Targeted District Review Report

Cape Cod Regional Vocational Technical High School

Review conducted March 19–22, 2018

Office of District Reviews and Monitoring

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

**Organization of this Report**

[Executive Summary 1](#_Toc531868440)

[Cape Cod RVTHS Targeted District Review Overview 4](#_Toc531868441)

[Curriculum and Instruction 12](#_Toc531868442)

[Assessment 23](#_Toc531868443)

[Student Support 27](#_Toc531868444)

[Appendix A: Review Team, Activities, Schedule, Site Visit 33](#_Toc531868445)

[Appendix B: Enrollment, Attendance, Expenditures 35](#_Toc531868446)

[Appendix C: Instructional Inventory 39](#_Toc531868447)

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Executive Summary

Many students in the Cape Cod Regional Vocational Technical High School district (Cape Cod Tech) come to school each day with high programmatic and support needs. In the 2017–2018 school year, 55.9 percent of 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. Economically disadvantaged students make up 36.3 percent of the student population, compared with 32 percent of the state; students with disabilities make up 29.2 percent of the total enrollment, compared with 17.7 percent of their peers in the state; and ELLs make up 1.5 percent of the student population, compared with 10.2 percent of the state.

District leaders have instituted a process to guide districtwide curriculum development, and they have provided specific content support, particularly in literacy. District curriculum objectives for reading and writing across the curriculum are supported by the efforts of a literacy coach. The English lead teacher/literacy coach provides teachers throughout the school with regular professional development on implementing the schoolwide writing rubric. Using the rubric, math, ELA, and science teachers regularly include open-response questions in unit tests and other measures. The literacy coach is also a resource for teachers as they develop lesson plans and address literacy-related topics in professional learning communities and department meetings. Teachers are expected to assign a minimum of one reading and writing task per trimester; evidence of that work must appear in each teacher’s evaluation evidence binder. Teachers complete a formal collaborative unit plan (CUP) for each segment of all academic and CVTE programs. Since 2016, the teachers’ collective bargaining agreement has required that teachers and instructors use a collaborative unit plan template to develop curricula.

**Instruction**

The team observed 37 classes throughout the district’s one high school. The team observed 8 ELA classes, 6 mathematics classes, and 23 classes in other subject areas. Among the classes observed were 4 special education classes and 17 career, vocational, technical education (CVTE) 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 academic and CVTE classrooms throughout the high school, teachers demonstrated strong subject matter knowledge, provided classroom routines and positive supports that encourageappropriate student behavior, and created a classroom climate conducive to teaching and learning.In observed academic classrooms, team members observed a lower incidence of students engaging in higher-order thinking and communicating their ideas and thinking with each other, and of teachers using a variety of instructional strategies, than in CVTE classrooms.

**Strengths**

* The district has adopted and implemented a curriculum development process to ensure that curriculum in all disciplines is consistently developed.
* In observed academic and CVTE classrooms throughout the high school, teachers demonstrated strong subject matter knowledge, provided classroom routines and positive supports that encourage appropriate student behavior, and created a classroom climate conducive to teaching and learning.
* The district has initiated common practices to identify and provide support for struggling students.

**Challenges and Areas for Growth**

* Academic and CVTE curricula in the district are not sufficiently integrated.
* The district has not established a common understanding of its expectations for research-based, high-quality instruction.
* In observed academic classrooms, team members observed a lower incidence of students engaging in higher-order thinking and communicating their ideas and thinking with each other, and of teachers using a variety of instructional strategies, than in CVTE classrooms.
* The district does not have an effective system for continuously collecting, analyzing, and disseminating student assessment data to inform instruction, to monitor students’ progress, and to inform decision-making.
* Many of the district’s students with disabilities have limited access to the standards-based academic curriculum taught in the least restrictive environment with appropriate supports.
* The district has not provided high-quality, research-based, ongoing professional development to all general education staff on inclusive practice models.

**Recommendations**

* The district should continue to develop its curriculum to ensure that the district has a fully documented, aligned, and integrated curriculum that is consistently used and effectively delivered.
* The principal, administrative team, and faculty should develop with some urgency a shared understanding of the district’s expectations for high-quality, research-based instruction and an implementation plan that includes professional development, support, and monitoring.

The school should establish the systems and resources needed to improve its collection and analysis of student achievement data.

* To provide all students with a high-quality education in the least restrictive environment, the district should expand its inclusion model and provide professional development to educators to implement the model effectively.

Cape Cod RVTHS Targeted District Review Overview

Purpose

Conducted under Chapter 15, Section 55A of the Massachusetts General Laws, targeted district reviews support local school districts in establishing or strengthening a cycle of continuous improvement. In general, districts performing at the 20th percentile or above receive a targeted review, while lower-performing districts receive a comprehensive review.[[1]](#footnote-1) Reviews consider carefully the effectiveness of systemwide functions, with reference to three district standards used by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE). Targeted reviews address one of the following sets of three standards: **Governance and Administrative Systems** (Leadership and Governance, Human Resources and Professional Development, and Financial and Asset Management standards) or **Student-Centered Systems** (Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment, and Student Support standards) —and may include the team’s observations/thoughts about systems and practices in the set of standards not being addressed. All targeted reviews include finding(s) about instruction based on classroom observations. A targeted review identifies systems and practices that may be impeding improvement as well as those most likely to be contributing to positive results. The targeted district review is designed to promote district reflection on its own performance and potential next steps. 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. This targeted review by the Office of District Reviews and Monitoring focused on the following standards: Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment, and Student Support.

Methodology

Reviews collect evidence for each of the three district standards identified as the focus of the targeted review. Team members also observe classroom instructional practice. A district review team consisting of independent consultants with expertise in the district standards reviews documentation, data, and reports for two days before conducting a three-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. 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 Cape Cod Regional Vocational Technical High School was conducted from March 19–22, 2018. The site visit included 17.5 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 69 stakeholders, including school committee members, district administrators, school staff, students, students’ families, and teachers’ association representatives. The review team conducted one focus group with 13 high-school teachers and another with 16 high-school teachers.

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 37 classrooms in 1 school. 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**

Cape Cod Regional Vocational Technical High School serves students in grades 9–12 from the towns of Barnstable, Brewster, Chatham, Dennis, Eastham, Harwich, Mashpee, Orleans, Provincetown, Truro, Wellfleet, and Yarmouth. The district has a regional school committee form of government and the chair of the school committee is elected. The 21 members of the school committee meet bi-weekly.

The current superintendent has been in the position since July 2010. The district leadership team includes the superintendent, the principal, the assistant principal, the curriculum coordinator, the technical director, and the guidance director. Central office positions have been mostly stable in number in recent years. The district has one principal leading one school. In 2017–2018, there were 65.8 teachers in the district.

In the 2017–2018 school year, 590 students were enrolled in the district’s 1 school (grades 9–12). With the support of the Massachusetts School Building Authority, Cape Cod Tech is planning a new high school building. Construction is slated to begin in December 2018.

Total in-district per-pupil expenditures were higher than the median in-district per-pupil expenditures for 14 vocational schools of similar size (<1,000 students) in fiscal year 2017:  $25,449 as compared with a median of $22,171 (see [District Analysis and Review Tool Detail: Staffing & Finance](http://www.mass.gov/edu/government/departments-and-boards/ese/programs/accountability/tools-and-resources/district-analysis-review-and-assistance/dart-for-districts-and-dart-for-schools.html)). Actual net school spending has been well above what is required by the Chapter 70 state education aid program, as shown in Table B3 in Appendix B.

Between 2014 and 2018 overall student enrollment decreased by 9.8 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.

