

# Ipswich Public Schools

## Comprehensive District Review Report

April 2022

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### **Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education**

#### Office of District Reviews and Monitoring

75 Pleasant Street  
Malden, MA 02148-4906  
781-338-3000  
[www.doe.mass.edu](http://www.doe.mass.edu)

### **American Institutes for Research**

#### Education Systems and Policy

201 Jones Road, Suite 100  
Waltham, MA 02451  
(202) 403-5000  
[www.air.org](http://www.air.org)

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Jeffrey C. Riley  
Commissioner

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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

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In accordance with Massachusetts state law, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) contracted with the American Institutes for Research® (AIR®), to conduct a comprehensive review of Ipswich Public Schools (hereafter, Ipswich) in April 2022. Data collection activities associated with the review focused on understanding how district systems, structures, and practices operate in support of district continuous improvement efforts. The review focused on the six standards (and related indicators) that DESE has identified as being important components of district effectiveness.

All data collection procedures for this report took place during the 2021-2022 academic year. This school year represents the third year affected by the global COVID-19 pandemic, which has had a significant impact on educational systems since March 2020. The districts reviewed during the 2021-2022 school year experienced school closures, significant illness among staff and students, shortages of instructional and noninstructional staff, transportation issues, and other challenges during the two preceding school years and some of these challenges continued during 2021-2022 as these districts were reviewed. Site visit and report writing teams considered these factors as they collected data and wrote reports.

### Leadership and Governance

The superintendent of Ipswich, Dr. Brian Blake, has been in the district since 2017. He receives support from the director of teaching and learning, the pupil personnel services director, the director of finance and operations, the facilities director, and the technology director. These school officials, particularly the superintendent, work closely with the elected school committee members who represent Ipswich residents through their oversight of the district. The school committee has seven members, each having a three-year term. The terms rotate in a staggered manner so that the committee always has some members who have served several years, while others may be new to the role.

The school committee has multiple responsibilities outlined in its mission statement, core values, and guiding principles, as well as governance and operations policies. The current committee positions budgetary matters as the primary goal and responsibility, which includes not only managing the budget but also acting as liaisons between district stakeholders, including teachers, students, families, and school and district leaders. Information sharing, particularly with the local community, was highlighted as particularly important in recent years, the goal of which is to develop buy-in with new initiatives and needs. To ascertain these needs, the school committee holds regular meetings and works closely with school leaders to discuss capacity building, capital maintenance and improvement, and emerging issues related to equity and inclusion.

The superintendent also works closely with school leaders to develop improvement plans and measure progress toward those plans at each school. In addition, he navigates key policy developments such as the *Vision 2030* 10-year strategic plan, as well as the disruption of that plan by the COVID-19 pandemic. The district's current strategic plan, *Vision 2030*, commenced in 2020 following a multiyear process involving multiple drafts and public discussions with the school

committee, community members, and teachers. Although disrupted by COVID-19 pandemic-related policies and changes, the strategic plan informs the work of school leaders. Goal setting and evaluation are key strategies for measuring improvement and determining success. District and school leaders explained that Massachusetts state standards and guidelines informed this goal setting, and the district has a clear and organized hierarchy for implementing strategic improvement processes.

## Curriculum and Instruction

Ipswich has a clearly articulated curricular review cycle and process. This cycle includes reviewing each content area's curriculum, approximately every five years, to determine alignment to the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks, developing and implementing revisions to the curriculum, and then using data to assess the effectiveness of the curriculum. When a content area reaches the end of this cycle, it begins anew at the review stage. Most curricula in Ipswich are locally created and developed following the Understanding by Design (UbD) frameworks. Two notable exceptions are the recent adoption of the Illustrative Math curricula for grades K-8, as well as the use of Foundations in grades K-3. The district also offers a variety of noncore course options, including World Language classes and an extensive music program, both beginning in Kindergarten.

Six observers, who focused primarily on instruction in the classroom, visited Ipswich during the week of April 11, 2022. The observers conducted 56 observations in a sample of classrooms across grade levels, focused on literacy, ELA, and mathematics. The Teachstone Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) protocol, developed by the Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning at the University of Virginia,<sup>1</sup> guided all classroom observations in the district. These observations used the three grade-band levels of the CLASS protocols: K-3, Upper Elementary (4-5), and Secondary (6-12). Overall, for the K-5 grade band, instructional observations suggest generally strong emotional support, high classroom organization and student engagement (grades 4-5), and mixed evidence of consistently rigorous instructional support. For the 6-8 grade band, instructional observations provide mixed evidence of consistently strong emotional support, strong classroom organization and student engagement, and mixed evidence of consistently rigorous instructional support. For the 9-12 grade band, instructional observations provide mixed evidence of strong emotional support, strong evidence of classroom organization, and mixed evidence of student engagement or of consistently rigorous instructional support.

## Assessment

Ipswich uses multiple assessments and data tools that vary across schools to ensure that assessments are appropriate for the grade levels served and align with the curricula used. At the elementary level, Ipswich uses Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) and Lexia for ELA and Star for ELA and mathematics. At the middle school, the district uses Lexia for ELA and i-Ready for mathematics. At the high school, teachers use MCAS data. IXL is also available for math assessments, if needed. Across all grades, staff use several platforms, such as Aspen, Google Classroom, and even email, to keep track of students' attendance and achievement and communicate with students and parents about progress. The director of teaching and learning leads

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on the Teachstone CLASS protocol, visit <https://teachstone.com/class/>.

data analysis and provides support to teachers on the Compass committee to analyze and share data with their colleagues.

## Human Resources and Professional Development

The human resources and professional development infrastructure in Ipswich ensures that the district has effective staff who have access to needed professional learning. The district recently established its own human resources department and has systems and documents for maintaining records and recruiting, hiring, and assigning staff. Supervision, evaluation, and recognition are supported collaboratively by administrators in school buildings and the district office. A Professional Development Committee of district and school leaders working with teachers gives feedback to inform professional development, resulting in a culture of shared professional learning through yearlong study topics, extensive summer professional learning, and mentorships. Ipswich is focusing on continuing to identify strategies to diversify candidate pools for open positions and creating more meaningful evaluation of the superintendent.

## Student Support

Ipswich has a district commitment to helping schools equitably support all students' safety, well-being, and sense of belonging. Although specific initiatives vary by school, classroom observations support the presence of strong behavioral management strategies across all schools. The district supports schools in offering a tiered system of supports for all students, which ensures that all students have access to a variety of school personnel and intervention services through general education. Multidisciplinary teams in each building also meet to develop targeted (e.g., Tier 2) and/or intensive (e.g., Tier 3) support plans based on students' individual learning needs. The district engages families and community members through formal school council teams, volunteer parent teacher organizations (PTOs), and communicating opportunities and resources via newsletters emailed weekly.

## Financial and Asset Management

Town and district leaders collaborate to ensure that allocation and use of funding and other resources improves students' performance, opportunities, and outcomes. School leaders have autonomy to prepare a budget proposal for the superintendent and business office to review. District leaders collaborate with town leaders to efficiently develop the overall budget and complete regular audits of financial reports and the use of funds. There is an agreed-on process for determining the overall amount of the town budget allocated to the district, and that amount is described as consistently exceeding net school spending requirements. However, additional stabilization funds (e.g., money received in a 2016 override) are frequently used to fund district-identified needs that exceed the town appropriation.

# Ipswich Public Schools: District Review Overview

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## 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 carefully consider the effectiveness of systemwide functions, referring to the six district standards used by DESE: Leadership and Governance, Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment, Human Resources and Professional Development, Student Support, and Financial and Asset Management.<sup>2</sup> Reviews identify systems and practices that may be impeding improvement as well as those most likely to be contributing to positive results. In addition, the design of the comprehensive district review promotes district reflection on its own performance and potential next steps. In addition to providing information to each district reviewed, DESE uses review reports to identify resources and/or technical assistance to provide to the district.

## Methodology

A district review team consisting of AIR staff members and subcontractors, with expertise in each district standard, reviews documentation and extant data prior to conducting an on-site visit. On-site data collection includes team members conducting interviews and focus group sessions with a wide range of stakeholders, including school committee members, teachers' association representatives, district and school administrators, teachers, students, and students' families. Team members also observe classroom instruction and collect data using the CLASS protocol. Virtual interviews and focus groups also are conducted as needed. Following the site visit, the team members code and analyze the data to develop a set of objective findings. The team lead and multiple quality assurance reviewers, including DESE staff, then review the initial draft of the report. DESE staff provides recommendations for the district, based on the findings of strengths and areas of growth identified, before AIR finalizes and submits the report to DESE. DESE previews and then sends the report to the district for factual review before publishing it on the DESE website.

## Site Visit

The site visit to Ipswich was conducted during the week of April 11, 2022. The site visit included 16 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 70 stakeholders, including school committee members, district administrators, school staff, students, students' families, and teachers' association representatives. The review team conducted six teacher focus groups with 12 elementary school teachers, eight middle school teachers, and 10 high school teachers.

The site team also conducted 56 observations of classroom instruction in four schools. Certified team members conducted instructional observations using the Teachstone CLASS protocol.

Additional information is in the appendices. Information about review activities and the site visit schedule is in Appendix A. Appendix B provides information about district enrollment, attendance,

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<sup>2</sup> DESE's District Standards and Indicators are at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/district-review/district-standards-indicators.pdf>.

and expenditures. The Districtwide Instructional Observation Report is in Appendix C. Appendix D contains additional resources to support implementation of DESE’s District Standards and Indicators. Lastly, Appendix E contains student performance data.

## District Profile

Ipswich is led by Dr. Brian Blake, who was appointed superintendent in 2017, as well as central office staff, including the director of teaching and learning, the pupil personnel services director, the director of finance and operations, the facilities director, and the technology director. The district is governed by a school committee composed of seven members who are elected for staggered three-year terms.

In the 2021-2022 school year, there were 157 teachers in the district, with 1,628 students enrolled in the district’s four schools. Table 1 provides an overview of student enrollment by school.

**Table 1. Ipswich Public Schools: Schools, Type, Grades Served, and Enrollment, 2021-2022**

School	Type	Grades served	Enrollment
Ipswich High School	High	9-12	528
Ipswich Middle School	Middle	6-8	360
Paul F. Doyon Memorial	Elementary	K-5	348
Winthrop School	Elementary	K-5	392
<b>Totals</b>			<b>1,628</b>

Note. Enrollment data as of October 1, 2021.

Between 2019 and 2021, overall student enrollment decreased by 80 students. Enrollment figures by race/ethnicity and high-need populations (i.e., students with disabilities, students who are economically disadvantaged, and English learners (ELs) and former ELs) compared with the state are in Tables B1 and B2 in Appendix B.

The total in-district per-pupil expenditure was greater than the median in-district per-pupil expenditure for K-12 districts of similar size in fiscal year (FY) 2020—\$17,878 for Ipswich compared with \$15,628 for similar districts and greater than average state spending per pupil (\$16,963). Actual net school spending was greater than what is required by the Chapter 70 state education aid program, as shown in Table B4 in Appendix B.

## School and Student Performance

The percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System) is greater than the state average for all tested grades and subject areas except for grades 4 and 5 mathematics. Tables 2-4 provide an overview of student performance in ELA, mathematics, and science by grade level between 2018 and 2021.



**Table 2. Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percentage Meeting or Exceeding Expectations, 2018-2021**

Grade	N (2021)	2018	2019	2021	Change	State (2021)	Above/below
3	133	69%	70%	60%	-9	51%	9
4	118	65%	67%	60%	-5	49%	11
5	118	63%	62%	53%	-10	47%	6
6	116	68%	69%	64%	-4	47%	17
7	126	67%	73%	55%	-12	43%	12
8	135	80%	70%	42%	-38	41%	1
3-8	746	69%	69%	55%	-14	46%	9
10	121	—	68%	87%	—	64%	23

Note. Data sourced from

[https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/mcas/achievement\\_level.aspx?linkid=32&orgcode=01440000&orgtypecode=5](https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/mcas/achievement_level.aspx?linkid=32&orgcode=01440000&orgtypecode=5) & (2021).

**Table 3. Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Percentage Meeting or Exceeding Expectations, 2018-2021**

Grade	N (2021)	2018	2019	2021	Change	State (2021)	Above/below
3	133	63%	68%	35%	-28	33%	2
4	118	66%	65%	31%	-35	33%	-2
5	118	56%	56%	25%	-31	33%	-8
6	116	54%	62%	37%	-17	33%	4
7	126	66%	64%	45%	-21	35%	10
8	134	71%	69%	43%	-28	32%	11
3-8	745	63%	64%	36%	-27	33%	3
10	121	—	64%	70%	—	52%	18

Note. Data sourced from

[https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/mcas/achievement\\_level.aspx?linkid=32&orgcode=01440000&orgtypecode=5](https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/mcas/achievement_level.aspx?linkid=32&orgcode=01440000&orgtypecode=5) & (2021).

**Table 4. MCAS Science Percentage Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grades 5 and 8, 2019-2021**

Grade	N (2021)	2019	2020	2021	3-year change	State (2021)
5	117	61%	—	54%	-7	42%
8	134	64%	—	51%	-13	41%
5 and 8	251	63%	—	53%	-10	42%
10	—	—	—	—	—	—

Note. Grade 10 results for the spring 2021 Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) are not provided because students in the class of 2023 were not required to take the STE test. Information about Competency Determination requirements is available at <https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/graduation.html>. In 2019, 10th graders took the Legacy MCAS science test. Data sourced from [https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/mcas/achievement\\_level.aspx?linkid=32&orgcode=01440000&orgtypecode=5](https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/mcas/achievement_level.aspx?linkid=32&orgcode=01440000&orgtypecode=5) & (2021).

In addition, the district’s four-year graduation rate<sup>3</sup> was 93.7 percent in 2021, which is greater than the state rate of 89.8 percent. The district’s five-year graduation rate was 93.7 percent in 2020, which is greater than the state rate of 91 percent.

<sup>3</sup> [Cohort 2021 Graduation Rates—Ipswich \(01440000\) \(mass.edu\)](https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/mcas/achievement_level.aspx?linkid=32&orgcode=01440000&orgtypecode=5)

## Leadership and Governance

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The current superintendent's tenure began in 2017, and he highlighted equity and communication as principles that have informed his work since accepting this position. He reports to the school committee and works closely with school leaders to develop improvement plans and measure progress toward those plans at each school. The superintendent also described the importance of state and local rules, the needs of district schools, and the input of community stakeholders as considerations in determining the direction of his work. As the district's leader, he guides the work of the district's *Vision 2030* 10-year strategic plan.

The school committee has multiple responsibilities outlined in its mission statement, core values, and guiding principles, as well as governance and operations policies. The current committee positions budgetary matters as the primary goal and responsibility, which includes not only managing the budget but also acting as liaisons between district stakeholders, including teachers, students, families, and school and district leaders. Information sharing, particularly with the local community, was highlighted as particularly important in recent years, the goal of which is to develop buy-in with new initiatives and needs. To ascertain these needs, the school committee holds regular meetings and works closely with school leaders to discuss capacity building, capital maintenance and improvement, and emerging issues related to equity and inclusion.

The district's current strategic plan, *Vision 2030*, commenced in 2020 following a multiyear process involving multiple drafts and public discussions with the school committee, community members, and teachers. Although disrupted by COVID-19 pandemic-related policies and changes, the strategic plan informs the work of school leaders. Goal setting and evaluation are key strategies for measuring improvement and determining success of the implementation of the strategic plan. District and school leaders explained that Massachusetts state standards and guidelines informed this goal setting, and the district has a clear and organized hierarchy for implementing strategic improvement processes. However, teachers reported concerns about their involvement in improvement conversations and decision making.

Table 5 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in leadership and governance.

**Table 5. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Leadership and Governance Standard**

Indicator	Strengths	Areas for growth
<b>School committee governance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Collaborating and sharing information with the community</li> <li>■ Incorporating input and knowledge from multiple stakeholders, including teachers, in decision making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Superintendent evaluation consisting of meaningful goals</li> </ul>
<b>District and school leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Establishes a culture of collaboration among district leaders, school leaders, and community stakeholders</li> <li>■ Provides open communication channels between community members and district leaders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Establishing a collaborative relationship between district leadership and teachers</li> </ul>
<b>District and school improvement planning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Clear, detailed, collaborative processes for improvement</li> <li>■ Aligning multiple improvement plans to create cohesive goals and progress monitoring across staff districtwide</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Teacher engagement in school improvement conversations</li> </ul>
<b>Budget development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Budget process is clear, governed by trust and transparent communication between school leaders and the school committee for setting budget priorities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Using data to inform budget decisions, in particular disaggregated student data</li> </ul>

## School Committee Governance

The school committee partners with district and community leaders to uphold Massachusetts laws and regulations, communicates with multiple education stakeholder groups, and maintains fiduciary responsibilities to the district and the town of Ipswich. The committee has established a culture of collaboration, both internally and with the superintendent, school leaders, and the local community, particularly in relation to budgetary decisions. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, information sharing about ongoing changes within the district has become even more important; the school committee highlighted the district’s use of newsletters and radio addresses to inform families about COVID-19 case counts, masking guidelines, and related shifts in school procedures.

The district’s FY2023 capital plan further supports the school committee’s assertions of improving communications with multiple stakeholders. In a memo introducing the capital plan, the town manager described the collaborative nature of the review and recommendation process. School committee members, district leaders, and community leaders all agreed that collaboration and information sharing have become well established in Ipswich in recent years and is a strength of the district.

When focusing on needed improvements, the school committee solicits information from district leaders and teachers about the district’s evolving needs, while also advocating on the behalf of students and the district, particularly to raise awareness of funding issues related to these needs. The committee recognizes its own limits as a governing body whose focus is on education, yet it has

no educators as members—a fact that both school committee members and teachers raised in focus groups. In particular, the committee highlighted learning from educators about topics including special education, serving ELs, and facility needs, and the school committee meeting minutes included some presentations from teachers. Committee members reported appreciating the knowledge they gained, which informed their recommendations about the budget as well as the rationales that committee members presented to families regarding their decision making.

The school committee also evaluates the superintendent's performance annually, based on goals set collaboratively by the committee and the superintendent. However, both school committee members and the superintendent spoke to some limitations regarding his evaluation. When discussing the evaluation of the superintendent, one school committee member said that “if the only thing he did was perform his goals in the evaluation, the district would be in shambles.” The superintendent agreed that the school committee evaluates him annually; however,

as specific as they [my goals] are, [they] are only a sliver of what I do . . . I could spend every minute working on my goals and the district would fall apart around me, or you lead the district and maybe you don't make it to all the faculty meetings. It's like a give and take there.

The superintendent also described several tasks he deems important but not included in the annual evaluation, such as improving communication between the district and the local community, equity and inclusion efforts (particularly for a growing immigrant population) and facilitating horizontal and vertical collaboration between schools. Creating a meaningful evaluation of the superintendent is an area for growth in Ipswich.

