Comprehensive District Review Report

West Springfield Public Schools

Review conducted December 4–7, 2017

Office of District Reviews and Monitoring

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

**Organization of this Report**

[Executive Summary 1](#_Toc518397457)

[West Springfield Public Schools Comprehensive District Review Overview 4](#_Toc518397458)

[Leadership and Governance 17](#_Toc518397459)

[Curriculum and Instruction 22](#_Toc518397460)

[Assessment 34](#_Toc518397461)

[Human Resources and Professional Development 37](#_Toc518397462)

[Student Support 45](#_Toc518397463)

[Financial and Asset Management 51](#_Toc518397464)

[Appendix A: Review Team, Activities, Schedule, Site Visit 55](#_Toc518397465)

[Appendix B: Enrollment, Attendance, Expenditures 57](#_Toc518397466)

[Appendix C: Instructional Inventory 61](#_Toc518397467)

**Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education**

75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906

Phone 781-338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Replay 800-439-2370

[www.doe.mass.edu](http://www.doe.mass.edu)



This document was prepared by the
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Jeffrey C. Riley

Commissioner

**Published July 2018**

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, an affirmative action employer, is committed to ensuring that all of its programs and facilities are accessible to all members of the public. We do not discriminate on the basis of age, color, disability, national origin, race, religion, sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation. Inquiries regarding the Department’s compliance with Title IX and other civil rights laws may be directed to the Human Resources Director, 75 Pleasant St., Malden, MA 02148-4906. Phone: 781-338-6105.

© 2018 Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

*Permission is hereby granted to copy any or all parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes. Please credit the “Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.”*

This document printed on recycled paper

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148-4906

Phone 781-338-3000 TTY: N.E.T. Relay 800-439-2370

[www.doe.mass.edu](http://www.doe.mass.edu)



Executive Summary

The student population is increasing in West Springfield. From 2013 to 2017, student enrollment increased by 5 percent. During this interval, the proportion of English language learners (ELLs) increased by 3.5 percent, and ELLs now constitute 10 percent of the student population. Some are refugees who have experienced trauma. In 2017–2018, 55.7 percent of the district’s enrollment are part of the high needs subgroup,[[1]](#footnote-1) as compared with the statewide average of 45.2 percent.

The current superintendent served as high school principal before his appointment as interim superintendent in 2014 and permanent superintendent in July 2015. Between 2014 and 2018, leadership changes have resulted in eight new or relocated administrators at the school and district levels.

The district has worked in partnership with the City of West Springfield to consolidate school and municipal services. The city now oversees the technology, custodial, and maintenance departments. The superintendent, the teachers’ association, and the school committee have formed a collaborative relationship, which has resulted in significantly less reliance upon the formal grievance procedure.

The district has devoted time and resources to support educators in using data more effectively and has begun to set up structures to make on-going progress in this area. The schools use a variety of formative and benchmark assessments to guide instruction and determine remedial and enrichment requirements for students. Between 2016 and 2018, district-level and school-based data teams were established.

Teachers have had a primary role in the design and implementation of the professional development (PD) program and the teacher evaluation system. The teacher PD program is based on district and school priorities, is informed by student performance data, uses teachers as presenters, and offers opportunities for peer collaboration.

Although the district has initiated planning to ensure that students with disabilities have access to the general education program and a curriculum based on the state Frameworks, inclusive practices are inconsistent from class to class within a school and from school to school in the district. The district has offered limited PD to help teachers accommodate a wider range of student learning needs and differences in their classes.

The district has implemented a comprehensive college and career-planning model that assists students in selecting their high-school courses, provides for advanced post-secondary planning, and informs students about post-secondary options. The district identifies and provides support services for students with behavioral and social-emotional developmental health issues that interfere with learning.

The district maintains and renovates its facilities and has developed a strong working relationship with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) that has led to the construction of a new high school and the beginning of a feasibility study to renovate or replace the Coburn School.

**Instruction**

The team observed 77 classes throughout the district: 16 at the high school, 17 at the middle school, and 44 at 5 elementary schools. The team did not observe classes at the Cowing Early Childhood Center, the Ashley kindergarten school, and the 21st Century Skills Academy. The team observed 33 ELA classes, 26 mathematics classes, 11 science classes, and 7 classes in other subject areas. Among the classes observed were three special education classes, and three ELL classes. The observations were approximately 20 minutes in length. All review team members collected data using ESE’s Instructional Inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching. This data is presented in Appendix C.

In observed classes across the district, the quality of instruction was inconsistent. In observed classes at the high school, the team found a consistently lower incidence of characteristics of effective instruction than at the elementary and middle-school levels. In all observed classes, the review team found a low incidence of student engagement, higher-order thinking, inclusive practices, and the use of varied instructional strategies.

**Strengths**

The superintendent, the teachers’ association, and the school committee have formed a collaborative relationship. The district has begun to use assessment data in a structured and coordinated manner to inform educational decisions and has established strategies and practices to ensure that student achievement data are gathered from multiple sources in a balanced system of formative and benchmark assessments. The district has taken a collaborative approach to the design and management of its teacher evaluation system and streamlined its procedure to make it less burdensome and more focused. The district’s PD program is managed by three interdisciplinary teams composed primarily of teachers. PD is closely aligned with the goals in district and school improvement plans, informed by some student performance data, driven by teacher collaboration, and assessed for effectiveness.

The district is providing tiered interventions to prepare students to graduate ready for college and career. The district identifies students at risk because of behavioral, social-emotional, and developmental health issues that interfere with learning and provides appropriate counseling and support programs. The district’s school facilities are in generally good condition and are well maintained. The district’s five-year capital program budget is funded regularly and the district has developed a long-term master plan to address facilities’ needs.

**Challenges and Areas for Growth**

The district’s planning documents do not include measurable goals that are informed by disaggregated student performance data. Stakeholder participation in district improvement planning is limited. The district does not have a process in place that ensures the timely curriculum review and revision to guarantee that updated and comprehensive curricula will be implemented in all classrooms. The district does not have sufficient leadership and meeting time to support curricular and instructional improvement.

The district has not achieved consistency in the implementation of its educator evaluation system. The district has not taken action on the components of the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework that require the collection and use of multiple sources of evaluative evidence. A disproportionate percentage of the district’s elementary-level English language learners (ELLs) are assigned to one school, diminishing the effectiveness of the English language development program and overburdening that school. Some of these students are educated in separate classes and have limited association with their native-English language-speaking peers.

There is not an explicit connection between district and school improvement plans and the district budget, and the district budget document does not contain staffing history and comprehensive rationales to support budget requests.

**Recommendations**

* The district should revise its three to five year District Improvement Plan and align other planning documents with it.
* The district should clarify who is responsible for oversight of curriculum review and revision. The district should complete as soon as possible its K–12 science and English language development curricula. Alignment of K–12 curricula with the current frameworks should be a district priority.
* The district should further articulate its expectations for high-quality instruction, communicate this to the full educational community, and support teachers in its implementation.
* The district should fully and effectively implement all components of the state’s Educator Evaluation Framework. Special attention should be given to developing systems for the collection and appropriate use of evidence to inform educators’ evaluations.
* The district should decentralize the elementary-level English language development program.
* The district should develop a more complete, transparent, and usable budget document.

West Springfield Public Schools Comprehensive District Review Overview

Purpose

Conducted under Chapter 15, Section 55A of the Massachusetts General Laws, comprehensive district reviews support local school districts in establishing or strengthening a cycle of continuous improvement. Reviews consider carefully the effectiveness of systemwide functions, with reference to the six district standards used by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE): leadership and governance, curriculum and instruction, assessment, human resources and professional development, student support, and financial and asset management. Reviews identify systems and practices that may be impeding improvement as well as those most likely to be contributing to positive results. In addition to being a tool that districts can use to inform their own improvement efforts, review reports may be used by ESE to identify technical assistance and other resources to provide to the district.

Methodology

Reviews collect evidence for each of the six district standards above. A district review team consisting of independent consultants with expertise in each of the district standards reviews documentation, data, and reports for two days before conducting a four-day district visit that includes visits to individual schools. The team conducts interviews and focus group sessions with such stakeholders as school committee members, teachers’ association representatives, administrators, teachers, parents, and students. Team members also observe classroom instructional practice. Subsequent to the onsite review, the team meets for two days to develop findings and recommendations before submitting a draft report to ESE.

Site Visit

The site visit to the West Springfield Public Schools was conducted from December 4–7, 2017. The site visit included 28 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 71 stakeholders, including school committee members, district administrators, school staff, students, and teachers’ association representatives. The review team conducted a focus group with eight high-school teachers. No elementary and middle-school teachers attended the focus groups scheduled for them because of an apparent conflict with release-day activities and after-school Sheltered English Immersion training.

A list of review team members, information about review activities, and the site visit schedule are in Appendix A, and Appendix B provides information about enrollment, attendance, and expenditures. The team observed classroom instructional practice in 77 classrooms in 7 schools. The team collected data using ESE’s Instructional Inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching. This data is contained in Appendix C.

**District Profile**

West Springfield has a mayor-council form of government and the chair of the school committee is the mayor. The seven members of the school committee meet monthly. West Springfield is one of 14 Massachusetts municipalities that have applied for and been granted city forms of government but wish to retain "The town of” in their official names.

The superintendent began as an interim in 2014 and assumed leadership of the district in July 2015. The district leadership team includes the superintendent; the acting assistant superintendent; the director of curriculum, instruction, and assessment; the special services administrator; the ELL coordinator; and the business manager. Central office positions have been stable in number in recent years. The district has eight principals leading nine schools and eight vice-principals. In the 2017–2018 school year, there were 329 teachers in the district.

In the 2017–2018 school year, 4,114 students were enrolled in the district’s 9 schools:

**Table 1: West Springfield Public Schools**

**Schools, Type, Grades Served, and Enrollment\*, 2017–2018**

| **School**  | **School Type** | **Grades Served** | **Enrollment** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Cowing Early Childhood Center | EES | Pre-K | 122 |
| John Ashley | ES | K | 234 |
| John R. Fausey | ES | K–5 | 460 |
| Philip G. Coburn | ES | K–5 | 518 |
| Memorial | ES | 1–5 | 239 |
| Mittineague | ES | 1–5 | 161 |
| Tatham | ES | 1–5 | 239 |
| West Springfield Middle School | MS | 6–8 | 899 |
| West Springfield High School | HS | 9–12 | 1,234 |
| 21st Century Skills Academy (*not a school facility)* | HS | 12 | 8 |
| **Totals** | **9 schools** | **Pre-K–12** | **4,114** |
| \*As of October 1, 2017 |

Between 2013 and 2017, overall student enrollment increased by five percent. Enrollment figures by race/ethnicity and high needs populations (i.e., students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, and English language learners (ELLs) and former ELLs) as compared with the state are provided in Tables B1a and B1b in Appendix B.

Total in-district per-pupil expenditures were lower than the median in-district per pupil expenditures for 19 K–12 districts of similar size (4,000–4,999 students) in fiscal year 2015: $12,440 as compared with $12,789 (see [District Analysis and Review Tool Detail: Staffing and Finance](http://www.doe.mass.edu/dart)). Actual net school spending has been above what is required by the Chapter 70 state education aid program, as shown in Table B3 in Appendix B.

Student Performance

**Note:** The Next-Generation MCAS assessment is administered to grades 3–8 in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics; it was administered for the first time in 2017. (For more information, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/parents/results-faq.html>.) The MCAS assessment is administered to grades 5 and 8 in science and to grade 10 in ELA, math, and science. Data from the two assessments are presented separately because the tests are different and cannot be compared.

**The average scaled score on the Next-Generation MCAS assessment for all students was below the state rate by 2.8 points in ELA and above the state rate by 0.8 point in math.**

| **Table 2: West Springfield Public Schools****Next-Generation MCAS ELA and Math Average Scaled Score (SS) Grades 3–8, 2017** |
| --- |
| **Group** | **N** | **ELA SS** | **State SS** | **N** | **Math SS** | **State SS** |
| High Needs | 1,029 | 488.3 | 488.5 | 1,029 | 492.3 | 488.1 |
| Econ. Dis. | 888 | 489.2 | 489.2 | 886 | 493.0 | 488.1 |
| SWD | 345 | 475.0 | 480.0 | 345 | 477.3 | 479.8 |
| ELLs | 189 | 477.8 | 484.9 | 190 | 490.5 | 486.8 |
| All | 1,804 | 496.3 | 499.1 | 1,804 | 499.6 | 498.8 |
| Next Generation MCAS Achievement Levels: 440–470 Not Meeting Expectations; 470–500 Partially Meeting Expectations; 500–530 Meeting Expectations; 530–560 Exceeding Expectations |

**The percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS assessment in grades 3–8 was below the state rate by 4 percentage points in ELA (45 percent vs. 49 percent) and above the state rate by 2 percentage points in math (50 percent vs. 48 percent).**

* The percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations was below the state rate in ELA by 8 and 9 percentage points for English language learners and students with disabilities, respectively, and was below the state rate in math by 6 percentage points for students with disabilities.
* The percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations was above the state rate in math by 5 to 10 percentage points for high needs students, economically disadvantaged students, and English language learners.

| **Table 3: West Springfield Public Schools****Next-Generation MCAS ELA and Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations (M/E) Grades 3–8, 2017**  |
| --- |
| **Group** | **N** | **ELA M/E** | **State M/E** | **Above/Below State** | **N** | **Math M/E** | **State M/E** | **Above/Below State** |
| High Needs | 1,029 | 29% | 27% | 2% | 1,029 | 35% | 27% | 8% |
| Econ. Dis. | 888 | 31% | 29% | 2% | 886 | 37% | 27% | 10% |
| SWD | 345 | 4% | 13% | -9% | 345 | 8% | 14% | -6% |
| ELLs | 189 | 15% | 23% | -8% | 190 | 31% | 26% | 5% |
| All | 1,804 | 45% | 49% | -4% | 1,804 | 50% | 48% | 2% |

**The percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the MCAS assessment in 10th grade was 5 percentage points below the state rate in ELA and math.**

* In ELA, the percentage of students, scoring proficient or advanced was below the state rate by 4 percentage points for high needs students and economically disadvantaged students and below the state rate by 37 percentage points for English language learners.
* In math, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced was below the state rate by 10 and 17 percentage points for students with disabilities and English language learners, respectively.

| **Table 4: West Springfield Public Schools****MCAS ELA and Math Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grade 10, 2017** |
| --- |
| **Group** | **N** | **ELA** | **State** | **Above/Below State** | **N** | **Math** | **State** | **Above/Below State** |
| High Needs | 165 | 75% | 79% | -4% | 165 | 58% | 58% | 0% |
| Econ. Dis. | 138 | 77% | 81% | -4% | 138 | 62% | 60% | 2% |
| SWD | 62 | 68% | 68% | 0% | 62 | 32% | 42% | -10% |
| ELL | 27 | 22% | 59% | -37% | 27 | 22% | 39% | -17% |
| All | 293 | 86% | 91% | -5% | 293 | 74% | 79% | -5% |

**Between 2014 and 2017, science proficiency for all students did not improve, and declined by 5 and 6 percentage points for high needs and English language learners, respectively.**

| **Table 5: West Springfield Public Schools****MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grades 5, 8, and 10, 2014–2017** |
| --- |
| **Group** | **N (2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr change** | **State (2017)** |
| High Needs | 463 | 40% | 36% | 37% | 35% | -5% | 31% |
| Econ. Dis. | 385 | -- | 40% | 39% | 38% | -- | 32% |
| SWD | 170 | 18% | 17% | 17% | 21% | 3% | 21% |
| ELLs | 73 | 21% | 15% | 25% | 15% | -6% | 20% |
| All | 859 | 54% | 52% | 54% | 54% | 0% | 53% |