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 percentage of all students scoring proficient or advanced on the MCAS assessment in 10th grade was 1 percentage point above the state in ELA and 8 percentage points below the state rate in math.**

* In ELA, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced was above the state rate by 6 and 8 percentage points for high needs students and economically disadvantaged students, respectively, and below the state rate by 1 percentage point for students with disabilities.
* In math, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced was below the state rate by 13 points for students with disabilities, equal to the state for high needs students, and above the state rate by 6 percentage points for economically disadvantaged students.

| **Table 1: Cape Cod RVTSD**  **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 | 73 | 85% | 79% | 6 | 74 | 58% | 58% | 0 |
| Econ. Dis. | 55 | 89% | 81% | 8 | 56 | 66% | 60% | 6 |
| SWD | 30 | 67% | 68% | -1 | 31 | 29% | 42% | -13 |
| ELLs | 4 | -- | 59% | -- | 4 | -- | 39% | -- |
| All | 139 | 92% | 91% | 1 | 139 | 71% | 79% | -8 |

**Between 2014 and 2017, ELA proficiency at Cape Cod RVTHS improved by 1 percentage point for all students and high needs students and declined by 6 points for students with disabilities.**

* In 2017, ELA proficiency for economically disadvantaged students was 89 percent at Cape Cod RVTHS.

**Between 2014 and 2017, math proficiency at Cape Cod RVTHS declined by 4 percentage points for all students and by 6 and 3 percentage points for high needs students and students with disabilities, respectively.**

* In 2017, math proficiency for economically disadvantaged students was 66 percent at Cape Cod RVTHS.

| **Table 2: Cape Cod RVTSD**  **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** |
| Cape Cod RVTHS | 91% | 89% | 95% | 92% | 1 | 75% | 77% | 74% | 71% | -4 |
| High Needs | 84% | 81% | 92% | 85% | 1 | 64% | 65% | 62% | 58% | -6 |
| Econ. Dis. | -- | 85% | 91% | 89% | -- | -- | 72% | 72% | 66% | -- |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| SWD | 73% | 68% | 86% | 67% | -6 | 32% | 41% | 39% | 29% | -3 |

**Between 2014 and 2017, in science, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the MCAS assessment declined by 4 percentage points for all students and by 3 percentage points for high needs students, and improved by 8 percentage points for students with disabilities.**

* In 2017, science proficiency for economically disadvantaged students was 64 percent at Cape Cod RVTHS.

| **Table 3: Cape Cod RVTSD**  **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** |
| Cape Cod RVTHS | 121 | 72% | 69% | 75% | 68% | -4 |
| High Needs | 65 | 58% | 58% | 69% | 55% | -3 |
| Econ. Dis. | 47 | -- | 64% | 75% | 64% | -- |
| SWD | 29 | 33% | 41% | 56% | 41% | 8 |
| ELLs | 4 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |

**Between 2014 and 2017, science proficiency for all students declined by 4 percentage points and by 3 percentage points for high needs students, and improved by 8 percentage points for students with disabilities.**

| **Table 4: Cape Cod RVTSD**  **MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced, 2014-2017** | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **N (2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2017)** |
| High Needs | 65 | 58% | 58% | 69% | 55% | -3 | 31% |
| Econ. Dis. | 47 | -- | 64% | 75% | 64% | -- | 32% |
| SWD | 29 | 33% | 41% | 56% | 41% | 8 | 21% |
| ELLs | 4 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 20% |
| All | 121 | 72% | 69% | 75% | 68% | -4 | 53% |

**Between 2014 and 2017, in science, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the MCAS assessment declined by 4 percentage points in the 10th grade.**

| **Table 5: Cape Cod RVTSD**  **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 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 46% |
| 8 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 40% |
| 10 | 121 | 72% | 69% | 75% | 68% | -4 | 74% |
| All | 121 | 72% | 69% | 75% | 68% | -4 | 53% |

**Between 2014 and 2017, in ELA the median student growth percentile (SGP) declined by 7.5 points in the 10th grade and in math the median SGP declined by 2.0 points in the 10th grade.**

| **Table 6: Cape Cod RVTSD**  **ELA and Math Median Student Growth Percentile, 2014–2017** | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Grade** | **N (2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2017)** |
| ELA | 113 | 53.5 | 40.0 | 54.0 | 46.0 | -7.5 | 50.0 |
| Math | 111 | 62.0 | 63.0 | 60.0 | 60.0 | -2.0 | 50.0 |
| Changes in SGP of 10 points or more are considered meaningful. | | | | | | | |

**The percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the MCAS assessment in the 10th grade was above the state rate by 1 percentage point in ELA, and below the state rate by 8 percentage points in math**.

| **Table 7: Cape Cod RVTSD**  **MCAS ELA and Math Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grade 10, 2017** | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **School** | ELA | Math |
| Cape Cod RVTHS | 92% | 71% |
| State | 91% | 79% |

**In science, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the MCAS assessment was 68 percent in the 10th grade.**

| **Table 8: Cape Cod RVTSD**  **MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced by School and Grade, 2017** | | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **School** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **10** | **Total** |
| Cape Cod RVTHS | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 68% | 68% |
| District | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 68% | 68% |
| State | -- | -- | 46% | -- | -- | 40% | 74% | 53% |

**Between 2014 and 2017, the district’s four-year cohort graduation rate for all students improved 3.4 percentage points, from 86.4 percent in 2014 to 89.8 percent in 2017, above the state rate of 88.3 percent. In 2017, the four-year cohort graduation rates for each subgroup with reportable data was above the state rate, except for White students.**

| **Table 9: Cape Cod RVTSD**  **Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates, 2014–2017** | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **N**  **(2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2017)** |
| High needs | 86 | 81.2% | 86.5% | 89.9% | 83.7% | 2.5 | 80.0% |
| Economically Disadvantaged\* | 69 | 81.0% | 84.7% | 90.6% | 84.1% | 3.1 | 79.0% |
| ELLs | 5 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 63.4% |
| SWD | 40 | 77.8% | 77.8% | 80.6% | 77.5% | -0.3 | 72.8% |
| African American | 9 | -- | 100% | 100% | 100% | -- | 80.0% |
| Asian | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 94.1% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 13 | 92.9% | 100% | 92.9% | 92.3% | -0.6 | 74.4% |
| Multi-Race, non-Hisp./Lat. | 4 | -- | 88.9% | -- | -- | -- | 85.2% |
| White | 115 | 85.0% | 85.3% | 92.1% | 87.8% | 2.8 | 92.6% |
| All | 147 | 86.4% | 88.1% | 92.9% | 89.8% | 3.4 | 88.3% |
| \* Four-year cohort graduation rate for students from low income families used for 2014 and 2015 rates. | | | | | | | |

**Between 2013 and 2016, the district’s five-year cohort graduation rate declined by 0.7 percentage point for all students, from 96.2 percent in 2013 to 95.5 percent in 2016, above the state rate of 89.8 percent. In 2016, the five-year cohort graduation rates for each subgroup with reportable data were above the state rates.**

| **Table 10: Cape Cod RVTSD**  **Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates, 2013–2016** | | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **N**  **(2016)** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2016)** |
| High needs | 99 | 96.1% | 85.1% | 89.9% | 93.9% | -2.2 | 82.9% |
| Economically Disadvantaged\* | 85 | 94.7% | 85.7% | 88.9% | 94.1% | -0.6 | 82.1% |
| ELLs | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 70.9% |
| SWD | 36 | 98.1% | 84.4% | 80.6% | 88.9% | -9.2 | 76.5% |
| African American | 9 | 100% | -- | 100% | 100% | 0.0 | 83.4% |
| Asian | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 94.8% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 14 | 90.0% | 100% | 100% | 100% | 10.0 | 76.8% |
| Multi-Race, non-Hisp./Lat. | 4 | -- | -- | 88.9% | -- | -- | 87.4% |
| White | 126 | 97.0% | 88.2% | 88.2% | 94.4% | -2.6 | 93.5% |
| All | 154 | 96.2% | 89.6% | 90.3% | 95.5% | -0.7 | 89.8% |
| \* Five-year cohort graduation rate for students from low income families used for 2013 and 2014 rates. | | | | | | | |

