

# Hudson Public Schools

## Comprehensive District Review Report

March 2023

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

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This document was prepared by the American Institutes for Research, in collaboration with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Jeffrey C. Riley  
Commissioner

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## 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 Hudson Public Schools (hereafter, Hudson) in March 2023. 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.<sup>1</sup>

### Leadership and Governance

At the time of the review, Hudson's current superintendent was Dr. Marco Rodrigues, although he retired from the district at the end of the 2022-2023 school year. The superintendent receives support from the assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction, the director of student services, the director of finance and operations, the director of technology, and the director of human resources. These officials, particularly the superintendent, work closely with the elected school committee members who represent residents of the Town of Hudson through their oversight of the district. The school committee has seven members, each serving a three-year term on a staggered cadence. At the time of the district review, the district was in the final stages of hiring a new superintendent, who will start in the 2023-2024 school year.

The school committee has four main responsibilities: (a) developing and evaluating district policy to guide administrative action; (b) approving the district's budget; (c) hiring, removing, and evaluating the superintendent; and (d) keeping the Hudson community informed about the district and keeping itself informed about the needs and desires of the public. To meet these responsibilities, the committee presides over meetings with the community and records meeting notes in a publicly accessible place on the school's website.

Hudson has a district improvement plan and school improvement plans for each building. The school improvement plans align with the district's improvement plan, with one additional goal added by each school's instructional leadership team to reflect the specific needs and priorities of each school. The district and school plans are revisited annually, and the information gathered in this district review, plus the district's commissioned equity review by MassInsight, will thus inform updates to the plans for the next school year (2023-2024).

The district has several strengths related to leadership and governance. Regarding the school committee, there is strong communication between the superintendent and school committee, positive relationships between the school committee and teacher's association, and good collaboration between members of the school committee in search of the new superintendent for the 2023-2024 school year. Regarding district and school leadership, each school has an instructional leadership team (ILT) responsible for their improvement plan and determining professional development, district leaders communicate regularly with families in three languages, and district

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<sup>1</sup> DESE's District Standards and Indicators are at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/district-review/district-standards-indicators.pdf>.

leaders are proactively communicating with stakeholders about anticipated financial challenges in future years. Regarding district and school improvement planning, the district has a clear process for updating the district improvement plan annually and school leaders contribute to the district improvement plan and have the autonomy to customize their school's improvement plan to meet their specific needs. Lastly, regarding budget development, the district considers student data and high needs populations when developing the budget.

The district also has several areas of growth for moving forward. Establishing and maintaining strong communication with the new superintendent is a priority for the school committee. Relatedly, promoting collaboration between district leaders and municipal leaders will be a focus area for the new superintendent. While the district's work is guided by their district and school-specific improvement plans, ensuring that these plans connect to school's staff work is an area of growth. Lastly, increasing transparency between the district's finance team and budget owners regarding why decisions are made is an area for improvement.

## **Curriculum and Instruction**

In accordance with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, Hudson strives to ensure equitable and effective instruction for all students. The district uses a combination of published and district-created curricula, including Units of Study for Reading and Writing, Eureka Math, Reveal Math, Project Lead the Way, Amplify, One Community One Nation, and teacher-created units. Reveal Math is a new mathematics curriculum for the middle school grades, with teachers implementing it for the first time during the 2022-2023 school year. The district's social-emotional curriculum, Choose Love, also is new this year, with implementation districtwide. At the time of the district review, the district was evaluating new mathematics curricula options for Grades K-4 and 8-12 through DESE's Evaluation Network, with plans to begin implementing the selected program in the 2023-2024 school year. The district also has a wide variety of academic offerings, including a dual language program at one of the elementary schools in English and Portuguese, and many opportunities at the high school (e.g., electives, Advanced Placement [AP] courses). To support students in career exploration, the district has four career pathways to provide students with real-world experiences and prepare students to pursue their career goals, whether through postsecondary education or the workforce.

Four observers, who focused primarily on instruction in the classroom, visited Hudson during the week of March 13, 2023. The observers conducted 85 observations in a sample of classrooms across grade levels, focused on literacy, English language arts (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>2</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, instructional observations suggest generally strong evidence of emotional support, behavior management, classroom organization, and student engagement. For all three grade bands—K-5, 6-8, and 9-12—average scores in each area rounded to 5.0 or higher, with a maximum possible score of 7.0. Instructional

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<sup>2</sup> For more information on the Teachstone CLASS protocol, visit <https://teachstone.com/class/>.

observations suggest generally mixed evidence of rigorous instructional support, with each grade band having average scores of approximately 4.0.

Regarding strengths, the district has a clearly defined process for updating and reviewing curricula to ensure horizontal and vertical alignment, as well as a well-defined process for critically reviewing and adopting high-quality curricular materials. The District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) identifies strategies for ensuring inclusive learning environments that supports students' learning needs and the district selected a new social-emotional program to better address students' social-emotional competencies. Lastly, the district provides students with rigorous learning experiences through a range of programs and activities at all levels.

The district also has several areas of growth, including providing middle and high school teachers with instructional coaching to build their instructional practices, embedding diversity, equity, and inclusion into the curriculum and instruction, and ensuring that all students have equitable access to the various learning opportunities available across the district.

## **Assessment**

Hudson employs a comprehensive approach to data collection by using multiple sources of information throughout the academic year. At the elementary level, Hudson uses Istation, Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), the Developmental Reading Assessment, pre-post examinations on the Units of Study, and the Next-Generation Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS). At the secondary level, the district uses Edulastic, common unit assessments, Eureka or Reveal module assessments, AP examinations, and MCAS results. Alongside academic assessments, mental health screeners enable early intervention for social-emotional needs and provide a basis for planning appropriate student support. Across grade levels, staff use several platforms, such as Aspen and Google Classroom, to track students' achievement and communicate with students and families about progress. The district implements some systems for supporting data use, including data mining meetings, common planning time, and quarterly data drives, although variations across schools currently exist.

Regarding strengths, the district uses multiple data sources to provide information about students' academic performance, has well-defined data meetings at the elementary level where each teacher can collaboratively review and discuss student data, and the district transparently shares data with the school committee and other stakeholders.

The district has several areas of growth related to assessment. At the high school level, these include examining grading policies for consistency, allocating more time for teachers to collaboratively examine and discuss student data, and establishing guidelines for timely data entry into Aspen. Districtwide, implementing a formal mathematics screening assessment is a priority for district leaders moving forward.

## **Human Resources and Professional Development**

The human resources and professional development infrastructure in Hudson provides guidance to school leaders on identifying and hiring staff, connecting new staff members with mentors, maintaining staff credentials and certifications, and enhancing employee culture. In recent years,

Hudson has prioritized the diversification of its workforce. To accomplish this goal, numerous recruitment strategies have been developed to recruit and hire diverse staff. Hudson's human resources department also committed to documenting and standardizing its operating procedures to ensure equity throughout the hiring and recruiting process as well as other human resource operations. Because administrators in each building are primarily responsible for hiring, supervising, evaluating, and recognizing staff, these documents helped with developing greater internal consistency across the district. For the 2022-2023 school year, professional development largely focused on addressing the needs of English learners (ELs), who are a large and growing population in Hudson, as well as implementing the district's new social-emotional learning program (Choose Love).

The district has several strengths related to human resources and professional development, including strong interconnectedness between the human resources department and other district leaders, utilizing various mechanisms to diversify their workforce, developing new human resources documents to improve standardization across the district, providing professional development that generally aligns with school and district goals and needs, and recognizing exemplar teachers at the district-level.

The district also has room for improvement, particularly related to supervision, evaluation, and educator development. Areas for growth include continuing to prioritize diversifying the educator workforce, addressing challenges with evaluator caseloads, creating an accountability system for ensuring administrator and educator evaluations are completed at the end of each evaluation cycle and include feedback on areas of improvement, updating the mentoring program to centralize important topics and incentive mentor participation, and standardizing informal methods of recognizing exemplar teachers at the school-level.

## Student Support

Hudson is making a concerted effort to ensure that all schools support students' safety, well-being, and sense of belonging by identifying and addressing students' needs and engaging families. Hudson is actively incorporating various practices to meet the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs of students. All schools in the district implement a multitiered system of support (MTSS) framework, and each building has either an SST or IST that develops targeted (e.g., Tier 2) and/or intensive (e.g., Tier 3) support plans based on students' individual needs. All schools in the district also are implementing Choose Love, a new social-emotional learning curriculum. The district communicates with families through monthly district-level newsletters and weekly school-level newsletters. Parents can elect to participate on Hudson's parent teacher association (PTA), the special education advisory council (SEAC), and the English learner parent advisory council (ELPAC). Hudson also made a concerted effort to reduce community language barriers by having all communications translated into Spanish and Portuguese.