**In ELA, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS assessment was 4 percentage points below the state rate in grades 3–8 as a whole and below the state rate by 1 percentage point in the 5th grade, by 5 to 7 percentage points in the 3rd, 6th, and 7th grades, and by 11 percentage points in the 8th grade.**

**In math, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS assessment was 2 percentage points above the state rate in grades 3–8 as a whole and in the 5th grade, and above the state rate by 7 and 16 percentage points in the 3rd and 4th grades, respectively. The percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS assessment was below the state rate in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades.**

| **Table 6: West Springfield Public Schools****Next-Generation MCAS ELA and Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations (M/E) in Grades 3–8, 2017** |
| --- |
| **Grade** | **N** | **ELA M/E** | **State ELA** | **Difference** | **N** | **Math M/E** | **State Math** | **Difference** |
| 3 | 320 | 42% | 47% | -5% | 320 | 56% | 49% | 7% |
| 4 | 292 | 53% | 48% | 5% | 292 | 65% | 49% | 16% |
| 5 | 289 | 48% | 49% | -1% | 288 | 48% | 46% | 2% |
| 6 | 319 | 45% | 51% | -6% | 320 | 47% | 50% | -3% |
| 7 | 282 | 43% | 50% | -7% | 283 | 45% | 47% | -2% |
| 8 | 302 | 38% | 49% | -11% | 301 | 39% | 48% | -9% |
| 3–8 | 1,804 | 45% | 49% | -4% | 1,804 | 50% | 48% | 2% |

**Between 2014 and 2017, in science, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the MCAS assessment did not improve and declined by 2 and 7 percentage points in the 5th and 8th grades, respectively, and improved by 9 percentage points in the 10th grade.**

| **Table 7: West Springfield Public Schools****MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grades 5, 8, and 10, 2014–2017** |
| --- |
| **Grade** | **N (2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr change** | **State (2017)** |
| 5 | 289 | 53% | 53% | 50% | 51% | -2% | 46% |
| 8 | 300 | 44% | 36% | 40% | 37% | -7% | 40% |
| 10 | 270 | 65% | 69% | 74% | 74% | 9% | 74% |
| All | 859 | 54% | 52% | 54% | 54% | 0% | 53% |

**Between 2014 and 2017, in ELA the median student growth percentile (SGP) improved by 16 points in the 10th grade.**

| **Table 8: West Springfield Public Schools****ELA Median Student Growth Percentile (SGP), 2014–2017** |
| --- |
| **Grade** | **N (2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr change** | **State (2017)** |
| 3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 4 | 269 | 58.0 | 69.0 | 53.0 | 52.0 | -6.0 | 50.0 |
| 5 | 263 | 49.0 | 52.0 | 47.0 | 47.0 | -2.0 | 50.0 |
| 6 | 284 | 38.0 | 25.0 | 60.0 | 42.0 | 4.0 | 50.0 |
| 7 | 253 | 41.0 | 21.0 | 43.0 | 36.0 | -5.0 | 50.0 |
| 8 | 273 | 44.0 | 33.0 | 70.0 | 51.0 | 7.0 | 50.0 |
| 10 | 243 | 37.0 | 41.0 | 51.0 | 53.0 | 16.0 | 50.0 |
| Changes in SGP of 10 points or more are considered meaningful. |

**Between 2014 and 2017, in math the median SGP improved by 14 and 13 points in the 6th and 10th grades, respectively.**

| **Table 9: West Springfield Public Schools****Math Median Student Growth Percentile (SGP), 2014–2017** |
| --- |
| **Grade** | **N (2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr change** | **State (2017)** |
| 3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 4 | 268 | 57.0 | 60.0 | 61.0 | 65.0 | 8.0 | 50.0 |
| 5 | 262 | 46.5 | 50.0 | 40.0 | 44.5 | -2.0 | 50.0 |
| 6 | 284 | 28.0 | 31.0 | 31.0 | 42.0 | 14.0 | 50.0 |
| 7 | 254 | 42.5 | 54.0 | 56.0 | 39.5 | -3.0 | 50.0 |
| 8 | 270 | 41.0 | 50.0 | 53.0 | 35.0 | -6.0 | 50.0 |
| 10 | 241 | 31.0 | 37.0 | 42.5 | 44.0 | 13.0 | 50.0 |
| Changes in SGP of 10 points or more are considered meaningful. |

**In ELA, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS assessment ranged from 20 to 76 percent in the 3rd grade, from 27 to 78 percent in the 4th grade, and from 26 to 66 percent in the 5th grade in the district’s 5 elementary schools with reportable data. The percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS assessment was 46 percent, 44 percent, and 39 percent in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades, respectively, all below the state rates.**

| **Table 10: West Springfield Public Schools****Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations by Grade and School, 2017** |
| --- |
| **School** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **3–8** |
| Cowing Early Childhood | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Ashley  | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Coburn | 20% | 27% | 26% | -- | -- | -- | 24% |
| Fausey | 50% | 65% | 66% | -- | -- | -- | 60% |
| Memorial | 35% | 45% | 32% | -- | -- | -- | 39% |
| Mittineague | 44% | 78% | 42% | -- | -- | -- | 53% |
| Tatham | 76% | 71% | 57% | -- | -- | -- | 67% |
| West Springfield Middle | -- | -- | -- | 46% | 44% | 39% | 43% |
| District | 42% | 53% | 48% | 45% | 43% | 38% | 45% |
| State | 47% | 48% | 49% | 51% | 50% | 49% | 49% |

**In math, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS assessment ranged from 41 to 90 percent in the 3rd grade, from 50 to 82 percent in the 4th grade, and from 31 to 64 percent in the 5th grade in the district’s 5 elementary schools with reportable data. The percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS assessment was 47 percent, 45 percent, and 40 percent in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades, respectively, all below the state rates.**

| **Table 11: West Springfield Public Schools****Next-Generation MCAS Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations by Grade and School, 2017** |
| --- |
| **School** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **3–8** |
| Cowing Early Childhood | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Ashley | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Coburn | 41% | 53% | 31% | -- | -- | -- | 42% |
| Fausey | 65% | 82% | 64% | -- | -- | -- | 70% |
| Memorial | 43% | 50% | 35% | -- | -- | -- | 44% |
| Mittineague | 47% | 81% | 36% | -- | -- | -- | 53% |
| Tatham | 90% | 69% | 57% | -- | -- | -- | 71% |
| West Springfield Middle | -- | -- | -- | 47% | 45% | 40% | 44% |
| District | 56% | 65% | 48% | 47% | 45% | 39% | 50% |
| State | 49% | 49% | 46% | 50% | 47% | 48% | 48% |

**The percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the MCAS assessment in the 10th grade at West Springfield High was below the state rate by 3 percentage points in both ELA and math**.

| **Table 12: West Springfield Public Schools****MCAS ELA and Math Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grade 10, 2017** |
| --- |
| **School** | **ELA** | **Math** |
| West Springfield High | 88% | 76% |
| State | 91% | 79% |

**In science, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the MCAS assessment ranged from 24 percent in the 5th grade at Coburn to 72 percent at Fausey, and was 38 percent in the 8th grade at West Springfield Middle. Science proficiency was 76 percent in the 10th grade at West Springfield High.**

| **Table 13: West Springfield Public Schools****MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced by School and Grade, 2017** |
| --- |
| **School** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **10** | **Total** |
| Cowing Early Childhood | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Ashley | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Coburn | -- | -- | 24% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 24% |
| Fausey | -- | -- | 72% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 72% |
| Memorial | -- | -- | 53% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 53% |
| Mittineague | -- | -- | 33% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 33% |
| Tatham | -- | -- | 57% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 57% |
| West Springfield Middle | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 38% | -- | 38% |
| West Springfield High | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 76% | 76% |
| 21st Century Skills Academy | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| District | -- | -- | 51% | -- | -- | 37% | 74% | 54% |
| State | -- | -- | 46% | -- | -- | 40% | 74% | 53% |

**In ELA, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS assessment in the district’s elementary schools ranged from 24 to 67 percent and was 43 percent at West Springfield Middle.**

* The percentage of high needs students meeting or exceeding expectations ranged from 19 to 46 percent in the district’s elementary schools, and was 28 percent at West Springfield Middle.
* The percentage of economically disadvantaged students meeting or exceeding expectations ranged from 19 to 51 percent in the district’s elementary schools, and was 31 percent at West Springfield Middle.
* The percentage of students with disabilities meeting or exceeding expectations ranged from 3 to 17 percent in the district’s elementary schools and was 3 percent at West Springfield Middle.
* The percentage of English language learners meeting or exceeding expectations ranged from 10 to 27 percent in the district’s elementary schools and was 3 percent at West Springfield Middle.

**In math, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS assessment in the district’s elementary schools ranged from 42 to 71 percent and was 44 percent at West Springfield Middle.**

* The percentage of high needs students meeting or exceeding expectations ranged from 39 to 51 percent in the district’s elementary schools and was 28 percent at West Springfield Middle.
* The percentage of economically disadvantaged students meeting or exceeding expectations ranged from 39 to 56 percent in the district’s elementary schools and was 31 percent at West Springfield Middle.
* The percentage of students with disabilities meeting or exceeding expectations ranged from 8 to 27 percent in the district’s elementary schools and was 6 percent at West Springfield Middle.
* The percentage of English language learners meeting or exceeding expectations ranged from 27 to 35 percent in the district’s elementary schools and was 25 percent at West Springfield Middle.

| **Table 14: West Springfield Public Schools****Next-Generation MCAS ELA and Math Percent Meeting and Exceeding Expectations by School, 2017** |
| --- |
|  | **ELA** | **Math** |
| **School** | **All** | **High Needs** | **Econ. Dis.** | **SWD** | **ELLs** | **All** | **High Needs** | **Econ. Dis.** | **SWD** | **ELLs** |
| Cowing Early Childhood | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Ashley | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Coburn | 24% | 19% | 19% | 3% | 10% | 42% | 39% | 41% | 8% | 35% |
| Fausey | 60% | 37% | 43% | 6% | -- | 70% | 51% | 56% | 13% | -- |
| Memorial | 39% | 34% | 34% | 5% | 27% | 44% | 38% | 39% | 10% | 27% |
| Mittineague | 53% | 46% | 51% | 17% | -- | 53% | 44% | 49% | 17% | -- |
| Tatham | 67% | 40% | 50% | 7% | -- | 71% | 45% | 47% | 27% | -- |
| West Springfield Middle | 43% | 28% | 31% | 3% | 15% | 44% | 28% | 31% | 6% | 25% |
| District | 45% | 29% | 31% | 4% | 15% | 50% | 35% | 37% | 8% | 31% |

**Between 2014 and 2017, ELA proficiency on the MCAS assessment at West Springfield High improved by 4 percentage points for all students and by 3 and 16 percentage points for high needs students and students with disabilities, respectively.**

**Between 2014 and 2017, math proficiency on the MCAS assessment at West Springfield High did not improve for all students and declined by 5 and 6 percentage points for high needs students and English language learners, respectively, and improved by 4 percentage points for students with disabilities.**

| **Table 15: West Springfield Public Schools****MCAS ELA and Math Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grade 10, 2014-2017** |
| --- |
|  | **ELA** | **Math** |
| **School** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** |
| West Springfield High | 84% | 86% | 90% | 88% | 4 | 76% | 78% | 76% | 76% | 0 |
| High Needs | 75% | 74% | 81% | 78% | 3 | 66% | 60% | 62% | 61% | -5 |
| Econ. Dis. | -- | 74% | 84% | 80% | -- | -- | 64% | 68% | 66% | -- |
| ELLs | 26% | 42% | 59% | 24% | -2 | 30% | 52% | 44% | 24% | -6 |
| SWD | 55% | 61% | 63% | 71% | 16 | 31% | 33% | 30% | 35% | 4 |

**Between 2014 and 2017, in science, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the MCAS assessment improved in 1 of the 5 elementary schools with reportable data. Science proficiency declined by 7 percentage points at West Springfield Middle and improved by 9 percentage points at West Springfield High.**

* Science proficiency for high needs students improved by 2 and 3 percentage points and declined by 6 and 10 percentage points in the 4 elementary schools with reportable data. Science proficiency declined by 13 percentage points and improved by 7 percentage points at West Springfield Middle and West Springfield High.
* Science proficiency for English language learners between 2014 and 2017 declined by 13 percentage points at Coburn Elementary, and by 19 and 3 percentage points at West Springfield Middle and West Springfield High.
* In 2017, science proficiency for economically disadvantaged students ranged from 25 to 50 percent in the district’s elementary schools and was 19 and 64 percent at West Springfield Middle and West Springfield High, respectively.
* In 2017, science proficiency for students with disabilities ranged from 6 to 13 percent in the district’s elementary schools and was 7 and 49 percent at West Springfield Middle and West Springfield High, respectively.

| **Table 16: West Springfield Public Schools****MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Science by School and Subgroup, 2014–2017** |
| --- |
| **School** | **N (2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** |
| Cowing Early Childhood | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Ashley | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Coburn | 62 | 20% | 34% | 31% | 24% | 4 |
| High Needs | 54 | 19% | 27% | 26% | 22% | 3% |
| Econ. Dis. | 46 | -- | 32% | 30% | 26% | -- |
| SWD | 16 | 6% | 8% | 0% | 6% | 0% |
| ELLs | 18 | 24% | 14% | 16% | 11% | -13% |
| Fausey | 97 | 72% | 79% | 61% | 72% | 0 |
| High Needs | 31 | 51% | 65% | 40% | 45% | -6% |
| Econ. Dis. | 26 | -- | 67% | 46% | 50% | -- |
| SWD | 15 | 38% | 50% | 29% | 13% | -25% |
| ELLs | 3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Memorial | 34 | 53% | 33% | 61% | 53% | 0 |
| High Needs | 25 | 50% | 26% | 56% | 52% | 2% |
| Econ. Dis. | 23 | -- | 28% | 53% | 48% | -- |
| SWD | 5 | 20% | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| ELLs | 6 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Mittineague | 33 | 47% | 42% | 40% | 33% | -14 |
| High Needs | 20 | 40% | 35% | 31% | 30% | -10% |
| Econ. Dis. | 16 | -- | 33% | 31% | 25% | -- |
| SWD | 6 | 12% | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| ELLs | 2 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Tatham | 54 | 74% | 67% | 72% | 57% | -17 |
| High Needs | 15 | -- | 56% | 64% | 20% | -- |
| Econ. Dis. | 10 | -- | 60% | 73% | 30% | -- |
| SWD | 6 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| ELLs | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| West Springfield Middle | 296 | 45% | 38% | 42% | 38% | -7 |
| High Needs | 159 | 30% | 24% | 21% | 17% | -13% |
| Econ. Dis. | 133 | -- | 28% | 22% | 19% | -- |
| SWD | 57 | 6% | 8% | 10% | 7% | 1% |
| ELLs | 24 | 19% | 0% | 5% | 0% | -19 |
| West Springfield High | 263 | 67% | 70% | 74% | 76% | 9 |
| High Needs | 139 | 55% | 49% | 58% | 62% | 7 |
| Econ. Dis. | 115 | -- | 56% | 65% | 64% | -- |
| SWD | 51 | 29% | 16% | 25% | 49% | 20 |
| ELLs | 19 | 24% | 20% | 41% | 21% | -3 |