**In 2017, the in-school suspension rate for all students increased 4percentage points, from 5.2 percent in 2014 to 9.2 percent in 2017. The in-school suspension rate for each subgroup with reportable data ranged from 8.5 to 22.6 percent.**

| **Table 11: Cape Cod RVTSD**  **In-School Suspension Rates by Subgroup, 2014–2017** | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2017)** |
| High Needs | 7.2% | 5.8% | 10.6% | 10.3% | 3.1 | 2.6% |
| Economically Disadvantaged\* | 4.7% | 5.3% | 10.4% | 12.6% | 7.9 | 2.9% |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 1.7% |
| SWD | 13.7% | 6.5% | 11.4% | 8.0% | -5.7 | 3.1% |
| African American | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 3.3% |
| Asian | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 0.5% |
| Hispanic or Latino | -- | 3.3% | 10.8% | 12.3% | -- | 2.5% |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic or Latino | -- | -- | 16.1% | 22.6% | -- | 2.1% |
| White | 5.2% | 4.5% | 10.0% | 8.5% | 3.3 | 1.3% |
| All | 5.2% | 4.5% | 9.9% | 9.2% | 4.0 | 1.7% |

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

**Between 2014 and 2017, the district’s out-of-school suspension rate for all students decreased 2.3 percentage points, from 8.2 percent in 2014 to 5.9 percent in 2017, and decreased for each subgroup with reportable data by 2.5 to 11.1 percentage points.**

| **Table 12: Cape Cod RVTSD**  **Out-of-School Suspension Rates by Subgroup, 2014–2017** | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2017)** |
| High Needs | 11.5% | 8.9% | 10.3% | 5.8% | -5.7 | 4.5% |
| Economically Disadvantaged\* | 9.3% | 7.9% | 9.6% | 4.8% | -4.5 | 5.3% |
| ELLs | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 3.8% |
| SWD | 18.5% | 13.0% | 9.6% | 7.4% | -11.1 | 5.5% |
| African American | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 6.3% |
| Asian | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 0.7% |
| Hispanic or Latino | -- | 9.8% | 7.7% | 6.2% | -- | 5.2% |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic or Latino | -- | -- | 19.4% | 3.2% | -- | 3.1% |
| White | 8.6% | 7.4% | 8.7% | 6.1% | -2.5 | 1.6% |
| All | 8.2% | 7.3% | 9.3% | 5.9% | -2.3 | 2.8% |

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

**In 2017, the district’s dropout rate for all students was 1.1 percent, below the state rate of 1.8 percent. The dropout rates for each subgroup with reportable data ranged from 0.0 to 5.6 percent and were below the state rates for each subgroup except White students.**

| **Table 13: Cape Cod RVTSD**  **Dropout Rates by Subgroup, 2014–2017** | | | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2017)** |
| High Needs | 1.8% | 1.2% | 2.4% | 1.8% | 0.0 | 3.5% |
| Economically Disadvantaged\* | 2.4% | 1.0% | 2.7% | 1.4% | -1.0 | 3.6% |
| ELLs | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 5.6% | 5.6 | 6.5% |
| SWD | 1.2% | 1.8% | 3.2% | 2.4% | 1.2 | 3.3% |
| African American | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0% | 0.0 | 2.9% |
| Asian | -- | -- | -- | 0.0% | -- | 0.6% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 0.0% | 0.0% | 1.7% | 1.6% | 1.6 | 4.2% |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic or Latino | 0.0% | 0.0% | 3.6% | 0.0% | 0.0 | 1.7% |
| White | 1.9% | 1.8% | 1.5% | 1.3% | -0.6 | 1.1% |
| All | 1.5% | 1.4% | 1.5% | 1.1% | -0.4 | 1.8% |
| \*Drop-out rates for students from low income families used for 2014 rates. | | | | | | |

Curriculum and Instruction

**Contextual Background**

Cape Cod Vocational Technical High School provides students with academic instruction based on the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks and career, vocational, technical education (CVTE) instruction based on the Massachusetts Vocational Technical Education Frameworks. Academic curricula are mainly teacher-developed. CVTE curricula comprise a combination of teacher-generated and off-the-shelf curricula. All academic and CVTE curricula are required to adhere to the Collaborative Unit Plan (CUP) format, which is mandated by the teachers’ collective bargaining agreement. Teachers complete a formal collaborative unit plan (CUP) for each segment of all academic and CVTE programs. Students spend alternating two-week blocks in academic and CVTE classrooms. In grades 9 and 10, students have additional English and math classes during their CVTE weeks to provide 180 days of instruction in these core content areas.

During grade 9, students explore CVTE opportunities before choosing an area on which to focus. Real-world instruction in these areas is provided in well-equipped CVTE classrooms and throughout the community. For example, at the time of the onsite review in March 2018, students in the horticulture department were clearing the site for the district’s newly approved construction project and the Pleasant Bay Boat Project was providing multiple CVTE departments the opportunity to work in the community. Departments that educate students for direct service careers also provide opportunities to work with the public within the school. For example, the early childhood department operates a day care center and students perform all culinary and hospitality functions at The Hidden Cove restaurant, which is open to the public for lunch Tuesdays through Fridays.

Many academic classes have approximately 15 students; all are capped at 25. In 2018, the district’s student-to-teacher ratio was 9 students to 1 teacher. Most classes have one highly qualified teacher. All core academic departments offer courses at the college preparation and honors levels. Mathematics and English Language Arts also offer advanced placement courses that require summer reading and a commitment to attend seven of nine Saturday classes throughout the regular school year. Dual enrollment for college credit is available at Cape Cod Community College.

Teachers meet and collaborate on curriculum development and alignment formally and informally. They use structured time for curriculum development and alignment and for analysis of MCAS assessment results.

Teachers are expected to assign a minimum of one reading and writing task per trimester; evidence of that work must appear in each teacher’s evaluation evidence binder.

***Strength Findings***

**1. The district has adopted and implemented a curriculum development process to ensure that curriculum in all disciplines is consistently developed.**

* 1. The teachers’ collective bargaining agreement (CBA) establishes expectations for the development of curriculum documents.

1. The CBA requires that all teachers and instructors use a collaborative unit plan (CUP) template to develop curriculum. The completed CUP should include planning team members, a knowledge statement (what students will know and be able to do after completing the unit), references to the common core state standards and the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks, learning targets, assessment practices, rubrics, learning activities, and independent activities (for example, extra credit).

2. In addition to completing CUPs, career, vocational, and technical educators complete the “Certificate of Proficiency Framework” document, which cites standards, resources, and assessments.

3. The CBA mandates 21 hours of common planning time throughout the year, along with a three-hour meeting in the first week of school dedicated to working on the collaborative unit plan.

a. Teachers and administrators stated that regular common planning time was in place.

**B.** Administrators and teachers stated that new teachers received the following at the start of their employment: state curriculum frameworks, scope and sequence documents, pacing guides, and the CUP template. All these documents are available in electronic format.

**C.** Interviews with district administrators and a document review indicated that teachers were meeting expectations for developing curriculum documentation as set forth in the teachers’ CBA.

1. Teachers stated that they submitted each CUP for review before teaching.

**D.** Administrators and teachers stated that all curriculum documents were aligned with the curriculum frameworks. Administrators agreed, “Teachers are very mindful of curriculum and alignment.”

**E.** Teachers are provided regular times to meet in professional learning communities (PLCs), to review and discuss curriculum matters.

1. Academic PLCs are department based; each career, vocational, and technical education (CVTE) PLC includes representatives from several programs.

2. The director of curriculum, instruction, and assessment and the director of CVTE programs meet with teachers to set agendas for PLC meetings, and to discuss how to use PLC time to address curriculum topics and to respond to students’ needs as determined by MCAS and other assessments.

3. An administrator stated that PLC time was used for the development of curriculum unit plans.

**Impact**: A comprehensive, cohesive, and aligned curriculum development process, mandated by collective bargaining, fostered by leadership, and supported through regular common planning time and PLCs, supports the district’s commitment to increasing expectations and improving student performance.