The district has several strengths related to student support. Regarding safe and supportive school climate and culture, the high school has a variety of clubs and activities to help students feel connected to school and the district ensures that all families have equitable access to information by translating communications into Spanish and Portuguese. Regarding tiered systems of support, the district has well-defined documents that outline their MTSS framework, each school has a problem-solving team to make collaborative decisions about students, and the district's MTSS process actively involves parents to get their input. Lastly, regarding family, student, and community

engagement and partnerships, the district prioritized stakeholder engagement in their district improvement plan and the district encourages a variety of ways for families to engage through parent organizations and school events.

The district also has several areas of growth for moving forward, including improving the high school's culture and climate, providing teachers with more professional development on diversity, equity, and inclusion, providing afterschool programming at the elementary level, ensuring the instructional support team (IST) focuses on all areas of student need at the secondary level, making sure that school communications are timely and relevant, working with the special education advisory council (SEPAC) and English learner parent advisory council (ELPAC) to ensure online resources are kept current and relevant, and promoting greater parent engagement at the high school.

## **Financial and Asset Management**

Town and district leaders aim to ensure that the allocation and use of funding and other resources improves students' performance, opportunities, and outcomes. District leaders collaborate with town leaders to efficiently develop the overall budget and complete annual audits of financial reports and the use of funds. There is a process for determining the overall amount of the town budget allocated to the district, and that amount exceeds net school spending requirements. To improve transparency, district leaders created a comprehensive budget book that includes an extensive narrative so that all stakeholders understand the district's finances. This budget book is readily accessible on the district's website; it details the various funding sources; expenses broken down by budget owner; and detailed information about fixed costs, maintenance costs, and other expenses. Hudson also has a facilities maintenance department that maintains school property and buildings in a timely manner.

Regarding strengths, the district has clear, accurate, complete, and user-friendly budget documents and a well-defined budgeting process that includes stakeholder input. District leaders provide regular financial reporting to the school committee and create three-to-five-year forecasts of estimated long-term needs. Lastly, the district has a comprehensive facilities department that contains necessary maintenance personnel.

Regarding areas for future improvement, the district is looking to develop a written municipal agreement around shared costs with the town, planning for when ESSER funds conclude to ensure the current level of programming continues, implementing an official tracking system to maintain salary information, and implementing all findings from the annual financial audit.



# Hudson 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. Reviews identify systems and practices that may be impeding improvement as well as those most likely to be contributing to positive results. 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. Virtual interviews and focus groups also are conducted as needed. Information about review activities and the site visit schedule is in Appendix A. Team members also observe classroom instruction and collect data using the CLASS protocol. The Districtwide Instructional Observation Report resulting from these classroom observations is in Appendix B.

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. DESE also provides additional resources to support implementation of DESE's District Standards and Indicators, summarized in Appendix C.

## Site Visit

The site visit to Hudson was conducted during the week of March 13, 2023. The site visit included 16 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 65 stakeholders, including school committee members, district administrators, school staff, students, students' families, and teachers' association representatives. The review team conducted five teacher focus groups with 11 elementary school teachers, seven middle school teachers, and seven high school teachers; two student focus groups with six middle school and six high school students; and one family focus group with two parents.

The site team also conducted 85 observations of classroom instruction in five schools. Certified team members conducted instructional observations using the Teachstone CLASS protocol.

## District Profile

At the time of the review, Hudson’s superintendent was Dr. Marco Rodrigues, who was appointed superintendent in 2017. He receives assistance from the assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction, the director of student services, the director of finance and operations, the director of technology, and the director of human resources. The district is governed by a school committee composed of seven members who are elected for three-year terms.

In the 2022-2023 school year, there were 240 teachers in the district, with 2,323 students enrolled in the district’s five schools. Table 1 provides an overview of student enrollment by school.

**Table 1. Schools, Type, Grades Served, and Enrollment, 2022-2023**

School	Type	Grades served	Enrollment
C. A. Farley Elementary School	Elementary	PK-4	430
Forest Avenue Elementary School	Elementary	PK-4	284
Joseph L. Mulready Elementary School	Elementary	PK-4	243
David J. Quinn Middle School	Middle	5-7	558
Hudson High School	High	8-12	808
<b>Total</b>			<b>2,323</b>

Note. Enrollment data as of October 1, 2022.

Between 2020 and 2023, overall student enrollment decreased by 243 students. Enrollment figures by race/ethnicity and high needs populations (i.e., students with disabilities, students from low-income families, and ELs and former ELs) compared with the state are in Tables D1 and D2 in Appendix D. Appendix D also provides additional information about district enrollment, attendance, and expenditures.

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 2021—\$19,306 for Hudson compared with \$17,145 for similar districts and greater than the average state spending per pupil (\$18,560). Actual net school spending was greater than what is required by the Chapter 70 state education aid program, as shown in Table D4 in Appendix D.

## Student Performance

In ELA in Grades 3-8, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS declined 16 percentage points from 51 percent in 2019 to 35 percent in 2022, which was below the 2022 state rate of 41 percent. In Grade 10, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations decreased by 7 percentage points from 64 percent in 2019 to 57 percent in 2022, which was below the 2022 state rate of 58 percent (see Tables E1 and E2 in Appendix E).

- In Grades 3-8, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations was above the state rate by 4 percentage points and 6 percentage points for Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino students and Asian students, respectively; equal to the state rate for students with disabilities; below the state rate by 8 percentage points to 14 percentage points for ELs and former ELs, White students, and African American/Black students; and below the state rate by 3 percentage points to 5 percentage points for Hispanic/Latino students, students from low-income families, and high needs students.
- In Grade 10, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations was above the state rate by 4 percentage points for ELs and former ELs and below the state rate by 5 percentage points to 11 percentage points for every other group with reportable data.

In mathematics in Grades 3-8, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS declined 20 percentage points from 47 percent in 2019 to 27 percent in 2022, which was below the 2022 state rate of 39 percent. In Grade 10, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations declined 8 percentage points from 61 percent in 2019 to 53 percent in 2022, which was above the 2022 state rate of 50 percent (see Tables E3 and E4 in Appendix E).

- In Grades 3-8, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations was below the state rate by 11 percentage points to 19 percentage points for African American/Black students, Asian students, White students, and ELs and former ELs and below the state rate by 3 percentage points to 8 percentage points for every other student group with reportable data.
- In Grade 10, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations was above the state rate by 1 percentage point for students from low-income families and below the state rate by 1 percentage point to 6 percentage points for every other student group with reportable data.

In science in Grades 5 and 8, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations on the Next-Generation MCAS declined 8 percentage points from 44 percent in 2019 to 36 percent in 2022, which was below the 2022 state rate of 42 percent. In Grade 10, 53 percent of all students scored Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations in 2022, which was above the 2022 state rate of 47 percent (see Tables E5 and E6 in Appendix E).

- In Grades 5 and 8, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations in science was below the state rate by 2 percentage points to 4 percentage points for Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino students, high needs students, students from low-income families, and students with disabilities and below the state rate by 7 percentage points to 12 percentage points for Hispanic/Latino students, White students, and ELs and former ELs.
- In Grade 10, the percentage of students scoring Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations in science was above the state rate by 7 percentage points for low-income students; above the state rate by 1 percentage point to 2 percentage points for high needs students and Hispanic/Latino students, respectively; equal to the state rate for ELs and

former ELs; and below the state rate by 1 percentage point for White students and by 9 percentage points for students with disabilities.

The average student growth percentile (SGP) on the 2022 MCAS assessments in Grades 3-8 was 48.5 in ELA and 44.4 in mathematics, which represents typical growth. In Grade 10, SGPs were typical in ELA (47.0) and mathematics (50.3)<sup>3</sup> (see Tables E7-E10 in Appendix E).

- SGPs in Grades 3-8 in ELA were typical for each student group with reportable data, ranging from 42.5 to 48.6. Math SGPs were typical for each student group, with reportable data ranging from 41.5 to 45.2.
- Grade 10 ELA SGPs were typical for each student group with reportable data, ranging from 46.1 to 53.0, except for students with disabilities, which was low (33.6). Math SGPs were typical for each student group, with reportable data ranging from 43.8 to 50.3.