## **District and School Leadership**

A team of district-level administrators supports the superintendent; this team includes a director of teaching and learning, a pupil personnel services director, a director of finance and operations, a facilities director, a technology director, and a human resources director. The district's central office staff are responsible for monitoring initiatives and carrying out different parts of the district agenda, such as monitoring special education compliance, encouraging teachers to share best practices for instruction and assessment, and supporting “horizontal communication” between elementary schools. These administrators report directly to both the superintendent and the school committee. The school committee evaluates the superintendent through a process of goal setting, midyear reporting, and end-of-year assessments and planning.

School leaders report to the school committee regarding budget needs in their buildings, but they are directly managed and evaluated by the superintendent and district leaders. The superintendent regularly meets with school leaders to discuss goal setting and improvement projects for each school, and in recent years, he has advocated for increased collaboration and accountability between the schools. The superintendent also evaluates school leaders annually, involving them in cyclical goal setting, evaluation, and reflection.

An identified area of strength for the district is that the superintendent promotes a culture of communication among district personnel and with community stakeholders. He engages with the school committee and the community to support learning and share information about school needs.

Given the disruption since spring 2020 by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as changes such as the newly negotiated contract with the teachers' association, the superintendent reported that his current objectives and focus include information sharing, building trust, and establishing two-way communication, particularly with families and community stakeholders. School committee members concurred that the superintendent communicates effectively with the community to maintain and bolster the relationship between the community and the district. Along with the superintendent, other district leaders expressed enthusiasm to move past a contentious teachers' contract negotiation and refocus on school needs; they detailed how they responded to school leaders and their expressed needs regarding staffing, facilities, and building instructional capacity to meet changing students' needs. For example, schools have recently hired more EL specialists and developed additional resources for special education. The school committee and school leaders agreed with district leaders that Ipswich has been responsive to these types of needs.

However, some teachers expressed frustration about decision-making and resource allocation, framing recent district initiatives as increasingly top-down in orientation. District leaders acknowledged that some tension exists, even as they assert that all groups work well together and that teachers have students' best interests in mind. Similarly, teachers expressed trust in the school committee members and district leaders while acknowledging disconnects in communication and questioning changes in management styles in recent years. The relationship between district leaders and teachers is an area for growth in the district.

## District and School Improvement Planning

District leaders, school leaders, and teachers generally agreed that there is a clear and thoughtful improvement process, promoted by the school committee and school and district leaders working together—a strength for the district. Multiple district leaders connected their work to the district's *Vision 2030* plan, which provides a framework and a continual process for improvement, specifically regarding meeting the needs of students; school innovation; and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts. Documents such as the *Framework for Student Success*, as well as teacher evaluation agreements, compile considerable amounts of information related to improvement, including student data, rubrics, and guidelines for using data to improve systems and instruction. In addition, a variety of stakeholders agreed that improvement planning was a priority, and various groups—including district leaders, school committee members, school leaders, and teachers—had students' best interests in mind when working to improve systems and practices. District and school leaders both spoke to their efforts to align school goals with the improvement goals set forth in the district's strategic plan as well as those outlined by the state. In addition, the school committee and district leadership review these systems at least annually in the form of goal setting and evaluations. These cohesive, aligned improvement plans are a strength for the district.

All stakeholders, including the superintendent, are evaluated annually to maintain and monitor progress toward district and personal goals. Improvement plans are very clearly laid out, such that district and school leaders work to align goals and progress across the district; each school develops an improvement plan and evaluation goals that mutually inform and are informed by district priorities. These plans drive the development, implementation, and modification of programs and practices at the school level. However, among the stated goals of district leaders is increased

collaboration between schools—independent of district leader involvement—particularly at the elementary level.

Teacher focus groups reported a desire to see more collaboration between teachers and district leaders regarding improvement processes. For example, several teachers noted that, in recent years, district initiatives (e.g., improvement plans) have become more top-down in orientation, and direct contact with and feedback from district leaders has decreased across time. One teacher suggested that because of the growth in the district, “maybe we do need to have more of a top-down approach” but went on to advocate for a greater district leader presence in “the trenches.” District leaders indicated that the professional development committee is one venue that facilitates communication between district leaders and school staff and provided examples of bottom-up approaches to change. For example, one leader highlighted the work of student representatives, describing their input as “fantastic” at developing “organic interest in social justice work . . . districtwide.” Work related to DEI has become more important across multiple stakeholders, indicating some ground-up approaches to change that district leaders have attempted to incorporate into new initiatives. This disconnect between teacher and district leader views on the levels of collaboration on school improvement initiatives represents an area of growth for the district.

## Budget Development

School committee members articulated a budget process with both considerable oversight and responsiveness to the needs at each school. In close collaboration with school leaders, district leaders identify key needs and share them with the school committee; district leaders concurred that school leaders have considerable agency over their individual school budgets. The school committee explicitly takes responsibility for supporting the needs detailed by school and district leaders within the constraints of the budget, in conversation with other town committees. One school committee member noted that school leaders “do a very good job of articulating [their] needs to the committee . . . and it’s on us to support them if they can justify it.” Other members concurred that school leaders’ requests are not extraneous and are based on genuine need. Further, the school committee reported that their responsibilities go further than ensuring adequate support; because they see their role as liaisons between the town and the district, their role is to also inform and educate the community about school needs, with the goal of using the budget to support schools as best they can. School committee members shared that they do so by approaching school leader budget requests—such as those for staffing or technology—from the belief that the requests are educationally sound and address the goals of the district. This clear, trusting, and transparent process is a strength of the district.

One area that interview data and documents did not clearly explain is the relationship between budget needs and data use. School committee members, district leaders, and school leaders agreed that the needs explained were real and well justified but rarely provided specifics when discussing the budget determination process. In terms of using data to identify areas for improvement and budgetary needs, there were few connections explained in interview data. Interviewees indicated that benchmark and student data influenced district practices, which are connected to budgeting needs and choices, but leaders across the district did not make those connections explicit. In addition, the capital plan, data analysis and use reports, and budget documents similarly provided suggestions for improvement strategies, but no direct connections showed how data analysis

informed resource allocation. Similarly, there was little indication in either interviews or documents of how disaggregated data were used to inform the budget. Budget decisions appeared relevant and responsive to the needs expressed by a variety of stakeholders, but although there were examples of school leaders and teachers using individual student assessments to determine student support needs, there is little indication that leaders explicitly incorporated disaggregated student data into the budget process, making this an area for growth.

## Recommendations

- District leadership should ensure that the superintendent's evaluation includes meaningful goals that encompass a wide range of duties and responsibilities.
- The district should focus on establishing a collaborative relationship between district leadership and teachers that includes a clear process for communicating with school-level staff.
- The district, in collaboration with school leaders and teachers, should establish a process that ensures that staff at all levels are involved in the development and implementation of school improvement initiatives.
- The district should ensure that the budgetary decision-making process includes the review of pertinent data, including disaggregated student data.



## Curriculum and Instruction

Ipswich has a clearly articulated curricular review cycle and process. This cycle includes reviewing each content area’s curriculum to determine alignment to the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks, developing and implementing revisions to the curriculum, and finally assessing the effectiveness of the curriculum based on data. When a content area reaches the end of this cycle, it begins anew at the review stage; each content area goes through this process approximately every five years. Most curricula in Ipswich are locally created and developed following the UbD frameworks. Notable exceptions to this are the recent adoption of the Illustrative Math curricula in grades K-8, Foundations for ELA in grades K-3, and Readers and Writers Workshop for ELA in grades K-5. The district also makes a variety of noncore course options available, including World Language classes and an extensive music program, both beginning in Kindergarten.

Table 6 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in curriculum and instruction.

**Table 6. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Curriculum and Instruction Standard**

Indicator	Strengths	Areas for growth
<b>Curriculum selection and use</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Teacher involvement in the curricular review and selection process</li> <li>■ Locally created curricula developed using UbD frameworks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Staff access to curricula documents and materials</li> </ul>
<b>Classroom instruction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Interdisciplinary learning</li> <li>■ Shifting mathematics support staff from interventionists to coaches</li> <li>■ Providing students with disabilities supports through coteaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Reading support staff role</li> </ul>
<b>Student access to coursework</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Music and foreign language classes for all beginning in elementary school</li> <li>■ Enrichment student participation facilitated by local grant funds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Access to advanced courses</li> <li>■ Career pathway options</li> </ul>

### Curriculum Selection and Use

Ipswich ensures that all teachers have access to standards-aligned curricular materials by using mostly locally created curricula that follow the UbD frameworks and curricula that at least partially meet expectations as rated on CURATE.<sup>4</sup> For history, social studies, and science in all grades and ELA for grades 6-12, Ipswich used UbD frameworks to create district-specific, student-centered curricula. For ELA in grades K-5, Ipswich’s current curricula (Units of Study, Foundations) are not rated on CURATE; Writers Workshop, used in grades K-5, also is not rated. For mathematics, the district recently implemented the Illustrative Math curriculum from grades K-8; this curriculum is not rated on CURATE in K-5 but is rated as “meets expectations” for grades 6-8. Algebra and geometry classes are guided by the Envision curricula, which are rated as “partially meets expectations.” All other classes are guided by

<sup>4</sup> CURATE: CUrriculum RATings by TEachers. See <https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate/>.

locally created curricula or, for some upper grade subjects including Advanced Placement (AP) courses, physics, and precalculus, locally created UbD frameworks and textbooks not reviewed by CURATE. Staff at both the school and district levels mentioned pride in their locally created curricula and said families and staff view this as a strength for the district. However, ensuring that all teachers can access the curriculum and lesson materials is an area for growth because instructional staff reported not being sure they could because the curricula “doesn’t all live in one place.”

The *Ipswich Statement of Curriculum Review Process* outlines the three-stage cycle that the district uses to review curriculum that requires five to seven years for each cycle. This process moves the curricula for each content area through three stages: Stage 1 is to review, unpack, and plan; Stage 2 is to develop and implement; and Stage 3 is to assess and revise. A content area is in Stage 1 for one year, during which they “match up current IPS curriculum with MA standards to identify areas of need.” The content area then enters Stage 2 for two to three years to create curriculum, pilot in classrooms, share in learning cycles for feedback, and begin to gather data. Finally, Stage 3 lasts for two years while they “analyze a variety of data to check in on how curriculum facilitates student learning [and] revise as is needed to best support all our learners.” In some cases, a content area may move from Stage 2 back to Stage 1 if standards change or new needs are identified during the development process. The director of teaching and learning oversees the full curricular review and selection process in collaboration with the Compass committee, which is a group of K-12 teachers who receive stipends to meet regularly and engage in this work. In addition to the traditional Massachusetts state standards, curricula in the review cycle for Ipswich also are examined for how well they meet successful habits of mind for 21st century learning expectations in five domains: perseverance, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, and self-management. Teacher association members, school leaders, and other instructional staff described the curricular review process as collaborative and “teacher driven,” and the inclusion of teachers in all levels of this process is a strength of the district.

The way curriculum will translate to the classroom is considered from the beginning in Ipswich. Although Ipswich staff are developing curriculum units, they follow a common template and consistent definitions to ensure that units created are high quality, create “enduring understanding,” introduce and revisit essential questions that “push and develop students’ thinking,” and present students with opportunities for “powerful learning.” The units also are expected to include ways in which teachers can differentiate instruction for all students to include considerations of “students’ cultural backgrounds, learning styles, socioeconomic status, [and] interests,” and accommodations for students with individualized education programs and ELs.

## Classroom Instruction

Six observers, who focused primarily on instruction in the classroom, visited Ipswich during the week of April 11, 2022. The observers conducted 56 observations in a sample of classrooms across grade levels, focused on literacy, ELA, and mathematics. The CLASS protocol guided all classroom observations in the district. These observations used the three grade-band levels of CLASS protocols: K-3, Upper Elementary (4-5), and Secondary (6-12).

The K-3 protocol includes 10 classroom dimensions related to three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support. The Upper Elementary and Secondary protocols

include 11 classroom dimensions related to three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support, in addition to Student Engagement. The three domains observed at all levels broadly are defined as follows:

- **Emotional Support.** Describes the social-emotional functioning of the classroom, including teacher-student relationships and responsiveness to social-emotional needs.
- **Classroom Organization.** Describes the management of students' behavior, time, and attention in the classroom.
- **Instructional Support.** Describes the efforts to support cognitive and language development, including cognitive demand of the assigned tasks, the focus on higher order thinking skills, and the use of process-oriented feedback.

When conducting a classroom visit, the observer rates each dimension (including Student Engagement) on a scale of 1 to 7. A rating of 1 or 2 (low range) indicates that the dimension was never or rarely evident during the visit. A rating of 3, 4, or 5 (middle range) indicates that the dimension was evident but not exhibited consistently or in a way that included all students. A rating of 6 or 7 (high range) indicates that the dimension was reflected in all or most classroom activities and in a way that included all or most students.

In Ipswich, ratings are provided across three grade bands: K-5, 6-8, and 9-12. For each grade band, ratings are provided across the overarching domains, as well as at individual dimensions within those domains. The full report of findings from observations conducted in Ipswich are in Appendix C, and summary results are in Tables 17, 18, and 19 in this appendix.

In summary, findings from the Ipswich observations were as follows:

- **Emotional Support.** Ratings were just below the high range for the K-5 and 6-8 grade bands (5.9 and 5.4, respectively) and in the middle range for the 9-12 grade band (4.5).
- **Classroom Organization.** Ratings were in the high range for all grade bands (6.5 for Grades K-5; 6.6 for Grades 6-8; 6.9 for Grades 9-12).
- **Instructional Support.** Ratings were in the middle range for K-5 and 6-8 grade bands (5.1 and 4.6, respectively), and lower middle for the 9-12 grade band (3.7).
- **Student Engagement.** For Grades 4 and up, where student engagement was measured as an independent domain, ratings were in the high range for Grades 4-5 (6.1), just below the high range for the 6-8 grade band (5.9), and the middle range for the 9-12 grade band (4.5).

Overall, in the K-5 grade band, instructional observations suggest generally strong emotional support, high classroom organization and student engagement (Grades 4-5) and mixed evidence of consistently rigorous instructional support. In the 6-8 grade band, instructional observations provide mixed evidence of consistently strong emotional support, strong classroom organization and student engagement, and mixed evidence of consistently rigorous instructional support. In the 9-12 grade band, instructional observations provide mixed evidence of strong emotional support, strong evidence of classroom organization, and mixed evidence of student engagement or consistently rigorous instructional support.

Interview data supported the instructional observation data, indicating that students received emotional support, and instructional support was present but somewhat inconsistent. District leaders, teachers, and students all described classroom environments with a variety of instructional approaches, including pedagogies that allow for student voice and provide a decentralized learning environment. For example, a district administrator claimed, “We’re not top down as a district and we’re not really top down in our classrooms.” Teachers and students agreed that many classrooms are student centered. A student added the following about Ipswich teachers: “They’re trying to be flexible, understanding, good people, which I totally understand. That’s what I look for in a teacher.” Another student described her school as “inclusive, definitely.” Students also recognized that some behavioral issues have coincided with the pandemic, and one student shared, “I think sometimes the line is blurred with actual behavioral issues rather than mental health issues.” Students generally agreed that teachers attend to their (students’) mental health and center student well-being, especially since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ipswich facilitates strong interdisciplinary learning by having locally created curricula supported by regular professional development and resources. This support is built into the curricular review process during Stages 2 and 3, resulting in a significant majority of the content areas being supported by ongoing professional development. Each content area reenters the cycle after completing Stage 3 and spends no more than two years back in Stage 1 before reentering development and implementation.

Interdisciplinary activities are a focus in the district. A teacher described a science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics (STEAM) project as an example of hands-on interdisciplinary science and mathematics working together by challenging students to “actually build the carnival game.” The district then hosts “the carnival probability fair so people can come and test it.” Students create an “explanation behind it of what the probabilities of you winning that game.” Another teacher said that, especially in the elementary grades, “our standards for social studies and science really overlap and as well as for ELA. So those tend to be very project-based activities that we’re working on in the classroom that are incorporating those three domains.”

Instructional staff and school leaders also shared examples of interdisciplinary lessons and community resource integration. One teacher discussed how Ipswich integrated music and ELA through collaboration with a community organization, Orchestra on the Hill:

Orchestra on the Hill then selected from the poems, and their composers turned the poems into music. And then the students went, and they did a performance of the music and the poetry. We [also] had the composers come in and do a lesson with the kids about how they turned the poems into music, and how do you actually create the musical composition.

School leaders and instructional staff explained that the district has moved away from having mathematics interventionists and began using mathematics coaches at grades K-5 in tandem with implementing the new Illustrative Math curriculum. District leaders consider this change a strength because the mathematics coaches support both teachers, such as doing model lessons in the classrooms and working individually with students. A teacher also shared this sentiment that the coach working with staff and students has been positive: “She can help facilitate lessons or work with specific kids or coach teachers on best practices. And that’s fluid; she determines what classroom she needs to work in or who wants her today.” Conversely, an area for growth identified by teachers who have appreciated this shift would be to mirror the change made in mathematics in

grades K-5 by adding reading coaches instead of interventionists for that subject as well. A teacher shared the current status of reading support:

We don't have a reading coach or a reading director of curriculum. And so we have one specialist who does it all. She does Title I; she does interventions. She is the person that everybody goes to for reading and with finding more and more kiddos who are being identified with specific reading disabilities. It's making it really challenging for one person to do it all. And she is definitely a leader in our building, but she also wears 10 different hats and can't do it all. So there's a . . . question of having enough support to really be able to deliver the type of instruction that we want to.

School leaders and instructional staff also described co-teaching for students with individualized education programs and Section 504 plans as a strategy that has been successful in not stigmatizing students requiring these supports; all students see both teachers as their classroom teachers. School leaders and teachers reported that as the number of students in the district whose first language was not English increased (from 2.1 percent in 2011-2012 to 5.9 percent in 2021-2022), the superintendent was able to fund an additional EL teacher for the elementary grades.

The district also has focused on training staff in project-based learning to support instruction, according to the superintendent, school leaders, and instructional staff, who indicated that the district participated in professional development in this area from the Buck Institute and PBL Works. This training aligned with and supported the district's move toward hands-on, project-based, and student-centered classrooms. Teachers described their classes as "a workshop model . . . mini lesson, small group, pulling kids working on different skills." Instructional observation scores near the high range for Grades K-5 (6.1) and 6-8 (5.9) in the student engagement domain suggest that most students are actively engaged in classroom discussions and activities; somewhat lower middle range scores for Grades 9-12 (4.5) indicate there is more mixed student engagement in the high-school grades, with some students actively engaged and some students disengaged. Middle- and high-school students reported being motivated by the project-based classes and hands-on or interdisciplinary approaches. For example, one student shared, when asked about a favorite class, "[I] pick science because it's the most hands-on, and they allow you to get creative with what you're doing." Teachers also mentioned interdisciplinary projects, such as in STEAM where students "might build something in class and then use math to graph and chart our results." Collaboration between the Spanish and art departments involved "reproducing Diego Rivera murals and a Picasso mural."