**Between 2013 and 2016, the district’s four-year cohort graduation rate improved by 4.2 percentage points for all students and improved by 9.1 to 12.2 percentage points for high needs students, economically disadvantaged students, and students with disabilities.**

| **Table 17: West Springfield Public Schools****Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates, 2013–2016** |
| --- |
| **Group** | **N** **(2016)** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2016)** |
| High needs | 219 | 72.2% | 74.5% | 69.7% | 81.7% | 9.5 | 79.1% |
| Economically Disadvantaged\* | 201 | 72.5% | 75.8% | 69.6% | 81.6% | 9.1 | 78.4% |
| ELLs | 23 | 73.1% | 60.0% | 62.5% | 60.9% | -12.2 | 64.1% |
| SWD | 69 | 58.8% | 60.3% | 50.8% | 71.0% | 12.2 | 71.8% |
| African American | 14 | 90.0% | 72.7% | 44.4% | 78.6% | -11.4 | 78.9% |
| Asian | 14 | 77.8% | 70.6% | 73.7% | 85.7% | 7.9 | 92.7% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 67 | 65.9% | 65.7% | 68.8% | 88.1% | 22.2 | 72.7% |
| Multi-Race, non-Hisp./Lat. | 6 | 85.7% | 40.0% | 80.0% | 50.0% | -35.7 | 84.3% |
| White | 209 | 84.3% | 86.9% | 85.6% | 86.6% | 2.3 | 91.9% |
| All  | 310 | 81.6% | 81.2% | 80.7% | 85.8% | 4.2 | 87.5% |
| \* Four-year cohort graduation rate for students from low income families used for 2013, 2014, and 2015 rates. |

**Between 2012 and 2015, the district’s five-year cohort graduation rate improved by 1.2 percentage points for all students, and improved by 1.1 to 4.8 percentage points for high needs students, economically disadvantaged students, English language learners, and students with disabilities.**

| **Table 18: West Springfield Public Schools****Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates, 2012–2015** |
| --- |
| **Group** | **N** **(2015)** | **2012** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2015)** |
| High needs | 175 | 73.2% | 75.3% | 76.6% | 74.9% | 1.7 | 82.0% |
| Economically Disadvantaged\* | 158 | 72.7% | 75.4% | 77.6% | 74.1% | 1.4 | 81.6% |
| ELLs | 24 | 74.4% | 76.9% | 65.0% | 79.2% | 4.8 | 70.2% |
| SWD | 61 | 57.9% | 63.2% | 63.2% | 59.0% | 1.1 | 74.5% |
| African American | 9 | 70.0% | 90.0% | 72.7% | 55.6% | -14.4 | 82.3% |
| Asian | 19 | 87.5% | 77.8% | 76.5% | 78.9% | -8.6 | 94.1% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 48 | 65.2% | 68.2% | 68.6% | 70.8% | 5.6 | 75.8% |
| Multi-Race, non-Hisp./Lat. | 10 | 85.7% | 100.0% | 50.0% | 80.0% | -5.7 | 88.0% |
| White | 215 | 86.7% | 85.9% | 87.3% | 88.8% | 2.1 | 93.1% |
| All  | 301 | 82.9% | 83.4% | 82.5% | 84.1% | 1.2 | 89.4% |
| \* Four-year cohort graduation rate for students from low income families used for 2012, 2013, and 2014 rates. |

**In 2016, in-school suspension rates were 0.0 percent for all students and each subgroup with reportable data.**

| **Table 19: West Springfield Public Schools****In-School Suspension Rates by Subgroup, 2013–2016** |
| --- |
| **Group** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2016)** |
| High Needs | 0.3% | 0.2% | 0.0% | 0.0% | -- | 2.9% |
| Economically disadvantaged\* | -- | -- | 0.0% | 0.0% | -- | 3.2% |
| ELLs | -- | -- | 0.0% | 0.0% | -- | 1.9% |
| SWD | 0.7% | 0.7% | 0.1% | 0.0% | -- | 3.5% |
| African American | 0.6% | -- | -- | 0.0% | -- | 3.7% |
| Asian | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 0.6% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 0.6% | 0.4% | 0.0% | 0.0% | -- | 3.1% |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic or Latino | 0.0% | 0.8% | -- | -- | -- | 2.1% |
| White | 0.1% | 0.1% | 0.0% | 0.0% | -- | 1.4% |
| All  | 0.2% | 0.2% | 0.0% | 0.0% | -- | 1.9% |

\*Suspension rates for students from low income families used for 2013 and 2014 rates.

**Between 2013 and 2016, out-of-school suspension rates declined by 1.5 percentage points for all students and for each subgroup with reportable data.**

| **Table 20: West Springfield Public Schools****Out-of-School Suspension Rates by Subgroup, 2013–2016** |
| --- |
| **Group** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2016)** |
| High Needs | 5.5% | 4.8% | 3.6% | 3.0% | -2.5 | 4.9% |
| Economically disadvantaged\* | -- | -- | 3.3% | 2.8% | -- | 5.6% |
| ELLs | -- | -- | 2.3% | 2.6% | -- | 4.0% |
| SWD | 9.6% | 9.0% | 5.8% | 5.1% | -4.5 | 5.9% |
| African American | 9.1% | -- | -- | 3.3% | -5.8 | 6.9% |
| Asian | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 0.8% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 7.9% | 6.5% | 4.1% | 3.4% | -4.5 | 5.7% |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic or Latino | 8.7% | 5.0% | -- | -- | -- | 3.4% |
| White | 2.6% | 3.5% | 2.2% | 2.0% | -0.6 | 1.7% |
| All  | 3.8% | 3.9% | 2.5% | 2.3% | -1.5 | 2.9% |

\* Suspension rates for students from low income families used for 2013 and 2014 rates.

**West Springfield’s dropout rate was 2.1 percent in 2013 and 2.2 percent in 2016 for all students, compared to the 2016 state rate of 1.9 percent.**

| **Table 21: West Springfield Public Schools****Drop-out Rates by Subgroup, 2013–2016** |
| --- |
| **Group** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2016)** |
| High Needs | 2.7% | 3.2% | 3.4% | 3.1% | 0.4 | 3.7% |
| Economically disadvantaged\* | -- | -- | 2.9% | 2.3% | -- | 4.1% |
| ELLs | 1.7% | 1.5% | 4.1% | 3.7% | 2.0 | 6.6% |
| SWD | 3.5% | 4.6% | 5.5% | 3.8% | 0.3 | 3.1% |
| African American | 4.7% | 2.3% | 0.0% | 0.0% | -4.7 | 3.2% |
| Asian | 3.4% | 1.6% | 2.7% | 2.5% | -0.9 | 0.7% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 3.8% | 4.3% | 3.2% | 5.0% | 1.2 | 4.5% |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic or Latino | 6.3% | 6.7% | 0.0% | 15.0% | 8.7 | 2.4% |
| White | 1.4% | 1.8% | 2.3% | 1.3% | -0.1 | 1.1% |
| All  | 2.1% | 2.3% | 2.3% | 2.2% | 0.1 | 1.9% |
| \*Drop-out rates for students from low income families used for 2013 and 2014 rates. |

Leadership and Governance

***Contextual Background***

The current superintendent served as the high-school principal before his appointment as interim superintendent in 2014 and permanent superintendent in July 2015. Between 2014 and 2018, leadership changes have resulted in eight new or relocated administrators at the school and district levels. In the fall of 2017, three new members were elected to the seven-member school committee.

The district has worked collaboratively with the city to consolidate district and municipal services. The city now oversees the technology, custodial, and maintenance departments. District and municipal leaders expressed satisfaction with the outcomes of this cooperative approach.

The city council and the school committee have worked collaboratively to define their respective roles in the district’s budget development process.

***Strength Finding***

1. **The superintendent actively collaborates with the teachers’ association.**
	1. The superintendent communicates regularly with teachers’ association leaders.
2. Teachers’ association leaders have monthly meetings with the superintendent.

 a. A memorandum of agreement between the school committee and the teachers’ association states that the association leadership team will meet at least monthly with the superintendent during the term of the collective bargaining agreement to “review and discuss matters of mutual concern.”

1. Teachers’ association leaders stated that the superintendent informs them about what is happening in the district, even at times when he is not required to do so.
2. School committee members told the review team that they meet regularly with central office administrators and teachers’ association leaders to discuss concerns and resolve issues collaboratively.

a. The memorandum of agreement between the school committee and the teachers’ association states that the school committee negotiation team and the superintendent will meet with the association negotiating team to “discuss matters of interest and concern.”

1. Teachers’ association leaders and school committee members told the review team that fewer formal grievances have been filed recently as a direct result of this collaborative approach.
	1. A review of the memorandum of agreement in the collective bargaining agreement indicated that the teachers’ association has a standing representative on all districtwide and ad-hoc committees, such as the committee working on the District Improvement Plan (DIP) and the professional development committee, and selects teacher representatives to serve on administrative hiring committees.
	2. The collective bargaining agreement includes a compact for collaboration, which states that the administration is “nurturing a partnership with the teachers’ association dedicated to the improvement of instruction, schools, and the school system,” and teachers are “taking responsibility for the improvement of the quality of teaching and learning.”

**Impact**: When the superintendent, school committee, and teachers’ association work together, a formal system of teacher leadership is defined, issues are collaboratively resolved, and district leaders share responsibility for improving teaching and learning.

***Challenges and Areas for Growth***

**2. The district’s planning documents do not include measurable goals that are informed by disaggregated student performance data.**  **Stakeholder participation in district improvement planning is limited.**

 **A.** A documentreview indicated that the West Springfield 2015–2018District Improvement Plan (DIP) and the School Improvement Plans (SIPs) generally do not include analysis of student performance data and measurable goals.

 1. For example, the DIP contains seven strategic objectives, each accompanied by action steps, persons responsible, and a timeline. Strategic objective #5 is “Address the social and emotional needs of all students.” The first outcome under that priority reads, “Completed report of available data.”

a. The plan does not contain expected results expressed as SMART goals (Specific and Strategic; Measurable; Action-Oriented; Rigorous, Realistic, and Results Focused; and Timed and Tracked).

 b. The plan generally does not identify measurable outcomes for each year, including student achievement goals that represent progress in reducing achievement gaps among student groups.

 c**.** While the DIP cites growth on standardized tests and benchmark assessments as one measurable outcome for strategic objective #2 (“Identify, pilot and implement an inclusionary model for consideration in West Springfield), the DIP does not use student performance data and other data sources to inform the plan’s strategic objectives.

 i. The superintendent told the review team that “anecdotal” information was used to develop the strategic objectives of the 2015–2018 DIP.

 **B.** Although the DIP and the SIPs do not include measurable outcomes, they do include process indicators that describe evidence of change.

1. For example, process indicators in the SIPs include increasing parent-teacher conference and meeting participation; using assessments for student learning, data analysis, and re-teaching and/or intervention; allocating resources to provide academic support interventions; and implementing effective inclusionary instructional strategies.

 **C**. The SIPS have different levels of stakeholder participation in their development, and vary in alignment with the DIP.

**D**. Stakeholder participation on the district improvement planning committee is limited and the district does not have a procedure for gathering feedback from unrepresented stakeholders.

1. The district improvement planning committee consists of administrators, school committee members, and teachers ’association representatives. Students, other staff, parents, and municipal officials are not included in the district improvement planning committee, and the district does not have a procedure for gathering feedback from these stakeholders.

 a. Teachers and other staff expressed concern about the absence of “buy-in” because of their limited role in the development of the DIP and said that they did not know about conversations about the development of the 2019–2022 DIP.

**Impact**: Without full stakeholder participation in the development of the DIP, the district cannot ensure that the plan represents a shared vision and goals. Without data-based SMART goals and measurable outcomes in the district’s planning documents, stakeholders do not know the rationale for district goals or the extent to which progress is being made.

***Recommendation***

**1. The district should revise its three- to five-year District Improvement Plan and align other planning documents with it.**

**A**. Under the leadership of the superintendent, a working group with wide representation should analyze student performance data and other data sources and develop a District Improvement Plan (DIP).

1. It is critically important that this stakeholder group recognize and be committed to the role of the DIP in creating a blueprint for success, achieving greater teacher effectiveness, and strongly influencing each School Improvement Plan.

 **B**. The DIP should include the district’s mission or vision, goals, and priorities for action.

 1. DIP goals should be SMART (Specific and Strategic; Measurable; Action-Oriented; and Rigorous, Realistic, and Results-Focused).

**C.** The district should develop an annual action plan based on priorities in the DIP; it should contain measurable outcomes that can be achieved in one year.

**D.** DIP performance goals for students should drive the development, implementation, and modification of the district’s educational programs.

1. School Improvement Plans should be created in alignment with the DIP and based on an analysis of student achievement data.

 **E.** The superintendent and the principals should periodically report to the school committee and the community on progress toward the achievement goals in the DIP and the SIPs.

1. The superintendent and the school committee should consider aligning some goals in the Superintendent’s Educator Plan (as part of the district’s educator evaluation system) with DIP goals.

**Benefits:** A broad effort to develop and communicate a District Improvement Plan and to include all stakeholders in improvement planning will refocus the district on greater teacher effectiveness and improved student achievement. The District Improvement and School Improvement Plans will provide guidance and ensure that the work at each level is designed to accomplish the district’s short- and long-term goals.

**Recommended resources:**

* ESE’s *District Analysis and Review Tool (DART)* ([www.mass.gov/ese/dart](http://www.mass.gov/ese/dart)) is organized by the District Standards and can help district leaders see where similar districts in the state are showing progress in specific areas to identify possible best practice.
	+ - ESE’s *Statistical Reports* page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/reports/>) provides links to downloadable district-level reports on graduation rates, grade retention, dropout rates, educator evaluation data, enrollment, mobility, and other data.
* ESE’s *District Standards and Indicators* (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/district-standards-indicators.pdf>) identify the characteristics of effective districts in supporting and sustaining school improvement.
	+ The *Conditions for School Effectiveness Self-Assessment* (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/school-effect-self-assessment.pdf>) is a tool for conducting a scan of current practice, identifying areas of strength, and highlighting areas requiring greater focus.
* ESE’s *Planning for Success* tools (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/success/>) support the improvement planning process by spotlighting practices, characteristics, and behaviors that support effective planning and implementation and meet existing state requirements for improvement planning.
* *What Makes a Goal Smarter?* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/presentations/SMARTGoals/Handout5.pdf>) is a description of SMART goals with accompanying examples. The handout was designed to support educators in developing goals as part of the educator evaluation system, but could also be a useful reference for the district as it develops or refines its DIP and SIPs.

The *Turnaround Practices Field Guide* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/howitworks/turnaround-practices-field-guide.pdf>) provides educators with examples of school specific practices, in authentic school contexts, which have contributed to turnaround success, so that those engaged in turnaround can apply these practices in their own schools and accelerate turnaround efforts.

Curriculum and Instruction

***Contextual Background***

The central office position of director of curriculum, instruction, and assessment was added to West Springfield’s organizational structure in 2015. The superintendent previously assumed responsibility for oversight of curriculum and instruction districtwide. The director is in his third year and is responsible for the coordination and implementation of the Pre-K-12 curriculum review process, all instructional initiatives, the district assessment system and related data analysis, and the district’s professional development (PD) program. Several school positions support the work of this office.