**2. In observed academic and career, vocational, technical education (CVTE) classrooms throughout the high school, teachers demonstrated strong subject matter knowledge, provided classroom routines and positive supports that encourage appropriate student behavior, and created a classroom climate conducive to teaching and learning.**

**A.** Teachers demonstrate knowledge of subject matter.

1. The team found sufficient and compelling evidence that the teacher demonstrates knowledge of the subject matter (characteristic #1) in 92 percent of observed classes.

a. For example, in a science class, the teacher paused a video to clarify the information, to provide additional examples, and to check for understanding. In a math class, the teacher walked students through the thought process to understand complex concepts.

b. In a CVTE classroom, the teacher provided instruction related to estimating the costs of a variety of senior projects. In another class, students discussed terms and concepts with a team member.

**B.** Classroom routines and positive supports limit disruptions and distractions.

1. In 97 percent of observed classrooms, team members found sufficient and compelling evidence that teachers provided classroom routines and positive supports to ensure that students behave appropriately (characteristic #11).

2. Team members noted strong and individualized classroom routines in virtually all observed classrooms. For example, in one class, students put their personal items away as they entered the classroom. In another, students signed in and out without interrupting the class. On one occasion when a student violated a rule about cell phones in class, the teacher addressed the situation efficiently and effectively.

3. Students also said that teachers “give you a set of rules” and if you break them, “They tell you about it.”

**C.** The classroom climate is conducive to teaching and learning.

1. In 98 percent of observed classrooms, the team found sufficient and compelling evidence of practices that provide a strong teaching and learning environment (characteristic #12).

* + - 1. Team members noted reciprocal respect on the part of students and teachers in virtually all observed classrooms. They also noted a “relaxed environment” where students participate, are comfortable asking questions, and generally show respect for each other.
    1. Students reported feeling that teachers wanted what was best for them. Students said “Our teachers treat us all individually,” noting it is “like a family here.”

a. One student noted the diversity of the school and told the team that there was “a place for everyone.”

b. Students said that they received compliments for “doing the right thing” and seemed impressed that teachers said “thank you” to them.

c. All 10 students in a focus group said that they felt safe at school.

3. Students said that teachers were very organized and were teaching students to be organized, expressing the view that this was especially helpful in preparing students for college.

a. One student said, “Everything is in a certain order.”

**Impact**: Teachers’ knowledge of their subject matter likely ensures that students are presented complex content and industry standard skills. When support structures are in place and the classroom environment is conducive to teaching and learning, students are more likely to feel safe to take academic risks and become responsible learners.

***Challenges and Areas for Growth***

**3. Academic and career, vocational, technical education curricula in the district are not sufficiently integrated.**

**A.** Integration of academic and career, vocational, technical education (CVTE) curricula is listed as a district priority in the Cape Cod Technical High School District Plan Overview 2017–2019: “Develop curriculum that enhances problem solving, critical and creative thinking, communication and collaboration skills. Project-based learning; real-life application; academic and vocational integration; explore current trends in industry.”

1. Teachers and administrators stated that the district had limited integration of academic and CVTE curricula.

a. At the time of the review in March 2018, the integration of academic and CVTE curricula was only in the discussion phase and there were no expectations for teachers to integrate curricula.

b. An administrator stated that the district is considering designs for the new building that will include more physical proximity between academic classrooms and technical areas to encourage integration of the academic and CVTE curricula.

2. An administrator stated that integration of academic and CVTE curricula was missing and that time was an issue. Other things took priority.

**B.** There is a schoolwide focus on literacy, but not on math.

1.Some teachers said that they knew that literacy was a schoolwide focus, but that math was “not organized as a schoolwide program.” Other teachers stated that math should also be a school focus.

2. CVTE teachers said that they knew little about the math MCAS assessment, but they expressed a willingness to address students’ academic needs in math.

a. Interviews and a document review indicated that in the 2017–2018 academic year the district provided MCAS assessment results for all tested subjects with CVTE teachers for the first time.

3. Between 2014 and 2017, in math, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced on the MCAS assessment declined by 4 percentage points for all students and by 6 and 3 percentage points for high needs students and students with disabilities, respectively.

**Impact**: The district loses an opportunity to strengthen students’ math skills when it does not fully inform CVTE teachers about students’ math performance and does not expect them to address students’ needs in math. Without a shared responsibility for embedding integrated academic and CVTE expectations into the curriculum across all grade levels and disciplines, students are shortchanged. The absence of expectations and support for teacher academic and CVTE integration undercut the commitment that the district has made to fostering collective responsibility among the faculty to ensure that all students succeed.

**4. The district has not established a common understanding of its expectations for research-based, high-quality instruction.**

**A.** Interviews and a document review indicated that a districtwide initiative for high expectations for teaching began in the 2016–2017 school year.

* + - 1. The district provided teachers with a list of “Observable Strategies/Questions for High Expectations Teaching.”[[2]](#footnote-2)
         1. The Action Plan Template for the Strategic Initiative/Objective[[3]](#footnote-3) completed by the High Expectations Committee outlined six process benchmarks to monitor progress and impact during implementation of “high expectations” instruction. Of the six process benchmarks to be completed from January through October 2016, the document indicated that two had been completed, three were “In Process,” and one had had no action taken.
         2. In focus groups and interviews, some teachers were not familiar with the list of observable strategies/questions provided by the administration as a guide for high expectations in teaching. One teacher reported having read the document once, but said that she/he had not used it. Another teacher said that the document was referred to in one evaluation, but she/he was unfamiliar with it.
         3. In January 2016, the district provided a districtwide training in research-based teaching.
    1. A number of faculty described the class as “not good.”
    2. Administrators said that although the course “tool box” and materials were useful, the training did not meet their standards for high-quality professional development.

**B.** The district has not provided sufficient ongoing and high-quality professional development (PD) in key areas to promote a deeper understanding of research-based instructional practices.

1. Faculty expressed an interest in PD in the areas of differentiated instruction, data analysis, and co-teaching.

2. Interviewees told the team that the district provided high-quality PD in math a few years before the onsite review in March 2018, but the majority of teachers who took that course were no longer employed at the school.

3. Administrators stated that they surveyed teachers about their PD interests.

**C.** The district is not promoting effective instruction in its implementation of the educator evaluation system.

1. Interviews and a document review indicated that the district’s implementation of its educator evaluation system was inconsistent and uneven.

a. Some teachers are not observed during the educator evaluation process. A review of 64 summary evaluations on the district’s Teach Point system showed that 10 academic teachers and 7 CVTE teachers received end-of-year evaluations without any written observations by their evaluators.

b. An administrator said, “Classroom observations aren’t always as strong as we’d like.”

2. Faculty expressed the feeling that there was little consistency “as far as what administrators are looking for.”

**Impact**: Without establishing a common understanding of the district’s expectations for research-based, high-quality instruction, the district cannot ensure that all students will receive the high-quality instruction they need to achieve success in careers, college, and civic involvement.

**5. In observed academic classrooms, team members observed a lower incidence of students engaging in higher-order thinking and communicating their ideas and thinking with each other, and of teachers using a variety of instructional strategies, than in career, vocational technical education classrooms.**

**A.** The team found sufficient and compelling evidence of students engaging in higher-order thinking (characteristic #6) in only 45 percent of academic classes. In contrast, observers found sufficient and compelling evidence of higher-order thinking in 83 percent of career, vocational, technical education (CVTE) classes.

1. While teachers in some academic classrooms encouraged students to understand complex vocabulary or to analyze math problems to solve them, in most academic classes few opportunities for higher-order thinking was observed. In one class, for example, students were recording quotes and analysis was frequently off topic. In others, the teacher was solving the problems instead of the students.

2. In most observed CVTE classrooms, students were engaged in analysis, synthesis, and problem solving. In one class, for example, a teacher directed a student to apply the concepts learned in math class to solve a problem.

**B.** Team members observed sufficient and compelling evidence of students communicating their ideas and thinking with each other (characteristic #7) in 82 percent of CVTE classrooms but in 55 percent of academic classrooms.

1. In most academic classes, team members observed some communication connected to content among students, but many of the interactions were short or focused on only a few students. A notable exception to this was in two math classes that used turn and talk, collaborative problem solving, and think-aloud strategies.

