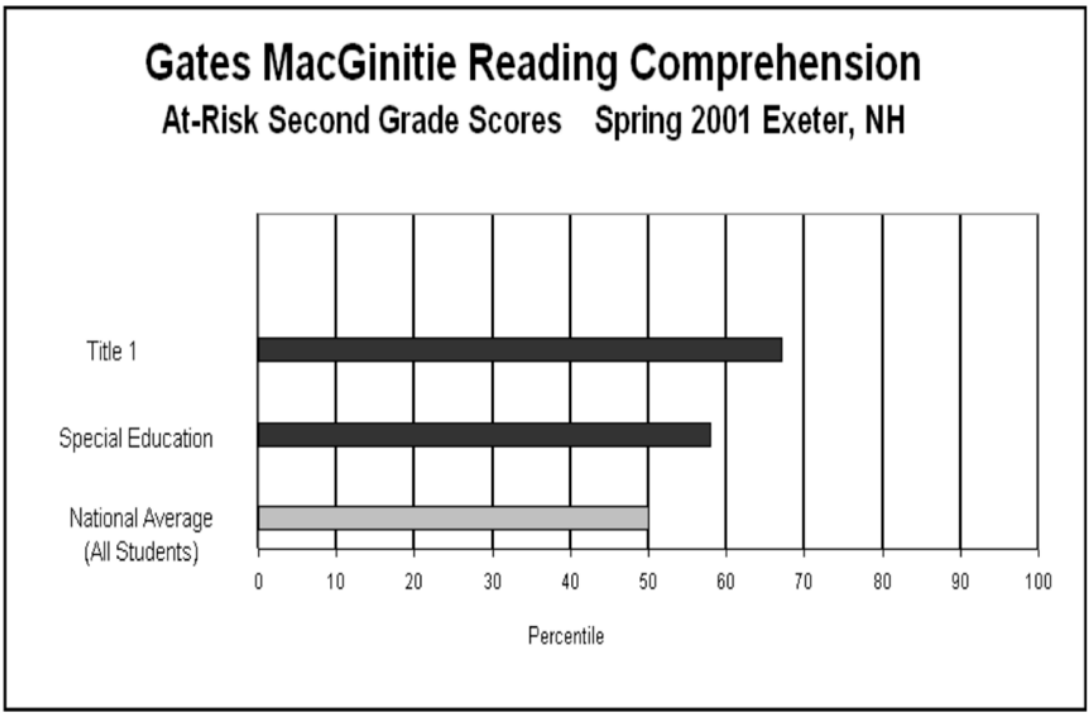
A Decade of Standardize Test Score Data
following Main Street School's Adoption of Picturing Writing and Image-Making

Dr. Sue O'Connor

As part of a Comprehensive School Reform Demonstration (CSRD) Grant (1999-2002), Main Street School in Exeter, NH (a K-2 school) adopted PW and IM schoolwide. Teachers were trained in the basics of Picturing Writing (PW) and Image-Making (IM) and then worked collaboratively with Beth Olshansky to develop units of study at each grade level to meet their ELA Standards and grade-level science curriculum. Each grade level developed 3-4 units of study that teachers would facilitate during the school year. Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Dr. Sue O'Connor, oversaw the schoolwide adoption and tracked standardized test results over the next decade.

On the Gates MacGinitie Reading Comprehension Assessment, after only two years of implementation of PW and IM school-wide, in the spring of 2001, second-grade Title I and SPED students outscored the national average of *all students* in reading comprehension across the United States.