A teacher shared about how project-based learning is occurring districtwide:

The district's STEAM team [hosts] a big showcase every year, hundreds of people come and, K-12, we have teachers bring their classes and do demonstrations of very hands-on project-based learning STEAM units that they've done, and we invite the community to come.

A different teacher discussed their teaching style as "present[ing] in ways where they can access through multimodalities." Instructional observation scores in the high middle range in Grades K-5 (5.7) and 6-8 (5.7) for the Instructional Learning Formats dimension suggest most teachers use multiple strategies and tools to facilitate engagement and learning and encourage student participation. For example, teachers may regularly move around, talk, and play with students, ask open-ended questions of students, and allow students to explore; teachers also use a variety of

teaching tools and strategies, including movement and visual or auditory resources. Slightly lower observation scores in Grades 9-12 (4.5) suggest that these strategies may be less consistently used in the high-school grades. In addition, a teacher shared that staff regularly support students using “scaffolding, and some of those graphic organizers might have sentence starters, or the if/then/because statement already written in there, so the kids can fill in certain things [in the teacher created materials].”

## Student Access to Coursework

Ipswich ensures that all students have access to a range of rigorous coursework and a variety of content areas. In addition to a robust honors and AP program, students described many electives, including computer science and cybersecurity, criminology and forensics, marine and coastal sciences, anatomy, robotics, environmental science, and sustainability. One student remarked, “I’m taking AP chem[istry] this year, so that is definitely a challenge, but it’s a good challenge because I do enjoy that.” District and school leaders, instructional staff, and students all described the music and foreign language programs beginning in elementary school, which are detailed in the elementary, middle school, and high school daily schedules and documents. Students and staff discussed the music program as a strength of the district, especially because it begins in elementary school and continues as an option for all students as electives in middle and high school. In addition, as shown in the course schedules and mentioned by students, school leaders, and teachers, foreign languages are taught beginning in Grade 1, allowing all students the opportunity to learn a language other than English from an early grade. Ipswich also participates in the Massachusetts State Seal of Biliteracy program.

In addition, to make participation in extracurricular and other enrichment activities equitable, the superintendent explained many grant opportunities made possible by the [Feoffees Trust program](#):

Every year, we do what we call [a] place-based learning grant. We do a lot of field trips, a lot of activities, a lot of innovative stuff in this district. This is like the most untraditional district I’ve ever been in, which is wonderful. So, through the place-based learning grants, we’re able to provide scholarships for kids who need them.

This enrichment funding that facilitates equitable student access to opportunities outside traditionally funded school activities is a strength of the district.

Currently, the district uses recommendations to determine placement for students in more advanced courses. As one teacher explained, students entering high school need a teacher recommendation, “but there’s always people who want to go to honors who we don’t think should. So we give them a test, like a sample MCAS section . . . and then we look at the results.” A student also shared, “You have to get a certain grade in your honors classes freshman and sophomore year to be recommended for [an] AP class.” Ipswich leaders noted that the district is recognizing the current middle-school mathematics tracking policy as an area for growth and is reviewing how they may change this structure to allow access to higher level mathematics classes to more students. One instructional staff member described a recently developed rubric that serves as “a profile of learners” and is now being used in Grade 8:

Rather than grade, it looks at their skills and abilities. On one end of a spectrum, are they an independent learner? Are they able to manage the materials in their preparation, not needing much cue on one end to somebody who needs a lot of support?

In addition, seniors have a Bridge program to participate in internships outside the school campus. However, the superintendent, school leaders, instructional staff, and students all described expanding career pathways options as an area for growth for the high school.

## Recommendations

- District leaders should work with school staff to create an easily accessible, central repository for lessons and other curricular materials.
- The district should consider building upon the success of its mathematics interventionist model in grades K-5 by expanding it to other subjects (for example, reading) where there may be a similar need.
- District and school leaders should expand the district's existing policy on student enrollment in advanced courses to ensure that more students, especially those from historically marginalized backgrounds, can participate in rigorous courses.
- The district should consider partnering with community or other local organizations to increase high school students' opportunities to explore career pathway options.

## Assessment

Ipswich uses multiple assessments and data tools that vary across schools to ensure that assessments are appropriate for the grade levels served and align with the curricula used. At the elementary level, Ipswich uses DIBELS and Lexia for ELA and Star for ELA and mathematics. At the middle school, the district uses Lexia for ELA and i-Ready for mathematics. At the high school, teachers use MCAS data and IXL data for math when needed. Across all grades, staff use several platforms, such as Aspen, Google Classroom, and even email, to keep track of students' attendance and achievement and communicate with students and parents about progress. The director of teaching and learning leads data analysis and also provides support to teachers on the Compass committee to analyze and share data with their colleagues.

Table 7 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in assessment.

**Table 7. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Assessment Standard**

Indicator	Strengths	Areas for growth
<b>Data and assessment systems</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A variety of data sources to track student progress and identify needs</li> </ul>	
<b>Data use</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Data analysis structures tied to the curricular review process</li> <li>Data-focused faculty meetings facilitate data-driven instruction and data-skill building among staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vertical data analysis in elementary grades</li> </ul>
<b>Sharing results</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regular review of a variety of data</li> <li>Active analysis of data led by school staff and supported by the director of teaching and learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarity about systems for sharing data with parents</li> </ul>

### Data and Assessment Systems

Ipswich uses assessments and related data to ensure that all teachers provide effective instruction that challenges and supports all students. The district uses varied data at multiple levels, but how and which data are used varies across the district. In addition to the formative and summative assessments integrated in locally created curricula, teachers administer Renaissance Star assessments, i-Ready adaptive diagnostics, DIBELS, and Lexia K-8 RAPID testing to monitor students' progress and determine support needs. Currently, teachers in grades K-5 are piloting Freckle by Renaissance software for individualized mathematics support. Ipswich leaders use MCAS results to gain a districtwide vision of student progress, but this is not regularly used to inform classroom-level instruction.

Ipswich's data and assessment systems include state and benchmark assessments; formative assessments that sometimes include a performance project; and, as one teacher stated, "the old-fashioned way," meaning that teachers examine classwork to determine where students stand and what needs to be done. In addition, because many curricula are locally created, each curriculum unit includes formative and summative assessments to be used throughout instruction to monitor



progress and determine whether students have achieved the learning objectives for the unit. This varied data collection and analysis is a strength of the district. The superintendent expressed that the district takes an expanded view of data, and MCAS is only one of several measures used to inform their work. In providing a rationale for this stance, the superintendent explained, “I don’t believe in teaching to the test.”

The sentiment of MCAS as useful but limited was echoed at multiple levels within the district; the district therefore uses a variety of systems to gauge progress and assess student growth and well-being. School staff described the implementation of several benchmark assessments, such as Lexia RAPID Assessment and Teachers College Reading & Writing Benchmarks. In addition, teachers regularly use Renaissance Star student assessment data to inform classroom strategies and instruction. In addition, one school leader explained that at the time of the district review visit in spring 2022, their main concern was “mental health data” because mental health issues had become more prominent in the district with both more students having mental health issues and, in some cases, more severe mental health needs.

## Data Use

Data use within the district varies across schools and grade levels; however, effectively using data has become a concrete goal for all schools districtwide and, as such, was integrated into all school improvement plans. School and district leaders shared that they use data to inform the district’s strategy for improvement. The district also uses digital tools, including Aspen, Lexia, and Formative, in conjunction with the digital learning specialists, to help with data management and analysis. Respondents at the district and school levels reported using MCAS data, even as many also agreed that the limitations of MCAS data necessitated the use of multiple assessment systems. For classroom instruction and decision making, teachers discussed different methods to use data. As teachers described the traditional way of using data, a teacher stated, “I look at their work and I see what’s wrong and that’s how I know what they know and what they don’t know.” The teachers also spoke about using software programs to quickly monitor class averages and assessment-specific and item-level results. Many said they have the autonomy to do whichever form of data analysis they prefer. One teacher summarized as follows: “[Data monitoring is done] a lot of different ways, whether it’s technologically driven or done the old fashioned way. It’s done, and that’s what helps drive our learning for the next day and the next day and the next day.”

The idea that formal assessments were only one of several important measures was a common refrain in the district. Multiple staff members, including teachers, reported having considerable autonomy with how they used assessment data, so long as it was used to improve student outcomes and experiences. For example, a secondary school leader explained that teachers work with a colleague who teaches the same curriculum to continually review student data together during their common planning time. In addition, middle- and high-school teachers also have weekly department meetings to review curriculum and data vertically, “look at trends and weaknesses and strengths and make improvements from there.” Finally, multiple times per year, the middle- and high-school faculties will have schoolwide meetings to review trend data and make changes in response to common weaknesses or strengths noticed across content areas. Elementary-school leaders shared that developing more opportunities for vertical data-sharing and review is an area of growth for their

buildings, noting, “There’s less about that overarching, K to 2, for example, what patterns are we seeing? We’d really like to see a little bit more of that.”

District leaders also spoke about how expectations and structures for data use have developed throughout the district, especially at the elementary level. At both elementary schools, data-focused faculty meetings are built into the schedule, and this regular review of data has provided an opportunity for staff to develop skills in data analysis and interpretation and to plan data-driven lessons and supports. At all school levels, the data review process has been tied to the curricular review cycle and, as a result, teachers who participated in the Compass subcommittee for a content area’s curricular review now lead the data reviews for that content. The subcommittee members from a particular school are the group who do the first pass of data analysis and present it to their colleagues during the data-focused faculty meetings, “and then teachers have the second half of the faculty meetings to dig in a little more deeply.” This process both deepens data analysis in the district and builds data skills in the staff, while also ensuring that data are tied directly to curriculum and instruction, which is a strength of the district.

## Sharing Results

School and district staff share data using multiple platforms and in multiple formats. The director of teaching and learning runs the district’s data analysis, and this person meets with school committee, school leaders, other district administrators, and teachers on the Compass Committee to ensure that staff across the district are aware of the available data and understand how to interpret the data. As the superintendent explained, “We meet regularly and talk about: What is data showing? Where do we need to go? What resources do we need to put in place? And how it ties back into the budget.” The director of teaching and learning presents MCAS results to the school committee annually, creating slides that show each test by grade and content area, and the percentage of students in Ipswich who scored at each achievement level in the most recent year and on the preceding three tests to easily show trends in scores. The presentation also shows the percentage of students at each achievement level compared with the percentages in the state overall and broken out for the two elementary schools, again showing the data for the current year as well as on the previous two tests.

The Director of Teaching and Learning also works with school staff to make sure they are aware of the latest data and are using it to guide instruction, primarily by working with Compass members who then bring the data back to colleagues in their school buildings. In addition to teachers sharing data during common planning meetings with their partner teachers who are focused on the same content, Compass members regularly present at schoolwide faculty meetings during which other teachers have an opportunity to review and discuss data. This includes reviewing data from MCAS, Star, Lexia, i-Ready, and from assessments aligned with the locally created curricula. These data presentations often use PowerPoint slides and Google classroom tools to ensure that they are accessible to all participants both during and after any meetings. The regular review of a variety of data and the active analysis of data led by school staff and supported by the director of teaching and learning is a strength of the district.

Students and parents have access to Google Classroom and Aspen to stay updated about student performance and attendance data. However, although there are common systems for sharing data

with parents, the support provided for using these systems and the utility of the data available varies. The district uses the Aspen student information system to disseminate information such as attendance tracking to parents, but interviews indicated inconsistency in sharing student performance data. For example, some teachers use Aspen for performance data; others use Google Classroom; and some assessments, such as i-Ready, have performance tracking within their own system. With i-Ready, students are informed about their progress, and there is a report generated for parents. The parents interviewed all reported access to these systems, most mentioning Google Classroom and Aspen, but also expressed inconsistent experiences. Specifically, the interviews indicated that some parents received more guidance than others about which system to use and how to use it. One parent expressed that Google Classroom was the primary mode of communication about student assessments, whereas others said they used both Google Classroom and Aspen. One parent had an online tutorial for Aspen, whereas another claimed receiving only a password and no other information.

Many students mentioned Aspen and shared, “My teachers say that a lot, to check Aspen.” Students also expressed that their teachers regularly communicate useful information outside these systems, such as through email. A high-school teacher shared the following example: “If a student’s grade has dropped or if a student has struggled with something, then we do email home . . . [And] because we want to put the students in the driver’s seat, we’re emailing the students and CC’ing the parents.” In addition to formal assessment data, teachers also stated that they regularly have conversations with students and conduct surveys at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year, both of which provide teachers with informal data about students’ experiences. While using Google Classroom, teachers also shared that they regularly conduct quick surveys of students to get “in-the-moment” feedback on a lesson. Google Classroom also allows teachers to provide students with “in-the-moment feedback,” such as when a teacher reads and provides feedback while a student is working on a writing assignment. In addition, teachers can provide students with links to resources through Google Classroom, to keep work, feedback, and supports in one place. When discussing the approach taken in sharing data with students, teachers from all grade levels mentioned “we focus on their growth” and “it’s very solution oriented.”

## Recommendations

- The district should expand its current practices for data review and sharing in the middle and high school grades to the elementary school grades.
- District and school leaders should develop and clearly communicate expectations for sharing data with students and families, and ensure that families are familiar with the system(s) used for sharing student performance data.

# Human Resources and Professional Development

The human resources and professional development infrastructure in Ipswich ensures that the district has effective staff who have access to needed professional learning. The district re-established a human resources department in early 2022 and has systems and documents for maintaining records and recruiting, hiring, and assigning staff. Supervision, evaluation, and recognition are supported collaboratively by administrators in school buildings and the district office. A Professional Development Committee of district and school leaders working with teachers gives feedback to inform professional development, resulting in a culture of shared professional learning through yearlong study topics, extensive summer professional learning, and mentorships. Ipswich is focusing on continuing to identify strategies to diversify candidate pools for open positions and creating more meaningful evaluation of the superintendent.

Table 8 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in human resources and professional development.

**Table 8. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Human Resources and Professional Development Standard**

Indicator	Strengths	Areas for growth
<b>Infrastructure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing human resources staff in the district office</li> </ul>	
<b>Recruitment, hiring, and assignment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Purposefully linking student needs to teacher assignments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruitment systems for diverse candidates</li> </ul>
<b>Supervision, evaluation, and educator development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Professional development systems</li> <li>Peer mentoring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The inclusion of goals in educator evaluations</li> </ul>
<b>Recognition, leadership development, and advancement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Leadership opportunities through mentoring and professional development facilitation</li> </ul>	

## Infrastructure

Ipswich employs effective human resources policies, procedures, and practices. District leaders said the district recently formed a human resources department, which resulted in improved record-keeping practices. In 2017, one person at the district was in charge of onboarding, benefits, payroll, and all other human resources functions. In 2019, the district combined human resources and payroll functions with the town of Ipswich for approximately two years. However, multiple district leaders shared that “wasn’t working well for the district, having a shared human resource function,” given the comparatively large number of employees working for the schools in Ipswich compared with the rest of the town overall. Beginning in early 2022, the human resources functions shifted back to being integrated with other district operations, and human resources staff report directly to the director of finance and operations. This change also helped streamline related functions, including payroll and benefits. This recently revised infrastructure alignment is a strength of the district.

District leaders agreed that human resources systems are improving and could describe processes for maintaining, updating, and accessing employment records. District staff provided copies of signed contracts to illustrate employment records and a personnel files document that specifies district expectations for what employment files contain and how they may be accessed. Interviews with district and school leaders along with the *Professional Staff Recruiting/Posting of Vacancies* document indicated that principals determine staffing needs in buildings. Principals' job posting requests are reviewed by human resources and the superintendent before being posted for candidates to respond.

## Recruitment, Hiring, and Assignment

Ipswich generally maintains needed staffing levels, and teachers and district staff said that the district consistently fills vacant educator positions. However, some school leaders and teachers said that, at times, needed positions, such as speech pathologists and assistants to support students' social-emotional needs, are slow to fill. The superintendent indicated that paraprofessional positions have occasionally been harder to fill but shared that "I haven't seen what a lot of other districts are experiencing in terms of [challenges filling] . . . our teaching positions. We've always had decent candidate pools." Two documents outline the district's recruitment commitments: the *Personnel Policies Goals* document states the district's intention to recruit highly skilled and committed educators, and the *Equal Employment Opportunity* document states its intention to base hiring decisions on qualifications without regard to individual characteristics.

Members of both the school committee and teachers' association voiced concerns that staff lack diversity in both race and gender. Although the district is committed to increasing diversity in staff, especially with the growing diversity in the Ipswich community, they have not identified a reliable strategy to diversify their applicant pool. School committee members said they are discussing strategies (beyond adding language to all job postings that encourage diverse applicants) to increase diversity in the applicant pool. However, these strategies are not yet noticed within the current teaching staff, and some shared they are "not sure that there is a concerted effort on the part of administration or [the] school committee to particularly reach out in [the] hiring process to entice more diverse candidates—more diverse, qualified candidates." Conversely, although teachers voiced concerns about a lack of racial diversity, they explained that they have many staff members who represent other forms of diversity, sharing, "We have several members of staff who are out and openly gay and lesbian and so on and appear to be welcomed and loved in the community."

Hiring processes are inclusive of stakeholders. Ipswich's hiring systems include school-based hiring committees, chaired by the principal, that interview and select candidates. Hiring processes for special education staff include input from the building principal, general educators, and the district special education department. Building administrators are hired with input from committees representing multiple stakeholders (parents, staff members, administrators, and one or two school committee members), with final interviews conducted by the superintendent. District human resources staff coordinate posting positions, inviting candidates for interviews, and ensuring that candidates have the correct licensure. District staff commented that the pandemic disrupted established hiring processes, which they found difficult to efficiently translate into online platforms. In addition, given the newly reestablished district-based human resources department, current staff were not familiar with processes for internal hires.

Teacher assignment in Ipswich is based on students' learning needs, as evidenced in interviews and documents, including an externally conducted review of assignments. Ipswich provided information about several strategies for ensuring that teacher assignments meet student needs. The district hired an external reviewer to review alignment between student needs and the qualifications of the special education staff. School committee members said they take a role in reviewing teaching assignments and raising any questions they have about staffing decisions, explaining, "What I really look for is, do we have the right people in the right positions to meet the needs of all the kids?" School committee members shared that if school or district leaders express concerns about staff who are "just not trained to handle the needs of the students that we have and that they're overseeing right now," then the committee members decide if they need to hire someone new with the specific needed skills or training. The district provided two documents illustrating teaching assignment commitments: the *Professional Staff Assignments and Transfers* document states the needs of students and the instructional program will guide assignment decisions, to be made by the superintendent, and by the principal within a school; and the *Personnel Policies Goals* document states the district's intention to use a staff assignment strategy that contributes to the learning program. This intentional linking of student needs and teacher assignments is a strength of Ipswich.