2. In the majority of CVTE classes, students communicated their ideas with the teacher during class discussion or in back-and-forth discussions with other students. Team members noted the high level of large-group discussions in these classes. They described students reinforcing or responding to other students’ ideas and students helping other students.

**C.** Team members saw sufficient and compelling evidence of teachers using a variety of instructional strategies (characteristic #10) in 55 percent of the academic classrooms observed and in 64 percent of CVTE classrooms.

1. Team members found that in many observed academic classrooms teachers relied on teacher-directed instruction. This meant that the teacher was doing most or all of the work in the lesson. Students in some classrooms were copying teachers’ notes from interactive whiteboards and completing worksheets.

2. Most activities in CVTE classrooms were project based.

**Impact**: Without sufficient opportunities to engage in higher-order thinking, communicating their ideas and thinking with each other, and learning through a variety of instructional strategies, some students are likely not receiving the instruction they need to achieve at high levels.

***Recommendations***

**1. The district should continue to develop its curriculum to ensure that the district has a fully documented, aligned, and integrated curriculum that is consistently used and effectively delivered.**

**A.** The district should consider expanding the collaborative unit plan template to include expectations for academic and technical integration.

1. The district should provide structured opportunities in the curriculum for students to apply their academic skills in the context of their technical majors and their technical skills in academic areas.

**B.** The district should consider providing lead teachers with ongoing professional development in guiding teachers to develop high‐quality, integrated curriculum.

1. The district should consider using PLCs as a way to promote curriculum integration that enables academic and technical teachers to join forces in addressing students’ learning needs.

a. The district should consider adjusting PLC goals to include developing integrated approaches to addressing results from all relevant student assessments.

**C.** The district should consider expanding the model used for addressing literacy across the curriculum to include math.

**Benefits** from implementing this recommendation will include structured opportunities for students in this vocational technical high school to integrate their academic and technical curricula, thereby deepening their understanding of what they are learning. By strategically increasing the focus of teacher collaboration time on curriculum integration, the district can create a clearer and more efficient pathway to curriculum integration across all grade levels, including improving teaching and student achievement in math, as well as incorporating best practices for the integration of math instruction into STEM disciplines and CVTE programs.

**Recommended resources:**

* DESE’s Massachusetts Vocational Technical Education Frameworks (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/cte/frameworks/?section=all>) include Academic Crosswalks as appendices.
  + - DESE’s STEM home page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/stem/>) provides the 2016 Science and Technology/Engineering Framework and resources supporting its implementation.
    - Quick Reference Guide: Assessing Your Curriculum Landscape (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/impd/qrg-assessing-curriculum.pdf>) is designed to support districts assess their curriculum landscape by asking three questions: (1) Do teachers have ready access to high-quality, standards-aligned curricular materials? (2) Do sustained and collaborative professional learning structures empower teachers to use those materials in ways responsive to their students’ needs? (3) Are curriculum review processes regular, rigorous, and responsive to stakeholder input and needs?
    - DESE’s Instructional Materials and Professional Development page ([www.doe.mass.edu/candi/impd/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/impd/)) provides resources for improving and collaborating on curriculum, including quick reference guides and maps designed to facilitate cross-district communication about curriculum.

**2. The principal, administrative team, and faculty should develop a shared understanding of the district’s expectations for high-quality, research-based instruction and an implementation plan that includes professional development, support, and monitoring.**

**A.** The district should convene a representative group of leaders and teachers to fully articulate the district’s expectations for research-based, high-quality instruction.

a. These could build on existing guidance, such as the “Observable Strategies/Questions for High Expectations Teaching.”

b. The district’s expectations should be based in part on student performance data and on classroom observation data.

**B.** The district should develop a plan to communicate these expectations, to provide support for educators in meeting them, and to monitor the extent to which they are met.

1. The district should provide focused, embedded professional development to increase teachers’ repertoire of instructional strategies, particularly in the areas of increasing student communication of their thinking and cultivating higher-order thinking skills.

**C.** The district should provide administrators with ongoing high-quality professional development and support to deepen their skills as effective observers of instruction.

1. Monitoring and support should be put in place to ensure that all teachers receive frequent and useful feedback about their instruction.

**Benefits:** By implementing this recommendation, the district will provide clear and articulated expectations for administrators and teachers as to what constitutes high-quality instruction and effective feedback. Students will benefit from more challenging lessons that further develop higher order thinking skills and are designed to address their specific learning needs. A district that prioritizes high-quality instruction for all students creates and sustains a culture of continuous improvement resulting 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.docx>) 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.)

Appendix 4, *Characteristics of Standards-Based Teaching and Learning: Continuum of Practice (*<http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/dart/walkthrough/continuum-practice.pdf>) is a framework that provides a common language or reference point for looking at teaching and learning.

* 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 *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.
* 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.

*The Massachusetts Standards for Professional Development* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/pd/standards.pdf>) describe, identify, and characterize what high quality learning experiences should look like for educators.

Assessment

**Contextual Background**

Assessments administered in the district include MCAS, common unit assessments in math and science, ELA unit assessments and writing portfolios, SkillsPlus, SAT, Advanced Placement assessments, and schoolwide writing samples. The director of curriculum, instruction, and assessment is responsible for monitoring and distributing schoolwide data. [[4]](#footnote-4)

Administrators told the team that teachers discussed and analyzed data during monthly professional learning community (PLC) time and on in-service days.[[5]](#footnote-5) School leaders said that the PLC process was better developed in the academic areas than in the CVTE programs, but was developing in the CVTE programs. In 2017–2018, the CVTE teachers have been working on implementing a new PLC structure and topics guide.

**Challenges and Areas for Growth**

**1. The district does not have an effective system for continuously collecting, analyzing, and disseminating student assessment data to inform instruction, to monitor students’ progress, and to inform decision-making.**

**A.** District leaders and teachers told the review team that comprehensive academic and CVTE school data, especially Skills Plus and Stanford 10 data, was not disseminated or available to academic and career, vocational, technical education (CVTE) teachers.

* + 1. When teachers were asked what data they received or had access to, academic and CVTE teachers stated, “We would like to be given all school data.”
       1. CVTE teachers said that they wanted to know more about the MCAS assessment and how their programs aligned with the test content.
       2. A teacher said, ““I only get data for kids in my class but not anyone else.” The teacher said that data was not freely shared, which meant that teachers were unable to make their own informed instructional decisions. The teacher noted, “[Instructional] decisions are made for us, not with us.”
    2. School leaders stated that they analyzed and interpreted MCAS assessment data and gave the results to groups of academic and CVTE teachers.

a. The superintendent stated that school leaders frequently looked at data: EWIS (early Warning Indicator System), attendance in each CVTE area, and the graduation rate.

b. The director of curriculum, instruction, and assessment said that she gave summary MCAS assessment data to lead teachers in ELA, math, and science, and that she met with individual teachers concerning their students’ data. She stated that she relied on lead teachers to share summary data with their departments.

i. An ELA teacher said, “I look at strands and where kids struggle.”

ii. A science teacher and math a teacher agreed that they looked at individual questions and individual scores.

c. In 2017–2018, for the first time, CVTE teachers received their students’ MCAS assessment scores. CVTE teachers stated that they did not receive any analysis of the data and they were not familiar with the content of the MCAS assessment. A CVTE teacher stated, “I have no idea what MCAS math looks like.”

3. School leaders told the team that the district expected CVTE teachers to analyze program-specific Skills Plus data at least three times a year. However, they said that this was not common practice. A more complicated assessment of student’s technical skills, referred to as Phase 2 Exploratory, was to be broken down by CVTE program. Interviewees said that this analysis also was not happening as it should.

* 1. School leaders are initiating activities to engage all teachers in more collaborative and team-structured data-based discussions and decision making.

Professional learning communities (PLCs) meet during teachers’ monthly half-day of professional development time as well as during some pre-service time.

School leaders said that ELA PLCs were working well, and that math and science PLCs were in the beginning stages of implementation. During these meetings, teachers discuss data, common assessments, curriculum planning, and peer assessment training.