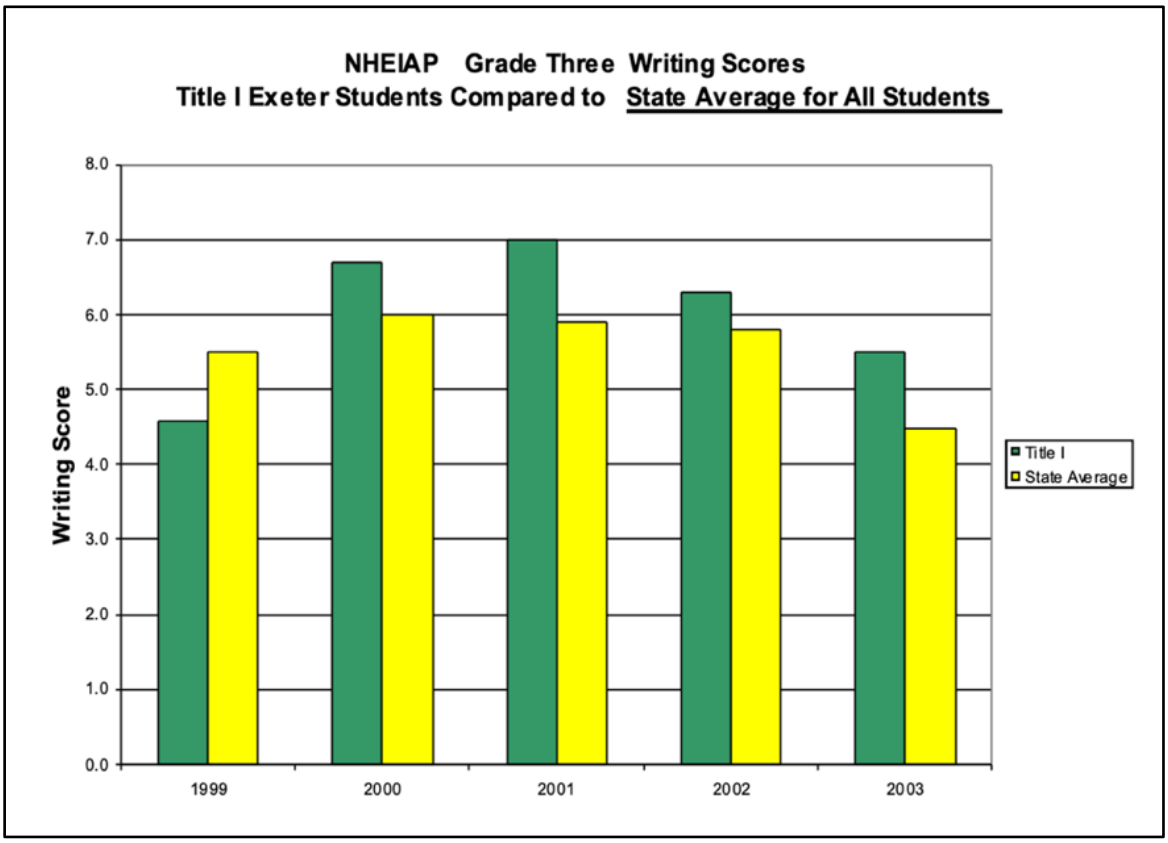
Following the Gates MacGinitie Reading Comprehension Test results over the next decade, gains were made by all groups of students, with the greatest gains made by those students who had previously scored below average in reading comprehension. For example, grade 2 reading scores prior to schoolwide adoption of PW and IM documented that 56% of the students scored below average, 32% scored average and above, and 12% scored in the high range. At the end of the 3-year grant period, only 18% scored below average, 38% scored average and above, and 44% scored in the high range. By 2010, only 10% scored below average, 37% scored in the average and above range, and 53% scored in the high range.