Hudson's four-year cohort graduation rate for all students decreased 2.6 percentage points from 90.1 percent in 2020 to 87.5 percent in 2022, which was below the 2022 state rate of 90.1 percent. The five-year cohort graduation rate for all students decreased 2.9 percentage points from 90.1 percent in 2019 to 87.2 percent in 2021, which was below the 2022 state rate of 91.8 percent (see Tables E16 and E17 in Appendix E).

- The four-year-cohort graduation rate was below the state rate in 2022 by 12.5 percentage points and 16.0 percentage points for students with disabilities and ELs, respectively, and below the state rate by 0.5 percentage point to 7.1 percentage points for every other student group with reportable data.
- The five-year cohort graduation rate was below the state rate by 1.3 percentage points for White students, and below the state rate by 9.6 percentage points to 12.6 percentage points for every other student group with reportable data, except Hispanic/Latino students which were 34 percentage points below the state.

The district's annual dropout rate increased from 0.9 percent in 2020 to 2.7 percent in 2022, which was above the 2022 state rate of 2.1 percent (see Table E20 in Appendix E). The dropout rate in Hudson was zero (0) percent for African American/Black and Asian students; above the state rate for White students, high needs students, students from low-income families, and ELs; and twice the state rate for Hispanic/Latino students, Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino students, and students with disabilities.

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<sup>3</sup> Average SGP ranges: Very Low Growth = 10–29.9, Low Growth = 30.1–39.9, Typical Growth = 40.0–59.9, High Growth = 60.0 or higher.

## Leadership and Governance

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At the time of the review, Hudson’s current superintendent was Dr. Marco Rodrigues, although he retired from the district at the end of the 2022-2023 school year. During the onsite portion of the review, the district was working on hiring his replacement, with final candidate interviews conducted during the same week as the district review. The Superintendent receives support from the assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction, the director of student services, the director of finance and operations, the director of technology, and the director of human resources. These officials, particularly the superintendent, work closely with the elected school committee members who represent residents of the Town of Hudson through their oversight of the district. The school committee has seven members, each serving a three-year term.

According to the *School Committee Powers and Duties* document, the school committee has several primary functions: (a) developing and evaluating district policy to guide administrative action; (b) approving the district’s budget; (c) hiring, removing, and evaluating the superintendent; and (d) keeping local Hudson citizenry informed about the district and keeping itself informed about the needs and desires of the public.

Within the district, Hudson has an overall district instructional leadership team (DILT) as well as school-level instructional leadership teams (ILTs) at each school. The DILT comprises instructional coaches, principals, assistant principals, department heads, and directors of curriculum, and each school’s ILT comprises administrators and teachers in each school building.

The district improvement plan is created in collaboration with both district and school leaders and is influential at every level within the district. School improvement plans align with the district’s improvement plan, with one additional goal added by each school’s ILT to reflect the specific needs and priorities of their school.

Table 2 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in leadership and governance.

**Table 2. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Leadership and Governance Standard**

Indicator	Strengths	Areas for growth
<a href="#"><u>School committee governance</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Strong communication exists between the superintendent and the school committee.</li> <li>■ A positive relationship exists between the school committee and the teacher’s association.</li> <li>■ School committee members worked collaboratively to determine the priorities for the new superintendent.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Maintaining strong communication with the new superintendent</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>District and school leadership</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Each school’s ILT has the autonomy to create a unique school improvement goal, and the ILT also determines professional development opportunities for the year.</li> <li>■ District leaders communicate regularly with families. All communications are in three languages to provide equitable access to information.</li> <li>■ District leaders proactively communicate with stakeholders about anticipated financial challenges in future years with the end of ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) funding.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Promoting collaboration between district leaders and Hudson’s municipal leaders, particularly the Select Board</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>District and school improvement planning</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The district has a clearly defined process to update its improvement plan annually, and the improvement plan guides the district’s work moving forward.</li> <li>■ School leaders contribute to the district’s improvement plan, intentionally align their individual school improvement plans with the district’s plan, and have the autonomy to customize their school’s improvement plan to fit their specific needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ensuring the district plan connects to school staff’s work</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Budget development</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The district consistently considers student data and high needs populations when developing the budget.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Increasing transparency between the district’s finance team and principals and other budget owners regarding why decisions are made</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 Hudson. School committee members were consistently aware of the district improvement plan, and members stated that it “guides everything at every level.” They vocalized that it was their job as the school committee to support the plan, contribute to it, and refer to it continuously throughout the school year to support the superintendent and the mission of the schools. The committee has a culture of collaboration with the superintendent, school leaders, the teacher’s union, and the local community. School committee members described their relationship with the superintendent as collaborative:

I defer to the superintendent to give us, as a school committee, the information on the ground from the teachers, about what's happening in the schools. I don't want to hear about things in the newspaper or, you know, when I drop my kid off at school; I want to hear about it from the superintendent. And so I view their role and relationship to us as they're the boss, and it's their responsibility to clearly communicate with us what's happening in the schools. Likewise, it's our responsibility to do that from the public to them.

As further evidence of their communicative and collaborative relationship, school committee members articulated a well-defined process in which—before voting on anything—the district leadership team sends a packet of information to the school committee containing what they need to make an informed decision. According to school committee members, these packets become publicly available on the school's website 48 hours before the vote so that Hudson citizens can access the same information. The school committee also described how the superintendent makes sure to answer their questions and that, “when he cannot answer a question, his staff can, or he'll report back to us at the next meeting. I appreciate that he's not dismissive of questions or requests.” Given this positive relationship with the current superintendent, the school committee also discussed worries about having a less communicative superintendent in the future, although this is a priority in the superintendent search. School committee members agreed that their communication with the superintendent was an area of strength for the district.

Generally, school committee members described a collaborative relationship between all members of the school committee, but some members noted variations across members regarding the importance of equity and what equity means for Hudson students. Nevertheless, school committee members and district leaders agreed that equity was a high priority and provided multiple examples of how they examine equity across the district. For example, the district is examining the composition of their workforce and hiring practices because educators no longer reflect the student population, especially with continued growth of the immigrant and EL population in the district. Specifically, according to DESE's Employed Educators Report, approximately 95 percent of teachers in Hudson identify as white and 4 percent identify as Hispanic, compared to 75 percent of students identifying as white and 18 percent of students identifying as Hispanic, the two most represented races. Second, district leaders disaggregate a variety of data, such as MCAS, graduation rates, attendance, and enrollment in advanced coursework, and identified a gap between students with disabilities and ELs compared with their peers. For these reasons, district leaders and school committee members prioritized funding an equity review by MassInsight in 2022-2023 to further assess areas for improvement and inform future improvement plans. Results of the equity audit were made publicly available in a school committee meeting in April 2023.

The teacher's association also reported having positive relationships with the school committee, citing interest-based bargaining as a platform that allowed them to feel heard within the district. As one teacher noted, and echoed throughout the focus group, “it [interest-based bargaining] has definitely taken away the 'us versus them' speak that I did have in prior contracts” and made the process feel much more collaborative. The interest-based bargaining approach involves both sides (representatives from the teacher's association and the school committee) coming together to discuss concerns that they have and figuring out, “what we can do in the language of the contract to improve that situation,” a teacher explained. For example, through the last contract negotiation



process, the district piloted a paid Family and Medical Leave Act bank to provide teachers with paid leave. The positive relationship between the school committee and teachers' association is a strength of the district.

At the time of the district review, the school committee's focus was on hiring a new superintendent to replace Dr. Marco Rodrigues, the current superintendent, who announced his retirement at the end of the 2022-2023 school year. When asked about their priorities for the new superintendent, a school committee member stated:

Number one by far was values, diversity, [and. . .] ensuring the growth of every student. Number two is create a cohesive, collaborative pre-K to 12 culture and system. Area three was promote transparent and inclusive communication. And four was secure as needed resources and budget.

The school committee created and voted on these priorities prior to beginning the superintendent search, to ensure a clear vision for the new superintendent across all members. This collaborative process of determining the priorities for the new superintendent is an area of strength for the district.