School leaders said that CVTE PLCs involved cross-department teams; teachers from different CVTE programs worked together. CVTE PLCs were in the development stage and were described by teachers as needing work.

School leaders told the review team that teachers were developing collaborative units of study where learning targets were identified and connections were made between planning, instruction, and assessments. School leaders stated that in 2017–2018 the technology coach was helping CVTE teachers build formative assessments. Leaders said, “Seeing this happening is a big step forward."

**Impact**: Without comprehensive student assessment data and analysis, educators are missing important information about student learning, challenges and opportunities, which is essential for informed and effective instructional planning and longer-term decision-making.

**Recommendation**

**The school should establish the systems and resources needed to improve its collection, analysis, and dissemination of student achievement data.**

**A.** School leaders should establish a system for the dissemination and analysis of assessment data.

1. School leaders should ensure that teachers at all levels have access to all relevant data and use that data strategically to inform their instruction.

2. The district should consider using a centralized online platform to produce a dashboard or other data display(s) to allow all appropriate staff to access and analyze all relevant student data in a consistent and useful way.

**B.** The district should clarify its expectations for professional learning communities to include data analysis and the use of data to inform curricular and instructional planning.

**Benefits** from implementing this recommendation will ensure that educators in both academic and CVTE disciplines have access to data and the guidance necessary to use this data to make instructional decisions and to measure progress. With such a system in place, educators will be able to provide teaching and learning experiences that prepare all students for success after high school.

**Recommended resources:**

* ESE’s Assessment Literacy framework (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/assessment/continuum.pdf>) is designed to organize and sequence the full range of skills educators need to use assessments effectively in classrooms. This can be a helpful reference to guide important conversations about how assessments are used to improve student learning.
* The Edwin Analytics web page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edwin/analytics/>) includes links to a Getting Started Guide, as well as a video tutorial series.
* The District Analysis and Review Tools (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/dart/>) turn the Department's vast amount of data into valuable, easily consumable information. The DARTs offer snapshots of district and school performance, allowing users to easily track select data elements over time, and make sound, meaningful comparisons to the state or to "comparable" organizations.
* ESE’s *Assessment Literacy Self-Assessment and Gap Analysis Tool* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/ddm/webinar/PartI-GapAnalysis/pdf>) is intended to support districts in understanding where their educators fit overall on a continuum of assessment literacy. After determining where the district as a whole generally falls on the continuum, districts can determine potential next steps.
* ESE’s District Data Team Tool Kit (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/toolkit/district-data-toolkit.pdf>) is a set of resources to help a district establish, grow, and maintain a culture of inquiry and data use through a District Data Team.

Student Support

**Contextual Background**

Administrators, teachers, student support staff, students, and family members consistently characterized the culture of the district as extremely supportive of the students. Administrators and teachers described their colleagues in multiple interviews as caring for all students. The efforts made daily to support the needs of the school’s diverse population are evident. Students expressed their feelings of being supported, coached, mentored, and encouraged by teachers who cared about their successes and overall well-being. Family members expressed their gratitude for having their children attend a school that provided a safe, nurturing, supportive learning environment. Parents told the team that they felt included in all aspects of their children’s education and highlighted the amount of time and attention that their children received from faculty and administrators across all disciplines. At the same time, however, between 2014 and 2017 the district’s in-school suspension rates increased for all students and for several student subgroups, and in 2017 were substantially higher than the state rate for all students and for each student subgroup as well as the highest of any district in the state excluding charter schools. Between 2014 and 2017, the district’s out-of-school suspension rates decreased, but in 2017 were higher than the state average for all students and for several student subgroups.[[6]](#footnote-6)

The district has entered into a partnership with two local agencies to provide counseling services to students with social, emotional, behavioral, and health needs. These counselors have office space in the school and provide therapeutic services to students during the school day. The district has implemented a comprehensive College and Career Planning model that assists students with selecting their high-school courses, provides for post-secondary planning, and educates students about the many available post-secondary options.

**Strength Finding**

**1. The district has initiated common practices to identify and provide support for struggling students.**

**A**. Interviews and a document review indicated that the district uses the AAA (Academic, Attendance, Attitude) process schoolwide to refer students who have challenges in academic and/or career, vocational, technical education (CVTE) courses. Teachers typically cite issues related to a student’s attendance and behavior and/or social-emotional needs when initiating an AAA referral.

1. The director of student services, the assistant principal, a guidance counselor, an adjustment counselor, the school resource officer, and the school nurse make up the AAA team. In addition, the referring staff member and others, as needed, participate in the meetings.

2. The school notifies the student’s family about a referral and may meet with family members.

3. Team members meet weekly to review referrals, develop action plans, and discuss the progress of students receiving interventions. The recommended actions for each student are entered electronically on a spreadsheet to track student progress. One AAA team member is assigned as primary contact for each student on an action plan.

a. At the time of the onsite review in March 2018, interviewees told the team that data on students’ progress was not available, because 2017–2018 was the first year of the tracking tool’s implementation.

**B**. The district uses a variety of screening tools to determine the social-emotional health and well-being of all students. For all grade 10 students, the school nurse and the guidance counselor administer the Screening Brief Intervention and Referral for Treatment (SBIRT) assessment. Students in grades 9, 11, and 12 complete the Communities That Care survey completed by all students.

**C.** Interviews and a document review indicated that the district provided social-emotional learning (SEL) classes and extensive counseling services for students who demonstrate a need for behavioral, social and/or emotional supports.

1.SEL curriculum is incorporated into academic support classes and is taught by the school’s at-risk coordinator who is a special education teacher. Boston Children’s Hospital provides training and support to all counselors and school social workers in the Break Free from Depression program, which led to the development of the AAA process.

2. Through partnerships with two local agencies, Cape Cod Human Services and Gosnold, four therapists provide counseling services to district students identified through the AAA referral process, mental health screenings, or parents/family members.

a. One therapist from Gosnold reported that she was working on certification to offer a Smart Recovery Group to students dealing with addiction.

3. The district employs two adjustment counselors and four guidance counselors, one of whom serves as guidance chair. A board-certified behavior analyst (BCBA) consults periodically with teachers to develop strategies for supporting students with specific challenges including autism spectrum disorders.

a. The guidance department has developed curriculum units as recommended by the Massachusetts Model for Comprehensive School Counseling. The counseling staff teaches these units of study to grade 9, 10, and 11 students in their CVTE programs.

**D.** The district offers extensive academic support options for students.

1. Academic support classes are available at all grade levels for students with disabilities. These courses are designed to strengthen students’ organizational skills with an emphasis on literacy and study skills. The goal is to increase the level of independence of all students challenged by general education curriculum. Students in grades 11 and 12, some who are not identified as students with disabilities, may be included in academic support classes as well as students identified as at risk for retention or not graduating high school.

2. MCAS academic support classes, also referred to as boost classes, are available to any 11th or 12th grade student who has not passed the MCAS assessment administered in grade 10. Based on an item analysis of each student’s MCAS assessments results, the teacher develops individualized lessons that target specific skills that the student has not mastered.

3. The district provides social-emotional academic support in classes for students with disabilities. These lessons consist of mini-lessons designed to strengthen students’ ability to manage school stressors and to develop strategies for positive learning interactions. Administrators and teachers expressed a desire to expand these lessons into the general education curriculum.

4. Academic support classes in transition skills are available to some students with disabilities in all grades. These classes are designed to help students develop greater independence as high-school learners.

5. The district offers all students a range of after-school classes for targeted assistance. Science, math, and writing labs are offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The “homework zone” is also available on Tuesdays and Thursdays to assist students with homework assignments.

6. Students may stay after school or come in before school any day, if they arrange sessions with individual teachers. Students are encouraged to stay on Tuesday and Thursday because there are more options for after-school transportation on those days. All teachers are required to stay after school one afternoon a week to be available for additional assistance to their students.

7. Saturday school is available in four-hour blocks for students to make up time missed due to excessive absence. This make up time is offered for credit recovery when student absence contributes to a failing grade.