Second Grade Gates MacGinitie Spring Scores
Reading Comprehensive

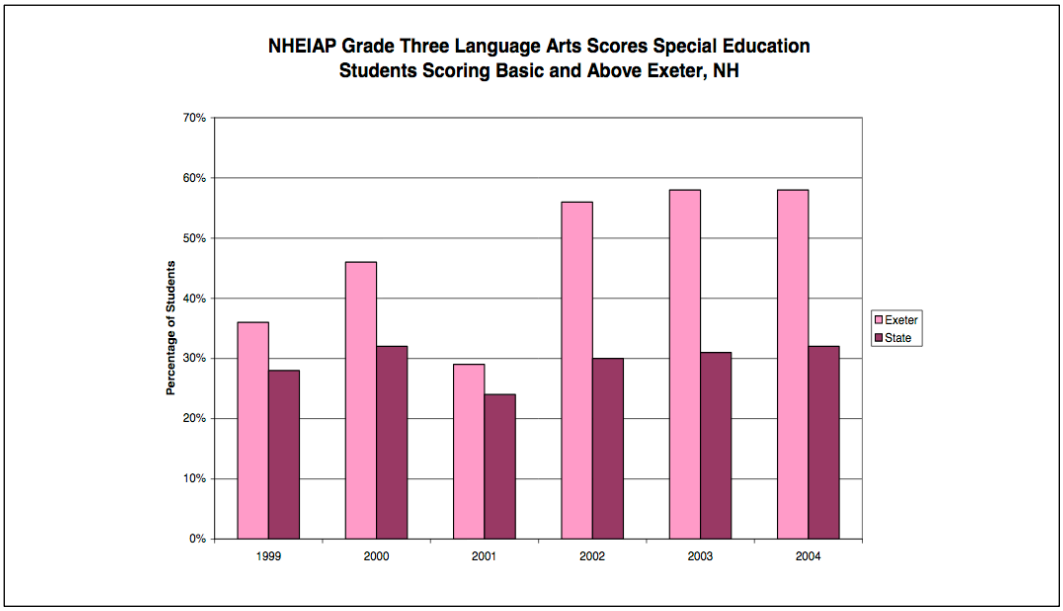
Percentages of students in each NCE range

Title I Reading	HIGH 99-96	ABOVE AVERAGE 64-50	BELOW AVERAGE 49-1
1999	12%	32%	56%
2002	44%	38%	18%
2003	49%	36%	15%
2004	43%	36%	21%
2005	26%	74%	0%
2006	35%	42%	23%
2007	52%	39%	9%
2008	43%	50%	7%
2009	24%	62%	14%
2010	53%	37%	10%

On the NHEIAP, NH's statewide Language Arts assessment for writing, after only one year of implementation, Title I students *outscored the NH state average for all students* in writing (2000). This trend continued through 2003, the last year that the NHEIAP writing assessment was given.



Special Education students taking the NHEIAP Language Arts Assessment outscored SPED students across the state for several consecutive years. In 2004, the last year of the test, 58% of Exeter's third grade SPED students scored Basic and Above whereas across the state, only 32% of SPED students scored Basic and Above.