## District and School Leadership

A team of five district-level administrators supports the superintendent; this team includes the assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction, the director of student services, the director of finance and operations, the director of technology, and the director of human resources. According to interviews with district leaders, this six-member team meets weekly; the larger district leadership team includes the curriculum directors and the principals of each school and meets a few times per year to review the district's goals. In addition, the district has a newly developed DILT, which is the district's curriculum team. This team is responsible for planning districtwide professional development, in addition to reviewing districtwide data to inform decisions.

Each school has its own specific ILT, and according to focus groups with teachers, this structure has been in place for some time. These ILTs primarily are teachers who work together as a leadership team to shape the focus and goals of their school as well as plan professional development aligned with these goals. The district's professional development focuses on multilingual learners and their social-emotional curriculum (Choose Love). Generally, according to the teacher focus groups, teachers seemed to think that the district's professional development priorities were well aligned with the needs of their schools and the district's improvement plan, even referencing the need for even more professional development opportunities related to multilingual learners, which is a growing population within the district. Overall, the autonomy for each school's ILT to create a unique school improvement goal and the ability to determine their professional development opportunities to meet their schools' needs is a strength for the district.

District leaders reported an ongoing emphasis to improve communication with families, particularly families from diverse backgrounds. According to the focus groups with district leaders, the current superintendent is trilingual and comes from an immigrant background. He can identify with Hudson's growing immigrant population and has promoted diversity, equity, and inclusion by giving speeches to family and community members in multiple languages. In addition, all communication from the



superintendent is in three languages: English, Spanish, and Portuguese. Because of the superintendent's efforts to connect with families in their native languages, teachers in focus groups reported that their schools emphasized the importance of sending information home to families in multiple languages as well. One school leader clearly articulated as follows:

I would also say that teachers also have been very creative with ways to communicate with all families. Everything we send out is in multiple languages. And I do ask teachers to, even when they're sending emails, to send them in multiple languages. And a lot of teachers will use Talking Points [a phone application that allows language translation] to communicate with families.

Overall, communication with families using multiple languages is an area of strength for the district.

District leaders are increasingly focusing on communicating with stakeholders about the district's budget. District leaders anticipate a "financial cliff" coming up starting in fiscal years 2025, 2026, and beyond as ESSER funds expire, which could result in many layoffs. (See Adequate Budget for additional information.) In response to their pending need to acquire more funding from the town, multiple district leaders described efforts to raise the community's awareness of this issue so that all stakeholders know well in advance and action can be proactively taken. Both town and district officials acknowledged being aware of the issue, although at the time of the district review, there was not yet consensus on how to address it moving forward. The district's proactive communication with stakeholders about this anticipated financial challenge is an area of strength.

One self-identified area for improvement, as described across various focus groups and interviews, is developing a collaborative relationship between district leaders and Hudson's municipal leaders, particularly the Select Board. District leaders reported "significant turnover in the Select Board in the past few years," with members who had been in their positions for many years stepping down. As district leaders noted,

I can't say I know the new members as well. Before, I felt like I could pick up the phone and call the five Select Board people and talk to them if I had to. I don't personally feel I have that relationship with the majority of them now.

The turnover in municipal leaders also has been difficult because of lost knowledge and experience with the district's processes and procedures. Considering the changes in personnel for the Select Board and the upcoming change in superintendent, a proactive area of focus for the new superintendent will be to forge collaborative working relationships with Hudson's municipal leaders to address some of these challenges.

## District and School Improvement Planning

District leaders, school leaders, and teachers generally agreed that the district has a clear and thoughtful improvement process that is supported 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 improvement plan, voicing sentiments such as the following: "It guides everything that we do. It guides budget, it guides professional development, it guides instruction, it guides social-emotional learning." The district improvement plan for 2022-2025 has four strategic objectives:

- **High-Quality Instructional Practices.** Build capacity at all district levels to ensure that every educator and administrator uses high-leverage practices to support outstanding teaching and learning experiences for all students, every day.
- **Educating the Whole Child.** Provide rigorous, inclusive academic and social-emotional learning experiences to ensure that all students succeed academically.
- **Innovative Educational Practices.** Ensure that all students are exposed to and engaged in innovative and challenging academic courses and programs.
- **Climate and Culture.** Develop a culture that promotes equity, eliminates opportunity gaps, and empowers students and adults to build strong relationships, psychological safety, and mutual accountability.

District and school leaders come together during an annual summer retreat to update the district's improvement plan and create each school's improvement plan. As one school leader described, "[The summer retreat] is when the superintendent brings ideas, and we hash them all out during that retreat and then our school improvement plans segue off of that." Each school's improvement plan must include goals aligned with the four strategic objectives, in addition to one unique goal that each school determines with their school council to meet their unique context and needs. Overall, school leaders' ability to contribute to the district's improvement plan, align the district improvement plan to their own school's improvement plan, and customize their own improvement plan to fit their needs is a strength of the district.

While customization of Hudson's school and district improvement plans is a strength, school staff did identify some areas for improvement regarding communication of the district's improvement plan. Several stakeholders acknowledged that the district's improvement plan felt like "a pretty long to-do list" and struggled to see how the everyday, specific initiatives within their schools connected to the district's "bigger picture." These comments suggest that making connections between the district's improvement plan and everyday school staff work is an area for growth within the district.

To further ensure accountability and transparency, district and school leaders make quarterly presentations to the school committee to review the district's progress toward achieving their strategic goals for the year. School committee members described being well informed about the district's strategic and improvement plans and voiced that it was their responsibility to support the district's strategic goals.

## Budget Development

Within each school, principals have autonomy to create their own budgets, based on the district's zero-based budgeting system. The district's approach to zero-based budgeting is defined as the following in their Budget Book:

For each budget cycle, all programs and services start at a base of zero and are funded based on student enrollment, program needs, services and justification. The staffing levels for next year are based solely on the future (enrollment and programs) and do not build upon staffing that already exists at the school. It allows a budget to be built on agreed upon District goals and priorities, rather than the history of resource allocation. This budget process also assures a fair level of staffing across schools.

In addition to the school principals, who have the autonomy to create their own zero-based budgets, program directors also create their own budgets for their particular departments; there are 22 total budget owners in the district. As one school leader described, with so many budget owners, each individual budget is smaller and easier to manage:

In terms of the material costs that I have to cover in my budget, those are really small. So that that budget's zero base is pretty easy to build. I can look pretty easily at long-term trends and how we spend. All the curriculum materials come from the director budget, so I don't really see those. I don't see the library budget, I don't see the science budget. All of the curriculum directors manage those [areas] and present their own budgets accordingly. So in terms of material cost, most of my budget is actually paying for [events and] all the resources I need to pull off [school events]. So, you know, I have smaller budgets for, like, main office needs and supplementary classroom supplies that are more general and that directors can't provide.

As mentioned by multiple different budget owners, to draft the budget, directors consider data such as attendance, MCAS scores, student demographics and need levels, and other priorities for the district and school in alignment with the school and district improvement plans. District leaders emphasized their understanding that having an equitable budget does not necessarily mean that all budgets are equal, and stakeholders reported that higher percentages of the budget support students with higher needs. For example, school committee members described prioritizing C.A. Farley Elementary School, as is the only Title I school in the district. A school committee member elaborated:

Farley [Elementary School] has more students who are economically disadvantaged compared to the other elementary schools. So [we're] being pushy about. "Farley might need a little bit more TLC here. We might need a little bit more [money for the athletic programs] here, not just because there's more students numerically, but because we also have a higher percentage of high needs and English learner students in this particular building. "

The consistent use of student data and the prioritization of high needs populations when developing the budget is a strength of the district.

After the budget owners initially draft their own budgets based on the zero-based budgeting system, the principals and curriculum directors meet with the superintendent and the director of finance and operations about one month later to discuss their recommendations. In that meeting, they "talk about what's going to be included and what's not. So that the directors and principals know about [the decisions]." The district finance leaders then document these decisions to the school committee regarding what was and was not included. Despite these attempts at transparency, school leaders described lacking clarity about what is and is not included in the budget by district leaders, which a school leader described as follows:

I think it's great that we get in on the front end and are able to present our needs. And then when push starts coming to shove in the budget that has to be presented, that's where things kind of tend to get a little murkier. And it's not always clear. You know how some of the decisions ultimately get made and kind of where those things get approved versus others and why or why not. So it starts off as a very open and transparent dialog and process, which is highly appreciated. But then kind of the consistent follow through in terms of circling back

to us in terms of the decision-making process is lacking. So at the end of the day, a budget has to be formed. That's where the reporting back, I feel like, tends to fall off a little bit and sometimes leaves us confused as to where we stand.