Two vice principals for curriculum and instruction were add to the organizational structure in 2017. One vice principal is assigned to the middle school and replaced the school’s ELA and math coaches, and the second vice principal is assigned to the high school. Both vice principals provide leadership for the instructional programs of the schools and meet with the director to coordinate district and school initiatives and improvement planning. The high-school vice principal collaborates with department chairs to support teachers with curriculum revision and instructional planning. The high-school support structure also includes two full-time ELA and math coaches who serve as department chairs and do not have regularly assigned teaching responsibilities.

One ELA coach and one mathematics coach serve all the elementary schools. The district does not have content support personnel in science at the elementary level. The ELA and mathematics coaches are the only support personnel at the elementary level in addition to the principals. A document review indicated that the coaches are responsible for facilitating professional learning communities (PLCs) and curriculum subcommittees, organizing and conducting PD sessions, modeling instructional strategies, facilitating data analysis, and supporting teachers in their content areas.

While the district has a process for ongoing curriculum review and revision that focuses on alignment with the state curriculum frameworks, this process is not comprehensive and fully implemented. Curriculum maps have been aligned with the frameworks in ELA and mathematics. The science maps are less complete. The English Language Learner (ELL) program has a new director. At the time of the onsite in December 2017, work had not begun on an ELL curriculum. The district had recently purchased instructional materials for its increasing numbers of English language learners and provides sheltered content and English language development instruction.

Although the district has supported several science materials pilots, there are few science instructional materials at the elementary level. Elementary teachers have developed science kits for temporary use pending the purchase of commercial materials.

The district has adopted the state’s educator evaluation rubric to monitor effective instruction and promote professional growth. Central office and school-based administrators conduct monthly walkthroughs to gauge progress toward meeting the district’s strategic goals. The walkthrough team consists of the superintendent; the director of curriculum, instruction, and assessment; the special services administrator; and school administrators. The district plans to include the ELL director in this process. School-based administrators conduct weekly walkthroughs to measure progress on school improvement goals and improving the quality of instruction.

Administrators and teachers at all levels have a common understanding of the district’s expectations for teaching and learning. The district places high priority on the power elements in its educator evaluation rubric. These elements are closely associated with the characteristics in ESE’s Instructional Inventory. The power elements include subject matter knowledge, rigorous standards-based unit design, adjustment to practice, student engagement, and meeting students’ diverse needs. Teachers are expected to include the following components in their lesson plans: learning objectives and agendas; accountable talk (learning conversations and turn-and-talk); formative assessment; use of educational technology; and project-based learning activities. In addition, teachers are expected to use the Depth of Knowledge critical thinking tool to promote higher-order thinking. The district has adopted the Workshop Model in kindergarten through grade 8, a balanced literacy approach.

While the district’s PD program addresses the expectations for teaching and learning, the quality of instruction remains a significant challenge in the district. In observed classrooms at the high school, the team found a consistently lower incidence of all characteristics of effective instruction. In all observed classes, the review team found a low incidence of student engagement, higher-order thinking, inclusive practices, and use of varied instructional strategies.

Teachers reported that too many initiatives have been imposed. They expressed the opinion that with each new initiative, there has been a “reset” of focus, which has limited or prevented progress toward successful implementation of district initiatives. Teachers told the team that expectations were not as clear as they once were and said that there was a perceived lack of support because of leadership inconsistencies.

Administrators also stated the need for more direction from the central office to ensure that all students experience the same core content learning experiences, especially in ELA.

***Challenges and Areas for Growth***

**The district does not have a process in place that ensures the timely review and revision of curriculum to guarantee that updated and comprehensive curricula will be implemented in all classrooms.**

 **A**. The district does not have a documented and shared process for curriculum review and revision.

1. Administrators expressed the view that some teachers and administrators were not familiar with the district’s curriculum review and revision process; that it was not an embedded district practice; and that curriculum review and revision depended upon available funding.
2. Teachers were not clear about the curriculum review and revision process and those responsible for overseeing it. However, teacher leaders who have defined roles in curriculum support and facilitation were familiar with the district’s curriculum review and revision process.

**B.** The district provides opportunities during the school day for curriculum review and revision. Teachers and administrators stated that these opportunities vary by level and content area. They added that curriculum meetings are not always devoted exclusively to curricular review and revision, and that these meetings are sometimes not well facilitated to support the intended outcomes.

At the elementary level, opportunities to discuss the curriculum are limited. Curriculum review and revision takes place during the summer, which enables teacher representatives from all elementary schools to participate in the work. Elementary curriculum development teams composed of 9 to 14 educators also meet monthly for 2 to 3 hours. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) meet weekly at all elementary schools; however, not all elementary teachers have common planning time.

At the middle school, some curriculum work is completed over the summer and teachers discuss the curriculum twice weekly during their content-area meetings. Teachers also have common planning time. Horizontal articulation discussions sometimes take place during grade-level meetings; however, the review team was told that the loss of the ELA and math coaches has made vertical articulation a challenge.

High-school ELA and math teachers have dedicated PLC time twice weekly. Teachers analyze data, review the curriculum, and plan instruction during this time. The schedule does not permit other departments to hold PLCs. All departments hold two meetings each month, some of which are dedicated to curriculum review and revision. Some professional development time is also provided for curriculum review and revision.

One administrator expressed the common view that curricular revision was “not really happening,” and added that special educators and ELL teachers were expected to attend curriculum meetings during the school day, leaving the neediest students without the help they require. Although eight “curriculum days” are identified on the district calendar, administrators said that a “curriculum day” consists of one hour during which teachers fine-tune curriculum maps. Curriculum day agendas vary by school, and teachers do not always focus exclusively on the curriculum.

The district does not have a process and dedicated time for vertical articulation of curriculum across grades and levels. Interviewees reported that coaches, department chairs, and the vice principals for curriculum and instruction facilitate this work. However, special educators and ELL teachers vary by level. Generally, time is dedicated for curriculum work at the discretion of school-based instructional leaders.

**C.** The district’s Pre–K–12 curriculum is at various stages of alignment with the current Massachusetts curriculum frameworks and the WIDA English Language Development Standards.

 1. The district’s K–12 ELA and mathematics curriculum maps are aligned with the 2017 Massachusetts E LA/Literacy and Mathematics Frameworks. These curriculum maps are comprehensive and include common elements such as essential questions, timelines, resources, assessments, scoring rubrics, and instructional strategies.

 2. The majority of K–8 science curriculum maps are complete. Mapping templates and content are comprehensive and correspond with the components of the district’s ELA and mathematics curriculum documents.

 a. At the time of the review in December 2017, the following K–12 science curriculum maps were not aligned with the 2016 Massachusetts Science and Technology/Engineering Curriculum Framework: kindergarten, grade 6, high-school biology courses 1 and 2, and high-school earth science, semester 2.

 3. The district has purchased instructional materials for English language learners at each level including *National Geographic* at the elementary level, *Inside* at the middle school, and *Edge* at the high school. Administrators stated and a review of documents confirmed that the district has not developed a K–12 English language development curriculum that is based on the WIDA English Language Development Standards.

**Impact**: Without fully aligned curricula, a clearly documented and articulated process for curriculum review and revision, adequate materials to support instruction, and regular and timely opportunities for horizontal and vertical collaboration at each level, the district cannot ensure that all students have access to a current, high-quality, and standards-aligned curriculum.

**The district does not have sufficient leadership and meeting time to support curricular and instructional improvement.**

1. Content leadership personnel vary by level and do not adequately meet the needs of teachers in certain grades and content areas.
2. At the elementary level, principals serve as the instructional leaders of their schools. The two elementary content coaches for ELA and mathematics largely facilitate curriculum work by supporting classroom teachers and facilitating professional development, best practices, and data analysis in all elementary schools.

 a. The district does not have a coach to support elementary teachers in science.

1. Curriculum and instructional leadership positions at the middle school include the vice principal for curriculum and instruction and content department chairs for ELA, mathematics, science, and social studies.
2. The high school has the largest number of instructional leadership positions, including a vice principal for curriculum and instruction and department chairs in all content areas.

 4. Administrators and teachers at all levels expressed the need for additional content support to better meet the demands of curriculum development and teachers’ implementation of content standards and instructional programs.

 a. Teacher leaders and administrators expressed the need for more content leadership in science, particularly at the elementary level. Interviewees reported that a science leadership position was eliminated approximately nine years before the onsite review and has not been restored.

 5. While elementary administrators rely heavily on the elementary ELA and math coaches, some expressed the view that the coaches’ roles were not well-defined and that two coaches cannot effectively meet the needs of teachers at all five schools. Citing the district’s stagnant performance in ELA on the MCAS tests, administrators expressed the need for central coordination of the elementary ELA program and curriculum in order to free the coaches to focus more on supporting teachers to improve the quality of instruction.

 6. Administrators stated that vertical alignment and articulation is difficult to accomplish with the elimination of the coaches at the middle school. Some middle-school teachers expressed concern that the elimination of coaches at the middle school may jeopardize progress in the articulation of content expectations and the development of assessments.

 7. Administrators stated that having ELA and mathematics coaches at the high school is advantageous. Because these coaches typically do not have a teaching assignment, they have been able to work with their departments on curriculum and instruction.

1. Time for curriculum development is not equitably distributed among teams.

Teacher leaders and administrators reported the need for more consistent dedicated time with the director of curriculum instruction and assessment to create and maintain understanding of the district’s vision, direction, and action plans for curriculum and instruction initiatives. Interviewees stated that the director once had regularly scheduled meetings with leaders, but this was no longer a consistent practice.

The ELA and mathematics curriculum committees meet monthly for a half-day. However, the science curriculum team, for example, meets only three times annually.

**Impact**: Without support systems for teaching and learning that include content specialists ; regular and timely opportunities for horizontal and vertical collaboration across levels; and opportunities for instructional leaders to meet regularly to set, plan for, and implement the district’s instructional vision, educators at all levels cannot ensure that all students have access to a current rigorous curriculum and high-quality instruction.

**3. In observed classes, the quality of instruction was inconsistent across levels. There was a consistently lower incidence of characteristics of effective instruction in observed classes at the high school.**

*The Instructional Inventory focus areas and related characteristics presented in this section of the report have been prioritized to assist the district in identifying instructional challenges across all levels. Where applicable, these characteristics have been aligned with the district’s educator evaluation rubric power elements.*

1. **Focus Area #2: Student Engagement & Higher-Order Thinking** In observed classes at all levels, the review team found a low incidence of student-centered instruction that is engaging, promotes meaningful student discourse about content and ideas, and provides opportunities for students to engage in higher-order thinking and meaningful, real-world tasks.[[2]](#footnote-2)

The review team found sufficient and compelling evidence of students engaged in higher-order thinking that required strategic or extended thinking (Depth of Knowledge/DOK level 3–4 tasks) in 41 percent of elementary classes, in 47 percent of middle-school classes, and in only 19 percent of high-school classes.

Students were engaged with meaningful, real-world tasks in 62 percent of elementary classrooms, in only 47 percent of middle-school classes, and in only 37 percent of high-school classrooms.

Observed lessons that did promote higher-order thinking were student centered and designed to ensure rich discussions about the lesson content. For example, teachers asked students to articulate strategies for solving complex math problems and engaged them in real-world tasks such as bridge design. In these lessons, teachers often engaged students in a variety of center-based activities. Students were responsible for explaining their own thinking, gathering information, designing and constructing models, and providing textual evidence in order to demonstrate understanding of the lesson objectives.

In the majority of observed classes, students were not provided sufficient opportunities to engage in higher-order thinking. In these classrooms, lessons were teacher directed in a lecture style format. Most questions posed by teachers required “Yes” or “No” responses, and teachers did not probe to extend student thinking. Instruction was largely focused on level 1 and level 2 DOK tasks, and student work consisted of the completion of worksheets.

While administrators told the team that accountable talk and learning conversations were instructional expectations, in observed classes the review team found sufficient and compelling evidence of students communicating their thoughts and ideas with each other as well as with teachers in 56 percent of elementary classrooms, in 47 percent of middle-school classrooms, and in only 25 percent of high-school classrooms.

In many observed classes, students worked individually with little opportunity to share their ideas with each other. Observed student discussions were often social in nature and off-task. This was especially evident in high-school classes.

When students responded to questions, teachers did not consistently require them to extend their thinking by asking them to elaborate on their thoughts. Most observed exchanges between students and the teachers consisted of short answers to literal questions.

1. **Focus Area #1: Learning Objectives & Expectations** In observed high-school classes, team members saw low incidence of effective instructional design and of the teacher checking for understanding. Review team members observed a higher incidence of these characteristics in elementary and middle-school classes.[[3]](#footnote-3) In observed classrooms, the review team found that assistants to general education teachers rarely assumed an active role with students. In most observed classes, while the teacher delivered instruction assistants watched and during work periods assistants focused on only one student.

Observers found sufficient and compelling evidence that teachers conducted frequent checks for student understanding, provided feedback to students, and made on-the-spot adjustments to instruction in 70 percent of elementary classrooms, in 76 percent of middle-school classrooms, and in only 31 percent of observed high-school classes (see rubric element I-B.2 Adjustment to Practice).

The review team observed sufficient and compelling evidence that the teacher included classroom activities that were well matched to the lesson objective in 75 percent of elementary classrooms, in 70 percent of middle-school classrooms, and in only 37 percent of high-school classrooms (see rubric element I-A.3 Rigorous Standards-based Unit Design).

Observers found sufficient and compelling evidence of teachers demonstrating subject matter knowledge in 82 percent of elementary classrooms, in 89 percent of middle-school classes, but in only 37 percent of high-school classes.

Elementary and middle school teachers frequently explained lesson content with fluency and in multiple ways; anticipated and addressed misconceptions; and provided a broader context for student learning (see rubric element I-A.1 Subject Matter Knowledge).

Team members observed sufficient and compelling evidence of teachers ensuring that students understand what they should be learning in the lesson and why in 56 percent of elementary classrooms, in 71 percent of middle-school classes, and in only 38 percent of high-school classrooms.

Many elementary and middle-school teachers shared and posted lesson objectives, referred to them during the lesson, and conducted exit activities to gauge students’ understanding of the objectives (see rubric element I-A.3 Rigorous Standards-based Unit Design).

When asked by review team members, some high-school students did not seem to understand what they were learning and why.

1. **Focus Area #3: Inclusive Practice & Classroom Culture** In all observed classes, the team saw a low incidence of lessons designed to challenge and support all students regardless of learning needs and of teachers using a variety of instructional strategies to ensure students are engaged and have access to the lesson content. While the majority of observed elementary and middle- school classes were characterized by respectful behavior and tone and established routines, a low incidence of observed high school classes had a climate conducive to learning.[[4]](#footnote-4)

Review team members found sufficient and compelling evidence of teachers using a variety of instructional strategies to motivate and engage students in 50 percent of observed elementary classes, in 53 percent of middle-school classes, and in only 6 percent of high-school classes (see rubric element II-A.2 Student Engagement, II-A.3 Meeting Diverse Needs).

In classes where effective engagement and motivational strategies were observed, teachers helped students make connections to prior learning; offered choices; set up learning centers around a common skill or concept; used visual cues, such as posters and anchor charts; and used turn and talk and accountable talk to further students’ learning.

The review team infrequently observed high-school teachers modifying the learning process or product for students or providing opportunities for students to share their thinking and vet their ideas with peers.