**Impact:** A districtwide process to help educators identify and support struggling students helps ensure that appropriate resources and interventions are deployed to address students’ needs. Monitoring student progress and using the data to make decisions for program modifications will likely lead to increased rates of retention and graduation and ensure that all students are receiving the assistance they are entitled to in order to be prepared for college, career, and productive citizenship.

**Challenges and Areas for Growth**

**2. Many of the district’s students with disabilities have limited access to the standards-based academic curriculum taught in the least restrictive environment with appropriate supports.**

**A.** A review of documents, including course schedules, indicated that the district enrolled students with disabilities in substantially separate classes for a total of 63 sections, called the CP3 curriculum. CP3 curricula are offered in all core content areas and at all grade levels for students with disabilities only.

1. Administrators and teachers told the review team that students in substantially separate classes had access to the same curriculum as that taught in general education classes. However, a comparison of curriculum unit plans as well as classroom observations indicated that the level of instruction in classes using CP3 curriculum was not the same as the instruction in classes using CP1 curriculum units.

a. An administrator expressed the belief that the students participating in CP3 classes were actively engaged in this setting and expressed concern that the level of engagement might decrease if these students were included in general education classes.

2. Administrators and teachers told the review team that a co-teaching model was developed in math classes and initiated in 2016–2017. One section was offered to grade 9 students in 2016–2017, and in 2017–2018 two sections were offered, one in grade 9 and one in grade 10. Only students with disabilities participate.

3. All students, including students with disabilities, have access to CVTE programs across the district.

**Impact**: When all students do not have access to the academic curriculum in the least restrictive environment, they do not have access to the same content and are not held to the same expectations in preparation for careers, college, and civic involvement as their peers.

**3. The district has not provided high-quality, research-based, ongoing professional development to all general education staff on inclusive practice models.**

**A.** Administrators and teachers told the review team that the district has not provided formal professional development (PD) on differentiating instruction in the classroom.

1. The results of a PD survey indicated teachers’ interest in PD focused on “how to work more effectively with learning differences.” The review team did not find evidence that this PD had been provided.

2. The integration technology specialist helps with training on how to differentiate instruction using technology in the classroom, and special education teachers help general education teachers with differentiation when teachers request assistance.

**B.** The district has not provided professional development on co-teaching practices for general education or special education teachers who lead co-taught classes.

**C.** Administrators and teachers told the review team that the district relied on special education teachers, teacher assistants, counselors, and crisis intervention staff to provide peer training and assistance to academic and CVTE teachers about teaching strategies and behavioral interventions.

1. Administrators, teachers, and student support staff said that in the two years before the onsite review in March 2018, the student support services department needed to substantially reduce its teaching and counseling time, which has limited its ability to meet competing demands.

**Impact:** Without high-quality, research-based professional development and guidance in inclusive practices for all teachers, instruction is likely not addressing students’ unique strengths and needs and does not ensure that all students reach their full potential in academic and technical programs.

**Recommendation**

**1. To provide all students with a high-quality education in the least restrictive environment, the district should expand its inclusion model and provide professional development to educators to implement the model effectively.**

**A.** The district should consider developing an inclusion committee to oversee the expansion of the inclusion program model, ensure the widespread implementation of effective practices, and provide ongoing monitoring and support.

1. The inclusion committee, or another group, should develop specific goals, timelines, actions, and resources needed for full implementation and share these with faculty, students, and families.

2. As part of this effort, the districtshould restructure the existing co-teaching model to include general education students with students with disabilities in co-taught classes.

a. The district should provide common planning time for co-teachers to discuss classroom strategies and plan lessons.

b. The district should provide high-quality ongoing professional development (PD) for the educators responsible for co-teaching.

3. The group leading this work should educate the district community about the benefits for students of full inclusion practices.

**B.** The district should provide ongoing, high-quality PD to all educators on inclusive practices.

**Benefits:** By implementing this recommendation, the district will ensure that all educators have the training, tools, and skills necessary to provide all students equal access to the general curriculum with appropriate supports in the least restrictive environment.

**Recommended resource:**

* The *Educator Effectiveness Guidebook for Inclusive Practice* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/guidebook/>) includes tools for districts, schools, and educators that are aligned to the MA Educator Evaluation Framework and promote evidence-based best practices for inclusion following the principles of Universal Design for Learning, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and Social and Emotional Learning.

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

Review Team Members

The review was conducted from March 19–22, 2018, by the following team of independent ESE consultants.

1. Dr. William Blake, Curriculum
2. Dr. Marta Montleon, Instruction
3. Mary Jo Nawrocki, Assessment
4. Mary Jo Santoro, Student Support
5. Patricia Williams, *review team coordinator*

District Review Activities

The following activities were conducted during the review:

The team conducted interviews with the following members of the school committee: four members.

The review team conducted interviews with the following representatives of the teachers’ association: president and vice-president.

The team conducted interviews/focus groups with the following central office administrators: the superintendent, the principal, the assistant principal, the curriculum coordinator, the technical director, and the guidance director.

The team visited the following school: Cape Cod Vocational Technical High School (grades 9–12).

The team conducted one focus group with 13 high-school teachers and another focus group with 16 high-school teachers.

The team observed 37 classes at the high school.

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.
  + Published educational reports on the district by ESE and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC).
  + 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, and school schedules.

Site Visit Schedule

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Monday**  03/19/2018 | **Tuesday**  03/20/2018 | **Wednesday**  03/21/2018 |
| Orientation with district leaders and principal; standards interviews with district administrative staff and principal; document reviews; interview with teachers’ association; and classroom observations. | Interviews with district staff and principal; review of personnel files; teacher focus groups; parent focus group; school committee focus group; and classroom observations. | Student focus group, interviews with school leaders; classroom observations, team review and discussion; wrap-up with administrative staff. |

Appendix B: Enrollment, Attendance, Expenditures

**Table B1a: Cape Cod RVTSD**

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

| **Group** | **District** | **Percent**  **of Total** | **State** | **Percent of**  **Total** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| African-American | 37 | 6.3% | 86,305 | 9.0% |
| Asian | 4 | 0.7% | 65,667 | 6.9% |
| Hispanic | 57 | 9.7% | 191,201 | 20.0% |
| Native American | 11 | 1.9% | 2,103 | 0.2% |
| White | 450 | 76.3% | 573,335 | 60.1% |
| Native Hawaiian | 1 | 0.2% | 818 | 0.1% |
| Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic | 30 | 5.1% | 34,605 | 3.6% |
| All | 590 | 100.0% | 954,034 | 100.0% |
| Note: As of October 1, 2017 | | | | |

**Table B1b: Cape Cod RVTSD**

**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 | 172 | 52.1% | 29.2% | 171,061 | 38.0% | 17.7% |
| Econ. Dis. | 214 | 64.8% | 36.3% | 305,203 | 67.9% | 32.0% |
| ELLs and Former ELLs | 9 | 2.7% | 1.5% | 97,334 | 21.6% | 10.2% |
| All high needs students | 330 | 100.0% | 55.9% | 449,584 | 100.0% | 46.6% |
| 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 590; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 964,806. | | | | | | |

**Table B2: Cape Cod RVTSD**

**Attendance Rates, 2014–2017**

| **Group** | **N (2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2017)** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| High Needs | 322 | 93.1 | 93.4 | 93.9 | 93.9 | 0.8 | 93.1 |
| Econ. Dis. | 218 | -- | 92.6 | 93.4 | 93.5 | -- | 92.6 |
| ELLs | 18 | 96.4 | 95.2 | 94.0 | 93.3 | -3.1 | 93.5 |
| SWD | 156 | 93.2 | 93.3 | 93.8 | 93.7 | 0.5 | 93.0 |
| African American | 34 | 96.9 | 95.3 | 95.9 | 96.8 | -0.1 | 94.0 |
| Asian | 6 | 97.6 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 96.7 | -0.9 | 96.3 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 64 | 94.1 | 94.7 | 93.8 | 92.5 | -1.6 | 92.8 |
| Multi-Race | 31 | 93.8 | 92.9 | 95.6 | 94.1 | 0.3 | 94.5 |
| White | 494 | 93.5 | 93.7 | 94.4 | 94.3 | 0.8 | 95.1 |
| All | 643 | 93.8 | 93.9 | 94.5 | 94.2 | 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: Cape Cod RVTSD**