## Supervision, Evaluation, and Educator Development

Ipswich leaders recently revised the teacher evaluation system to provide more detailed, actionable information for educators. Teacher association members said the district had developed a new evaluation system housed in TeachPoint but includes customizations for the Ipswich team. Teachers stated that the new system provides more qualitative feedback and is more actionable for teachers. However, the process is more time consuming than the previous system, and both teachers and district leaders agreed that the pandemic disrupted implementation. The district provided two documents reflecting the evaluation system: the *Ipswich Educator Evaluation Agreement* includes extensive guidance on the evaluation process, and the *Personnel Policies Goals* document states the district's intention to use a personnel evaluation process that will support improvement in performance and the learning program.

District records suggest that teacher evaluations are consistently uploaded to TeachPoint, although a review of the records shows that the expected use of specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely (SMART) goals is not consistent. A review of the educator evaluation system indicated that teachers received ratings and feedback on their performance based on the Standards and Indicators of Effective Practice. Simple random sampling was used to select the sample of 10 percent of 62 professional teacher status teachers (six teachers) with summative evaluations for the 2020-2021 school year. All (100 percent) were marked as complete and not missing the required components, including a rating for each standard or an overall rating. Half of the evaluations (50 percent) included multiple sources of evidence, such as observations, student work samples, or other evidence to support progress toward student learning goals, professional learning goals, standards, and indicators. All summative evaluations (100 percent) included feedback for each standard, and the majority of the evaluations (83 percent) included feedback identifying strengths, whereas one third of the evaluation feedback (33 percent) included areas of improvement. The review of evaluation documents indicated that no educators were developing both student learning and professional practice SMART goals: None of the evaluations (0 percent) reviewed contained student learning

SMART goals, and half of evaluations (50 percent) reviewed contained professional practice SMART goals.

Administrator evaluations also are stored using TeachPoint. Two summative evaluations for 2020-2021 of Ipswich's administrative staff members were available for review and complete with performance ratings and assessment of progress toward goals. Of the summative evaluations reviewed, none of the evaluations included student learning goals, professional practice goals, or school improvement goals. One evaluation included multiple sources of evidence to assess performance on summative evaluation standards. Both summative administrator evaluations reviewed included evaluator comments with specific, actionable feedback identifying each administrator's strengths and areas for improvement.

Professional development is a strength of Ipswich because it is informed by teachers' needs, aligned with district improvement plans, and reflects annual goals instead of one-off sessions. District and school staff in Ipswich described several facets of the district's professional development approach, including ongoing thematic sessions, summer professional development, and individualized supports for teachers to pursue interests or maintain licensure. School and district staff said the 2021-2022 theme for professional development was culturally responsive and antiracist teaching. In addition, the superintendent, school leaders, and other instructional staff all mentioned the former social justice subcommittee that has now evolved to become the DEI group and whose work is now being explored in staff meetings, professional learning communities, and leadership groups. Documents provided to illustrate the district's work include *The District Cultural Competency Anti-Racism Social Justice Presentation* as a sample training document, sign-up forms, and presentations (on topics including *Learning Cycles* and *Culturally Responsive Teaching*) that show the professional development sessions build on one another as the district focused on the theme across the year. The *Vision Statement (Draft 3)* shows the district's alignment between professional development activities and its goals and priorities, and Ipswich has clear goals and objectives aligned to student outcomes. School administrators said that adopting a yearly theme avoids the "one and done" approach to professional development that can lack context and follow-through.

Ipswich has a system for planning and providing summer professional development. Committees staffed by the superintendent, school administrators, and teachers draft professional development priorities by reviewing curriculum cycles, the district improvement plan, and requests from teachers collected through district-hosted surveys. The Director of Teaching and Learning uses this information to plan sessions, inviting presentations from external and internal experts. The *Summer Professional Development Playbook* is an online document that informs staff about the courses offered through the summer, when they are scheduled, and links to register. Numerous documents related to *Summer PD*, *PD Session Agendas*, and *PD Committee meetings* illustrate the district's focus on developing internal professional development processes focused on teacher-identified needs.

Finally, teachers and teacher association representatives said they are supported for individual or team professional development needs by the district. District staff said that professional development is included in teachers' contracts, and they and the teachers' union provide funding and substitute coverage to allow teachers to attend professional development sessions needed to

maintain licenses. Professional development is provided for new curricula, and funding is available through a local land trust to support teachers with an interest in pursuing specialized professional development to support their teaching.

Mentoring is a norm in Ipswich, supported by a documented system of peer support that includes observations and feedback. Teachers said Ipswich has a strong mentorship program and described mentoring as part of the culture of the district. Most teachers participate in the program, either as a mentor or a mentee. A coordinator helps match new teachers with experienced teacher mentors. Mentors and mentees meet frequently early in the mentee's first year and then less often but still on a weekly or biweekly basis for the rest of the year. Mentors observe and provide feedback to their mentees, and new teachers are encouraged to observe in other classrooms as well. The culture also supports informal mentoring conversations "across the lunch table" as teachers ask each other for advice. Experienced teachers volunteer or are asked to serve as mentors. Mentor/mentee pairs are usually on the same grade-level team to facilitate scheduling meetings for mentoring conversations. Teachers association representatives agreed that the district encourages cross-classroom visits and supports them with substitutes. Various *Mentor/Mentee Packets* clarify roles in the induction and mentoring program, supporting the program with suggested meeting topics, timelines, and support strategies.

## Recognition, Leadership Development, and Advancement

Teachers and district staff view the district's mentoring program as a leadership opportunity for experienced teachers. District staff also pointed to the summer professional development program as a leadership opportunity for teachers who lead sessions for colleagues. A district staff member said the district helps staff members "climb professional ladders" toward roles such as instructional coach (two former teachers now coach mathematics) and building or district administration. The *2020-2021 Teacher Leader and PD Playbook* documents Ipswich's policies and practices concerning teacher leadership, including multiple available roles on committees including curriculum alignment, technology, STEAM, and collaborative partnerships. These committees offer teachers leadership opportunities to fulfill important district needs.

## Recommendations

- District leadership should develop a talent diversification strategy that includes the evaluation and revision of the district's current practices around candidate recruitment and selection.
- The district should ensure that evaluations, including those for both teachers and administrators, include the required student learning and professional practice goals.



## Student Support

Ipswich has a district commitment to helping schools equitably support all students’ safety, well-being, and sense of belonging. Although specific initiatives vary by school, classroom observations support the presence of strong behavioral management strategies across all schools. The district supports schools in offering a tiered system of supports for all students, which ensures that all students have access to a variety of school personnel and intervention services through general education. Multidisciplinary teams in each building also meet to develop targeted (e.g., Tier 2) and/or intensive (e.g., Tier 3) support plans based on students’ individual learning needs. The district engages families and community members through formal school council teams, volunteer PTOs, and communicating opportunities and resources via newsletters emailed weekly.

Table 9 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in student support.

**Table 9. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Student Support Standard**

Indicator	Strengths	Areas for growth
<b>Safe and supportive school climate and culture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District commitment to DEI as evidenced by formal inclusion in district improvement plan and creation of the DEI team</li> <li>Strong positive behavioral approaches to supporting students</li> </ul>	
<b>Tiered systems of support</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student support teams have been established and meet regularly at each school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assessments for progress monitoring interventions</li> </ul>
<b>Family, student, and community engagement and partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School councils provide formal opportunities for student engagement and leadership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parent communication regarding student performance and support</li> <li>Guidance and support regarding various platforms for accessing different student information</li> </ul>

### Safe and Supportive School Climate and Culture

Overall, Ipswich prioritizes the creation of a safe and supportive environment for students. The district improvement plan reflects a commitment to DEI issues to ensure schools equitably support all students’ safety, well-being, and sense of belonging. Staff identify several examples of ways in which they foster safe, positive, healthy, inclusive, engaging, and welcoming learning environments, including the use of Responsive Classroom in the elementary schools, Restorative Justice in the middle school, and positive behavioral approaches such as clarifying behavioral expectations and consequences at all school levels. Finally, information collected from students corroborate that the structures and relationships in place across Ipswich schools generally lead to a positive overall climate.

The district improvement plan for 2021-2022 has a district objective focused on “building best practices to support diversity, equity, and inclusion.” This district objective is written into school

improvement plans and outlined by the school building within the district improvement plan. Examples of actions that school buildings are taking include implementing new curricula that consider diverse perspectives; creating professional learning communities about texts on culturally responsive pedagogy; providing professional learning for staff on how to support students with diverse backgrounds; and holding staff discussions about issues of diversity, common language, and schoolwide vision. In addition, district leaders shared that the district has worked to create more inclusive classrooms by de-tracking courses, and school staff shared that two professional development opportunities were offered to instructional and support staff about how to support diverse learners. In addition, the district recently convened a formal DEI team to lead the district's work in this area. The DEI team met initially in October 2021 and engaged in a collaborative process to refine a vision statement. In January 2022, the team formed three subcommittees: Supporting Our EL Population, No Place for Hate, and Peer Mentoring. This focus on DEI and accompanying concrete actions is a strength of the district.

The district also has identified a set of *Successful Habits of Mind* that reflect 21st century learning expectations. These habits of mind include perseverance, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity, self-management, and communication. They apply to student learning, appear across strands of work in the district, are referenced in the template for drafting locally created curriculum units, appear in the Theory of Action for the *Strategy for District Improvement (2021-22)* document, and are present in DEI team meeting agendas and minutes.

School staff shared that the district has developed bullying and safety protocols, as well as plans for how to respond to and disseminate information following a crisis in the district. Across elementary-, middle-, and high-school levels, staff described creating welcoming environments for students by incorporating student learning styles into teaching, implementing wellness workshops during exam week, and providing opportunities for students (at the elementary level) to have lunch with peers and the school counselor (i.e., lunch bunch). Staff shared that to promote inclusivity, they include pronouns in their email signatures and adjust pronoun usage to match students' preferred pronouns. In addition, instructional observation ratings in the middle range on the Teacher Sensitivity dimension (average scores out of 7.0 of 5.7 for Grades K-5, 5.9 for Grades 6-8, 4.9 for Grades 9-12) suggests that most teachers are aware of student needs much of the time, and many students are comfortable with the teachers, share ideas, and ask and respond to questions.

Ipswich's positive behavioral approaches to supporting students is a strength of the district, as evidenced by instructional observations, staff focus groups, and district documents. Instructional observation scores in the high range for the Behavior Management dimension (average score is 6.8 districtwide) suggest that rules and guidelines for behavior are clear and consistently reinforced by teachers. In addition, staff shared, and student handbooks at each school building corroborated, that schools outline behavioral expectations and disciplinary policies for all students. High-school staff members reported that school leaders include relevant staff members in discussions on how to respond to student behavior in an equitable fashion by including staff with specific domains of expertise (e.g., English as a second language teachers, counselors, special education teachers) and staff members familiar with the student. Elementary staff shared that the elementary buildings use Responsive Classroom, incorporate student voice and perspectives when developing school rules, and use problem-solving conferences when students are referred to the principal's office. In

addition, according to a presentation to the school committee, the middle school piloted the use of Restorative Justice concepts during the 2020-2021 school year.

Students in Ipswich shared that they feel their schools are inclusive and engaging, with student focus group participants indicating they view the school as a safe community: They felt included by other students, and their teachers were willing to help them. Results from the Views of Climate and Learning student survey indicate a relatively strong school climate across all school levels and student subgroups, as evidenced by overall school climate scores (out of 100) in the “favorable” range (51 to 70). The only exception was in the district subgroup of students who fell into the “other” racial category, whose results indicated an overall school climate score on the high end (49) of the “somewhat favorable” range (31 to 50).

## Tiered Systems of Support

Ipswich provides a tiered system to support the needs of all students by using data-driven decision making to develop appropriate interventions and supports. Information collected through the district review confirmed that although language and protocols vary, each school has a multidisciplinary team that meets with classroom teachers to review data and develop appropriate intervention and/or support plans based on student needs. Across each school, the process typically involves a teacher referral, a review of student data, the development of a support plan, and a review to ensure the plan is effective. This consistent presence of and process for a team to review data and assign student supports at each school is a strength of the district.

District leaders and school staff shared that each school has a multidisciplinary team that meets regularly to review data on student progress, and teachers can refer students for additional support. After an initial conversation and data review, the school will provide an appropriate intervention for four to six weeks before the team reconvenes to review updated data, discuss progress, and decide on continuing the support, changing the support, or ending additional support. School-level documents from one elementary school and the middle school indicate that the process for multidisciplinary, multitiered systems of support (MTSS) teams varies. For example, documents from Doyon Memorial reflect the same language used in the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP; e.g., MTSS, student support team), whereas documents from the middle school refer to a “child study team” that uses a similar process—but different referral forms—as Doyon’s “student support team.” In both cases, the process begins with a teacher referral with supporting documentation and includes the use of an intervention or accommodative instructional change, followed by an additional follow-up meeting to determine if the intervention is effective. Staff interviews indicated that membership of the student support teams varied across schools but included a representative set of stakeholders with authority to make collaborative decisions. Examples of team members across buildings included the school principal or assistant principal, school psychologist, school counselor, academic interventionists, and the referring teacher.

Both district- and school-sponsored professional development opportunities reflect topics related to student learning along a continuum of needs, including academic, social, and emotional learning. In addition, the *Ipswich Public Schools DCAP* describes a proactive MTSS designed to ensure that “all possible efforts are made to meet student needs in general education classrooms and to support teachers in analyzing and accommodating the wide range of learning styles and needs that exist in

each school.” The DCAP details personnel as well as interventions that are accessible to all students and families through general education and provides an overview of considerations related to curriculum access, engagement, assessment, and supporting student learning. Program reviews related to programming for students with disabilities and ELs further document the district’s commitment to supporting student learning along a continuum of needs.

Teacher interviews and district documents indicate that Ipswich uses a combination of assessment tools to assess student learning in ELA and mathematics. All students in kindergarten through fifth grade are administered the Lexia RAPID, the Developmental Reading Assessment, and Caulkins End of Unit assessments. Beginning in sixth grade, the Lexia RAPID is administered to students in grades 6-8. To assess student mathematics achievement, the district administers Star Math and Star CBM (curriculum-based measures for reading and mathematics) to all students in kindergarten through fifth grade; students in sixth through eighth grade are administered the mathematics portion of i-Ready. At the high school level, staff shared that students are identified for additional support by evaluating student grades and progress in class. Although staff interviews and document reviews indicated a data-driven referral and plan development process, clear progress monitoring protocols were less apparent across all schools. When asked, staff could not articulate a standardized progress monitoring process or tool that the district used to assess the efficacy of interventions for students receiving tiered supports. One staff member shared that they review qualitative intervention notes to determine if their intervention system is effective. Using consistent datasets for progress monitoring students receiving additional supports or interventions is an area for growth in the district.

District leaders, educators, district documents, and the *Ipswich Tiered Focused Monitoring Report* from March 2020 indicate that the district has established a tiered system to support students in the district. The district was found to be in compliance with all reviewed criteria as part of the 2020 *Tiered Focused Monitoring Report*. An additional program review of special education services for students with autism and dyslexia contained praise for programming and the district’s capacity to serve both groups of students. In particular, the report—which was not a required program evaluation—specifically recognized staff training, inclusivity, individualization, and high expectations for students and noted that “IPS be recognized as a model district in supporting students with autism in a public school setting.” A similar review of programming for ELs noted improvement evidenced by the district’s implementation of strategies recommended in a previous review, as well as positive pedagogical approaches observed in classrooms. Reviews of dyslexia and EL programming recommended next steps to support increased collaboration between specialists and general education teachers through the use of common planning time.

## Family, Student, and Community Engagement and Partnerships

Ipswich ensures that families and students have multiple opportunities to engage with the district and support students’ academic progress and general well-being. Families are represented on school council boards from each school, as well as PTOs (called Friends of Ipswich Elementary Schools) at the elementary levels. In addition, students participate on school councils.

Family members participating in the focus groups reported that parents serve in leadership roles on both school councils and PTOs. School councils meet monthly and involve building leaders, teachers,

parents, community members, and students at the high school level. Parent representatives on school councils are elected by the PTOs. PTOs consist of parent volunteers who actively support school activities and include all parents from each school community. In addition, schools share weekly newsletters with updates and resources and post information on publicly available websites. Parents interviewed for the district review generally indicated that school communications were helpful, and some shared that they felt communication from schools improved as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic; the district began more consistently using emails and online information sharing versus paper newsletters. High-school staff also reported efforts to engage families of ELs by sending out newsletters that are translatable into several languages, along with recordings in several languages of students explaining how to adjust the language settings on the newsletters.

However, parents noted room for improvement in communicating about student performance. They noted that report card structures vary considerably by teacher, with some parents feeling the information they received was incredibly detailed, whereas others, whose children had different teachers, felt it lacked specific details. Parents also agreed that communication about student supports could be improved. In one case, a parent shared that her student was receiving pull-out academic support services without their knowledge. Finally, parents noted confusion about how to access various platforms to monitor student performance and assignments. The district uses Aspen to store student grades, but parents also can access Google Classroom to see student assignments. Parents indicated that schools share information sheets about how to access each platform, but they noted that a more formal orientation would be helpful to support parents in understanding how to navigate both platforms. School staff shared that the district had sent out parent surveys and established parent workshops but reported that these were typically poorly attended. Communication with families is an area for growth.

Students can participate in leadership roles at all levels within the district, beginning with the school councils at all schools, which are a strength of the district. Elementary staff shared that the school council is responsible for completing projects within the school, and students can take on roles such as helping with the mobile mart pantry, helping at the buses, assisting during parent pickup and drop-off, and helping in the library. At the middle-school level, students have a variety of extracurricular options to participate in that include leadership opportunities, including intramural sports, music and theater groups, and clubs focused on a variety of topics (e.g., robotics and mathematics). At the high school, students described a variety of avenues for student engagement during the school day and outside school hours. Students may participate on athletic teams (e.g., track and field, gymnastics, volleyball), music programming (e.g., concert orchestra, chamber orchestra, symphony), or a variety of clubs (e.g., Amnesty International, mathematics club, robotics). High-school students mentioned the Forty Percent Club's focus on raising awareness about mental health and community supports.

District and school leaders shared about multiple school and community partnerships. Community partnerships are typically developed at the school level to meet the unique needs and interests of their school community. District administrators shared that one school has a partnership with a local food pantry to provide food for students within the school building, eliminating the need for families to travel to obtain food. Students and school leaders shared examples of community partnerships, including the high-school partnerships with the National Alliance for Mental Illness and the Ipswich

Rotary Club that convenes Interact Clubs (a Rotary Club at the high school level) that connect high school students to a variety of community events. The district also provides afterschool opportunities by holding different community activities within schools. School leaders shared that schools have hosted activities such as karate, and invited Change Is Simple into the middle school for students to build solar-based cars. These varied activities were less available in recent years because the pandemic but are expected to be reinvigorated in coming years.

## Recommendations

- The district should establish and clearly communicate protocols for progress monitoring, including a standard set of assessments and/or tools that should be considered when evaluating the effectiveness of interventions.
- District and school leaders should develop and clearly communicate expectations for communicating with families about student performance and related supports.
- The district should ensure that families have access to guidance and support regarding the various platforms used to share student data.