Overall, transparency between the budget directors and the district's finance team regarding decisions made about which items are approved, and why, from the drafted budget requests is an area for improvement in Hudson. Although the infrastructure is in place to support "circling back" with the budget owners through the series of meetings described above, this practice is reportedly not consistently carried out, leading to "murkiness" in budget transparency.

## Recommendations

- The incoming Superintendent should continue and reinforce the existing communicative relationship held with the school committee.
- The district should find ways to build working relationships with municipal staff, particularly the Select Board, as the district undergoes the Superintendent transition.
- Upon revising its district improvement plan, the district should draw stronger connections to the work happening each day in classrooms, so that instructional staff feel represented and connected to the district-level plan.
- The district should provide better clarity around its budgetary recommendations to the School Committee, and give budget owners more transparency into why requests were recommended or not.

## Curriculum and Instruction

Hudson places a strong emphasis on promoting student autonomy, providing individualized instruction, offering social-emotional support, and fostering an inclusive curriculum across its schools. Currently, the district is actively expanding its curriculum to provide all students with rigorous learning experiences. To ensure the quality of the curriculum, Hudson follows an extensive review process, using the understanding by design model to maintain vertical alignment across materials. A district review team evaluates the curricula, which undergo multiple rounds of piloting and feedback, to ensure alignment with district and school priorities and values. Moreover, the district prioritizes social-emotional learning for all students and recently implemented a new social-emotional curriculum, Choose Love, in all its schools. Hudson also uses student-driven data and feedback to facilitate a multitiered intervention process at all schools, which informs instruction and support.

Hudson offers specialized programming for students with disabilities, prioritizes translated materials for multilingual learners, and offers a dual language program at one elementary school. This program aims to provide students with the opportunity to become fluent in both English and Portuguese, thus creating a bilingual and biliterate student population. Hudson offers a variety of academic offerings, particularly at the high school level. The high school offers several career pathways to provide students with real-world experience in their chosen field. These postsecondary experiences prepare students to pursue their career goals, whether through postsecondary education or the workforce.

Table 3 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in curriculum and instruction.

**Table 3. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Curriculum and Instruction Standard**

Indicator	Strengths	Areas for growth
<a href="#">Curriculum selection and use</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The district has a clearly defined process for updating and reviewing curricula to ensure horizontal and vertical alignment, while also emphasizing essential understandings, transferring learning, and acquiring new skills and knowledge.</li> <li>■ The district has a well-defined process for critically reviewing and adopting high-quality curricular materials that includes teacher input and feedback.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Providing middle and high school teachers with instructional coaching</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Classroom instruction</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The DCAP lays out the district’s strategies for ensuring inclusive learning environments that support differences in student learning needs, interests, and readiness.</li> <li>■ The district selected a new social-emotional program to better address students’ social-emotional competencies.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Embedding diversity, equity, and inclusion into the curriculum and instruction</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Student access to coursework</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The district provides students with rigorous learning experiences through a range of programs and activities at all levels (e.g., the dual language program, four career pathways).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ensuring equitable access for all students to the various learning opportunities available within the district</li> </ul>

## Curriculum Selection and Use

Curriculum selection and use is a strength for the district. A review of Hudson’s CURATE<sup>4</sup> table indicated that the district uses a combination of published and created curricula, including Units of Study for Reading and Writing, Foundations, and Heggerty (Grades K-4) and teacher-created units (Grades 5-12) for ELA; Eureka Math (Grades K-4), Reveal Math Common Core (Grades 5-7) and a mix of discipline-specific curricula (Grades 8-12) for mathematics; Project Lead the Way Launch (Grades K-4), Amplify (Grades 5 and 8), and teacher-created units (K-12) for science; and One Community One Nation (Grades K-4) and teacher-created units (K-12) for social studies. According to CURATE, Eureka Math partially meets expectations, whereas Reveal Math and Amplify meet expectations. The district’s other curricula do not have CURATE ratings. To improve the instructional materials used, the district is evaluating new mathematics curricula options for Grades K-4 and 8-12 through DESE’s Evaluation Network. For Grades 5-7, the district implemented a new mathematics curriculum, Reveal Math, in 2022-2023. The district also implements several supplemental programs to augment the core curriculum, including Foundations, Lively Letters, and Heggerty at the elementary level and Project Lead the Way at the secondary level. (See Student Access to Coursework for more information.)

Hudson’s created materials follow the understanding by design model. Content area teams, led by the district’s department heads, work together to develop these materials. This framework prioritizes creating curricula that are engaging, relevant, and meaningful to students while focusing on what they should understand, know, and be able to do. Guided by the state curriculum standards and the district’s vision for the curriculum, expectations and outcomes for students are clearly outlined and included in the curriculum maps. At each grade level, the curriculum team maps out the scope and sequence of content, and department heads review across grade levels to ensure vertical alignment of the materials. This approach emphasizes the development of essential understandings, the ability to transfer learning to new situations, and the acquisition of key skills and knowledge, which is a strength of the district.

As stated in the district’s improvement plan, the district has strongly emphasized curriculum selection and implementation, with a focus on “expanding access to advanced coursework for all students to ensure rigorous learning experiences.” To accomplish this, the district is currently adopting a new elementary and high school mathematics curriculum for implementation in 2023-2024. The review process involves a team consisting of six to 10 members, including teachers and administrators. According to Hudson’s High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) Timeline for Adoption document, the review process is well defined and includes the following steps:

1. Establishing a timeline, mission and vision, and core instructional values to guide the curriculum review. To identify instructional priorities, the team generated a survey for K-12 educators, which was reviewed and summarized.
2. Generating a list of evidence-based mathematics materials for consideration.
3. Using CURATE, EdReports, and conversations with colleagues, the team identified two to three sets of HQIM to review.

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

4. Meeting with the HQIM publishers and identified two sets of materials to pilot within the schools.
5. Piloting the materials with a subset of teachers who provided feedback via surveys.
6. Making a recommendation for purchase to district leaders after reviewing this feedback, considering the curricula's alignment with mission, district, and school priorities.

As described by teacher leaders, the review team critically evaluates each program according to criteria, such as inclusive learning experiences; variation of formats (e.g., online platforms); language supports for multilingual learners; accessibility; and diversity, equity, and inclusion. At the time of the district review, the district was poised to select which programs would be piloted in spring 2023. Teacher perspectives and feedback will be gathered through surveys before making the final selection, which allows teachers who will be responsible for curriculum implementation to have a voice in the district's decision-making process. This same process was used in 2021-2022 to select Choose Love, the district's new social-emotional learning curriculum. This well-defined process for critically reviewing and adopting high-quality curricular materials is an area of strength for the district.

To make the curriculum more accessible to teachers and parents alike, the district is currently updating its website to provide an online repository of curriculum materials. Teachers can access current and previous curricula through a "literacy mastery document." The literacy document illustrates the scope and sequence of the curriculum, which aligns with a corresponding curriculum map. Teachers also can access the curriculum through a shared Google Drive to collaborate and contribute to the development of the district's instructional resources.

Hudson uses data to inform instructional practices and guidance. In focus groups, teachers describe utilizing data to adjust their instructional practices to meet the needs of their students. For example, at the elementary level, a teacher shares, "I think as a district, we do a great job focusing on using data to form small group or small groups for reading." Additionally, the district utilizes data to involve specialist teachers to support students. Specialist teachers and instructional coaches provide professional development to classroom teachers. Instructional coaches are available at the elementary level, whereas at the middle and high school levels, specialist teachers typically use quick videos to teach specific strategies to other teachers. Middle and high school teachers described wanting more coaching and described a need for greater classroom supports. Providing middle and high school teachers with instructional coaching is an area of growth for the district.

## Classroom Instruction

Four observers, who focused primarily on instruction in the classroom, visited Hudson during the week of March 13, 2023. The observers conducted 85 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 Hudson, 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 Hudson is in Appendix B, and summary results are in Tables 17, 18, and 19 in this appendix.