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

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **FY15** | | | **FY16** | | | **FY17** | | | |
|  | **Estimated** | | **Actual** | **Estimated** | **Actual** | | **Estimated** | | **Actual** | |
| Expenditures | | | | | | | | | | |
| By school committee | $13,908,300 | $14,347,057 | | $14,542,300 | | $14,442,305 | | $14,485,261 | | $15,428,918 |
| From revolving funds and grants | -- | $1,583,607 | | -- | | $1,579,080 | | -- | | $1,261,548 |
| Total expenditures | -- | $15,930,665 | | -- | | $16,021,385 | | -- | | $16,690,466 |
| Chapter 70 aid to education program | | | | | | | | | | |
| Chapter 70 state aid\* | -- | $2,080,187 | | -- | | $2,096,487 | | -- | | $2,130,477 |
| Required local contribution | -- | $8,734,661 | | -- | | $8,693,872 | | -- | | $8,195,699 |
| Required net school spending\*\* | -- | $10,814,848 | | -- | | $10,790,359 | | -- | | $10,326,176 |
| Actual net school spending | -- | $13,044,115 | | -- | | $12,829,427 | | -- | | $13,234,194 |
| Over/under required ($) | -- | $2,229,267 | | -- | | $2,039,068 | | -- | | $2,908,018 |
| Over/under required (%) | -- | 20.6% | | -- | | 18.9% | | -- | | 28.2% |
| \*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 website  Data retrieved 12/13/17 and 9/24/18 | | | | | | | | | | |

**Table B4: Cape Cod RVTSD**

**Expenditures Per In-District Pupil**

**Fiscal Years 2014–2016**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Expenditure Category** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** |
| Administration | $1,022 | $1,051 | $1,135 |
| Instructional leadership (district and school) | $1,410 | $1,425 | $1,772 |
| Teachers | $7,486 | $7,596 | $7,645 |
| Other teaching services | $1,471 | $1,589 | $1,353 |
| Professional development | $489 | $471 | $499 |
| Instructional materials, equipment and technology | $1,361 | $1,490 | $1,308 |
| Guidance, counseling and testing services | $756 | $946 | $848 |
| Pupil services | $2,310 | $2,865 | $2,607 |
| Operations and maintenance | $2,990 | $2,889 | $2,806 |
| Insurance, retirement and other fixed costs | $3,916 | $4,230 | $4,683 |
| Total expenditures per in-district pupil | $23,212 | $24,552 | $24,656 |
| Sources: [Per-pupil expenditure reports on ESE website](http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/statistics/ppx.html)  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. | **V/Tech.** | 0% | 0% | 47% | 53% | 2.5 |
| **Acad.** | 0% | 15% | 45% | 40% | 2.3 |
| **Total #** | 0 | 3 | 17 | 17 | 2.4 |
| **Total %** | 0% | 8% | 46% | 46% |  |
| 2. The teacher ensures that students understand what they should be learning in the lesson and why. | **V/Tech.** | 0% | 0% | 59% | 41% | 2.4 |
| **Acad.** | 0% | 40% | 45% | 15% | 1.8 |
| **Total #** | 0 | 8 | 19 | 10 | 2.1 |
| **Total %** | 0% | 22% | 51% | 27% |  |
| 3. The teacher uses appropriate classroom activities well matched to the learning objective(s). | **V/Tech.** | 0% | 0% | 47% | 53% | 2.5 |
| **Acad.** | 0% | 20% | 55% | 25% | 2.1 |
| **Total #** | 0 | 4 | 19 | 14 | 2.3 |
| **Total %** | 0% | 11% | 51% | 38% |  |
| 4. The teacher conducts frequent checks for student understanding, provides feedback, and adjusts instruction. | **V/Tech.** | 0% | 0% | 71% | 29% | 2.3 |
| **Acad.** | 0% | 15% | 55% | 30% | 2.2 |
| **Total #** | 0 | 3 | 23 | 11 | 2.2 |
| **Total %** | 0% | 8% | 62% | 30% |  |
| **Total Score For Focus Area #1** | **V/Tech.** |  |  |  |  | 9.8 |
| **Acad.** |  |  |  |  | 8.2 |
| **Total** |  |  |  |  | 8.9 |

| **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. | **V/Tech.** | 0% | 0% | 41% | 59% | 2.6 |
| **Acad.** | 5% | 20% | 60% | 15% | 1.9 |
| **Total #** | 1 | 4 | 19 | 13 | 2.2 |
| **Total %** | 3% | 11% | 51% | 35% |  |
| 6. Students engage in higher-order thinking. | **V/Tech.** | 6% | 12% | 59% | 24% | 2.0 |
| **Acad.** | 20% | 35% | 35% | 10% | 1.4 |
| **Total #** | 5 | 9 | 17 | 6 | 1.6 |
| **Total %** | 14% | 24% | 46% | 16% |  |
| 7. Students communicate their ideas and thinking with each other. | **V/Tech.** | 0% | 18% | 53% | 29% | 2.1 |
| **Acad.** | 10% | 35% | 55% | 0% | 1.5 |
| **Total #** | 2 | 10 | 20 | 5 | 1.8 |
| **Total %** | 5% | 27% | 54% | 14% |  |
| 8. Students engage with meaningful, real-world tasks. | **V/Tech.** | 0% | 0% | 18% | 82% | 2.8 |
| **Acad.** | 10% | 45% | 35% | 10% | 1.5 |
| **Total #** | 2 | 9 | 10 | 16 | 2.1 |
| **Total %** | 5% | 24% | 27% | 43% |  |
| **Total Score For Focus Area #2** | **V/Tech.** |  |  |  |  | 9.5 |
| **Acad.** |  |  |  |  | 6.1 |
| **Total** |  |  |  |  | 7.7 |

| **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. | **V/Tech.** | 0% | 0% | 47% | 53% | 2.5 |
| **Acad.** | 5% | 20% | 65% | 10% | 1.8 |
| **Total #** | 1 | 4 | 21 | 11 | 2.1 |
| **Total %** | 3% | 11% | 57% | 30% |  |
| 10. The teacher uses a variety of instructional strategies. | **V/Tech.** | 0% | 35% | 35% | 29% | 1.9 |
| **Acad.** | 5% | 40% | 50% | 5% | 1.6 |
| **Total #** | 1 | 14 | 16 | 6 | 1.7 |
| **Total %** | 3% | 38% | 43% | 16% |  |
| 11. Classroom routines and positive supports are in place to ensure that students behave appropriately. | **V/Tech.** | 0% | 0% | 24% | 76% | 2.8 |
| **Acad.** | 5% | 0% | 40% | 55% | 2.5 |
| **Total #** | 1 | 0 | 12 | 24 | 2.6 |
| **Total %** | 3% | 0% | 32% | 65% |  |
| 12. The classroom climate is conducive to teaching and learning. | **V/Tech.** | 0% | 0% | 18% | 82% | 2.8 |
| **Acad.** | 5% | 0% | 40% | 55% | 2.5 |
| **Total #** | 1 | 0 | 11 | 25 | 2.6 |
| **Total %** | 3% | 0% | 30% | 68% |  |
| **Total Score For Focus Area #3** | **V/Tech.** |  |  |  |  | 10.1 |
| **Acad.** |  |  |  |  | 8.3 |
| **Total** |  |  |  |  | 9.1 |

1. Other factors are also taken into consideration when determining the type of review a district will receive. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. This document is undated. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The Action Plan Template for the Strategic Initiative/Objective is undated. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. MCAS, AP, Stanford 10, and EDWIN data as well as the results of common final, unit, and benchmark assessments. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. In-service days are known as pre-service days in the district. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. See Tables 11 and 12 in Student Performance section of this report. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)