# Financial and Asset Management

Town and district leaders collaborate to ensure that allocation and use of funding and other resources improves students’ performance, opportunities, and outcomes. School leaders have autonomy to prepare a budget proposal for the superintendent and business office to review. District leaders collaborate with town leaders to efficiently develop the overall budget and complete regular audits of financial reports and the use of funds. There is an agreed-on process for determining the overall amount of the town budget allocated to the district, and that amount is described as consistently exceeding net school spending requirements. However, additional stabilization funds (e.g., money received in a 2016 override) are frequently used to fund district-identified needs that exceed the town appropriation.

Table 10 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in financial and asset management.

**Table 10. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Financial and Asset Management Standard**

Indicator	Strengths	Areas for growth
<b>Budget documentation and reporting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget documents are clear, detailed, and easily accessible on the district website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explicit connection to district and school improvement planning</li> </ul>
<b>Adequate budget</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strong working relationship between town and district leaders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budgeting for replacement of Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds</li> </ul>
<b>Financial tracking, forecasting, controls, and audits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistent monitoring ensures efficient and effective use of budgeted funds</li> </ul>	
<b>Capital planning and facility maintenance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborative process ensures that maintenance needs are addressed efficiently</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Determining future elementary-school building plans</li> </ul>

## Budget Documentation and Reporting

Ipswich maintains clear and accurate budget documents that include information about all sources of funds and the allocation of resources. District budgets from FY2019 to FY2022 are publicly posted on the district website. Ipswich’s budget documents and presentation to the school committee include pertinent information about the allocation of resources and the sources of funds. The current budget document provides information on funding sources, including federal and state grant funding, choice fund revenue, and circuit breaker fund revenue. The presentation also includes historical spending data from 2020 for comparison to the current year’s resource allocations, along with enrollment information. Budget presentations and documents contain expenses for fixed costs, health insurance, special education, and compensation for all staff, and they break down specific budget detail by school. Budget documents also include historical data that go back to FY2014 or FY2016 (depending on the specific item). Budget documents are a strength of the district in that they are clear, accurate, complete, and user-friendly, and they provide historical spending data for

comparisons. Details are sufficient for stakeholders to understand the current year's resource allocation and explanations for needed resources.

District leaders described collaboration between school administrators, town officials, and district central office staff in developing the overall budget. For example, district leaders noted a clear and consistent calculation for determining what percentage of the town's overall budget would be reserved for the school budget each year, which consistently exceeds net school spending requirements and supports the internal district budget planning process. School administrators reported having a high degree of autonomy when developing their individual budgets, which they submit to the superintendent and the finance department for initial review and approval. School leaders noted that through regularly scheduled collaborative time (e.g., department head meetings and meetings with other school leaders and central office staff), they collectively and regularly discuss the budget and the unique needs of each building throughout the year. School leaders described several ways in which budgets reflect the changing student needs, such as the inclusion of additional EL specialists, special educators, and behavioral support staff in response to emerging needs.

Budget documentation includes overall district budget information followed by school-specific budget details. Each school budget section begins with a summary of the educational goals used to develop the budget. Consistent with school leaders' description of autonomy about developing their budget, these goals do not always align with the goals outlined in the districtwide *Strategy for District Improvement (2021-2022)* document. This inconsistency between school goals highlighted as driving budget requests and district improvement goals is an area for growth.

According to a district leader, the finance and operations department is responsible for contracts with food services and transportation. A new contract for those services was put in place during the 2021-2022 school year. The town manager is responsible for facility-related contracts and works directly with the superintendent. The district and the Town of Ipswich have separate formal agreements in place for custodial services; they use the same overarching company, but the town has its own custodians, and the district has a separate contract with the schools' custodians.

## Adequate Budget

District and town officials explained that the base budget document dictates what portion of the overall town budget will be allocated to the district, and this agreed-on method supports an efficient budget development process for both entities. District leaders indicated that the overall budget determined through this process always exceeded net spending requirements; however, a town official noted that yearly appropriation funds from the town frequently fall short of the district's identified overall need. District and town officials described the district's use of a stabilization fund in these cases. This stabilization fund is the result of a 2016 town override vote, which was expected to last five years according to district leaders. One district leader shared as follows:

We've been able to stretch it a little bit because of the COVID funding that we received. So that money sits in our, we have a school stabilization fund. And so aside from the appropriation that we get from the town, every fiscal year, we're supplementing that with money that comes out of the school stabilization fund.



District and town officials agreed that a good working relationship exists, with district leaders identifying positive relationships with multiple town boards as critical to their success.

School leaders reported that they added new staff positions this year, including behavior technicians, special educators, teaching assistants, and preschool teachers. However, some of those positions have been funded through ESSER grants, and there is a fear among school leaders that staff positions will go away when funding goes away; district leaders described exercising extreme caution when using ESSER funds for staffing needs because they anticipated this challenge. District leaders also mentioned restricting their use of ESSER funds to staffing needs that directly benefitted students (such as for in-classroom positions rather than vice principal roles) and having early conversations about long-term staffing needs to support future budgets. When discussing special education costs specifically, district leaders highlighted effective communication on concerns and issues that need to be addressed. To date, the district has been able to address any special education issues by shifting funds accordingly.

According to district leaders, the [Feoffees Trust](#) has two grant programs available. The Traverso-Weatherall Innovation Grants are intended specifically for Ipswich faculty and staff to apply to and receive up to \$7,500 for classroom items “dedicated to the pursuit of innovation in education for the benefit of all Ipswich Public Schools students.” One school leader reported their teachers write grants for classroom experiences and field trips, and “lots of money from both appropriate budget and grants have gone into changing our libraries and making sure that those books are there for kids at all levels.”

## Financial Tracking, Forecasting, Controls, and Audits

According to district leaders, the district finance department reports to the superintendent and the school committee monthly. The director of finance and operations attends all school committee meetings, budget subcommittee meetings, negotiation meetings, and town meetings. When forecasting needs, the town manager described how he and the superintendent use the five-year capital plan, which is updated annually with new projects, to build their budget. In addition, the publicly available facilities needs assessment helps inform town and district decisions. District leaders described staff in the Ipswich (town) business office as “fantastic” and “very knowledgeable.” The business office is responsible for meeting end-of-year reporting requirements. Despite turnover in the district finance department, the district has met end-of-year reporting requirements without issue.

The district uses Harpers for its payroll system and Munis for finance to ensure that “things are done accurately and effectively.” The district began using Harpers in 2019 when the town made the move to this system; however, according to some district leaders, the process introduced new challenges and nuances when working between both systems. As a result, the district created a manual process to integrate information from both systems to address their day-to-day operational needs.

Powers & Sullivan audit both the town and the district. The district is responsible for its own reporting for the audit, which is conducted independently from the overall town audit. The town manager described the process as follows:

We rely on the auditors to make sure we're checking and meet the state requirements. I'm sure there's education requirements that they have to report on the school side with regard to students and learning . . . I don't think there's ever been any issue with that.

The most recent audits revealed no concerns.

## Capital Planning and Facility Maintenance

A facilities director hired in 2019 shared between the town and the district is responsible for maintaining all school buildings. The district also hired and funds its own assistant facilities director who is responsible for all district buildings, including any preventive maintenance work recommended in an annual review. According to the town manager, facilities maintenance is a collaboration between the district and the town. The town manager explained that the town and the district benefit from working collaboratively on project bids because they save money by buying supplies together. Both town and district leaders described collaboratively addressing capital planning and facility maintenance. For example, one of the boilers at a school malfunctioned, and the town manager was on the phone with the superintendent immediately to figure out a plan. Ultimately, they were able to work together to ensure proper heating for the building.

The town manager maintains a long-term capital improvement plan for the town and the district. Previous versions of the capital plan are available on the town's website, with the most recent plan reflecting the years between 2017 and 2021. District leaders provided the 2023 capital plan for the district review. The proposals in the plan are reviewed by the select board, the finance committee, and during town meeting to improve buildings, equipment, and infrastructure. The capital plan includes a list of facilities separated by the town and the district and includes a project title and funds requested. The following district projects are planned or underway: painting, flooring, roofing repairs/replacement, lighting upgrade, fire alarm upgrade/replacement, and water heater replacement.

Although not mentioned in the plan, district leaders and the town manager all agree a decision is necessary about new facilities for the elementary schools, both of which need extensive repairs. The town has been planning to combine the elementary schools into a single new building given the number of students in Ipswich. As a school committee member explained, "We recognize the school building classrooms are mid-20th century learning facilities and in the 21st century model, it doesn't work. It doesn't work for special needs, breakout rooms. It doesn't work for square footage for the kids per classroom." Challenges to this single elementary-school plan, however, emerged because some families were disappointed by the planned building site. These discussions and deliberations have been ongoing since at least 2016 and were continuing at the time of the district review.

## Recommendations

- District and school leaders should ensure that the goals included in school budgets are directly connected to district's overall strategy for improvement.
- District, school committee, and municipal leaders should discuss potential options for maintaining initiatives that were implemented with Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds once those funds are no longer available.

- Using a process that includes input from the community and other relevant stakeholders, district, school committee, and municipal leaders should work to resolve future elementary school building plans.

## Appendix A. Summary of Site Visit Activities

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The AIR team completed the following activities as part of the district review activities in Ipswich. The team conducted 56 classroom observations during the week of April 11, 2022, and held interviews and focus groups between April 11 and April 14, 2022. The site visit team conducted interviews and focus groups with the following representatives from the school and the district:

- Superintendent
- Other district leaders
- School committee members
- Teachers' association members
- Principals
- Teachers
- Support specialists
- Parents
- Students
- Town representative

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

- 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
- Curricular review process and timeline
- Ipswich curriculum unit template
- Published educational reports on the district by DESE, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, and the former Office of Educational Quality and Accountability
- 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

## Appendix B. Enrollment, Attendance, Expenditures

**Table B1. Ipswich Public Schools: Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity, 2021-2022**

Group	District	Percentage of total	State	Percentage of total
All	1,628	100.0%	911,529	100.0%
African American	15	0.9%	84,970	9.3%
Asian	21	1.3%	65,813	7.2%
Hispanic	122	7.5%	210,747	23.1%
Native American	3	0.2%	2,060	0.2%
White	1,402	86.1%	507,992	55.7%
Native Hawaiian	0	0.0%	788	0.1%
Multirace, Non-Hispanic	65	4.0%	39,159	4.3%

Note. As of October 1, 2021.

**Table B2. Ipswich Public Schools: 2021-2022 Student Enrollment by High-Need Populations**

Group	District			State		
	N	Percentage of high need	Percentage of district	N	Percentage of high need	Percentage of state
All students with high needs	552	100.0%	33.6%	512,242	100.0%	55.6%
Students with disabilities	307	55.6%	18.7%	174,505	34.1%	18.9%
Low-income households	333	60.3%	20.5%	399,140	77.9%	43.8%
ELs and former ELs	30	5.4%	1.8%	100,231	19.6%	11.0%

Note. As of October 1, 2021. District and state numbers and percentages for students with disabilities and high needs are calculated including students in out-of-district placements. Total district enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 1,645; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 920,971.

**Table B3. Ipswich Public Schools: Chronic Absence<sup>a</sup> Rates by Student Group, 2018-2021**

Group	2018	2019	2020	2021	4-year change	State (2021)
All	6.2	5.4	6.0	3.8	-2.4	17.7
African American/Black	4.8	6.3	0.0	5.0	0.2	24.1
Asian	3.3	3.3	4.0	0.0	-3.3	7.2
Hispanic/Latino	11.0	9.3	10.3	8.3	-2.7	29.0
Multirace, non-Hispanic/Latino	7.6	10.0	11.3	7.6	0.0	18.9
White	6.0	4.9	5.6	3.3	-2.7	13.2
High need	11.3	9.6	10.9	7.6	-3.7	26.3
Economically disadvantaged	14.8	11.1	11.3	11.0	-3.8	30.2
ELs	18.6	17.8	5.1	10.3	-8.3	29.0
Students with disabilities	7.7	8.7	11.3	8.7	1.0	26.8

<sup>a</sup> The percentage of students absent 10 percent or more of their total number of student days of membership in a school.

**Table B4. Ipswich Public Schools: Expenditures, Chapter 70 State Aid, and Net School Spending Fiscal Years, 2019-2021**

	2019		Fiscal year 2020		Fiscal year 2021	
	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual
<b>Expenditures</b>						
From local appropriations for schools						
By school committee	\$32,329,091	\$31,948,944	\$33,575,401	\$31,793,945	\$32,019,077	\$31,674,534
By municipality	\$485,466	\$894,200	\$861,033	\$931,787	\$937,866	\$1,018,829
Total from local appropriations	\$32,814,557	\$32,843,144	\$34,436,434	\$32,725,732	\$32,956,943	\$32,693,363
From revolving funds and grants	—	\$3,744,909	—	\$3,934,740	—	\$4,089,562
Total expenditures	—	\$36,588,053	—	\$36,660,472	—	\$36,782,925
<b>Chapter 70 aid to education program</b>						
Chapter 70 state aid <sup>a</sup>	—	\$3,282,240	—	\$3,332,340	—	\$3,332,340
Required local contribution	—	\$14,676,936	—	\$15,160,772	—	\$15,259,127
Required net school spending <sup>b</sup>	—	\$17,959,176	—	\$18,493,112	—	\$18,591,467
Actual net school spending	—	\$27,606,878	—	\$28,040,407	—	\$29,312,428
Over/under required (\$)	—	\$9,647,702	—	\$9,547,295	—	\$10,720,961
Over/under required (%)	—	53.7%	—	51.6%	—	57.7%

Note. Data as of June 1, 2022, and sourced from FY2020 district end-of-year reports and Chapter 70 program information on DESE website.

<sup>a</sup> Chapter 70 state aid funds are deposited in the local general fund and spent as local appropriations. <sup>b</sup> 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.

**Table B5. Ipswich Public Schools: Expenditures Per In-District Pupil, Fiscal Years 2019-2021**

Expenditure category	2019	2020	2021
Administration	\$702.82	\$621.12	\$784.88
Instructional leadership (district and school)	\$1,195.70	\$1,286.09	\$1,296.68
Teachers	\$6,995.71	\$7,298.26	\$7,977.39
Other teaching services	\$1,827.30	\$1,747.56	\$1,973.68
Professional development	\$192.81	\$182.98	\$124.00
Instructional materials, equipment, and technology	\$667.14	\$894.32	\$1,084.58
Guidance, counseling, and testing services	\$600.82	\$672.01	\$751.96
Pupil services	\$1,327.91	\$1,249.36	\$1,243.72
Operations and maintenance	\$1,312.81	\$1,090.73	\$1,589.37
Insurance, retirement, and other fixed costs	\$2,641.06	\$2,836.06	\$3,189.75
Total expenditures per in-district pupil	\$17,464.09	\$17,878.49	\$20,016.00

Note. Any discrepancy between expenditures and total is because of rounding. Data are from <https://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/statistics/per-pupil-exp.xlsx>.



# Appendix C. Districtwide Instructional Observation Report

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## *Ipswich Public Schools*

**Classroom Visits: Summary of Findings**

**Districtwide Instructional Observation Report**

**April 2022**



201 Jones Road  
Waltham, Massachusetts  
781-373-7000 | TTY 877.334.3499  
[www.air.org](http://www.air.org)



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## Introduction

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The *Districtwide Instructional Observation Report* presents ratings for the classroom observations that were conducted by certified observers at American Institutes for Research (AIR) as part of the Massachusetts District Reviews.

Observers visited Ipswich Public Schools during the week of April 11, 2022. The observers conducted 56 observations in a sample of classrooms across four schools. Observations were conducted in Grades K-12 and focused primarily on literacy, English language arts, and mathematics instruction.

The classroom observations were guided by the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), developed by the Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning (CASTL) at the University of Virginia. Three levels of CLASS Manuals were used: K-3, Upper Elementary, and Secondary. The K-3 tool was used to observe grades K-3, the Upper Elementary tool was used to observe grades 4-5, and the Secondary tool was used to observe grades 6-12.

The K-3 protocol includes 10 classroom dimensions related to three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support (listed in Table 1).

**Table 1. CLASS K-3 Domains and Dimensions**

Emotional Support	Classroom Organization	Instructional Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Positive Climate</li><li>Negative Climate</li><li>Teacher Sensitivity</li><li>Regard for Student Perspectives</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Behavior Management</li><li>Productivity</li><li>Instructional Learning Formats</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Concept Development</li><li>Quality of Feedback</li><li>Language Modeling</li></ul>

The Upper Elementary and Secondary protocols include 11 classroom dimensions related to three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support (listed in Table 2), in addition to Student Engagement.

**Table 2. CLASS Upper Elementary and Secondary Domains and Dimensions**

Emotional Support	Classroom Organization	Instructional Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Positive Climate</li><li>Teacher Sensitivity</li><li>Regard for Student Perspectives</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Behavior Management</li><li>Productivity</li><li>Negative Climate</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Instructional Learning Formats</li><li>Content Understanding</li><li>Analysis and Inquiry</li><li>Quality of Feedback</li><li>Instructional Dialogue</li></ul>
<b>Student Engagement</b>		

When conducting a visit to a classroom, the observer rates each dimension (including Student Engagement) on a scale of 1 to 7. A rating of 1 or 2 indicates that the dimension was never or rarely evident during the visit. For example, a rating of 1 or 2 on Teacher Sensitivity indicates that, at the time of the visit, the teacher was not aware of students who needed extra support or attention, was

unresponsive to or dismissive of students, or was ineffective at addressing students' problems; as a result, students rarely sought support from the teacher or communicated openly with the teacher. A rating of 3, 4, or 5 indicates that the dimension was evident but not exhibited consistently or in a way that included all students. A rating of 6 or 7 indicates that the dimension was reflected in all or most classroom activities and in a way that included all or most students.

Members of the observation team who visited the classrooms all received training on the CLASS protocol and then passed a rigorous certification exam for each CLASS protocol to ensure that they were able to accurately rate the dimensions. All observers must pass an exam annually to maintain their certification.

Research on CLASS protocol shows that students in classrooms that rated high using this observation tool have greater gains in social skills and academic success than students in classrooms with lower ratings (MET Project, 2010; CASTL, n.d.). Furthermore, small improvements on these domains can affect student outcomes: "The ability to demonstrate even small changes in effective interactions has practical implications—differences in just over 1 point on the CLASS 7-point scale translate into improved achievement and social skill development for students" (CASTL, n.d., p. 3).

In this report, each CLASS dimension is defined, and descriptions of the dimensions at the high (6 or 7), middle (3, 4, or 5), and low levels (1 or 2) are presented (*definitions and rating descriptions are derived from the CLASS K-3, Upper Elementary, and Secondary Manuals*). For each dimension we indicate the frequency of classroom observations across the ratings and provide a districtwide average of the observed classrooms. In cases where a dimension is included in more than one CLASS manual level, those results are combined on the dimension-specific pages. In the summary of ratings table following the dimension-specific pages the averages for every dimension are presented by grade band (K-5, 6-8, and 9-12). For each dimension, we indicate the grade levels for which this dimension is included.