The review team observed lessons that were challenging and accessible for all learners in 54 percent of elementary classrooms, in just 36 percent of middle-school classrooms, and in only 25 percent of high-school classes (see rubric element II-A.3 Meeting Diverse Needs).

In the majority of observed classes, lessons did not have multiple means of content representation such as anchor charts, word walls, content posters, interactive technology, manipulatives, and artifacts. Activities were not scaffolded and did not offer multiple entry points so that students could readily access content knowledge.

**Impact**: When students do not have consistent opportunities to engage in higher-order thinking and to communicate their thoughts and ideas with each other, they are not developing and using the skills they will need for college, career, and civic participation.

***Recommendations***

**1.** **The district should clarify who is responsible for oversight of curriculum review and revision. The district should document and share its multi-year process for the regular and timely review, revision, and alignment of curricula.**

**A.** The district should convene a representative group including, but not limited to, teachers and instructional leaders to develop a systematic plan to review and/or revise ELA, mathematics, and science curricula to ensure alignment.

1. The plan should include analysis of student performance data and other data sources, and should involve educators from different levels and areas of expertise.

 2. The plan should include a timeline for when K**–**12 curricula in each discipline will be reviewed and updated, identify participants, and dedicate time within and among schools for this ongoing work.

 a. The plan should include regular meetings to align the curriculum horizontally (across classrooms and schools) and vertically (between grades and schools).

 3. This multi-year plan should be posted to the district curriculum website and shared with faculty and the larger community.

 **B.** The district should identify resources---including time during and/or after school and over the summer, professional development, and compensation as appropriate---which would be needed to support this work.

The district should consider a reallocation of resources to ensure that elementary science curriculum development and instruction is sufficiently supported.

 **C.** The district should develop systems to ensure that curriculum is regularly reviewed for effectiveness and currency.

 1. Practices should include regular collaborative discussions by level and discipline to identify the materials that are most effective and those needing revision or replacement.

 2. The district should make the acquisition of high-quality, standards-aligned elementary science instructional materials a priority.

**Benefits:** A clearly articulated and comprehensive curriculum review and revision process likely guarantees currency in thinking and knowledge. All students will be more likely to have access to a complete curriculum that meets their diverse learning needs.

1. **The district should complete as soon as possible K–12 science and English language development curricula. Alignment of K–12 curricula with the current frameworks should be a district priority.**
2. The district should ensure that English language learners have meaningful access to the Massachusetts academic standards and sufficient opportunities to develop their English in ESL and other settings.

 1. Sheltered English immersion (SEI) strategies should be included in the “suggested strategies” section of curriculum maps.

2. The district should communicate to teachers the plan for completing the curriculum.

1. Administrators are urged to provide time and resources for the alignment of the Pre-K–12 science curriculum with the 2016 Massachusetts Science and Technology/Engineering Framework and to expedite the adoption of instructional materials for elementary science.

**Benefits:** An updated and aligned K–12 curriculum will ensure that instruction is standards-based and consistent throughout the district. As a result, all students will have equitable access to a high-quality education that promotes higher levels of achievement and readies them for college, career, and civic participation.

**Recommended resources:**

* *Quick Reference Guide: Establishing an Effective Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) Program* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/stem/ste/STEprogram.docx>): ESE has identified five components districts should attend to when designing a rigorous, coherent and relevant pre-K-12 STE education program. Educators, administrators and curriculum designers can refer to this guide for brief descriptions and resources for each component.
* *ESE’s STE Quality Review Rubric* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/model/rubrics/STE.pdf>) is designed to help educators determine the quality, rigor, and alignment of lessons and units to the 2016 MA STE Curriculum Framework.
* The *Next Generation ESL Curriculum Resource Guide* [(http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/curriculum.html](file:///%5C%5CESE-FPS-MAL-002.doe.mass.edu%5CHOME%5CMXL%5C2018%20Reports%5CWest%20Springfield%5C%28http%3A%5Cwww.doe.mass.edu%5Cell%5Ccurriculum.html)) provides extensive resources for professional learning communities (PLCs) to support collaborative ESL curriculum development.
* The *Collaboration Tool* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/curriculum.html>) is designed to support curricular planning with the intentional, simultaneous development of language and standards-based analytical practices and concepts. The Collaboration Tool can help educators create clear, standards-based language learning goals for developing curricula.

**3.** **The district should further articulate the district’s expectations for high-quality instruction, communicate this to the full educational community, and support teachers in its implementation.**

* 1. The district should continue to articulate its instructional expectations, including the 11 power standards of the educator evaluation rubric and its instructional strategic objectives of rigor, inclusive practices, and student engagement.

 Using grade-level meetings, department and faculty meetings, common planning time, professional learning communities, and professional development time, the district is encouraged to discuss ideas and strategies from its instructional expectations.

 One possible strategy for deep analysis and calibration of instructional expectations is use meeting time to view videos of effective instructional strategies and then follow up with discussion. Shared professional readings and subsequent discussions can also strengthen teachers’ understanding of key instructional strategies.

 The district should continue to use coaches and other instructional leaders to model best practice in classrooms, to facilitate lesson study, and to provide team, grade-level, and department coaching, as well as one-to-one support.

 Administrators are encouraged to empower teachers to reflect on their practice by providing time for them to observe effective practice in classrooms.

1. Teachers should be provided with appropriate guidance and feedback as they implement instructional expectations.

Professional development should focus on elements of the district’s expectations for effective instruction.

Principals, as instructional leaders, should ensure that teachers have the information and support necessary to meet the district’s expectations for instruction.

Teachers should receive frequent, helpful feedback that helps them to continually improve their instruction.

The district should review relevant data and information about instruction---including findings in this report---to determine whether coaches and other instructional leaders should change their approaches to more effectively support instructional improvement.

4. The district should review and if possible modify teaching schedules so that teachers at all levels have regular, frequent department and/or grade level common planning and meeting time that can be used to collaboratively reflect on and improve curriculum and instruction.

1. The administrative team is encouraged to expand upon current non-evaluative walkthrough practices.

Administrators are encouraged to conduct walkthroughs targeting specific power standards and/or characteristics from ESE’s Instructional Inventory to generalize and share feedback about trends observed, and to discuss improvement strategies regularly with teachers.

**Benefits:** Implementing this recommendation will mean clear and articulated expectations for administrators and teachers for what constitutes high-quality teaching. This will provide a common language that will facilitate more focused feedback and professional development. A district that provides high-quality instruction for all students creates and sustains a culture of continuous improvement that has the potential to result in professional growth and increased student achievement.

**Recommended resources:**

* ESE’s *Learning Walkthrough Implementation Guide* (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/dart/walkthrough/implementation-guide.pdf#search=%22Learning Walkthrough Implementation Guide%22>) is a resource to support instructional leaders in establishing a *Learning Walkthrough* process in a school or district. It is designed to provide guidance to those working in an established culture of collaboration as well as those who are just beginning to observe classrooms and discuss teaching and learning in a focused and actionable manner. (The link above includes a presentation to introduce Learning Walkthroughs.)
* ESE’s *Calibration Video Library* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/calibration/>) is a collection of professionally created videos of classroom instruction produced by the School Improvement Network. These videos depict a range of practice (this is NOT a collection of exemplars) to support within-district calibration activities that promote a shared understanding of instructional quality and rigor.
* ESE’s *"What to Look For" Observation Guides* ***(Updated August 2017)*** (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/observation/>) describe what observers should expect to see in a classroom at a particular grade level in a specific subject area. This includes the knowledge and skills students should be learning and using (as reflected in state learning standards) and best practices related to classroom curriculum, instruction, and assessment for each subject area. The guides are not designed to replace any evaluation system or tools districts currently use, but are a resource to help classroom observers efficiently identify what teachers and students should be experiencing in specific subjects and grade levels.

Assessment

***Contextual Background***

The district’s director of curriculum, instruction, and assessment oversees the student assessment program and data collection, analysis, dissemination, and decision-making for the district. Under the supervision of the director, the education technology coordinator provides additional support to the schools, joins data team meetings, offers professional development, and meets with individual teachers to answer questions as they arise.

The district has devoted time and resources to support educators in using data more effectively and has begun to set up structures to make ongoing progress in this area. The schools use a variety of formative and benchmark assessments to guide instruction and to determine remedial and enrichment supports for students. A district data team was established in school year 2015–2016 and school-based data teams were established in school year 2016–2017. The district has adopted Data Wise, a program that provides models and protocols for data inquiry.

Administrators expressed the view that they have all the data they need and are now focusing on the development of structures and mechanisms to help schools prioritize and disseminate these data appropriately. Examples of data dissemination shared with the review team indicated systems at an early stage of development. For example, the team did not find evidence of a commonly used and agreed-upon process for disseminating data or models or examples of user-friendly data report templates.

District administrators acknowledged that it would take time to develop practices and structures to help schools disseminate data. Educators expressed appreciation for the pace of change and for their colleagues’ increasing confidence in using data.

Whilethe plan to build internal capacity through the school data teams and teacher training is a worthwhile goal, the process may need additional expertise and resources to help ensure that the current momentum continues, examples of best practice are shared, and strong foundational skills are established across the district to make use of the data now available.

***Strength Findings***

**1. The district has begun to develop a culture of using assessment data in a structured and coordinated manner to inform educational decisions.**

 **A**. The district has used student assessment data to help inform recent changes in systemwide practices.

1. The district data team reviewed data on student behavior and discovered an escalation in behavior problems among refugees, especially those who had experienced recent trauma. As a result, the district hired an expert on trauma to help to alleviate the challenges faced by these students.

2. Members of the middle-school English department told the review team that an analysis of Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI) Lexile levels drove their decision to devote more attention to individual students who were falling behind. They reported that this approach has been effective as confirmed by stronger first quarter SRI results.

3. After reviewing disaggregated MCAS tests scores, the school committee recognized the need to improve the performance of students with disabilities. These data were cited in the rationale for the district’s decision to move toward an inclusion model.

4. District administrators adopted Advantage Math Recovery (AVMR) at the elementary level in response to persistently low math achievement results. The district has provided training for teachers on the AVMR program. The district holds monthly math committee meetings to analyze school and district math performance trends.

5. The high-school science department reviewed the results of pretests and posttests, common assessments, and students’ grades in grade 9 biology and identified a way to use these data to predict MCAS biology test scores. As a result, students identified as at risk of not passing the MCAS biology exam now enroll in an additional year of biology.

6. Elementary teachers studied the results of MCAS tests and other student achievement data and decided to embed additional real-world life situations into lessons to better prepare their students for the types of questions on the Next Generation MCAS tests.

7. The results of a longitudinal study indicated that students with disabilities assigned to the resource room were missing opportunities to learn higher-order thinking skills. Consequently, the district is moving from a pull-out to a push-in model of service provision.

* 1. The district has supported teachers to use data more often and effectively. Administrators reported that teachers are now more open to “delving into the data.”
		1. The review team found that teachers do not perceive the strategic emphasis on data analysis as a top-down initiative, since data are used to address school-based needs. Administrators and teachers agreed that teachers need time to get comfortable and confident with using data. Teachers said that they were content with the pace at which they were moving. The progression was described as “purposely moving at a controlled pace.”
		2. During school year 2015–2016, the district established a district data team consisting of school administrators and representatives from the District and School Assistance Center (DSAC). In 2016–2017, data teams were established at each school, except at the two smallest elementary schools where data dialogues are used instead.
		3. The renewed district emphasis on using data effectively is supported by the connection with Data Wise. Training is underway using the Data Wise protocols and the district plans to continue these trainings.

**Impact**: By using student achievement data to inform critical decisions about programs and services, the district is likely enhancing the ability of teachers to support students and is likely improving student achievement.

1. **The district has established strategies and practices to ensure that student achievement data are gathered from multiple sources through a balanced system of formative and benchmark assessments. Teachers at each school have a variety of opportunities to review student assessment data.**
	1. Interviews and a document review indicated a wide range of formative and benchmark assessments administered at all levels.
		1. These include locally developed assessments, such as monthly elementary math assessments; middle-school and high-school common assessments in core academic areas; and course mid-terms and finals.
		2. The district also administers commercial assessments including the Fountas and Pinnell benchmark reading assessments and the Scholastic Reading Inventory (SRI).
		3. In addition, the district analyzes the results of PSAT, SAT, and AP exams, and MCAS tests.
	2. A variety of opportunities exists for teachers at each school to review student assessment results and reflect on student achievement.

 1. Opportunities include grade-level meetings, Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), middle-school team meetings, department meetings, staff meetings, data team meetings, and curriculum days.

* 1. The review team observed a high incidence of formative assessment in observed elementary and middle-school classes.

In 70 percent of elementary and in 76 percent of middle-school classes observed, the review team found sufficient and compelling evidence of teachers conducting frequent checks for student understanding, providing feedback, and adjusting instruction accordingly.

**Impact**: Using a range of assessments provides numerous data, which contribute to identifying students’ academic strengths and needs. By using frequent formative assessment, teachers obtain timely information, which they can use to revise their instructional practices. The many structured opportunities to share and discuss assessment results also provides opportunities for educators to determine remedial and enrichment requirements for individual students.

Human Resources and Professional Development

***Contextual Background***

West Springfield has a participatory process for the selection and hiring of teachers and administrators. A representative committee typically composed of the principal and other school leaders, teachers, and parents screens the applications for teachers’ vacancies and determines the candidates to interview based on their qualifications to meet district and school needs. For example, consistent with the goal of inclusion in the District Improvement Plan, the district seeks candidates who have had experience in addressing a wide range of student needs in their classrooms. The committee selects three finalists and the superintendent interviews the candidate recommended by the principal. The superintendent confers with the principal following the interview and provides feedback, but respects the principal’s authority to make the final decision. The district is actively seeking candidates who represent the increasingly diverse student population by networking with other districts and attending regional job fairs.

The process for the selection of principals is similarly inclusive. The acting assistant superintendent chairs a representative committee composed of school committee members, teachers, parents, and sometimes students. The committee surveys stakeholders to identify the desired characteristics of the new school leader with reference to the needs set forth in the School Improvement Plan (SIP). The committee interviews the candidates selected and nominates three finalists in order of preference. The superintendent interviews the finalists and makes the appointment. Consistent with the district’s emphasis on teacher leadership, four of the current principals began in the district as teachers.

West Springfield has made a strong and deliberate effort to form a partnership among teachers, administrators, and the school committee. The collective bargaining agreement is prefaced by a Joint Labor Management Collaboration Statement, which begins with the proverb, “None of us is as smart as all of us.” Teachers have had a primary role in the design and implementation of the professional development (PD) program and the teacher evaluation system. The teacher PD program is based on district and school priorities, informed by some student performance data, uses teachers as presenters, and offers many opportunities for peer learning. However, the district offers few PD opportunities on leadership topics for principals and other administrators. The superintendent organizes and conducts a mentoring program for beginning teachers and teachers new to the district.

The district’s educator evaluation system for teachers is focused on power standards and is designed to be helpful and efficient rather than burdensome and compliance-driven. However, there is inconsistency in the quality of teacher evaluations and some of the components of the Educator Evaluation Framework; student feedback and student learning gains are not fully in place. The evaluation system for administrators is not being implemented effectively and is missing components such as staff feedback and principals’ progress on SIP goals.

***Strength Findings***

**1. The district has taken a collaborative approach to the design and management of its educator evaluation system. The district has** **streamlined its system to make it more helpful and efficient.**

**A.** A Joint Labor Management Collaboration Statement that prefaces the teachers’ collective bargaining agreement states, “Communication, teamwork, and mutual respect are the cornerstones of the relationship among the school committee, teachers’ association, and district administrators.” It goes on to state that all key decisions are made “in concert among the leaders from each of these three groups.”