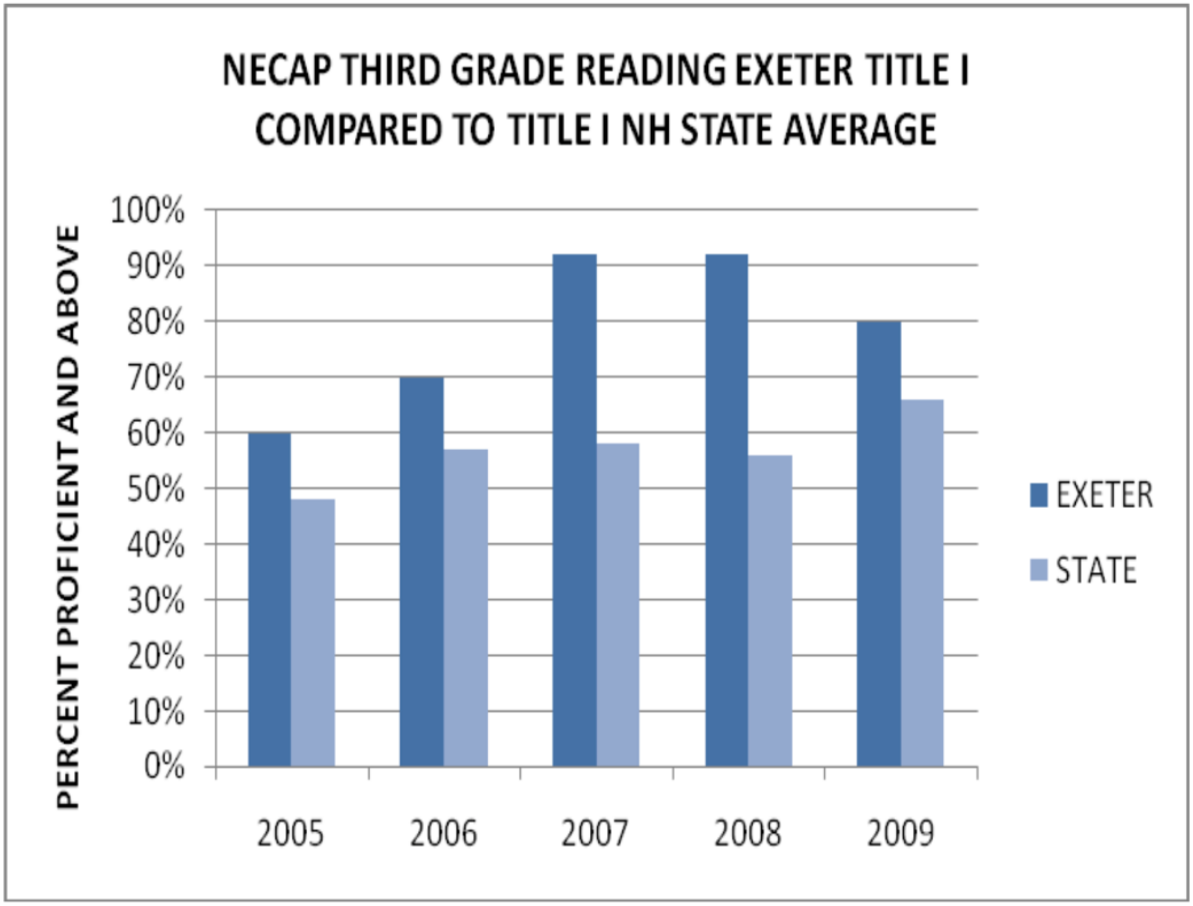
When comparing Exeter's students to students across NH on the NHEIAP, Exeter's students consistently scored better than the state average across all subgroups.

NHEIAP

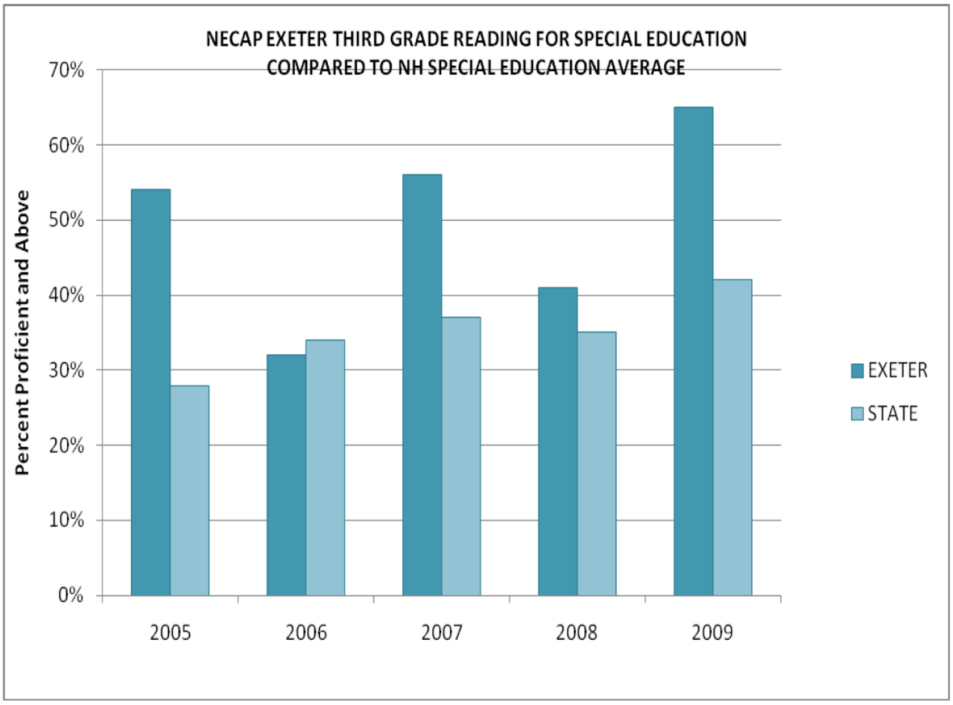
English Language Arts
Grade 3
Percentage of Students Scoring Basic and Above
(State results are shown in parenthesis.)