## Positive Climate

---

*Emotional Support domain, Grades K–12*

Positive Climate reflects the emotional connection between the teacher and students and among students and the warmth, respect, and enjoyment communicated by verbal and nonverbal interactions (*CLASS K–3 Manual*, p. 23, *CLASS Upper Elementary Manual*, p. 21, *CLASS Secondary Manual*, p. 21). Table 3 (as well as tables for the remaining dimensions) includes the number of classrooms for each rating on each dimension and the district average for that dimension.

**Table 3. Positive Climate: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average**

**Positive Climate District Average\*: 5.5**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	0	0	0	0	5	10	4	19	5.9
Grades 6-8	0	0	0	3	7	6	4	20	5.6
Grades 9-12	0	1	3	1	6	4	2	17	4.9

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 3, the district average is computed as:  $([2 \times 1] + [3 \times 3] + [4 \times 4] + [5 \times 18] + [6 \times 20] + [7 \times 10]) \div 56 \text{ observations} = 5.5$

**Ratings in the Low Range.** All indicators are absent or only minimally present. Teachers and students do not appear to share a warm, supportive relationship. Interpersonal connections are not evident or only minimally evident. Affect in the classroom is flat, and there are rarely instances of teachers and students smiling, sharing humor, or laughing together. There are no, or very few, positive communications among the teacher and students; the teacher does not communicate encouragement. There is no evidence that students and the teacher respect one another or that the teacher encourages students to respect one another.

**Ratings in the Middle Range.** There are some indications that the teacher and students share a warm and supportive relationship, but some students may be excluded from this relationship, either by the teacher or the students. Some relationships appear constrained—for example, the teacher expresses a perfunctory interest in students, or encouragement seems to be an automatic statement and is not sincere. Sometimes, teachers and students demonstrate respect for one another.

**Ratings in the High Range.** There are many indications that the relationship among students and the teacher is positive and warm. The teacher is typically in close proximity to students, and encouragement is sincere and personal. There are frequent displays of shared laughter, smiles, and enthusiasm. Teachers and students show respect for one another (e.g., listening, using calm voices, using polite language). Positive communication (both verbal and nonverbal) and mutual respect are evident throughout the session.



## Teacher Sensitivity

---

*Emotional Support domain, Grades K–12*

Teacher Sensitivity encompasses the teacher’s awareness of and responsiveness to students’ academic and emotional needs. High levels of sensitivity facilitate students’ abilities to actively explore and learn because the teacher consistently provides comfort, reassurance, and encouragement (*CLASS K–3 Manual*, p. 32, *CLASS Upper Elementary Manual*, p. 27, *CLASS Secondary Manual*, p. 27).

**Table 4. Teacher Sensitivity: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average**

**Teacher Sensitivity District Average\*: 5.4**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	0	0	0	4	5	2	8	19	5.7
Grades 6-8	0	0	1	2	2	8	7	20	5.9
Grades 9-12	0	0	2	5	8	2	0	17	4.6

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 4, the district average is computed as:  $([3 \times 3] + [4 \times 11] + [5 \times 15] + [6 \times 12] + [7 \times 15]) \div 56 \text{ observations} = 5.4$

**Ratings in the Low Range.** In these sessions, the teacher has not been aware of students who need extra support and pays little attention to students’ needs. As a result, students are frustrated, confused, and disengaged. The teacher is unresponsive to and dismissive of students and may ignore students, squash their enthusiasm, and not allow them to share their moods or feelings. The teacher is not effective in addressing students’ needs and does not appropriately acknowledge situations that may be upsetting to students. Students rarely seek support from the teacher and minimize conversations with the teacher, not sharing ideas or responding to questions.

**Ratings in the Middle Range.** The teacher is sometimes aware of student needs or aware of only a limited type of student needs, such as academic needs, not social-emotional needs. Or the teacher may be aware of some students and not of other students. The teacher does not always realize a student is confused and needs extra help or when a student already knows the material being taught. The teacher may be responsive at times to students but at other times may ignore or dismiss students. The teacher may respond only to students who are upbeat and positive and not support students who are upset. Sometimes, the teacher is effective in addressing students’ concerns or problems, but not always.

**Ratings in the High Range.** The teacher’s awareness of students and their needs is consistent and accurate. The teacher may predict how difficult a new task is for a student and acknowledge this difficulty. The teacher is responsive to students’ comments and behaviors, whether positive or negative. The teacher consistently addresses students’ problems and concerns and is effective in doing so. Students are obviously comfortable with the teacher and share ideas, work comfortably together, and ask and respond to questions, even difficult questions.

## Regard for Student Perspectives

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*Emotional Support domain, Grades K–12*

Regard for Student Perspectives captures the degree to which the teacher’s interactions with students and classroom activities place an emphasis on students’ interests, motivations, and points of view and encourage student responsibility and autonomy (*CLASS K–3 Manual*, p. 38, *CLASS Upper Elementary Manual*, p. 35, *CLASS Secondary Manual*, p. 35).

**Table 5. Regard for Student Perspectives: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average**

**Regard for Student Perspectives District Average\*: 4.6**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	0	0	1	8	3	4	3	19	5.0
Grades 6-8	0	0	5	3	7	3	2	20	4.7
Grades 9-12	0	3	5	4	1	4	0	17	3.9

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 5, the district average is computed as:  $([2 \times 3] + [3 \times 11] + [4 \times 15] + [5 \times 11] + [6 \times 11] + [7 \times 5]) \div 56 \text{ observations} = 4.6$

**Ratings in the Low Range.** At the low range, the teacher exhibits an inflexible, rigid adherence to his or her plan, without considering student ideas or allowing students to make contributions. The teacher inhibits student enthusiasm by imposing guidelines or making remarks that inhibit student expression. The teacher may rigidly adhere to a lesson plan and not respond to student interests. The teacher does not allow students any autonomy on how they conduct an activity, may control materials tightly, and may offer few opportunities for students to help out with classroom responsibilities. There are few opportunities for students to talk and express themselves.

**Ratings in the Middle Range.** The teacher exhibits control at times and at other times follows the students’ lead and gives them some choices and opportunities to follow their interests. There are some opportunities for students to exercise autonomy, but student choice is limited. The teacher may assign students responsibility in the classroom, but in a limited way. At times, the teacher dominates the discussion, but at other times the teacher allows students to share ideas, although only at a minimal level or for a short period of time.

**Ratings in the High Range.** The teacher is flexible in following student leads, interests, and ideas and looks for ways to meaningfully engage students. Although the teacher has a lesson plan, students’ ideas are incorporated into the lesson plan. The teacher consistently supports student autonomy and provides meaningful leadership opportunities. Students have frequent opportunities to talk, share ideas, and work together. Students have appropriate freedom of movement during activities.

## Negative Climate

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Emotional Support domain, Grades K–3

Classroom Organization domain, Grades 4–12

Negative Climate reflects the overall level of expressed negativity in the classroom. The frequency, quality, and intensity of teacher and student negativity are key to this dimension (*CLASS K–3 Manual*, p. 28, *CLASS Upper Elementary Manual*, p. 55, *CLASS Secondary Manual*, p. 55). For the purposes of this report, we have inversed the observers scores, to be consistent with the range scores across all dimensions. Therefore, a high range score in this dimension indicates an absence of negative climate, and a low range score indicates the presence of negative climate.<sup>1</sup>

**Table 6. Negative Climate: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average**

**Negative Climate District Average\*: 6.9**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	0	0	0	0	0	2	17	19	6.9
Grades 6-8	0	0	0	0	0	3	17	20	6.9
Grades 9-12	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	17	7.0

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 6, the district average is computed as:  $([6 \times 5] + [7 \times 51]) \div 56 \text{ observations} = 6.9$

**Ratings in the Low Range.** Negativity is pervasive. The teacher may express constant irritation, annoyance, or anger; unduly criticize students; or consistently use a harsh tone and/or take a harsh stance as he or she interacts with students. Threats or yelling are frequently used to establish control. Language is disrespectful and sarcastic. Severe negativity, such as the following actions, would lead to a high rating on negative climate, even if the action is not extended: students bullying one another, a teacher hitting a student, or students physically fighting with one another.

**Ratings in the Middle Range.** There are some expressions of mild negativity by the teacher or students. The teacher may express irritability, use a harsh tone, and/or express annoyance—usually during difficult moments in the classroom. Threats or yelling may be used to establish control over the classroom, but not constantly; they are used more as a response to situations. At times, the teacher and students may be sarcastic or disrespectful toward one another.

**Ratings in the High Range.** There is no display of negativity: No strong expressions of anger or aggression are exhibited, either by the teacher or students; if there is such a display, it is contained and does not escalate. The teacher does not issue threats or yell to establish control. The teacher and students are respectful and do not express sarcasm.

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<sup>1</sup> When observers rate this dimension it is scored so that a low rating (indicating little or no evidence of a negative climate) is better than a high rating (indicating abundant evidence of a negative climate). To be consistent across all ratings, for the purposes of this report we have inversed this scoring.

## Behavior Management

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Classroom Organization domain, Grades K–12

Behavior Management refers to the teacher’s ability to provide clear behavioral expectations and use effective methods to prevent and redirect misbehavior (*CLASS K–3 Manual*, p. 45, *CLASS Upper Elementary Manual*, p. 41, *CLASS Secondary Manual*, p. 41).

**Table 7. Behavior Management: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average**

**Behavior Management District Average\*: 6.8**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	0	0	0	0	0	1	18	19	6.9
Grades 6-8	0	0	0	1	1	5	13	20	6.5
Grades 9-12	0	0	0	0	0	1	16	17	6.9

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 7, the district average is computed as:  $([4 \times 1] + [5 \times 1] + [6 \times 7] + [7 \times 47]) \div 56 \text{ observations} = 6.8$

**Ratings in the Low Range.** At the low range, the classroom is chaotic. There are no rules and expectations, or they are not enforced consistently. The teacher does not monitor the classroom effectively and only reacts to student disruption, which is frequent. There are frequent instances of misbehavior in the classroom, and the teacher’s attempts to redirect misbehavior are ineffective. The teacher does not use cues, such as eye contact, slight touches, gestures, or physical proximity, to respond to and redirect negative behavior.

**Ratings in the Middle Range.** Although rules and expectations may be stated, they are not consistently enforced, or the rules may be unclear. Sometimes, the teacher proactively anticipates and prevents misbehavior, but at other times the teacher ignores behavior problems until it is too late. Misbehavior may escalate because redirection is not always effective. Episodes of misbehavior are periodic.

**Ratings in the High Range.** At the high range, the rules and guidelines for behavior are clear, and they are consistently reinforced by the teacher. The teacher monitors the classroom and prevents problems from developing, using subtle cues to redirect behavior and address situations before they escalate. The teacher focuses on positive behavior and consistently affirms students’ desirable behaviors. The teacher effectively uses cues to redirect behavior. There are no, or very few, instances of student misbehavior or disruptions.

## Productivity

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Classroom Organization domain, Grades K–12

Productivity considers how well the teacher manages instructional time and routines and provides activities for students so that they have the opportunity to be involved in learning activities (*CLASS K–3 Manual*, p. 51, *CLASS Upper Elementary Manual*, p. 49, *CLASS Secondary Manual*, p. 49).

**Table 8. Productivity: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average**

**Productivity District Average\*: 6.7**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	0	0	0	0	0	2	17	19	6.9
Grades 6-8	0	0	0	1	1	5	13	20	6.5
Grades 9-12	0	0	0	0	0	4	13	17	6.8

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 8, the district average is computed as:  $([4 \times 1] + [5 \times 1] + [6 \times 11] + [7 \times 43]) \div 56 \text{ observations} = 6.7$

**Ratings in the Low Range.** At the low level, the teacher provides few activities for students. Much time is spent on managerial tasks (such as distributing papers) and/or on behavior management. Frequently during the observation, students have little to do and spend time waiting. The routines of the classroom are not clear and, as a result, students waste time, are not engaged, and are confused. Transitions take a long time and/or are too frequent. The teacher does not have activities organized and ready and seems to be caught up in last-minute preparations.

**Ratings in the Middle Range.** At the middle range, the teacher does provide activities for students but loses learning time to disruptions or management tasks. There are certain times when the teacher provides clear activities to students, but there are other times when students wait and lose focus. Some students (or all students, at some point) do not know what is expected of them. Some of the transitions may take too long, or classrooms may be productive during certain periods but then not productive during transitions. Although the teacher is mostly prepared for the class, last-minute preparations may still infringe on learning time.

**Ratings in the High Range.** The classroom runs very smoothly. The teacher provides a steady flow of activities for students, so students do not have downtime and are not confused about what to do next. The routines of the classroom are efficient, and all students know how to move from one activity to another and where materials are. Students understand the teacher's instructions and directions. Transitions are quick, and there are not too many of them. The teacher is fully prepared for the lesson.

## Instructional Learning Formats

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Classroom Organization domain, Grades K–3

Instructional Support domain, Grades 4–12

Instructional Learning Formats refer to the ways in which the teacher maximizes students' interest, engagement, and abilities to learn from the lesson and activities (*CLASS K–3 Manual*, p. 57; *CLASS Upper Elementary Manual*, p. 63, *CLASS Secondary Manual*, p. 61).

**Table 9. Instructional Learning Formats: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average**

**Instructional Learning Formats District Average\*: 5.3**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	0	1	0	3	3	4	8	19	5.7
Grades 6-8	0	0	1	3	5	4	7	20	5.7
Grades 9-12	0	0	3	5	7	2	0	17	4.5

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 9, the district average is computed as:  $[(2 \times 1) + (3 \times 4) + (4 \times 11) + (5 \times 15) + (6 \times 10) + (7 \times 15)] \div 56 \text{ observations} = 5.3$

**Ratings in the Low Range.** The teacher exerts little effort in facilitating engagement in the lesson. Learning activities may be limited and seem to be at the rote level, with little teacher involvement. The teacher relies on one learning modality (e.g., listening) and does not use other modalities (e.g., movement, visual displays) to convey information and enhance learning. Or the teacher may be ineffective in using other modalities, not choosing the right props for the students or the classroom conditions. Students are uninterested and uninvolved in the lesson. The teacher does not attempt to guide students toward learning objectives and does not help them focus on the lesson by providing appropriate tools and asking effective questions.

**Ratings in the Middle Range.** At the middle range, the teacher sometimes facilitates engagement in the lesson but at other times does not, or the teacher facilitates engagement for some students and not for other students. The teacher may not allow students enough time to explore or answer questions. Sometimes, the teacher uses a variety of modalities to help students reach a learning objective, but at other times the teacher does not. Student engagement is inconsistent, or some students are engaged and other students are not. At times, students are aware of the learning objective and at other times they are not. The teacher may sometimes use strategies to help students organize information but at other times does not.

**Ratings in the High Range.** The teacher has multiple strategies and tools to facilitate engagement and learning and encourage participation. The teacher may move around, talk and play with students, ask open-ended questions of students, and allow students to explore. A variety of tools and props are used, including movement and visual/auditory resources. Students are consistently interested and engaged in the activities and lessons. The teacher focuses students on the learning objectives, which students understand. The teacher uses advanced organizers to prepare students for an activity, as well as reorientation strategies that help students regain focus.

## Concept Development

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*Instructional Support domain, Grades K–3*

Concept Development refers to the teacher’s use of instructional discussions and activities to promote students’ higher order thinking skills and cognition and the teacher’s focus on understanding rather than on rote instruction (*CLASS K–3 Manual*, p. 64).

**Table 10. Concept Development: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average**

**Concept Development District Average\*: 5.3**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-3**	0	0	1	1	4	5	1	12	5.3

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 10, the district average is computed as:  $([3 \times 1] + [4 \times 1] + [5 \times 4] + [6 \times 5] + [7 \times 1]) \div 12 \text{ observations} = 5.3$

\*\*Concept Development does not appear in the CLASS Upper Elementary Manual, therefore scores for the Elementary School Level represent grades K-3 only.

**Ratings in the Low Range.** At the low range, the teacher does not attempt to develop students’ understanding of ideas and concepts, focusing instead on basic facts and skills. Discussion and activities do not encourage students to analyze and reason. There are few, if any, opportunities for students to create or generate ideas and products. The teacher does not link concepts to one another and does not ask students to make connections with previous content or their actual lives. The activities and the discussion are removed from students’ lives and from their prior knowledge.

**Ratings in the Middle Range.** To some extent, the teacher uses discussions and activities to encourage students to analyze and reason and focuses somewhat on understanding of ideas. The activities and discussions are not fully developed, however, and there is still instructional time that focuses on facts and basic skills. Students may be provided some opportunities for creating and generating ideas, but the opportunities are occasional and not planned out. Although some concepts may be linked and also related to students’ previous learning, such efforts are brief. The teacher makes some effort to relate concepts to students’ lives but does not elaborate enough to make the relationship meaningful to students.

**Ratings in the High Range.** At the high range, the teacher frequently guides students to analyze and reason during discussions and activities. Most of the questions are open ended and encourage students to think about connections and implications. Teachers use problem solving, experimentation, and prediction; comparison and classification; and evaluation and summarizing to promote analysis and reasoning. The teacher provides students with opportunities to be creative and generate ideas. The teacher consistently links concepts to one another and to previous learning and relates concepts to students’ lives.

## Content Understanding

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*Instructional Support domain, Grades 4 – 12*

Content Understanding refers to the depth of lesson content and the approaches used to help students comprehend the framework, key ideas, and procedures in an academic discipline. At a high level, this dimension refers to interactions among the teacher and students that lead to an integrated understanding of facts, skills, concepts, and principles (*CLASS Upper Elementary Manual*, p. 70, *CLASS Secondary Manual*, p. 68).

**Table 11. Content Understanding: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average**

**Content Understanding District Average\*: 4.9**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades 4-5**	0	1	0	1	0	2	3	7	5.6
Grades 6-8	0	1	1	1	6	10	1	20	5.3
Grades 9-12	0	1	3	6	6	1	0	17	4.2

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 11, the district average is computed as:  $([2 \times 3] + [3 \times 4] + [4 \times 8] + [5 \times 12] + [6 \times 13] + [7 \times 4]) \div 44 \text{ observations} = 4.9$

\*\*Content Understanding does not appear in the CLASS K-3 Manual, therefore scores for the Elementary School Level represent grades 4-5 only.

**Ratings in the Low Range.** At the low range, the focus of the class is primarily on presenting discrete pieces of topically related information, absent broad, organizing ideas. The discussion and materials fail to effectively communicate the essential attributes of the concepts and procedures to students. The teacher makes little effort to elicit or acknowledge students' background knowledge or misconceptions or to integrate previously learned material when presenting new information.

**Ratings in the Middle Range.** At the middle range, the focus of the class is sometimes on meaningful discussion and explanation of broad, organizing ideas. At other times, the focus is on discrete pieces of information. Class discussion and materials communicate some of the essential attributes of concepts and procedures, but examples are limited in scope or not consistently provided. The teacher makes some attempt to elicit and/or acknowledge students' background knowledge or misconceptions and/or to integrate information with previously learned materials; however, these moments are limited in depth or inconsistent.