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

- **Emotional Support.** Ratings were in the middle range for all grade bands (5.9 for K-5, 4.7 for 6-8, and 4.7 for 9-12).
- **Classroom Organization.** Ratings were in the high range (6.0-6.3) for all grade bands.
- **Instructional Support.** Ratings were in the middle range for K-5 and 6-8 grade bands (4.3 and 4.1, respectively) and low middle for the 9-12 grade band (3.9).
- **Student Engagement.** For Grades 4 and up, where student engagement was measured as an independent domain, ratings were in the middle range for all grade bands: 5.8 for Grades 4-5, 5.2 for Grades 6-8, and 4.8 for Grades 9-12.

Overall, instructional observations suggest evidence of emotional support, student engagement, and classroom organization. For each grade band, average scores in each area rounded to 5.0, with a maximum score of 7.0. Instructional observations suggest generally mixed evidence of rigorous instructional support, with each grade band falling between 3.9 and 4.3. In the K-5 grade band, instructional observations generally suggest 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.



Further, instructional observations indicate some evidence of regard for student perspective. Average scores for the regard for student perspective dimension are in the middle range (4.8 for K-5 and 3.7 for both 6-8 and 9-12). Integrating student perspectives into the learning environment is critical for student growth and engagement. As described in focus groups, Hudson is implementing student-centered practices in different ways at various school levels. At the elementary level, individualized meetings are conducted with students after data meetings to monitor their progress and inspire their involvement in setting and achieving their goals. At the secondary level, teachers frequently organize collaborative learning in small groups across various subjects to create engaging learning environments. For example, a teacher highlighted the efforts to create a more culturally diverse curriculum, particularly in history, by “representing a broad range of voices,” such as among the eighth-grade civics team. A high school student praised a teacher for creating a lively learning environment that fosters student engagement: “We all have discussions. It’s a very fun class, you’re very involved and no one’s quiet in the class. Everybody’s talking and it’s very fun and very inclusive.” However, as indicated by the instructional observations, students do not yet experience these learning opportunities consistently.

Multiple interview and focus group participants frequently referenced standards-based, student-centered, and project-based instructional practices throughout the district. Each school places a strong emphasis on providing students with meaningful choices and autonomy over their learning experiences. At the elementary level, Hudson implemented a workshop model that uses small-group instruction and differentiation. The model ensures that students are receiving individualized attention and instruction that meets their unique needs. Similarly, at the middle and high school levels, the district focuses on small-group instruction, differentiation, and academic conversations. School leaders described taking student feedback seriously and adjusting the curricula accordingly. To make the general education curriculum accessible to all students, Hudson’s DCAP and MTSS framework documents detail a variety of resources and supports to meet the needs of diverse learners, such as arranging partner or small-group instruction, providing cueing or think time, providing multimodal presentations, reteaching concepts using different approaches, and providing manipulatives. The district’s clearly documented strategies for ensuring inclusive learning environments that support differences in student learning needs, interests, and readiness is an area of strength.

To improve the learning experiences of all students, the district introduced the Choose Love program, which is a social-emotional curriculum that focuses on improving the learning experiences of all students. to provide social-emotional supports.<sup>5</sup> To emphasize the importance of addressing students’ social-emotional learning competencies, the second strategic priority in the district’s 2022-2025 district improvement plan is to “implement Choose Love’s social-emotional program to build and sustain a positive learning community at each school.” According to district leaders, the Choose Love curriculum provides “comprehensive” and “developmentally appropriate” online lessons for each grade level and scripts for teachers to follow. However, teachers had some mixed impressions about this program, with those at the elementary level typically liking and supporting the program, whereas those at the secondary level were more critical. Specifically, secondary teachers described

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<sup>5</sup> The Choose Love curriculum is a character social emotional development program designed after the founder experienced the loss of her son during the Sandy Hook Elementary School tragedy. The program is designed to be implemented starting in kindergarten through grade 12.

the Choose Love program as being a “canned script,” that there was not enough flexibility to “have it better fit with the group of kids that are with us,” and that it was developed primarily for an “upper-class white community” that does not reflect Hudson’s student population. Secondary teachers also described challenges with students liking the program. According to one teacher,

I don’t think we have any student buy-in, and the program is supposed to be for the students. So I think I feel very strongly about that, that if the kids aren’t feeling connected to the program, then it’s pointless to do it. It has to be made for the students; . . . we need a culturally diverse program that meets the needs of all the students, not just where the program was created.

Related to meeting the socioemotional needs of students, information collected through focus groups showed that high school students expressed a desire for more diversity and inclusivity within instruction. For example, students in focus groups reported wanting to read books from “more diverse and inclusive representative authors” in English classes. Similarly, students reported a lack of culturally diverse information shared in history classes, indicating a need for greater inclusivity in the curriculum. Although there have been strides to create inclusivity in curricular content, the district’s overall commitment to providing well-rounded and culturally diverse instruction continues to be an area for growth.

For students needing more supports, the district uses an MTSS (see Tiered Systems of Support for more information). According to the district’s MTSS framework documents, all students receive high-quality Tier 1 instruction in the appropriate setting, which includes having clear learning objectives, explicit instruction, and scaffolding as needed. Students with more intensive needs are referred to a collaborative problem-solving team (e.g., SST) to establish additional, supplemental supports that go beyond Tier 1 instruction. Each school has intervention blocks in which specialists work with students, and teachers work with students individually or in small groups. These blocks are named What I Need at the elementary level; Hawk block at the middle school level; and Academics, Relationships, and Community at the high school level. This time also can be used to provide ELs or students with disabilities with additional supports beyond the requirements.

District leaders and Hudson’s recent program evaluations detail a variety of specialized programs for students with various disabilities to target their specific needs. These programs emphasize teaching students in the least restrictive environment that is appropriate for their needs. These programs include the following:

- **Academic Support Program (PK-12):** A substantially separate classroom for students led by a special educator. This program is for students who are on the “graduation track” and expected to pass the Standard MCAS with accommodations. The program focuses on teaching students compensational, organizational, and self-advocacy skills. Students participate in core academic courses in co-taught classrooms, while receiving support through this program as needed according to their individualized education program (IEP).
- **Therapeutic Stabilization Program (K-2) and Social-Emotional Program (Grades 3-7):** These two programs target students who have social-emotional or mental health needs, often resulting from experiencing trauma. Staffing for the program includes a special education teacher, a clinician, and two to three paraprofessionals.

- **Language-Based Services (Grades 3-12):** Although not a formal program, the district provides specialized language-based services for students with a language-based disability with support from Landmark Consulting.
- **Life Skills Program (Grades 8-12):** A substantially separate program led by a special educator who teaches all core content areas. This teacher is supported by a program paraprofessional and one-to-one paraprofessionals assigned to specific students based on their individualized education program. This program is for students who are not on a “graduation track” and take the MCAS-Alt.
- **Bridge (Grades 8-12):** Led by a clinician, this transitional bright program is for students who are returning from a hospitalization or extended absence, to help students get back on track.
- **Harbor Program I (Grades 8-9) and II (Grades 10-12):** This program supports students with internalizing challenges such as anxiety, depression, and eating disorders. The program operates as a substantially separate classroom, although inclusion opportunities are available and encouraged.
- **Assabet Valley (ages 18-22):** Because of a lack of space, the district contracts with Assabet Valley Collaborative to provide extended services to students ages 18-22 years old.

Overall, the district is working to prioritize the student learning environment in different capacities.

## Student Access to Coursework

Interviews and a document review showed that Hudson offers a variety of educational offerings for students to engage in rigorous learning experiences. The importance of providing students with access to a variety of learning experiences is the third strategic priority of the district’s 2022-2025 improvement plan, which states that the district needs to “expand access to advanced coursework that ensures rigorous learning experiences for all students.”

At the elementary level, C. A. Farley Elementary School offers a dual language program in English and Portuguese for students in Grades K-1. Although housed at one of the three elementary schools, the program is open to all Hudson kindergarten students regardless of the school they attend. According to the district’s website, the program uses a 50-50 instruction model in both languages, in which students receive 50 percent of their instructional time in English and the other 50 percent in Portuguese. The district’s website describes the purpose of this program as “to promote bilingualism and biliteracy, cross-cultural competence, and high levels of academic achievement for all students.” At all elementary schools, rigorous learning experiences primarily take place in the classrooms through hands-on materials, differentiation, and small-group instruction. Students also take elective classes such as art, gym, and music.

According to the middle school’s website, students take elective classes such as art, wellness, band, chorus, drama, and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics). In addition, students have the option to take either Spanish or Portuguese, and heritage classes are available for students whose families speak either language at home. Students also have access to academic and nonacademic afterschool activities, including a STEM club, a math league, jazz band, a newspaper club, and more; however, according to a school leader, “The problem there being that attendance is

very, very variable on those, whereas with STEM Club it is extremely popular. But for the other [opportunities], attendance is spotty at best. So, definitely an area of improvement.”