Year	All Students	Educational Disability	Title 1	Socio-economically Disadvantaged
1999	79% (72%)	36% (28%)	45% (47%)	not reported
2000	84% (75%)	46% (32%)	69% (54%)	not reported
2001	85% (72%)	29% (24%)	75% (47%)	not reported
2002	84% (76%)	56% (30%)	65% (55%)	56% (55%)
2003	89% (76%)	58% (31%)	76% (56%)	67% (58%)
2004	88% (73%)	58% (32%)	86% (52%)	86% (54%)

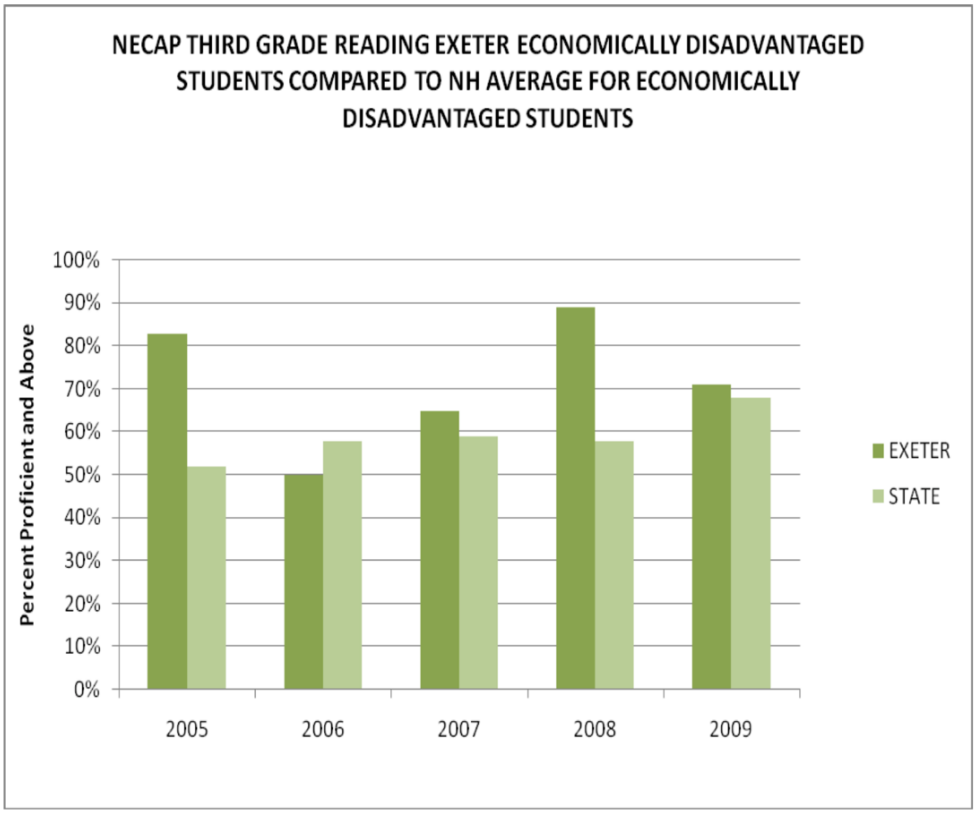
In October of 2005, Exeter students took the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) for the first time. Third grade students were assessed in reading and mathematics. The reading scores included 9 open responses (40% of their Total Reading Score). Third grade Title I students in Exeter scored above the NH state average for Title I students for all 5 years that the tests were given. (Not shown in the graph below: Exeter's Title I students scored above the NH state average in reading *for all students* in 2007 and 2008. In 2009, Exeter's Title I students tied with *all NH students in reading*.)