**Ratings in the High Range.** At the high range, the focus of the class is on encouraging deep understanding of content through the provision of meaningful, interactive discussion and explanation of broad, organizing ideas. Class discussion and materials consistently communicate the essential attributes of concepts and procedures to students. New concepts and procedures and broad ideas are consistently linked to students' prior knowledge in ways that advance their understanding and clarify misconceptions.



## Analysis and Inquiry

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*Instructional Support domain, Grades 4 – 12*

Analysis and Inquiry assesses the degree to which students are engaged in higher level thinking skills through their application of knowledge and skills to novel and/or open-ended problems, tasks, and questions. Opportunities for engaging in metacognition (thinking about thinking) also are included (*CLASS Upper Elementary Manual*, p. 81, *CLASS Secondary Manual*, p. 76).

**Table 12. Analysis and Inquiry: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average**

**Analysis and Inquiry District Average\*: 3.8**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades 4-5**	1	0	1	0	3	2	0	7	4.4
Grades 6-8	0	3	5	6	4	2	0	20	3.9
Grades 9-12	1	4	5	3	3	1	0	17	3.4

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 12, the district average is computed as:  $([1 \times 2] + [2 \times 7] + [3 \times 11] + [4 \times 9] + [5 \times 10] + [6 \times 5]) \div 44 \text{ observations} = 3.8$

\*\*Analysis and Inquiry does not appear in the CLASS K-3 Manual, therefore scores for the Elementary School Level represent grades 4-5 only.

**Ratings in the Low Range.** At the low range, students do not engage in higher order thinking skills. Instruction is presented in a rote manner, and there are no opportunities for students to engage in novel or open-ended tasks. Students are not challenged to apply previous knowledge and skills to a new problem, nor are they encouraged to think about, evaluate, or reflect on their own learning. Students do not have opportunities to plan their own learning experiences.

**Ratings in the Middle Range.** Students occasionally engage in higher order thinking through analysis and inquiry, but the episodes are brief or limited in depth. The teacher provides opportunities for students to apply knowledge and skills within familiar contexts and offers guidance to students but does not provide opportunities for analysis and problem solving within novel contexts and/or without teacher support. Students have occasional opportunities to think about their own thinking through explanations, self-evaluations, reflection, and planning; these opportunities, however, are brief and limited in depth.

**Ratings in the High Range.** At the high range, students consistently engage in extended opportunities to use higher order thinking through analysis and inquiry. The teacher provides opportunities for students to independently solve or reason through novel and open-ended tasks that require students to select, utilize, and apply existing knowledge and skills. Students have multiple opportunities to think about their own thinking through explanations, self-evaluations, reflection, and planning.

## Quality of Feedback

*Instructional Support domain, Grades K–12*

Quality of Feedback refers to the degree to which the teacher provides feedback that expands learning and understanding and encourages continued participation in the learning activity (*CLASS K–3 Manual*, p. 72). In the upper elementary and secondary classrooms, significant feedback also may be provided by peers (*CLASS Upper Elementary Manual*, p. 89, *CLASS Secondary Manual*, p. 93). Regardless of the source, the focus of the feedback motivates learning.

**Table 13. Quality of Feedback: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average**

**Quality of Feedback District Average\*: 4.1**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	1	1	0	4	5	5	3	19	5.0
Grades 6-8	0	2	6	5	5	2	0	20	4.0
Grades 9-12	0	5	7	1	3	0	1	17	3.4

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 13, the district average is computed as:  $([1 \times 1] + [2 \times 8] + [3 \times 13] + [4 \times 10] + [5 \times 13] + [6 \times 7] + [7 \times 4]) \div 56 \text{ observations} = 4.1$

**Ratings in the Low Range.** At the low range, the teacher dismisses incorrect responses or misperceptions and rarely scaffolds student learning. The teacher is more interested in students providing the correct answer than understanding. Feedback is perfunctory. The teacher may not provide opportunities to learn whether students understand or are interested. The teacher rarely questions students or asks them to explain their thinking and reasons for their responses. The teacher does not or rarely provides information that might expand student understanding and rarely offers encouragement that increases student effort and persistence.

**Ratings in the Middle Range.** In the middle range, the teacher sometimes scaffolds students, but this is not consistent. On occasion, the teacher facilitates feedback loops so that students may elaborate and expand on their thinking, but these moments are not sustained long enough to accomplish a learning objective. Sometimes, the teacher asks students about or prompts them to explain their thinking and provides information to help students understand, but sometimes the feedback is perfunctory. At times, the teacher encourages student efforts and persistence.

**Ratings in the High Range.** In this range, the teacher frequently scaffolds students who are having difficulty, providing hints or assistance as needed. The teacher engages students in feedback loops to help them understand ideas or reach the right response. The teacher often questions students, encourages them to explain their thinking, and provides additional information that may help students understand. The teacher regularly encourages students' efforts and persistence.

## Language Modeling

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*Instructional Support domain, Grades K–3*

Language Modeling refers to the quality and amount of the teacher’s use of language stimulation and language facilitation techniques (*CLASS K–3 Manual*, p. 79).

**Table 14. Language Modeling: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average**

**Language Modeling District Average\*: 5.1**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-3**	0	0	2	3	2	2	3	12	5.1

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 14, the district average is computed as:  $([3 \times 2] + [4 \times 3] + [5 \times 2] + [6 \times 2] + [7 \times 3]) \div 12 \text{ observations} = 5.1$

\*\*Language Modeling does not appear in the CLASS Upper Elementary Manual, therefore scores for the Elementary School Level represent grades K-3 only.

**Ratings in the Low Range.** In the low range, there are few conversations in the classroom, particularly between the students and the teacher. The teacher responds to students’ initiating talk with only a few words, limits students’ use of language (in responding to questions) and asks questions that mainly elicit closed-ended responses. The teacher does not or rarely extends students’ responses or repeats them for clarification. The teacher does not engage in self-talk or parallel talk—explaining what he or she or the students are doing. The teacher does not use new words or advanced language with students. The language used has little variety.

**Ratings in the Middle Range.** In this range, the teacher talks with students and shows some interest in students, but the conversations are limited and not prolonged. Usually, the teacher directs the conversations, although the conversations may focus on topics of interest to students. More often, there is a basic exchange of information but limited conversation. The teacher asks a mix of closed- and open-ended questions, although the closed-ended questions may require only short responses. Sometimes, the teacher extends students’ responses or repeats what students say. Sometimes, the teacher maps his or her own actions and the students’ actions through language and description. The teacher sometimes uses advanced language with students.

**Ratings in the High Range.** There are frequent conversations in the classroom, particularly between students and the teacher, and these conversations promote language use. Students are encouraged to converse and feel they are valued conversational partners. The teacher asks many open-ended questions that require students to communicate more complex ideas. The teacher often extends or repeats student responses. Frequently, the teacher maps his or her actions and student actions descriptively and uses advanced language with students.

## Instructional Dialogue

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*Instructional Support domain, Grades 4 – 12*

Instructional Dialogue captures the purposeful use of content-focused discussion among teachers and students that is cumulative, with the teacher supporting students to chain ideas together in ways that lead to deeper understanding of content. Students take an active role in these dialogues, and both the teacher and students use strategies that facilitate extended dialogue (*CLASS Upper Elementary Manual*, p. 97, *CLASS Secondary Manual*, p. 101).

**Table 15. Instructional Dialogue: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average**

**Instructional Dialogue District Average\*: 3.9**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades 4-5**	0	1	1	0	3	0	2	7	4.9
Grades 6-8	1	1	3	6	8	0	1	20	4.2
Grades 9-12	2	4	5	3	0	2	1	17	3.3

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 15, the district average is computed as:  $([1 \times 3] + [2 \times 6] + [3 \times 9] + [4 \times 9] + [5 \times 11] + [6 \times 2] + [7 \times 4]) \div 44 \text{ observations} = 3.9$

\*\*Instructional Dialogue does not appear in the CLASS K-3 Manual, therefore scores for the Elementary School Level represent grades 4-5 only.

**Ratings in the Low Range.** At the low range, there are no or few discussions in the class, the discussions are not related to content or skill development, or the discussions contain only simple question-response exchanges between the teacher and students. The class is dominated by teacher talk, and discussion is limited. The teacher and students ask closed-ended questions; rarely acknowledge, report, or extend other students' comments; and/or appear disinterested in other students' comments, resulting in many students not being engaged in instructional dialogues.

**Ratings in the Middle Range.** At this range, there are occasional content-based discussions in class among teachers and students; however, these exchanges are brief or quickly move from one topic to another without follow-up questions or comments from the teacher and other students. The class is mostly dominated by teacher talk, although there are times when students take a more active role, or there are distributed dialogues that involve only a few students in the class. The teacher and students sometimes facilitate and encourage more elaborate dialogue, but such efforts are brief, inconsistent, or ineffective at consistently engaging students in extended dialogues.

**Ratings in the High Range.** At the high range, there are frequent, content-driven discussions in the class between teachers and students or among students. The discussions build depth of knowledge through cumulative, contingent exchanges. The class dialogues are distributed in a way that the teacher and the majority of students take an active role or students are actively engaged in instructional dialogues with each other. The teacher and students frequently use strategies that encourage more elaborate dialogue, such as open-ended questions, repetition or extension, and active listening. Students respond to these techniques by fully participating in extended dialogues.

## Student Engagement

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*Student Engagement domain, Grades 4–12*

Student Engagement refers to the extent to which all students in the class are focused and participating in the learning activity that is presented or facilitated by the teacher. The difference between passive engagement and active engagement is reflected in this rating (*CLASS Upper Elementary Manual*, p. 105).

**Table 16. Student Engagement: Number of Classrooms for Each Rating and District Average**

**Student Engagement District Average\*: 5.4**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades 4-5**	0	0	0	0	1	4	2	7	6.1
Grades 6-8	0	0	0	1	6	7	6	20	5.9
Grades 9-12	0	0	5	2	6	4	0	17	4.5

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 16, the district average is computed as:  $([3 \times 5] + [4 \times 3] + [5 \times 13] + [6 \times 15] + [7 \times 8]) \div 44 \text{ observations} = 5.4$

\*\*Student Engagement does not appear in the CLASS K-3 Manual, therefore scores for the Elementary School Level represent grades 4-5 only.

**Ratings in the Low Range.** In the low range, the majority of students appear distracted or disengaged.

**Ratings in the Middle Range.** In the middle range, students are passively engaged, listening to or watching the teacher; student engagement is mixed, with the majority of students actively engaged for part of the time and disengaged for the rest of the time; or there is a mix of student engagement, with some students actively engaged and some students disengaged.

**Ratings in the High Range.** In the high range, most students are actively engaged in the classroom discussions and activities.

## Summary of Average Ratings: Grades K–5

**Table 17. Summary Table of Average Ratings for Each Dimension in Grades K–5**

	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average Scores*
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
<b>Emotional Support Domain</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>5.9</b>
Positive Climate	0	0	0	0	5	10	4	19	5.9
Negative Climate**	0	0	0	0	0	2	17	19	6.9
Teacher Sensitivity	0	0	0	4	5	2	8	19	5.7
Regard for Student Perspectives	0	0	1	8	3	4	3	19	5.0
<b>Classroom Organization Domain</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>6.5</b>
Behavior Management	0	0	0	0	0	1	18	19	6.9
Productivity	0	0	0	0	0	2	17	19	6.9
Instructional Learning Formats***	0	1	0	3	3	4	8	19	5.7
<b>Instructional Support Domain</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>5.1</b>
Concept Development (K-3 only)	0	0	1	1	4	5	1	12	5.3
Content Understanding (UE only)	0	1	0	1	0	2	3	7	5.6
Analysis and Inquiry (UE only)	1	0	1	0	3	2	0	7	4.4
Quality of Feedback	1	1	0	4	5	5	3	19	5.0
Language Modeling (K-3 only)	0	0	2	3	2	2	3	12	5.1
Instructional Dialogue (UE only)	0	1	1	0	3	0	2	7	4.9
<b>Student Engagement (UE only)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6.1</b>

\*The district average is an average of the scores. For example, for Positive Climate, the district average is computed as:  $([5 \times 5] + [6 \times 10] + [7 \times 4]) \div 19 \text{ observations} = 5.9$

\*\*Negative Climate is rated on an inverse scale. An original score of 1 is given a value of 7. The scoring in the table reflects the normalized adjustment:  $([6 \times 2] + [7 \times 17]) \div 19 \text{ observations} = 6.9$ . In addition, Negative Climate appears in the Classroom Organization Domain for the Upper Elementary Manual.

\*\*\*Instructional Learning Formats appears in the Instructional Support Domain for the Upper Elementary Manual.

## Summary of Average Ratings: Grades 6–8

**Table 18. Summary Table of Average Ratings for Each Dimension in Grades 6–8**

	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average Scores*
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
<b>Emotional Support Domain</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>5.4</b>
Positive Climate	0	0	0	3	7	6	4	20	5.6
Teacher Sensitivity	0	0	1	2	2	8	7	20	5.9
Regard for Student Perspectives	0	0	5	3	7	3	2	20	4.7
<b>Classroom Organization Domain</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>6.6</b>
Behavior Management	0	0	0	1	1	5	13	20	6.5
Productivity	0	0	0	1	1	5	13	20	6.5
Negative Climate**	0	0	0	0	0	3	17	20	6.9
<b>Instructional Support Domain</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>4.6</b>
Instructional Learning Formats	0	0	1	3	5	4	7	20	5.7
Content Understanding	0	1	1	1	6	10	1	20	5.3
Analysis and Inquiry	0	3	5	6	4	2	0	20	3.9
Quality of Feedback	0	2	6	5	5	2	0	20	4.0
Instructional Dialogue	1	1	3	6	8	0	1	20	4.2
<b>Student Engagement</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>5.9</b>

\*The district average is an average of the scores. For example, for Positive Climate, the district average is computed as:  $([4 \times 3] + [5 \times 7] + [6 \times 6] + [7 \times 4]) \div 20 \text{ observations} = 5.6$

\*\*Negative Climate is rated on an inverse scale. An original score of 1 is given a value of 7. The scoring in the table reflects the normalized adjustment:  $([6 \times 3] + [7 \times 17]) \div 20 \text{ observations} = 6.9$

## Summary of Average Ratings: Grades 9–12

**Table 19. Summary Table of Average Ratings for Each Dimension in Grades 9–12**

	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average Scores*
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
<b>Emotional Support Domain</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>4.5</b>
Positive Climate	0	1	3	1	6	4	2	17	4.9
Teacher Sensitivity	0	0	2	5	8	2	0	17	4.6
Regard for Student Perspectives	0	3	5	4	1	4	0	17	3.9
<b>Classroom Organization Domain</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>6.9</b>
Behavior Management	0	0	0	0	0	1	16	17	6.9
Productivity	0	0	0	0	0	4	13	17	6.8
Negative Climate**	0	0	0	0	0	0	17	17	7.0
<b>Instructional Support Domain</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>3.7</b>
Instructional Learning Formats	0	0	3	5	7	2	0	17	4.5
Content Understanding	0	1	3	6	6	1	0	17	4.2
Analysis and Inquiry	1	4	5	3	3	1	0	17	3.4
Quality of Feedback	0	5	7	1	3	0	1	17	3.4
Instructional Dialogue	2	4	5	3	0	2	1	17	3.3
<b>Student Engagement</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>4.5</b>

\*The district average is an average of the scores. For example, for Positive Climate, the district average is computed as:  $([2 \times 1] + [3 \times 3] + [4 \times 1] + [5 \times 6] + [6 \times 4] + [7 \times 2]) \div 17 \text{ observations} = 4.9$

\*\*Negative Climate is rated on an inverse scale. An original score of 1 is given a value of 7. The scoring in the table reflects the normalized adjustment:  $([7 \times 17]) \div 17 \text{ observations} = 7.0$



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## Appendix D. Resources to Support Implementation of DESE's District Standards and Indicators

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**Table D1. Resources to Support Leadership and Governance**

Resource	Description
<a href="#">Transforming School Funding: A Guide to Implementing Student-Based Budgeting (SBB)</a> from Education Resource Strategies	This guide describes a process to help districts tie funding to specific student needs.

**Table D2. Resources to Support Curriculum and Instruction**

Resource	Description
<a href="#">Quick Reference Guide: The Case for Curricular Coherence</a>	This guide describes three types of curricular coherence that support student learning: vertical coherence, aligned tiers of instruction, and cross-subject coherence.
<a href="#">Increasing Access to Advanced Coursework</a>	Describes how districts can use the federal Every Student Succeeds Act to expand access to advanced coursework and increase students' achievement in these courses.
<a href="#">CURATE</a>	CURATE convenes panels of Massachusetts teachers to review and rate evidence on the quality and alignment of specific curricular materials and then publish their findings for educators across the Commonwealth to consult.

**Table D3. Resources to Support Assessment**

Resource	Description
DESE's <a href="#">District Data Team Toolkit</a>	A set of resources to help a district establish, grow, and maintain a culture of inquiry and data use through a district data team.

**Table D4. Resources to Support Human Resources and Professional Development**

Resource	Description
<a href="#">Quick Reference Guide: Opportunities to Streamline the Evaluation Process</a>	This guide helps school districts reflect on and continuously improve their evaluation systems: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ What's working? What are the bright spots?</li> <li>■ How can we streamline the process to stay focused on professional growth and development?</li> <li>■ What do we need to adjust to ensure our system is valuable to educators and students?</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Identifying Meaningful Professional Development</a>	A video in which educators from three Massachusetts districts discuss the importance of targeted, meaningful professional development and the ways districts can use the evaluation process to identify the most effective professional development supports for all educators.

Resource	Description
<a href="#"><i>The Educator Effectiveness Guidebook for Inclusive Practice</i></a>	This guide includes tools for districts, schools, and educators aligned to the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework. It promotes evidence-based best practices for inclusion following the principles of Universal Design for Learning, positive behavioral interventions and supports, and social-emotional learning.
<a href="#"><i>Making Inclusive Education Work</i></a> by Richard A. Villa and Jacqueline S. Thousand	The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization that develops programs, products, and services essential to the way educators learn, teach, and lead.

**Table D5. Resources to Support Student Support**

Resource	Description
<a href="https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfss/mtss/">https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfss/mtss/</a>	An MTSS is a framework for how school districts can build the necessary systems to ensure that all students receive a high-quality educational experience.

**Table D6. Resources to Support Financial and Asset Management**

Resource	Description
<a href="#"><i>Spending Money Wisely: Getting the Most From School District Budgets</i></a> (scroll down to Research section)	A discussion of the top 10 opportunities for districts to realign resources and free up funds to support strategic priorities.

## Appendix E. Student Performance Tables

The COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact on the 2020-2021 school year. Data reported in this appendix may have been affected by the pandemic. Please keep this in mind when reviewing the data and take particular care when comparing data across multiple school years.