The high school offers four postsecondary pathway programs, which allow high school students to explore different pre-career training programs. According to the high school’s *Program of Studies* document, these programs are as follows:

- **Biomedical (Grades 9-12):** As part of Project Lead the Way, students solve medical mysteries, develop in-demand lab skills, and grow as thinkers and problem solvers. Students take Principles of Biomedical Science, Human Body Systems, and Medical Intervention, in addition to other optional courses (e.g., Forensic Science).
- **Engineering (Grades 9-12):** As part of Project Lead the Way, students receive a foundation for different engineering careers. Students take Introduction to Engineering Design, Principles of Engineering, Digital Electronics, and Engineering Development and Design, in addition to other optional courses (e.g., Robotic Design).
- **Education and Care (Grades 10-12):** Through this pathway, students develop content-specific skills in infant through young adolescent education and care. In the early childhood pathway, students complete an internship experience to obtain the 150-hour requirement for the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care lead teacher certification. Hudson partners with Quinsigamond Community College for this program, and students can earn up to three graduate credits. Students take Child Growth and Development and Early Childhood Education I and II, in addition to other optional courses (e.g., Conflict Resolution).
- **Portuguese Medical Interpretation (Grades 11-12):** Through this pathway, students continue developing skills in Portuguese, in addition to skills and techniques in interpretation and translation. Students who complete the two medical interpretation courses satisfactorily are eligible to earn a program certificate that fulfills the training requirements to work as a medical interpreter. Students take honors Medical Interpretation I and II, in addition to optional courses (e.g., Principles of Biomedical Science).

All four programs have a pamphlet that describes the units of study, options for future careers, courses offered through the pathway, and a recommended sequence of courses to complete the pathway requirements.

For all high school students, a variety of opportunities exist outside the postsecondary pathways. According to the high school’s *Program of Studies* document, numerous classes are available to students outside the core course offerings, including in ELA (e.g., Creative Writing, Journalism); history and social studies (e.g., Eastern Faiths, Conflict Resolution, Psychology); science (e.g., Marine Ecology, Forensic Science); engineering (e.g., Robotic Design, 3D Modeling and Design); technology/business (e.g., Business Management, Video Game Design and Development, Graphic Design); performing arts (e.g., Drama, Public Speaking, Music History); and health and physical education (e.g., Mindfulness and Movement). The high school also offers several honors and AP courses, in addition to a variety of nonacademic activities for students to engage in. Students can participate in after school activities such as athletics, dance, marching band, performing arts, student-led clubs (e.g., Anime, Book Club, Future Problem Solvers, Girls for Gaming) and co-curricular clubs (e.g., Quiz Bowl, Science Olympiad, Diversity Club). Hudson’s commitment to providing rigorous

learning experiences and diverse opportunities for its students is evident in its range of programs and activities and is a strength of the district.

Hudson is working to create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment. However, at the time of the District Review, district and school leaders were still in the early stages of examining students' access to the variety of opportunities available within the district to ensure equitable access. This was one of the reasons for funding the equity audit. According to school leaders, ensuring that students have equitable access to opportunities later in their school careers (where they have more choice in activities) begins at the elementary level, to ensure that they have the foundational knowledge and skills to be successful. A school leader explained:

I do have concerns about who has access to some of these [opportunities], who is being recommended [for them] or is engaging in some of these programs. And, you know, [school leaders] have always talked about how do we look at that? Not necessarily as a high school kind of problem to solve . . . How do we make sure that even [in] the elementary levels, students have the required academic preparedness to engage in challenging coursework at the middle school, which then gives them the requisite skills to come in ready for eighth and ninth grade.

This sentiment was later supported by the district's equity audit, which was publicly shared in April 2023. The audit found that the district's recommendation process for advanced and honors courses resulted in limited access for students of color and marginalized students. The findings of the audit aligned with the sentiments shared by school leaders during the District Review indicate that ensuring equitable access for all students to the various learning opportunities available within the district is an ongoing area of growth.

## Recommendations

- Where possible, the district should provide additional coaching for its middle and high school level teachers.
- In future curricular decisions, the district should place a greater weight on ensuring curriculum is culturally diverse and representative of the student body.
- The district should review its current practices around recommending students for advanced courses in an effort to address discrepancies in advanced and honors course-taking for students of color and marginalized students and ensure equitable access for all students.

## Assessment

Hudson employs a comprehensive approach to data collection by using multiple sources of information throughout the academic year. The district conducts both internally developed and external assessments to monitor progress and evaluate student performance. Alongside academic assessments, mental health screeners enable early intervention for social-emotional needs and provide a basis for planning appropriate student support. To review and understand student progress, schoolwide progress, and specific goals, data meetings are conducted at each grade level. Parents and students can access information through various communication channels, such as conferences, email, and online platforms such as Google Classroom and Aspen.

Table 4 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in assessment.

**Table 4. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Assessment Standard**

Indicator	Strengths	Areas for growth
<a href="#">Data and assessment systems</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multiple data sources provide information about students' academic performance across grade levels and subject areas.</li> <li>The district is administering a new mental health screener to identify students needing additional support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementing a formal mathematics screening assessment for districtwide use</li> <li>Examining grading policies for inconsistencies at the high school</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Data use</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At the elementary level, data mining meetings with each individual teacher provide formalized opportunities to review and discuss student data.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allocating time for high school teachers to collaboratively examine and analyze student data on a regular basis</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Sharing results</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The district transparently shares data with the school committee, and these data are publicly available on the district's website.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishing guidelines for timely data entry into Aspen at the high school level</li> </ul>

### Data and Assessment Systems

Hudson ensures the collection of multiple data sources numerous times throughout the school year. The district's *2022-2023 Assessment Inventory* details the administered assessments, including the assessment, content area and grade band where it is administered, population that completes the assessment (i.e., general population or targeted to specific students), and administration frequency. Hudson uses both district-developed and externally developed assessments, and the results are analyzed by different groups within the district, including ELs, students in the dual language program, heritage and biliteracy students, students enrolled in AP courses, and students who may fall below benchmark.

According to the district's assessment inventory, at the elementary level, students take DIBELS (administered to Grades K-3), Istation as a dyslexia screener (administered to Grades K-2), the



Developmental Reading Assessment (administered to Grades K-4), pre-post writing assessments (Grades K-4), Eureka Math summative module assessments (Grades K-4), district-developed common science assessments (Grades K-4), and district-developed common social studies assessments (Grades K-4). In addition, other assessments gather additional information with targeted student populations (e.g., Benchmark Assessment System in literacy for students below benchmark). At the middle and high school levels, all students take Edulastic literacy assessments (Grades 5-7), English common unit assessments (Grades 5-12), Reveal common unit assessments (Grades 5-7), Eureka Math summative module assessments (Grades 8-11), district-developed common science assessments (Grades 5-12), and district-developed common social studies assessments (Grades 5-12). Additional academic data sources that district and school leaders examine include course pass/failure rates, MCAS results, AP examination scores, and more. Generally, the variety of data sources used to assess student performance across grade levels and subject areas is an area of strength for the district.

At the time of the district review, Hudson did not yet have a consistent districtwide mathematics screening assessment, which is an area of growth according to district leaders. Currently, the district uses common formative and summative assessments, although there are challenges with this approach. A district leader noted that “we struggle because if [teachers’] pacing is off, they’re trying to give this assessment and it’s totally different [by each class].” To address this gap and have more consistent and valid mathematics data, the district was piloting different mathematics assessments before making a final determination about the assessments in 2023-2024. The same district leader summarized, “We’re hoping next year brings [the data] all back into line.”

For district-developed common formative assessments, teachers and department leaders work together during common planning times or the summer to create and modify them as needed. To ensure consistency, all teachers must implement the same assessment, although they have flexibility to add questions based on where they are in the scope and sequence. A district leader described, “If [teachers] want to add something to it, that’s great. But they have to implement the same questions and can make it their own after that. We need to know how kids did on these common questions.”