1.Consistent with this collaborative approach, the district created an educator evaluation steering committee composed of administrators, teacher representatives from each school, and West Springfield Education Association leaders to manage the district’s educator evaluation system.

 2. Central office administrators, principals, and teachers told the team that the steering committee meets at least quarterly to manage the system and address concerns. Interviewees expressed the view that teachers have “bought into” the educator evaluation system and perceive it as fair and supportive largely because of this collaborative approach.

 **B.** The educator evaluation steering committee has acted to make the educator evaluation system more effective.

1. Central office administrators told the team that that they worked collaboratively with teachers’ association representatives and association leaders to design a more efficient process for evidence collection.

2. Under this process, teams composed of teachers at a grade level or within a department set individual and collective goals related to professional practice and student learning and describe the evidence that they will collect to assess progress toward their goals. Teachers use descriptors such as “continuous updates to curriculum maps” or “attendance at a workshop series on inclusion.” Teachers and evaluators must agree on the quantity and sufficiency of the evidence, and evaluators may request teachers to furnish more evidence at the close of the evaluation cycle, but interviewees said that this is rarely necessary.

3. The team was told that central office administrators, principals, and a teachers’ association representative narrowed ESE’s teacher rubric to a subset of 11 power elements: Subject Matter Knowledge; Rigorous Standards Based Units; Variety of Assessment Methods; Adjustments to Practice; Sharing Conclusions with Colleagues; Student Engagement; Meeting Diverse Student Needs; High Expectations; Curriculum Support; Reflective Practice; and Reliability and Responsibility.

 a. Central office administrators, principals, and teachers said that these power elements are the district’s shared expectations for practice.

4. The steering committee designed forms for the educator evaluation system including self-assessment, goal-setting, educator plan, observation, formative evaluation, and summative evaluation forms. Central office administrators, principals, and teachers said that these forms are intended to promote reflection and ongoing dialogue and are not “compliance driven.”

5. The team found that the forms were concise and sufficient. For example, the observation form provides evaluators with space to summarize evidence aligned with the set of power elements and to identify areas of reinforcement, or practices to continue, and refinement, or practices to improve.

6. Principals and teachers told the team that the steering committee conducts periodic trainings for teachers on the educator evaluation system and provides an annual orientation for new teachers. They expressed the view that the district has created an open and transparent evaluation system by providing regular updates, responding to questions, and encouraging teacher participation in decision-making.

**Impact**: Districts make more rapid and lasting progress through a genuinely collaborative process. The regulations in the Educator Evaluation Framework (603 CMR 35.00) establish the major components of the educator evaluation system, but allow districts autonomy in implementation. By agreeing on the number of artifacts used as evidence and prioritizing the elements in the teacher rubric, West Springfield has made its teacher evaluation system more efficient and targeted, increasing its potential to promote professional growth and improve student outcomes.

**2. The district’s professional development program is managed by three interdisciplinary teams composed primarily of teachers. Professional development is closely aligned with District and School Improvement Plan goals, informed by certain student performance data, driven by teacher collaboration, and assessed for effectiveness.**

**A.** Central office administrators, principals, and teachers described the district’s structure for professional development (PD) which consists of a PD committee at each level. All grades and disciplines are represented.

1. The elementary committee (Pre-K–grade 5) is composed of 14 teachers and chaired by the director of curriculum and instruction.

2. The middle-school committee (grades 6–8) is composed of seven teachers and chaired by the middle-school principal.

3. The high school committee (grades 9–12) is composed of nine teachers and chaired by the high-school principal.

 4. Interviewees told the team that the middle- and high-school PD committees meet three times annually and the elementary PD committee meets more often. Committee members told the team and teachers confirmed that the committees are responsible for conducting all aspects of the district’s PD program.

 5. One administrator said and teachers agreed that teachers are in charge of PD and administrators do not make unilateral decisions and “push [them] down.” They added that the district relies heavily on its own teachers as presenters and contracts with external consultants only when necessary.

**B.** Central office administrators, principals, and teachers told the team that PD topics are highly correlated with the strategic objectives in the 2015–2018 District Improvement Plan and School Improvement Plan initiatives.

1. For example, sessions on mindfulness and strategies for improving classroom behavior correspond with the strategic objective to address the social and emotional needs of all students. Sessions on inclusive practices are aligned with the strategic objective to identify an inclusionary model. Sessions on Depth of Knowledge correspond with the strategic objective to analyze, develop, and implement a common understanding of rigor.

 2. Schoolsalso sponsor PD sessions consistent with their School Improvement Plan goals. For example, sessions on the Workshop Model and student engagement and choice have been offered at the middle school. In addition, sessions on Add+VantageMR mathematics, Singapore Math, and unpacking the new standards have been offered at the elementary level.

**C.** Central office administrators, principals, and teachers told the team that student performance data informs the PD program. For example, an analysis of anecdotal classroom observation data, MCAS tests results for subgroups, district benchmark assessment results, and the responses to informal surveys of teachers and parents led to the emphasis on rigor, inclusion, and student engagement in the PD program.

**D.** The district offers three full-days and two half-days of PD. Teachers select sessions they plan to attend through an on-line survey and subsequently complete and submit an evaluation of each session, which the PD committees use to plan subsequent sessions.

**E**. Teachers may also use PD time to collaborate with their peers on a project, with the approval of their principal. Teachers apply by completing a request form that includes the proposed agenda and the intended outcomes. They subsequently submit minutes of the session to the principal that include proposed next steps.

1. Examples of peer collaboration include planning to articulate the scope and sequence of the high-school studio arts program down to the middle-school level and planning instruction for English language learners at levels 3 and 4 in general education classes.

**Impact**: Districts use PD to ensure that educators continue to strengthen their practice throughout their career in order to support the needs of all learners. The most effective PD engages teams of teachers to collaborate and learn together in order to ensure that all students achieve success.

***Challenges and Areas for Growth***

**3. The district has not achieved consistency in the implementation of its educator evaluation system. The district has not taken action on the components of the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework that require the collection and use of multiple sources of evaluative evidence.**

**A.** Teachers’ assessments/evaluations do not consistently provide specific, actionable recommendations for improvement.

 1**.** The team reviewed the formative assessments/evaluations and summative evaluations of 25 teachers randomly selected from across the district.

 a. Eleven assessments/evaluations were informative, instructive,[[5]](#footnote-5) and had the capacity to contribute to professional growth because they described teachers’ methods and practices in detail and provided specific, actionable feedback for improvement.

 b. Fourteen assessments/evaluations did not provide detailed descriptions of teachers’ performance and did not include recommendations for improvement.

2. Principals told the team that they read each other’s teacher evaluations and noted that although the format was the same, the detail and quality varied widely.

3. Several principals told the team that they had not received any training on the educator evaluation system.

4. All eight principals said that they had not participated in calibration exercises to promote inter-rater reliability and consistency in classroom observations.

 **B.** The administrator evaluation system has not been implemented as designed.

1. The team reviewed the assessments/evaluations of central office administrators, principals, and vice principals and found that all 20 of these evaluations were not instructive or informative, and did not include clear and actionable feedback with the capacity to improve instruction or to contribute to professional growth. Most assessments/evaluations were incomplete and a few were blank, except for the signatures on the signature page.

2. The superintendent told the team that he prefers candid conversations with central office administrators and principals to written feedback. He stated that he meets regularly with the principals as a group and has additional meetings with the newer principals. He added that he is clear and direct about his expectations and provides support.

3. Central office administrators and principals confirmed that the superintendent discussed their performance with them and that these discussions were not documented. Some regarded discussions with the superintendent as evaluative, while others said that they were simply conversations.

4. Principals told the team that the superintendent did not evaluate them on the accomplishment of the goals in their School Improvement Plans. The team did not find any provision for assessing the fulfillment of School Improvement Plan goals on the district’s administrator evaluation form.

**Impact**: Without consistently providing teachers and administrators with evidence-based, growth-promoting feedback, the district is challenged to enhance teaching and learning.

**4. The district has not taken action on the components of the state Educator Evaluation Framework that require the collection and use of multiple sources of evaluative evidence.**

**A.** Beginning in the 2015–2016 school year, state educator evaluation regulations (603 CMR 35.07) required districts to collect and use student feedback as evidence in a teacher evaluation process and staff feedback as evidence in the administrator evaluation process.[[6]](#footnote-6) Student feedback may also be used to inform an educator’s self-assessment and goal setting, and as evidence of change in practice over time.

1. The district’s educator evaluation system states that teachers will select three to five questions from the state’s model feedback instruments and use them to survey a minimum of ten students. The system also stipulates that teachers will collect student survey responses and maintain them “in the event that an evaluator wishes to see the results.”

2. Central office administrators and principals stated that the district does not have a protocol for using student feedback or a procedure to ensure that teachers are collecting and maintaining student feedback. Teachers’ association representatives said that student feedback was “in the contract,” but they did not know whether and how teachers were collecting and using it.

3. Similarly, central office administrators said that the district did not have a protocol for the collection and use of staff feedback. Teachers’ association representatives said that they were not informed about the collection of staff feedback and believed that it was not taking place in all schools.

 **B.** Another component of the state’s Educator Evaluation Framework requires school districts to develop and use multiple measures of student learning, including common assessments and other statewide growth measures, to assess student growth and achievement.

1. Central office administrators and teachers’ association representatives told the team that the district was not using measures of student learning as a component of its educator evaluation system and had not begun to implement this component of the state’s Educator Evaluation Framework.

**Impact:** Without the collection and use of student and staff feedback and multiple measures of student learning to be used in the evaluation of teachers and administrators, the district is challenged to help teachers and administrators identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement in their practice.

***Recommendation***

**1. The district should fully and effectively implement all components of the state’s Educator Evaluation Framework. Special attention should be given to developing systems for the collection and appropriate use of evidence to inform educators’ evaluations.**

**A.** The district should review supervisory policies, practices, and expectations to ensure that the quantity and quality of evaluative feedback, both written and oral, is enhanced.

1**.**  The district should provide continuous professional development (PD), coaching, and support to improve the supervisory practices and evaluative skills of all administrators and evaluators.

2**.** The district should provide systematic and formal calibration training for evaluators, using tools such as ESE’s observation calibration video and related calibration protocols and activities.

**B.** The district should consider forming a steering committee to conduct regular reviews of the quality and timeliness of feedback provided to educators.

1. The committee’s findings should inform the PD provide to teachers as well as the implementation of the district’s educator evaluation system.

**C.** To increase alignment and coherence, the district should consider using progress toward the attainment of school improvement plan goals as a component of principals’ evaluations.

**Benefits**: By fully and effectively implementing all components of the state’s Educator Evaluation Framework, the district will create the conditions for improving instruction and student achievement.

**Recommended resources:**

* Educator Evaluation Implementation Surveys for Teachers ([www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/implementation/TeachersSurvey.pdf](http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/implementation/TeachersSurvey.pdf) ) and Administrators ([www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/implementation/AdministratorsSurvey.pdf](http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/implementation/AdministratorsSurvey.pdf)) are designed to provide schools and districts with feedback about the status of their educator evaluation implementation. Information from these surveys can be used to target district resources and supports where most needed to strengthen implementation.
* ESE’s *"What to Look For" Observation Guides* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/observation/>) describe what observers should expect to see in a classroom at a particular grade level in a specific subject area. This includes the knowledge and skills students should be learning and using (as reflected in state learning standards) and best practices related to classroom curriculum, instruction, and assessment for each subject area. The guides are not designed to replace any evaluation system or tools districts currently use, but are a resource to help classroom observers efficiently identify what teachers and students should be experiencing in specific subjects and grade levels.
* ESE’s *Online Calibration Training Tool* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/resources/calibration/tool/>) uses videos of classroom instruction from ESE’s Calibration Video Library to simulate brief, unannounced observations. Groups of educators, such as a district leadership team, watch a video together and then individually assess the educator’s practice related to specific elements from the Model Classroom Teacher Rubric and provide the educator with written feedback. Through real-time data displays, the group members can then see how their conclusions compare to each other, as well educators throughout the state.

Student Support

***Contextual Background***

Many students come to school each day with high programmatic and support needs. In 2017–2018, 57 percent of district students are part of the high-needs subgroup because they are in one or more of the following groups: economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and English language learners (ELLs) or former ELLs. Students with disabilities in the district represent 18.6 percent of the total student enrollment, compared with 10.2 percent of the state; ELLs make up 10.6 percent of enrollment, compared with 10.2 percent statewide; 30.6 percent of students do not have English as their first language,[[7]](#footnote-7) compared with the statewide average of 20 percent; and 30.6 percent of students come from economically disadvantaged households, compared with 20.9 percent across the state. Some of these students are refugees who have experienced trauma. In addition, according to ESE data, at the time of the onsite in December 2017, 26 evacuees from Puerto Rico because of the impact of Hurricane Maria were enrolled in West Springfield schools.[[8]](#footnote-8)

In response to the persistently low performance of students with disabilities on the MCAS tests and an analysis of the district’s special education placement practices, the district has begun planning the implementation of an inclusion model in all district schools to ensure that students with disabilities have access to the general education program and a curriculum based on the state Frameworks. According to ESE data, West Springfield includes fewer students with disabilities in the general education program than the statewide average and separates students from their peers more than the statewide average.[[9]](#footnote-9) Although the district has initiated planning to ensure that students with disabilities have access to the general education program and a curriculum based on the state Frameworks, inclusive practices are inconsistent from class to class within a school and from school to school within the district. The district has provided limited professional development for teachers on inclusive practices and co-teaching strategies.

According to ESE data, some student indicators are improving. For example, in recent years the district’s out-of-school suspension rate has been the same or lower than the statewide average.[[10]](#footnote-10) West Springfield has made and sustained progress in its graduation and dropout rates, although the four-year cohort graduation rate is lower and the dropout rate higher than the statewide average.[[11]](#footnote-11) [[12]](#footnote-12)In addition, from 2014 to 2016, the district’s Mass Core completion rate rose from 45.8 percent to 61.9 percent, although it is below the 2016 statewide average of 77.4 percent.

***Strength Findings***

**1. The district is providing a continuum of programs and support to prepare students for college and career.**

1. Administrators, teachers and guidance counselors told the review team that the guidance department has increased its emphasis on college and career readiness and is providing a range of programs to prepare students for post-secondary education and the world of work.
2. Grade 9 students create an account through the Massachusetts Educational Financing Authority, an agency that provides comprehensive information and products for college-bound students and their families, including sources of financial aid. Students also complete a career exploration survey and meet with their guidance counselors to discuss the educational implications of the results. In subsequent sessions, guidance counselors help students select courses that match their career interests.
3. The district sponsors a career day at the high school that includes a panel of guest speakers representing a number of career fields. The panelists describe what they do and discuss the educational requirements and career options for their fields.
4. Guidance counselors help grade 10 students use the College Board website to research colleges. The district plans to move the administration of the PSAT to grade 9 to identify and provide earlier support for struggling students.
5. The high school conducts an annual college fair for students in grades 11 and 12. In addition, the guidance department hosts college representatives who meet with interested students.

 a. Guidance counselors also arrange college visits for individual students and groups of students and meet individually with all grade 12 students to ensure that their college and career planning is underway.