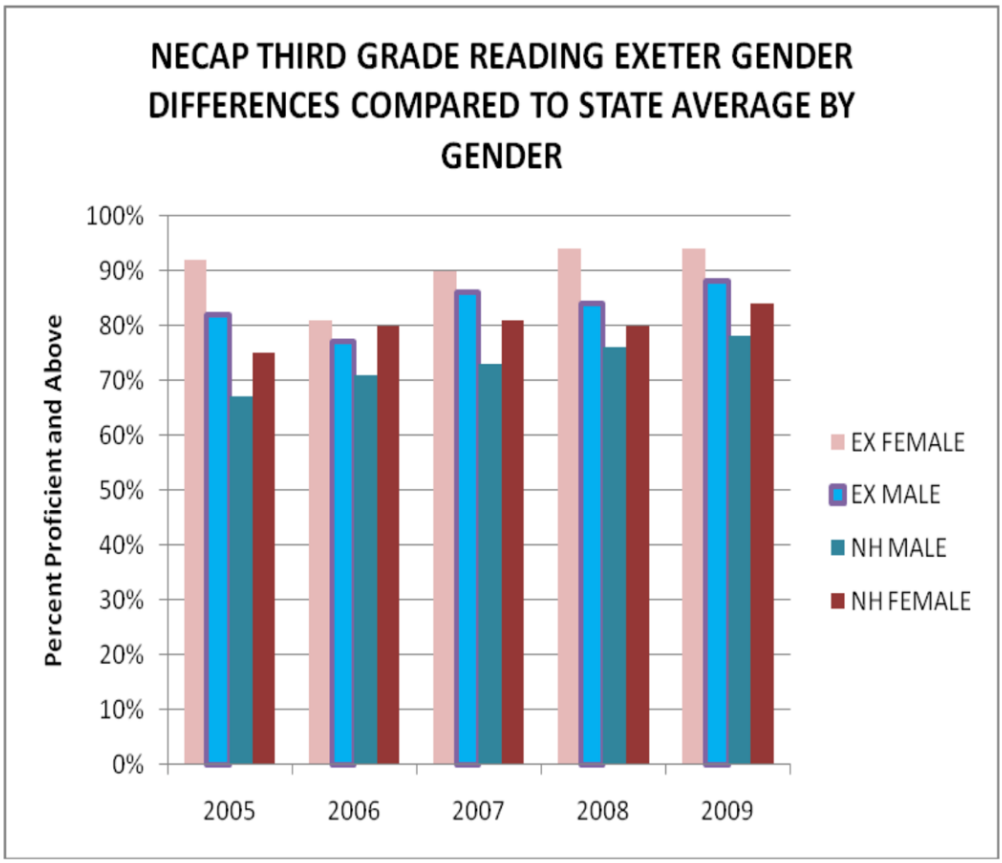
In 2005, third grade Special Education students scored above the NH state average for Special Education students. In 2006, for the first time since PW and IM had been implemented in 1999, third grade Special Education students scored below NH's state average for Special Education students. Anecdotal comments from teachers indicate that the 2006 class had exceptionally high needs. In 2007, 2008, and 2009, Exeter's Special Education students rebounded to score above the state average for Special Education students.



Exeter's scores for Economically Disadvantaged students followed a similar pattern. Overall, Exeter's economically disadvantaged population scored better than students in the same category across NH.



When looking at gender differences, Exeter's third grade girls consistently scored better than Exeter's boys on the NECAP. However, Exeter's boys scored above the NH state average for boys all 5 years that the NECAP was given. More significantly, *Exeter's boys scored above the NH state average for girls every year but 2006.*



Beyond the Data

For administrators concerned that adopting an art-based model for writing will lead to lower test scores, Exeter's decade of reading and writing test data proves the opposite.

Beyond the data, there were qualitative changes at the Main Street School, the biggest one being a change to the classroom culture. As a school that valued both language and visual arts, students became immersed in rich language and quality illustrations through the picture books that were used as mentor texts for teaching art and writing lessons throughout the week. Our students saw themselves as writers. They learned to read like a writer. They became much more observant when looking at quality picture books. They were focused on writer's craft in a way I had never witnessed. There was a tremendous amount of joy and excitement about the process in the classroom and throughout the school. The fact that students produced beautiful books was another plus. Their pride was palpable, and their confidence grew.