**Table E1. Ipswich Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Scaled Scores in Grades 3-8, 2018-2021**

Group	N (2021)	2018	2019	2021	Change	State (2021)	Above/below
All	746	510.7	511.3	501.9	-8.8	496.5	5.4
African American/Black	8	496.1	—	—	—	486.4	—
Asian	12	501.8	506.3	496.1	-5.7	508.5	-12.4
Hispanic/Latino	54	499.8	500.3	490.2	-9.6	484.3	5.9
Multirace	28	512.9	510.4	500.7	-12.2	499.7	1.0
White	644	511.5	512.5	503.4	-8.1	501.3	2.1
High need	261	491.2	494.4	490.3	-0.9	485.9	4.4
Economically disadvantaged	137	494.4	497.9	490.1	-4.3	485.2	4.9
ELs and former ELs	40	490.6	497.3	492.6	2.0	482.8	9.8
Students with disabilities	180	482.6	488.6	485.9	3.3	478.1	7.8

Note. Next-Generation MCAS Achievement Levels: 440-469 Not Meeting Expectations; 470-499 Partially Meeting Expectations; 500-529 Meeting Expectations; 530-560 Exceeding Expectations.

**Table E2. Ipswich Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Scaled Scores in Grades 3-8, 2018-2021**

Group	N (2021)	2018	2019	2021	Change	State (2021)	Above/below
All	745	506.4	506.8	494.4	-12.0	489.7	4.7
African American/Black	8	491.3	—	—	—	477.3	—
Asian	12	501.2	501.1	496.8	-4.4	508.6	-11.8
Hispanic/Latino	54	495.0	496.3	485.1	-9.9	476.5	8.6
Multirace	28	507.9	503.5	495.8	-12.1	492.1	3.7
White	643	507.3	508.2	495.2	-12.1	494.3	0.9
High need	260	492.2	493.8	482.8	-9.4	479.0	3.8
Economically disadvantaged	137	494.6	495.3	482.3	-12.3	477.4	4.9
ELs and former ELs	40	492.7	497.8	490.2	-2.5	477.8	12.4
Students with disabilities	179	486.0	488.3	478.8	-7.2	472.5	6.3

Note. Next-Generation MCAS Achievement Levels: 440-469 Not Meeting Expectations; 470-499 Partially Meeting Expectations; 500-529 Meeting Expectations; 530-560 Exceeding Expectations.

**Table E3. Ipswich Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percentage Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grades 3-8, 2018-2021**

Group	N (2021)	2018	2019	2021	Change	State (2021)	Above/below
All	746	69%	69%	55%	-14	46%	9
African American/Black	8	40%	—	—	—	28%	—
Asian	12	50%	60%	42%	-8	66%	-24
Hispanic/Latino	54	49%	52%	41%	-8	26%	15
Multirace	28	68%	67%	50%	-18	51%	-1
White	644	71%	71%	58%	-13	54%	4
High need	261	33%	39%	33%	0	28%	5
Economically disadvantaged	137	42%	52%	32%	-10	27%	5
ELs and former ELs	40	37%	43%	45%	8	24%	21
Students with disabilities	180	16%	25%	26%	10	16%	10

**Table E4. Ipswich Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS Math Percentage Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grades 3-8, 2018-2021**

Group	N (2021)	2018	2019	2021	Change	State (2021)	Above/below
All	745	63%	64%	36%	-27	33%	3
African American/Black	8	30%	—	—	—	14%	—
Asian	12	43%	53%	42%	-1	64%	-22
Hispanic/Latino	54	49%	42%	24%	-25	14%	10
Multirace	28	63%	57%	29%	-34	37%	-8
White	643	65%	67%	38%	-27	40%	-2
High need	260	33%	36%	16%	-17	16%	0
Economically disadvantaged	137	40%	43%	14%	-26	14%	0
ELs and former ELs	40	32%	35%	33%	1	17%	16
Students with disabilities	179	20%	25%	11%	-9	10%	1

**Table E5. Ipswich Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS ELA and Mathematics Scaled Scores in Grade 10, 2021**

Group	ELA				Mathematics			
	N (2021)	2021	State	Above/below	N (2021)	2021	State	Above/below
All	121	523.7	507.3	16.4	121	510.8	500.6	10.2
African American/Black	1	—	494.6	—	1	—	486.7	—
Asian	1	—	518.2	—	1	—	520.9	—
Hispanic/Latino	5	—	491.9	—	5	—	485.3	—
Multirace	8	—	510.6	—	8	—	503.9	—
White	106	524.1	512.5	11.6	106	511.1	504.9	6.2
High need	26	513.0	493.3	19.7	26	497.4	486.5	10.8
Economically disadvantaged	18	522.0	493.7	28.3	18	506.9	486.6	20.3
ELs and former ELs	—	—	477.9	—	—	—	477.6	—
Students with disabilities	14	495.4	487.2	8.2	14	483.9	479.6	4.3

Note. Next-Generation MCAS Achievement Levels: 440-469 Not Meeting Expectations; 470-499 Partially Meeting Expectations; 500-529 Meeting Expectations; 530-560 Exceeding Expectations.

**Table E6. Ipswich Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS ELA and Mathematics Percentage Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grade 10, 2021**

Group	ELA				Mathematics			
	N (2021)	2021	State	Above/below	N (2021)	2021	State	Above/below
All	121	87%	64%	23	121	70%	52%	18
African American/Black	1	—	41%	—	1	—	27%	—
Asian	1	—	80%	—	1	—	80%	—
Hispanic/Latino	5	—	39%	—	5	—	26%	—
Multirace	8	—	67%	—	8	—	55%	—
White	106	87%	73%	14	106	71%	60%	11
High need	26	65%	39%	26	26	54%	26%	28
Economically disadvantaged	18	83%	41%	42	18	78%	27%	51
ELs and former ELs	—	—	19%	—	—	—	15%	—
Students with disabilities	14	36%	25%	11	14	21%	14%	7

**Table E7. Ipswich Public Schools: Next Generation MCAS Science Percentage Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grades 5 and 8, 2019-2021**

Group	N (2021)	2019	2021	State (2021)	Above/below
All	251	63%	53%	42%	11
African American/Black	4	—	—	19%	—
Asian	4	—	—	62%	—
Hispanic/Latino	23	53%	43%	20%	23
Multirace, non-Hispanic/Latino	4	69%	—	47%	—
White	216	63%	56%	50%	6
High need	87	34%	33%	23%	10
Economically disadvantaged	51	53%	31%	21%	10
ELs and former ELs	14	—	36%	18%	—
Students with disabilities	54	18%	28%	15%	13

Note. Grade 10 results for the spring 2021 STE are not provided because students in the class of 2023 were not required to take the STE test. Information about Competency Determination requirements is available at <https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/graduation.html>.

**Table E8. Ipswich Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percentage Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grades 3-10, 2018-2021**

Grade	N (2021)	2018	2019	2021	Change	State (2021)	Above/below
3	133	69%	70%	60%	-9	51%	9
4	118	65%	67%	60%	-5	49%	11
5	118	63%	62%	53%	-10	47%	6
6	116	68%	69%	64%	-4	47%	17
7	126	67%	73%	55%	-12	43%	12
8	135	80%	70%	42%	-38	41%	1
3-8	746	69%	69%	55%	-14	46%	9
10	121	—	68%	87%	—	64%	23

**Table E9. Ipswich Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Percentage Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grades 3-10, 2018-2021**

Grade	N (2021)	2018	2019	2021	Change	State (2021)	Above/below
3	133	63%	68%	35%	-28	33%	2
4	118	66%	65%	31%	-35	33%	-2
5	118	56%	56%	25%	-31	33%	-8
6	116	54%	62%	37%	-17	33%	4
7	126	66%	64%	45%	-21	35%	10
8	134	71%	69%	43%	-28	32%	11
3-8	745	63%	64%	36%	-27	33%	3
10	121	—	64%	70%	—	52%	18

**Table E10. Ipswich Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS Science Percentage Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grades 5 and 8, 2019-2021**

Grade	N (2021)	2019	2020	2021	3-year change	State (2021)
5	117	61%	—	54%	-7	42%
8	134	64%	—	51%	-13	41%
5 and 8	251	63%	—	53%	-10	42%
10	—	—	—	—	—	—

Note. Grade 10 results for the spring 2021 STE are not provided because students in the class of 2023 were not required to take the STE test. Information about Competency Determination requirements is available at <https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/graduation.html>. In 2019, 10th graders took the Legacy MCAS science test.



**Table E11. Ipswich Public Schools: ELA and Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile in Grades 3-10, 2019-2021**

Grade	ELA				Mathematics			
	N (2021)	2019	2021	State (2021)	N (2021)	2019	2021	State (2021)
3	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
4	—	57.5	—	—	—	54.0	—	—
5	112	52.0	32.4	34.9	112	48.3	15.8	31.9
6	110	61.7	38.9	37.3	110	45.5	21.9	26.3
7	120	61.1	33.7	36.1	120	54.3	38.9	35.8
8	126	47.3	25.0	34.8	125	48.8	32.8	27.4
3-8	468	55.8	32.3	35.8	467	50.2	27.7	30.4
10	118	54.3	59.6	52.5	118	54.0	33.3	36.5

**Table E12. Ipswich Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percentage Meeting or Exceeding Expectations by Grade and School, 2021**

School	3	4	5	6	7	8	3-8	10
Doyon Memorial	51%	62%	53%	—	—	—	55%	—
Winthrop	70%	60%	53%	—	—	—	61%	—
Ipswich Middle	—	—	—	65%	57%	43%	54%	—
Ipswich High	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	88%
District	60%	60%	53%	64%	55%	42%	55%	87%
State	51%	49%	47%	47%	43%	41%	46%	64%

**Table E13. Ipswich Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Percentage Meeting or Exceeding Expectations by Grade and School, 2021**

School	3	4	5	6	7	8	3-8	10
Doyon Memorial	29%	31%	28%	—	—	—	29%	—
Winthrop	42%	33%	20%	—	—	—	32%	—
Ipswich Middle	—	—	—	39%	47%	43%	43%	—
Ipswich High	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	71%
District	35%	31%	25%	37%	45%	43%	36%	70%
State	33%	33%	33%	33%	35%	32%	33%	52%

**Table E14. Ipswich Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS Science Percentage Meeting or Exceeding Expectations by Grade and School, 2021**

School	5	8	5 and 8	10
Doyon Memorial	52%	—	52%	—
Winthrop	54%	—	54%	—
Ipswich Middle	—	52%	52%	—
Ipswich High	—	—	—	—
District	54%	51%	53%	—
State	42%	41%	42%	—

Note. Grade 10 results for the spring 2021 STE are not provided because students in the class of 2023 were not required to take the STE test. Information about Competency Determination requirements is available at <https://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/graduation.html>.

**Table E15. Ipswich Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percentage Meeting and Exceeding Expectations in Grades 3-8 by School, 2021**

School	All	High need	Econ. dis.	SWD	ELs and former ELs	African American	Asian	Hispanic	Multirace	White
Doyon Memorial	55%	41%	40%	32%	40%	—	—	—	—	56%
Winthrop	61%	43%	40%	35%	73%	—	—	65%	45%	62%
Ipswich Middle	54%	24%	23%	15%	33%	—	—	32%	58%	57%
Ipswich High	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
District	55%	33%	32%	26%	45%	—	42%	41%	50%	58%
State	46%	28%	27%	16%	24%	28%	66%	26%	51%	54%

Note. High need = students with high needs; Econ. dis. = students who are economically disadvantaged; SWD = students with disabilities; multirace = students who are multiple races but not Hispanic or Latino.

**Table E16. Ipswich Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Percentage Meeting and Exceeding Expectations in Grades 3-8 by School, 2021**

School	All	High need	Econ. dis.	SWD	ELs and former ELs	African American	Asian	Hispanic	Multirace	White
Doyon Memorial	29%	17%	20%	15%	10%	—	—	—	—	31%
Winthrop	32%	16%	13%	11%	55%	—	—	35%	18%	33%
Ipswich Middle	43%	15%	11%	8%	33%	—	—	24%	42%	46%
Ipswich High	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
District	36%	16%	14%	11%	33%	—	42%	24%	29%	38%
State	33%	16%	14%	10%	17%	14%	64%	14%	37%	40%

Note. High need = students with high needs; Econ. dis. = students who are economically disadvantaged; SWD = students with disabilities; multirace = students who are multiple races but not Hispanic or Latino.

**Table E17. Ipswich Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percentage Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grade 10, 2021**

School	All	High need	Econ. dis.	SWD	ELs and former ELs	African American	Asian	Hispanic	Multirace	White
Ipswich High	88%	68%	83%	38%	—	—	—	—	—	88%
District	87%	65%	83%	36%	—	—	—	—	—	87%
State	64%	39%	41%	25%	19%	41%	80%	39%	67%	73%

Note. High need = students with high needs; Econ. dis. = students who are economically disadvantaged; SWD = students with disabilities; multirace = students who are multiple races but not Hispanic or Latino.

**Table E18. Ipswich Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grade 10, 2021**

School	All	High need	Econ. dis.	SWD	ELs and former ELs	African American	Asian	Hispanic	Multirace	White
Ipswich High	71%	56%	78%	23%	—	—	—	—	—	71%
District	70%	54%	78%	21%	—	—	—	—	—	71%
State	52%	26%	27%	14%	15%	27%	80%	26%	55%	60%

Note. High need = students with high needs; Econ. dis. = students who are economically disadvantaged; SWD = students with disabilities; multirace = students who are multiple races but not Hispanic or Latino.

**Table E19. Ipswich Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS Science Percentage Meeting and Exceeding Expectations in Grades 5-8 by School, 2021**

School	All	High need	Econ. dis.	SWD	ELs and former ELs	African American	Asian	Hispanic	Multirace	White
Doyon Memorial	52%	41%	—	36%	25%	—	—	—	—	55%
Winthrop	54%	41%	35%	31%	—	—	—	—	—	56%
Ipswich Middle	52%	25%	18%	20%	—	—	—	36%	—	56%
Ipswich High	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
District	53%	33%	31%	28%	36%	—	—	43%	—	56%
State	42%	23%	21%	15%	18%	19%	62%	20%	47%	50%

Note. High need = students with high needs; Econ. dis. = students who are economically disadvantaged; SWD = students with disabilities; multirace = students who are multiple races but not Hispanic or Latino.

**Table E20. Ipswich Public Schools: Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Student Group, 2018-2021**

Group	N (2021)	2018	2019	2020	2021	4-year change	State (2021)
All	142	94.3	92.8	90.8	93.7	-0.6	89.8
African American/Black	1	—	—	—	—	—	84.4
Asian	4	—	—	—	—	—	96.1
Hispanic/Latino	7	—	83.3	63.6	71.4	—	80.0
Multirace, non-Hispanic/Latino	3	—	—	—	—	—	88.8
White	127	93.8	93.6	92.9	95.3	1.5	93.2
High need	49	86.1	76.5	78.3	83.7	-2.4	82.4
Low income	44	85.7	90.0	72.4	79.5	-6.2	81.7
ELs	1	—	—	57.1	—	—	71.8
Students with disabilities	24	78.3	60.0	79.2	79.2	0.9	76.6

**Table E21. Ipswich Public Schools: Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Student Group, 2017-2020**

Group	N (2020)	2017	2018	2019	2020	4-year change	State (2020)
All	142	95.7	95.9	93.6	93.7	-2.0	91.0
African American/Black	—	—	—	—	—	—	87.2
Asian	2	—	—	—	—	—	95.8
Hispanic/ Latino	11	—	—	83.3	72.7	—	81.0
Multirace, non-Hispanic/Latino	2	—	—	—	—	—	90.8
White	127	95.3	95.5	94.5	95.3	0.0	94.4
High need	46	86.5	91.7	79.4	84.8	-1.7	84.5
Low income	29	85.0	90.5	95.0	79.3	-5.7	84.1
ELs	7	—	—	—	71.4	—	74.7
Students with disabilities	24	78.3	87.0	65.0	87.5	9.2	79.3

**Table E22. Ipswich Public Schools: In-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2018-2021**

Group	2018	2019	2020	2021	4-year change	State (2021)
All	2.2	—	0.8	0.7	-1.5	0.3
African American/Black	—	—	—	—	—	0.3
Asian	—	—	—	—	—	0.0
Hispanic/Latino	6.6	—	—	—	—	0.2
Multirace, non-Hispanic or Latino	—	—	—	—	—	0.4
White	2.0	—	0.5	0.5	-1.5	0.3
High need	4.1	—	1.3	1.3	-2.8	0.4
Economically disadvantaged	5.4	—	—	—	—	0.3
ELs	—	—	—	—	—	0.1
Students with disabilities	4.2	—	—	—	—	0.6

**Table E23. Ipswich Public Schools: Out-of-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2018-2021**

Group	2018	2019	2020	2021	4-year change	State (2021)
All	0.7	—	0.1	0.2	-0.5	0.5
African American/Black	—	—	—	—	—	0.6
Asian	—	—	—	—	—	0.1
Hispanic/Latino	1.1	—	—	—	—	0.5
Multirace, non-Hispanic or Latino	—	—	—	—	—	0.7
White	0.8	—	0.1	0.2	-0.6	0.5
High need	1.5	—	0.0	0.2	-1.3	0.7
Economically disadvantaged	1.3	—	—	—	—	0.7
ELs	—	—	—	—	—	0.3
Students with disabilities	1.6	—	—	—	—	1.1

**Table E24. Ipswich Public Schools: Dropout Rates by Student Group, 2018-2021**

Group	N (2021)	2018	2019	2020	2021	4-year change	State (2021)
All	535	0.4	0.9	1.5	1.1	0.4	1.5
African American/Black	7	—	—	—	0.0	—	1.8
Asian	8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3
Hispanic/Latino	29	4.2	4.2	6.7	10.3	4.2	3.2
Multirace, non-Hispanic/Latino	22	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.5	0.0	1.4
White	468	0.2	0.6	1.2	0.4	0.2	1.0
High need	128	2.0	3.7	3.4	3.9	2.0	2.7
Economically disadvantaged	84	0.0	3.1	1.4	4.8	0.0	2.9
ELs	6	16.7	—	16.7	16.7	16.7	5.8
Students with disabilities	65	1.8	3.4	3.1	0.0	1.8	2.4

**Table E25. Ipswich Public Schools: Advanced Coursework Completion Rates by Student Group, 2019-2021**

Group	N (2021)	2019	2020	2021	3-year change	State (2021)
All	281	61.3	56.2	59.1	-2.2	65.3
African American/Black	4	—	—	—	—	54.9
Asian	5	—	83.3	—	—	84.3
Hispanic/Latino	14	42.9	30.8	7.1	-35.8	50.2
Multirace, non-Hispanic/Latino	11	62.5	33.3	36.4	-26.1	65.5
White	247	61.6	57.9	62.8	1.2	69.6
High need	67	42.4	21.2	26.9	-15.5	47.7
Economically disadvantaged	48	51.3	24.4	35.4	-15.9	49.0
ELs	3	—	—	—	—	28.1
Students with disabilities	33	19.2	11.4	9.1	-10.1	33.1