1. Guidance counselors introduce students to the hands-on career and technical education options available at the Lower Pioneer Valley Career and Technical Educational Center (CTEC).

 a. Grade 8 students attend an orientation program and tour the facility.

 b. Administrators told the review team that in conjunction with the CTEC the district also offers a life-skills program for 18-to-22-year-old students with disabilities. This program is work based and a job facilitator supports every student.

1. The district’s career development plan states that the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) is administered annually to all students in grades 11 and 12.
2. Administrators said that some students in grade 8 are chosen to go to local college campuses for a college campus experience. They added that they envision offering this opportunity to all students in grade 8.
3. Interviewees told the review team that the elementary career education program introduces students to the world of work primarily through community connections and guest speakers.

**Impact:**  The district is helping all students to graduate ready for college, career, and civic participation by offering a comprehensive school-counseling program with a variety of appropriate programs and support.

**2. The district identifies students at risk because of behavioral or social-emotional challenges and provides appropriate counseling and support programs.**

**A**. Adjustment and guidance counselors told the review team that they review 504 plans, Individualized Education Programs, and student performance data to identify students at high risk and prioritize focus areas for counseling interventions. They reported that they counsel students experiencing the effects of trauma, students experiencing anxiety, and students having difficulty with social skills.

1. Counselors told the review team that data teams meet eight times annually to review attendance rates, Early Warning Indicator System (EWIS) data, and other student performance data to identify struggling students and provide targeted support.

 2. Special services administrators[[13]](#footnote-13) and counselors told the review team that the district has implemented preventative programs such as the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) Program at the elementary level, which provides incentives and reinforcement for students to meet behavioral expectations.

 a. They added that the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan is a useful resource for teachers dealing with students with behavioral and emotional issues.

3. Guidance and adjustment counselors serve on the student support teams and offer teachers strategic guidance and support.

4. The district uses the Signs of Suicide Program and substance abuse screening methods to identify students who may require immediate intervention.

5. The district offers several programs for students with moderate social-emotional challenges.

 a. Westside Academy is a therapeutic program for high-school students with social-emotional needs. At the time of the onsite in December 2017, the program enrolled 25 to 30 students. Some of these students also attended a partial day program at the Lower Pioneer Valley Career and Technical Educational Center. The team was told that most students transition from Westside Academy to a less restrictive program.

 b. Cowing Alternative School is the middle-school - equivalent of Westside Academy.

 6. The district has partnered with The Behavioral Health Network, a mental health agency that provides counseling services to students in all district schools.

**Impact**: By using data to identify students with behavioral and social-emotional challenges and providing targeted support, the district promotes a culture of high student achievement, supports course completion and grade promotion, encourages on-time graduation, and ensures that students are ready for college, career, and civic participation.

***Challenges and Areas for Growth***

**3.**  **With a rapid increase in the numbers of its English language learners (ELLs) in recent years, the district’s centralized model at one elementary school no longer serves its ELLs students, and staff at the school are overburdened.**

**A.** According to ESE data, English language learners (ELLs) constitute 48.6 percent of the Coburn School population. According to district data, 56 percent of these students reside in the catchment areas of other district elementary schools.

 1. Administrators stated that many Coburn School classes are composed entirely of ELLs. They said that this results in a separate program where ELLs do not have access to their native English-language-speaking peers.

**B**. Administrators and teachers told the team that the district centralized the elementary level ELL program for efficiency and cost-effectiveness when the number of ELLs enrolled in the district was small. However, between 2014 and 2017 the proportion of ELLs in the district increased from 7.5 percent to 10 percent.

**C**. Administrators told the review team that the number of ELLs continues to increase primarily because of an influx of refugees including families relocating to West Springfield from storm-damaged Puerto Rico.

1. Three ELLs enrolled in the Coburn School on the morning that the review team was visiting classes at the school. Staff said that this was typical.

**D.** Interviewees described the Coburn School as a “school in crisis.”

1. Administrators told the team that the number of ELLs at the Coburn School fluctuates, with students entering and leaving, creating instability.

2. They told the review team that class sizes were generally high, especially in grade 5, and added that administrators and teachers struggle to meet the needs of students who have experienced trauma.

**Impact**: The separation of English language learners from their English-language-speaking peers limits their social network, decreases their association with models for language acquisition, and prevents them from progressing at a rate commensurate with their English-language-speaking peers. When staff are overburdened, the quality of teaching and learning is jeopardized.

**Recommendation**

**1. The district should decentralize the elementary-level English language development program.**

  **A**. The district should form a working group with wide representation to develop a decentralized elementary-level English language development program.

 **B**. The working group should consider ways of redistributing the elementary English language learners (ELLs) to enhance program effectiveness and ensure student success.

1. For example, proximate schools might be paired with one school offering the kindergarten through grade 2 English language development program and the other school offering the grades 3 through grade 5 English language development program.

 2. Alternatively, students could be assigned to the paired schools according to their English language proficiency levels.

 **C**. The model should ensure that ELLs associate with their English-language-speaking peers as much as possible in both academic and social settings.

**Benefits:** The district has the opportunity to design a high-quality elementary English language development program. The best program organization is one that is tailored to meet the linguistic, academic, and affective needs of students; provides ELLs with the instruction necessary to allow them to progress at a rate commensurate with their native-English-speaking peers; and makes the best use of district and community resources.

**Recommended resources:**

* *The English Learner Tool Kit for State and Local Education Agencies* (<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/index.html>) is designed to help state and local education agencies to meet their legal obligations to English language learners (ELLs) and to provide ELLs with the support needed to attain English language proficiency while meeting college- and career-readiness standards. The tool kit includes such topics as identifying English language learners, evaluating the effectiveness of programs, and supporting limited English proficient parents. Each of its 10 chapters includes: (1) explanations of the civil rights and other legal obligations to ELLs; (2) checklists that can be used as self-monitoring tools; (3) sample tools that may be used or adapted for use to aid with compliance; and (4) free online resources that provide additional relevant information and assistance.
* ESE’s *Student Growth Model* web page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/growth/>) provides links to tutorials and documents that explain the Student Growth Model, along with research supporting the model, materials to help education leaders present the model, and links to student growth data.
* *Best Practices in School District Budgeting* (<http://www.gfoa.org/best-practices-school-district-budgeting>) outlines steps to developing a budget that best aligns resources with student achievement goals. Each step includes a link to a specific resource document with relevant principles and policies to consider.

Financial and Asset Management

***Contextual Background***

The district and the city have consolidated their information technology, custodial, and maintenance departments in order to generate cost saving efficiencies. The district is a member of the Pioneer Valley Educational Collaborative, which provides joint bidding for transportation and other major procurements and offers regional special education and career-technical education programs.

City financial support of schools has consistently exceeded the required net school spending level. The percentage amount over the requirement increased from fiscal year 2013 to fiscal year 2016, and decreased slightly in fiscal year 2017. The city’s maximum excess levy limit is 12.4 percent above the actual levy. The override capacity is zero. The district and the city have a signed and written agreement about expenditures made by the municipality in support of the district.

***Strength Finding***

**1. The district’s school buildings are in generally good condition and are well maintained. The district has a five-year capital program budget that is funded regularly and a long-term master plan to renovate, close, or replace older school buildings.**

 **A**. The district’s school buildings are in generally good condition and are well maintained.

 1. The 2016 Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) School Survey Report found that six of the nine school buildings were in generally good condition. The high school was not rated because it is new and the Cowing Early Childhood Center was not rated because it is scheduled to be closed as part of a renewal plan for the Coburn Elementary School.

 a. The MSBA found that the Faucey Elementary School was in good condition with few or no building systems needing attention.”

 b. The Ashley, Memorial, Mitteneague, and Tatham elementary schools and the middle school were in generally good condition with a few building systems that may need attention.

 c. The MSBA noted that the Coburn Elementary School was in fair to poor condition with some building systems needing repair or replacement.

* + - * 1. A 2015 city council resolution stated that the Coburn Elementary School was in "dire need of repair and renovation or replacement.”
				2. West Springfield has submitted a statement of interest to renovate or replace the Coburn Elementary School to the MSBA, and the MSBA has accepted the school into its feasibility study program.

d. A comparison of the 2016 MSBA survey with the two previous surveys conducted in 2005 and 2010 indicated that the condition of the Faucey, Ashley, Memorial, Mitteneague, and Tatham elementary schools stayed the same or improved, and the condition of the middle school declined slightly. Administrators told the review team that this was because HVAC equipment was wearing out. Funds for replacement of HVAC equipment have been allocated in the capital improvement budget.

 e. The MSBA survey also rates the buildings on general environment. All the buildings, except the Coburn Elementary School, were rated as having an “adequate physical environment in which to teach and learn.”

 **B**. The district has developed a five-year capital program budget through an effective collaborative process.

 1. School principals, central office administrators, and central maintenance department members identify the district’s capital improvement needs and submit them to the school committee’s budget sub-committee.

 2. The budget sub-committee reviews the identified needs and submits its recommendations to the full school committee for review and approval.

 3. The school committee submits the approved requests to the city’s capital program planning committee.

 4. The capital program planning committee reviews the district’s requests together with the requests from other city departments and submits its recommendations for funding to the city council.

  **C**. The district developed and recently updated a feasibility study to guide implementation of its master plan.

 1. The district originally commissioned a feasibility study in 2005 to address the future of all the aging schools in West Springfield.

 2. The decision to build a new West Springfield High School and the approval of the statement of interest for the Coburn Elementary School necessitated an update to this master plan, and a new feasibility study was commissioned in 2014.

 3. The resulting study includes a 12-year plan with elementary schools and middle-school components.

**Impact**: Effective capital planning and a valid master plan ensure that school buildings are well maintained and provide an environment conducive to teaching and learning. This level of planning also helps to prevent budget crises caused by unforeseen emergency repairs to high cost building systems.

***Challenges and Areas for Growth***

**2. The district’s budget document is not clearly linked to district goals and does not provide clear and useful summaries of financial data.**

 **A**. The budget document does not contain clear links to district and school goals.

 1. The budget document contains the District Improvement Plan (DIP) goals, but budget requests are not correlated with these goals.

 2. Administrators told the review team that the funding required for district and school goals was discussed in administrative team meetings about the budget. These discussions determine the line item account levels.

3. While it appears that budget discussions consider the funds needed for district and school goals, the budget document does not have a clear connection to the goals.

 **B**. The budget document consists of spreadsheets and narratives in a large binder. A briefer document entitled Budget Request Summary by School or Department better reflects key information about the district.

 1. The budget document does not have trend data such as multiple-year expenditures and staffing history.

 2. The budget document shows the current year’s budget and the planned budget for the coming year. The document does not have an actual expenditure history.

 3. The budget document has current and projected full-time equivalent (FTE) data in the personnel sections. The document does not have an FTE history.

**C.** Copies of the budget document are made available for public review at several public facilities and are provided to the school committee and city council.

1. The district’s website does not provide information on the budget.

**Impact**: Without including historical data, summary narratives, and a clear link to strategic goals in the budget document, the district cannot ensure a transparent budget process and effective use of funds to support students’ needs.

***Recommendation***

**1. The district should develop a more complete, transparent, and usable budget document.**

**A.** The budget document should contain narratives about key priorities and how they are supported financially.

1. The document should show the ways in which the budget supports District Improvement Plan (DIP) and School Improvement Plan (SIP) goals.

**B**. The budget document should be revised to better reflect key information about the district.

1.The budget document should be organized by school or by programs. Summary totals should be available for each program. The Budget Request Summary by School or Department document is a resource for this work.

2. The budget should show trend data.

 3. The district could consider including in the budget document the requests of principals and department heads for additional transparency.

 4. Staff changes should be monetized and explained.

**Benefits**: By implementing this recommendation, the district will likely ensure a transparent budget process and appropriate use of funds to support the needs of all students.

**Recommended resources:**

* *School System 20/20 Checklist: Funding Strategic Budget Development* (<https://www.erstrategies.org/tap/school_system_20_20_checklist_budget_development>), from Education Resource Strategies, helps district leaders understand what a strategic budget process looks like.
* *Transforming School Funding: A Guide to Implementing Student-Based Budgeting* (<https://www.erstrategies.org/library/implementing_student-based_budgeting>), from Education Resource Strategies, describes a process to help districts tie funding to specific student needs.
* The Rennie Center’s *Smart* *School Budgeting* (<http://www.renniecenter.org/research/reports/smart-school-budgeting-resources-districts>) is a summary of existing resources on school finance, budgeting, and real­location.
* *Best Practices in School District Budgeting* (<http://www.gfoa.org/best-practices-school-district-budgeting>) outlines steps to developing a budget that best aligns resources with student achievement goals. Each step includes a link to a specific resource document with relevant principles and policies to consider.

Appendix A: Review Team, Activities, Schedule, Site Visit

Review Team Members

The review was conducted from December 4–7, 2017, by the following team of independent ESE consultants.

1. Kristan Rodriguez, Leadership and Governance
2. Michele Kingsland-Smith, Curriculum and Instruction
3. Lonnie Kaufman, Assessment
4. James McAuliffe, Human Resources and Professional Development, *review team coordinator*
5. Valerie Murphy, Student Support
6. David King, Financial and Asset Management

District Review Activities

The following activities were conducted during the review:

The team conducted interviews with the following financial personnel: the superintendent, the acting assistant superintendent, the business manager, the business analyst/grants manager, the accounting assistant, the mayor, the municipal chief financial officer, and the municipal treasurer.

The team conducted interviews with the following members of the school committee: the chair, the vice chair, and one member.

The review team conducted interviews with the following representatives of the teachers’ association: the two co-presidents and the professional rights and responsibilities representatives at the elementary and secondary levels.

The team conducted interviews/focus groups with the following central office administrators: the superintendent; the acting assistant superintendent; the director of curriculum, instruction, and assessment; the special services administrator; the ELL coordinator; and the business manager.

The team visited the following schools: John R. Fausey (K–5), Philip G. Coburn (K–5), Memorial (1–5), Mittineague (1–5), Tatham (1–5), West Springfield Middle (6–8), and West Springfield High (9–12).

During school visits, the team conducted interviews with eight principals and a focus group with eight high-school teachers. No elementary and middle-school teachers attended the focus groups scheduled for them because of an apparent conflict with release day activities and after-school Sheltered English Immersion training.

The team observed 77 classes in the district: 16 at the high school, 17 at the middle school, and 44 at elementary schools.

The review team analyzed multiple data sets and reviewed numerous documents before and during the site visit, including:

* + Student and school performance data, including achievement and growth, enrollment, graduation, dropout, retention, suspension, and attendance rates.
	+ Data on the district’s staffing and finances.
	+ Published educational reports on the district by ESE, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), and the former Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA).
	+ District documents such as district and school improvement plans, school committee policies, curriculum documents, summaries of student assessments, job descriptions, collective bargaining agreements, evaluation tools for staff, handbooks, school schedules, and the district’s end-of-year financial reports.
	+ All completed program and administrator evaluations, and a random selection of completed teacher evaluations.