All students published three to four carefully crafted picture books each year. At-risk students become just as engaged as their classmates in creating books and reading their own and each other's books, which were added to the classroom library.

Teachers were particularly proud of the work their at-risk students produced. The ESOL and Speech therapists became vocal advocates of the program. During the annual Literacy Celebration, visitors no longer could tell which books were created by our Special Education students. A Special Education teacher confided, "Before Picturing Writing, I used to dread the Literacy Celebration. My children's books stood out. Now, my students' books are beautiful."

NHEIAP Population Statistics

1999 Third Grade: 197 students enrolled, four Educationally Disabled students excluded from testing. Twenty Title I and seven Educationally Disabled students were included in testing.

2000 Third Grade: 163 students enrolled, four students excluded from testing (two Educationally Disabled, 1 Limited English, 1 Other). Twenty-six Title I and eight Educationally Disabled were included in testing.

2001 Third Grade: 187 students enrolled, 0 excluded. Twenty-one Title I, fifteen Educationally Disabled, and one Limited English student were included in testing.

2002 Third Grade: 163 students enrolled, 0 excluded. Twenty-three Title I, eighteen Educationally Disabled, and two Limited English students were included.
2003 Third Grade: 163 students enrolled, 0 excluded. Seventeen Title I, twenty-six Educationally Disabled, and fifteen Economically Disadvantaged students were included.

2004 Third Grade: 172 students enrolled, 0 excluded. Fifty-one Title I, twenty-six Educationally Disabled and fifteen Economically Disadvantaged students.

Gates MacGinitie Test Population Statistics

1999: 150 students enrolled in second grade; 15 received Special Education support, 3 absent from testing; 33 received Title I services, 0 absent from testing.
2000: 176 students enrolled in second grade; 10 received Special Education support, 4 absent from testing; 34 received Title I support, 1 absent from testing.

2001: 161 students enrolled in second grade; 23 received Special Education support, 0 absent from testing; 38 received Title I support, 0 absent from
2002: 170 students enrolled in second grade; 28 received Special Education support, 1 absent from testing; 34 received Title I support, 2 absent from testing.

2003: 162 students enrolled in second grade; 28 received Special Education support, 11 absent from testing; 33 received Title I support, 0 absent from testing.

2004: 162 students enrolled in second grade: 33 received Special Education support, 16 absent from

testing; 42 received Title I support, 0 absent from testing.

2005: 163 students enrolled in second grade: 16 received Special Education support, 5 absent from testing; 19 received Title I support, 0 absent from testing.

2006: 164 students enrolled in second grade: 29 received Special Education support, 43 received Title I support, 0 absent from testing.

2007: 145 students enrolled in second grade: 28 received Special Education support, 23 received Title I support, 0 absent from testing.14

2008: 163 students enrolled in second grade: 32 received Special Education support, 30 received Title I support, 0 absent from testing.

2009: 160 students enrolled in second grade: 30 received Special Education support, 21 received Title I support, 0 absent from testing

2010: 166 students enrolled in second grade: 24 received Special Education support, 19 received Title I support, 0 absent from testing.

New England Common Assessment Program Population Statistics

2005: 157 students enrolled in third grade: 13 received Special Education support, 0 absent from testing, 21 received Title I support, 0 absent from testing, 18 were Economically Disadvantaged students, 0 absent from testing.

2006: 166 students enrolled in third grade: 22 received Special Education support, 33 received Title I support, 0 absent from testing.

2007**:** 141 students enrolled in third grade: 25 received Special Education support, 24 received Title I support, 0 absent from testing.

2008: 173 students enrolled in third grade: 30 received Special Education support, 30 received Title I support, 0 absent from testing.

2009: 166 students enrolled in third grade: 24 received Special Education support, 19 received Title I support, 0 absent from testing.