Site Visit Schedule

| **Monday**12/04/2017 | **Tuesday**12/05/2017 | **Wednesday**12/06/2017 | **Thursday**12/07/2017 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Orientation with district leaders and principals; interviews with district staff and principals; document reviews; review of personnel files; Interviews with city personnel; interview with the teachers’ association.  | Interviews with district staff and principals; student focus group; teacher focus groups; parent focus group; and visits to Fausey Elementary School and West Springfield High School for classroom observations. | Interviews with school leaders; interviews with school committee members; visits to Coburn, Tatham, Mittineague, and Memorial elementary schools for classroom observations. | Interviews with school leaders; follow-up interviews; district review team meeting; visits to Coburn Elementary School, West Springfield Middle School, and West Springfield High School for classroom observations; district wrap-up meeting with the superintendent. |

Appendix B: Enrollment, Attendance, Expenditures

**Table B1a: West Springfield Public Schools**

**2017–2018 Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity**

| **Group** | **District** | **Percent****of Total** | **State** | **Percent of****Total** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| African-American | 153 | 3.7% | 86,305 | 9.0% |
| Asian | 320 | 7.8% | 65,667 | 6.9% |
| Hispanic | 713 | 17.3% | 191,201 | 20.0% |
| Native American | 3 | 0.1% | 2,103 | 0.2% |
| White | 2,811 | 68.3% | 573,335 | 60.1% |
| Native Hawaiian | 1 | 0.0% | 818 | 0.1% |
| Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic  | 113 | 2.7% | 34,605 | 3.6% |
| **All**  | 4,114 | 100.0% | 954,034 | 100.0% |
| Note: As of October 1, 2017 |

**Table B1b: West Springfield Public Schools**

**2017–2018 Student Enrollment by High Needs Populations**

| **Group** | **District** | **State** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **N** | **Percent of High Needs** | **Percent of District** | **N** | **Percent of High Needs** | **Percent of State** |
| Students w/ disabilities | 798 | 34.6% | 19.2% | 167,530 | 38.4% | 17.4% |
| Econ. Dis. | 1,795 | 77.7% | 43.8% | 288,465 | 66.1% | 30.2% |
| ELLs and Former ELLs | 411 | 17.8% | 10.0% | 90,204 | 20.7% | 9.5% |
| All high needs students | 2,309 | 100.0% | 55.7% | 436,416 | 100.0% | 45.2% |
| Notes: As of October 1, 2017. District and state numbers and percentages for students with disabilities and high needs students are calculated including students in out-of-district placements. Total district enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 4,165; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 964,806. |

**Table B2: West Springfield Public Schools**

**Attendance Rates, 2014–2017**

| **Group** | **N (2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2017)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| High Needs | 2,448 | 93.8 | 93.5 | 93.8 | 94.1 | 0.3 | 93.1 |
| Econ. Dis. | 1,964 | -- | 93.6 | 93.8 | 94.0 | -- | 92.6 |
| ELLs | 473 | 95.1 | 95.7 | 95.2 | 95.0 | -0.1 | 93.5 |
| SWD | 847 | 92.3 | 91.9 | 92.8 | 93.6 | 1.3 | 93.0 |
| African American | 163 | 94.7 | 94.3 | 94.4 | 95.5 | 0.8 | 94.0 |
| Asian | 324 | 96.6 | 95.8 | 96.1 | 96.1 | -0.5 | 96.3 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 760 | 92.9 | 93.1 | 93.2 | 93.6 | 0.7 | 92.8 |
| Multi-Race | 112 | 93.3 | 94.1 | 94.4 | 95.2 | 1.9 | 94.5 |
| White | 2,985 | 95.0 | 95.1 | 95.1 | 95.3 | 0.3 | 95.1 |
| All  | 4,349 | 94.7 | 94.7 | 94.8 | 95.1 | 0.4 | 94.6 |
| Notes: The attendance rate is calculated by dividing the total number of days students attended school by the total number of days students were enrolled in a particular school year. A student’s attendance rate is counted toward any district the student attended. In addition, district attendance rates included students who were out placed in public collaborative or private alternative schools/programs at public expense. Attendance rates have been rounded; percent change is based on unrounded numbers. |

**Table B3: West Springfield Public Schools**

**Expenditures, Chapter 70 State Aid, and Net School Spending Fiscal Years 2015–2017**

|   | **FY15** | **FY16** | **FY17** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | **Estimated** | **Actual** | **Estimated** | **Actual** | **Estimated** | **Actual** |
| Expenditures |
| From local appropriations for schools: |  |
| By school committee | $40,845,239 | $40,712,412 | $41,832,402 | $42,233,259 | -- | $39,857,990 |
| By municipality | $10,576,984 | $12,108,636 | $13,075,029 | $13,272,782 | -- | $17,286,526 |
| Total from local appropriations | $51,422,223 | $52,821,048 | $54,907,431 | $55,506,041 | -- | $57,144,516 |
| From revolving funds and grants | -- | $6,087,902 | -- | $6,410,268 | -- | $7,317,876 |
| Total expenditures | -- | $58,908,950 | -- | $61,916,309 | -- | $64,462,392 |
| Chapter 70 aid to education program |
| Chapter 70 state aid\* | -- | $21,363,060 | -- | $22,613,567 | -- | $24,082,496 |
| Required local contribution | -- | $20,188,627 | -- | $20,277,457 | -- | $20,212,569 |
| Required net school spending\*\* | -- | $41,551,687 | -- | $42,891,024 | -- | $44,295,065 |
| Actual net school spending | -- | $46,181,716 | -- | $48,444,529 | -- | $48,891,014 |
| Over/under required ($) | -- | $4,630,029 | -- | $5,553,505 | -- | $4,595,949 |
| Over/under required (%) | -- | 11.1% | -- | 12.9% | -- | 10.4% |
| \*Chapter 70 state aid funds are deposited in the local general fund and spent as local appropriations.\*\*Required net school spending is the total of Chapter 70 aid and required local contribution. Net school spending includes only expenditures from local appropriations, not revolving funds and grants. It includes expenditures for most administration, instruction, operations, and out-of-district tuitions. It does not include transportation, school lunches, debt, or capital.Sources: FY15, FY16, and FY17 District End-of-Year Reports, Chapter 70 Program information on ESE websiteData retrieved 12/13/17 and 4/11/18 |

**Table B4: West Springfield Public Schools**

**Expenditures Per In-District Pupil**

**Fiscal Years 2014–2016**

| **Expenditure Category** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Administration | $318 | $343 | $338 |
| Instructional leadership (district and school) | $709 | $706 | $750 |
| Teachers | $4,718 | $4,821 | $5,005 |
| Other teaching services | $1,184 | $1,194 | $1,313 |
| Professional development | $239 | $205 | $210 |
| Instructional materials, equipment and technology | $237 | $236 | $393 |
| Guidance, counseling and testing services | $607 | $608 | $606 |
| Pupil services | $1,444 | $1,409 | $1,540 |
| Operations and maintenance | $816 | $853 | $881 |
| Insurance, retirement and other fixed costs | $1,834 | $2,066 | $2,047 |
| Total expenditures per in-district pupil | $12,107 | $12,440 | $13,083 |
| Sources: [Per-pupil expenditure reports on ESE website](http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/statistics/)Note: Any discrepancy between expenditures and total is because of rounding. |

Appendix C: Instructional Inventory

| **Focus Area #1: Learning Objectives & Expectations** |  | Insufficient Evidence | Limited Evidence | Sufficient Evidence | Compelling Evidence | Avg Number of points |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (1 to 4) |
| 1. The teacher demonstrates knowledge of the subject matter. | **ES** | 2% | 16% | 64% | 18% | 3.0 |
| **MS** | 0 | 12% | 71% | 18% | 3.1 |
| **HS** | 25% | 38% | 31% | 6% | 2.2 |
| **Total #** | 5 | 15 | 45 | 12 | 2.8 |
| **Total %** | 6% | 19% | 58% | 16% |  |
| 2. The teacher ensures that students understand what they should be learning in the lesson and why. | **ES** | 5% | 38% | 56% | 0 | 2.5 |
| **MS** | 6% | 24% | 59% | 12% | 2.8 |
| **HS** | 38% | 25% | 38% | 0 | 2.0 |
| **Total #** | 9 | 23 | 38 | 2 | 2.5 |
| **Total %** | 13% | 32% | 53% | 3% |  |
| 3. The teacher uses appropriate classroom activities well matched to the learning objective(s). | **ES** | 0 | 25% | 61% | 14% | 2.9 |
| **MS** | 0 | 29% | 29% | 41% | 3.1 |
| **HS** | 25% | 38% | 31% | 6% | 2.2 |
| **Total #** | 4 | 22 | 37 | 14 | 2.8 |
| **Total %** | 5% | 29% | 48% | 18% |  |
| 4. The teacher conducts frequent checks for student understanding, provides feedback, and adjusts instruction. | **ES** | 5% | 25% | 52% | 18% | 2.8 |
| **MS** | 6% | 18% | 47% | 29% | 3.0 |
| **HS** | 31% | 38% | 25% | 6% | 2.1 |
| **Total #** | 8 | 20 | 35 | 14 | 2.7 |
| **Total %** | 10% | 26% | 45% | 18% |  |
| **Total Score For Focus Area #1** | **ES** |  |  |  |  | 11.2 |
| **MS** |  |  |  |  | 11.9 |
| **HS** |  |  |  |  | 8.4 |
| **Total** |  |  |  |  | 10.8 |

| **Focus Area #2: Student Engagement & Higher-Order Thinking** |  | Insufficient Evidence | Limited Evidence | Sufficient Evidence | Compelling Evidence | Avg Number of points |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (1 to 4) |
| 5. Students assume responsibility to learn and are engaged in the lesson. | **ES** | 0 | 32% | 52% | 16% | 2.8 |
| **MS** | 0 | 29% | 35% | 35% | 3.1 |
| **HS** | 44% | 25% | 31% | 0 | 1.9 |
| **Total #** | 7 | 23 | 34 | 13 | 2.7 |
| **Total %** | 9% | 30% | 44% | 17% |  |
| 6. Students engage in higher-order thinking. | **ES** | 11% | 48% | 27% | 14% | 2.4 |
| **MS** | 6% | 47% | 35% | 12% | 2.5 |
| **HS** | 31% | 50% | 19% | 0 | 1.9 |
| **Total #** | 11 | 37 | 21 | 8 | 2.3 |
| **Total %** | 14% | 48% | 27% | 10% |  |
| 7. Students communicate their ideas and thinking with each other. | **ES** | 9% | 34% | 45% | 11% | 2.6 |
| **MS** | 12% | 41% | 29% | 18% | 2.5 |
| **HS** | 50% | 25% | 19% | 6% | 1.8 |
| **Total #** | 14 | 26 | 28 | 9 | 2.4 |
| **Total %** | 18% | 34% | 36% | 12% |  |
| 8. Students engage with meaningful, real-world tasks. | **ES** | 14% | 25% | 48% | 14% | 2.6 |
| **MS** | 35% | 18% | 18% | 29% | 2.4 |
| **HS** | 38% | 25% | 31% | 6% | 2.1 |
| **Total #** | 18 | 18 | 29 | 12 | 2.5 |
| **Total %** | 23% | 23% | 38% | 16% |  |
| **Total Score For Focus Area #2** | **ES** |  |  |  |  | 10.5 |
| **MS** |  |  |  |  | 10.5 |
| **HS** |  |  |  |  | 7.6 |
| **Total** |  |  |  |  | 9.9 |

| **Focus Area #3: Inclusive Practice & Classroom Culture** |  | Insufficient Evidence | Limited Evidence | Sufficient Evidence | Compelling Evidence | Avg Number of points |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (1 to 4) |
| 9. The teacher ensures that students are engaging in challenging tasks regardless of learning needs. | **ES** | 7% | 39% | 43% | 11% | 2.6 |
| **MS** | 6% | 58% | 24% | 12% | 2.4 |
| **HS** | 44% | 31% | 19% | 6% | 1.9 |
| **Total #** | 11 | 32 | 26 | 8 | 2.4 |
| **Total %** | 14% | 42% | 34% | 10% |  |
| 10. The teacher uses a variety of instructional strategies. | **ES** | 5% | 45% | 36% | 14% | 2.6 |
| **MS** | 0 | 47% | 35% | 18% | 2.7 |
| **HS** | 44% | 50% | 6% | 0 | 1.6 |
| **Total #** | 9 | 36 | 23 | 9 | 2.4 |
| **Total %** | 12% | 47% | 30% | 12% |  |
| 11. Classroom routines and positive supports are in place to ensure that students behave appropriately. | **ES** | 2% | 9% | 36% | 52% | 3.4 |
| **MS** | 0 | 0 | 59% | 41% | 3.4 |
| **HS** | 31% | 25% | 44% | 0 | 2.1 |
| **Total #** | 6 | 8 | 33 | 30 | 3.1 |
| **Total %** | 8% | 10% | 43% | 39% |  |
| 12. The classroom climate is conducive to teaching and learning. | **ES** | 5% | 9% | 48% | 39% | 3.2 |
| **MS** | 0 | 12% | 59% | 29% | 3.2 |
| **HS** | 38% | 25% | 38% | 0 | 2.0 |
| **Total #** | 8 | 10 | 37 | 22 | 2.9 |
| **Total %** | 10% | 13% | 48% | 29% |  |
| **Total Score For Focus Area #3** | **ES** |  |  |  |  | 11.8 |
| **MS** |  |  |  |  | 11.7 |
| **HS** |  |  |  |  | 7.6 |
| **Total** |  |  |  |  | 10.9 |

1. Students in the high needs subgroup are in one or more of the following groups: economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and English language learners (ELLs) or former ELLs. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. See Appendix C, the Instructional Inventory, characteristics #6 –8; rubric element I-A.3 Rigorous Standards-based Unit Design, II-D.2 High Expectations [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. See Appendix C, the Instructional Inventory, characteristics #1–4 and rubric elements below. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. See Appendix C, the Instructional Inventory, characteristics # 9–12, and rubric elements below. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. An informative evaluation is factual and cites instructional details such as methodology, pedagogy, Standards and Indicators of Effective Teaching Practice or instruction of subject-based knowledge that is aligned with the state curriculum frameworks. It does not commit to improvement strategies. An instructive evaluation includes comments intended to improve instruction. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. On Tuesday, February 28, 2017, after collecting public comment since November 2016, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education voted 9-1 to amend the educator evaluation regulations. The most significant change in the regulations is the elimination of a separate student impact rating. Under the [amended regulations](http://www.doe.mass.edu/boe/docs/FY2017/2017-02/item6.html), evaluators do not have to make a separate judgment about an educator’s impact on student learning. Instead, student learning is embedded as an indicator within one of the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework’s four standards. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. The district reported that eight first languages are currently represented in the population of students whose first language is not English. Most of these students come from Syria, Russia, Nepal, Iraq, and some South-Central Asian countries. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. As of April 25, 2018, the district reported 69 actively enrolled evacuees. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. According to 2016 ESE data, 47 percent of district students with disabilities were included in general education classrooms for 80 percent or more of the day (full inclusion), compared with the statewide average of 72 percent, and 19 percent of district students with disabilities were included in the general education program for less than 40 percent of the school day (substantially separate placement), compared with the statewide average of 7 percent. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. According to ESE data, the percentage of students suspended out of school at least once was 3.8 percent in 2013, 3.9 percent in 2014, 2.5 percent in 2015, and 2.3 percent in 2016, compared with state rates of 4.3 percent, 3.9 percent, 2.9 percent and 2.9 percent, respectively. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. From 2011 to 2016, the district’s four-year cohort graduation rate rose from 77.5 percent, compared with the 2011 state rate of 88.4 percent, to 85.8 percent, compared with the 2016 state rate of 87.5 percent. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. The district’s dropout rate declined from 5.1 percent in 2011, compared with the state rate of 2.7 percent, to 2.2 percent in 2016, compared with the state rate of 1.9 percent. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Title used in the district. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)