At the middle and high school levels, district and school leaders closely monitor students’ course pass/failure rate, disaggregated by different student groups such as ELs and students with disabilities. This year, leaders identified a high course failure rate among ELs at the high school, and through conversations identified inconsistent grading practices as one potential cause of this pattern. A district leader explained as follows:

Our grading practices are a little bit all over the place. You know, some departments are grading one way, [and] some are grading another way. [For example] some are counting homework as a higher percentage. Some are counting class participation in a different way. So we really need to look at our grading system a little more carefully, especially at the high school level. . . . [We need to] consider the impact on different groups of students to ensure the district has a comprehensive view of the student.

Further examining this challenge and updating grading practices to address inconsistencies is an area of growth for the district.

In addition to academic data, the district recently adopted Panorama’s social emotional learning assessment as a comprehensive mental health screener to identify students’ social-emotional challenges, which is a strength of the district. According to school staff, students complete Panorama to assess their social-emotional skills, and the program provides a “playbook” of scripted resources that teachers can use aligned with students’ needs. Generally, teachers had positive impressions of Panorama thus far, with one teacher commenting that “I think we’re all finding it to be pretty incredible in terms of one place to store all [the data]. And it’ll be used with fidelity in the sense that whoever meets certain criteria will be taught these specific lessons.” Additional nonacademic data that school staff examine primarily include behavioral referrals and attendance.

## Data Use

School and district leaders spoke about the expectations to use data to drive continuous improvement at all levels and ensure that educators use data to guide instructional practices. The importance of using data is part of the district’s first strategic priority in their improvement plan, which states that the district needs to “implement the use of data at the classroom, school, and district levels to inform professional learning.” This strategic priority was further broken down into action steps, including identifying and evaluating available data on multilingual learners and identifying additional common assessments to facilitate classroom discussions.

At the elementary level, the district has transitioned from having grade-level data meetings to individual “mining meetings” with each teacher. These mining meetings occur between the reading specialist, instructional coach, and teacher to discuss their classroom data three times per year for approximately 90 minutes per meeting. During this time, they “mine” students’ recent academic data (e.g., DIBELS, Developmental Reading Assessment, benchmark assessments). In-between these meetings, approximately every six to eight weeks, are interim data meetings for 45-minute check-ins with teachers. According to a review of the agendas for these meetings, these meetings have a common structure that includes reviewing schoolwide and grade-level data during which teachers engage in a notice and wondering protocol, review student reading profiles, and set goals and a schedule. The data meetings also serve as a time to identify students who would benefit from the IST process. A district leader described this process as follows:

[The conversations are] this is what we’re seeing in your classroom. Like, here are the kids who are on benchmark. Here are the students who are kind of on the cusp. Here are the students who still need intervention. And they talk about as many kids as they can in the amount of time that they have. But then they come away from that meeting with who’s going to see the students.

Elementary teachers also review and discuss student data during common planning times. According to district and school leaders, the combination of these approaches is proving effective in improving student performance and is an area of strength within the district.

At the secondary level, middle school teams use common planning time to examine data on an ongoing basis. At the high school, there are data dives each term to improve teachers’ understanding of where they are as a school, identify trends and areas of need, and implement action steps. For example, the first quarter’s data dive examined course failure data for trends and identified action



items for classroom teachers and administrators. However, the high school has minimal time for teachers to meet and discuss data with their department teams on an ongoing basis. Although conversations occur informally, multiple teachers in focus groups expressed wanting additional common planning time to have these conversations more readily. These findings align with the results of the equity review, which found that school staff had limited opportunities to collaboratively monitor student data. Taken together, providing high school teachers with more time to regularly collaborate with colleagues to review and analyze student data is an area of growth for the district.

## Sharing Results

District leaders believe in transparently sharing student data with families and community members to foster an open and collaborative environment. To accomplish this, district leaders regularly share aggregated student data with the school committee that also is publicly available on the district's website and easily accessible by staff, parents, and other community stakeholders. By openly sharing these data, the district hopes to provide a clear and comprehensive understanding of student progress and achievement. These efforts are an area of strength for the district.

In addition to sharing data with the school committee, the district is committed to engaging with families and students. According to district and school leaders, parents and families receive frequent communication about their children's progress, although parents describe more frequent communication happening at the elementary level compared to the secondary level. Each school has parent-teacher conferences twice per year, in the fall and spring. According to school staff, parent participation in these events varies widely by grade level, with teachers in the early elementary grades describing nearly all parents attending, whereas the high school conferences are "not well attended" according to school leaders.

At the elementary level, students receive standards-based report cards three times throughout the year. On the report card, students receive a rating of either meeting expectations, progressing independently, or progressing with support. However, "I think the parents do have a difficult time understanding [the report cards]," and "the report cards don't really reflect everything we do as clearly as it could for parents," teachers explained. To improve this process for families, teachers are working to create a progress report that accompanies report cards home and to frame parent-teacher conferences. The progress report details the assessments taken by the student, what the focus of the assessment was, and how their child did. These data also are saved in student portfolios shared with students and parents during parent-teacher conferences.

At the middle and high school levels, students receive traditional report cards quarterly. More frequently, students and parents have access to the Aspen portal on the district's website and Google Classroom, where they can review assignments and grades on an ongoing basis. At the middle school, teachers must update grades within Aspen every two weeks at minimum, a requirement confirmed by several students and parents. However, at the high school level, both parents and students reported similar frustrations regarding the timeliness of data entered into Aspen, describing wide variation across teachers. Students reported how some teachers wait until just before the end of term to input grades, which limits Aspen's usefulness. A parent described the impact of delayed data entry as, "My son's atrocious on assignments, I very much have to check up on his homework [to help him manage the workload], or I will get a flood of "not turned in" at some

point in time for work. I don't feel like this is where I look at Aspen." Since Aspen is not regularly updated, parents described communicating with their child's teachers via email, which is especially time consuming at the secondary level where their child has multiple teachers. Establishing guidelines for timely data entry so that Aspen is useful for students and parents to monitor student progress is an area of improvement at the high school level.

The district also aims to promote student ownership of their learning through data sharing. At the elementary level, students choose work samples they are proud of and present them to their families during parent-teacher conferences. In addition, teachers provide students with feedback on their assessments, which are stored in individual portfolios. Middle and high school students are expected to monitor their own progress through platforms such as Google Classroom or Aspen

## Recommendations

- The district should select and implement a consistent, districtwide math screening assessment.
- The district should diagnose perceived inconsistencies in grading practices, particularly as they affect certain student groups, and then adjust grading guidelines to ensure equitable practices.
- Where logistically feasible, the district should create time for high school teachers to collaboratively meet to monitor student data, so that they can adjust instructional practices to address learning gaps.
- The district should establish and enforce guidelines around timely data entry into Aspen at the high school level, so that students and parents can stay up to date on student progress.

## Human Resources and Professional Development

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Within Hudson, the human resources department is one of five cabinet-level departments underneath the superintendent. The human resources department has three people, including the director of human resources, a human resources assistant, and a receptionist. The department works with school leaders to identify and fill necessary positions at schools and assign teachers to needed positions. In recent years, Hudson has prioritized diversification of its workforce. To accomplish this goal, the district developed numerous recruitment strategies to recruit and hire diverse staff. The human resources department also commits to documenting and standardizing its operating procedures to ensure equity throughout the hiring and recruiting process as well as other human resource operations.

Mentoring is a norm within Hudson; new teachers must attend mentoring sessions throughout their first year of employment. Professional development opportunities occur at the district level, aligned with the district's priorities. Teachers generally agree that the districtwide professional development opportunities are beneficial to them and relevant to school and district priorities. Teacher recognition in Hudson occurs during the annual Evening of Celebrations, with additional methods of informal recognition varying by school principal throughout the year.

Table 5 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in human resources and professional development.

**Table 5. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Human Resources and Professional Development Standard**

Indicator	Strengths	Areas for growth
<a href="#"><u>Infrastructure</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ There is strong interconnectedness between the human resources department, the superintendent, and the other members of the superintendent’s cabinet.</li> </ul>	
<a href="#"><u>Recruitment, hiring, and assignment</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Hudson has a variety of different mechanisms to diversify their workforce to make it more representative of the students (e.g., J1 Visa program, attending recruitment fairs).</li> <li>■ The district developed the <i>Human Resources Procedure Manual</i> and <i>Hiring Manager Toolkit</i> to support improved standardization of hiring processes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Continuing to prioritize the need to diversify the educator workforce</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Supervision, evaluation, and educator development</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Professional development opportunities generally align with the school and district’s goals and teacher needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Addressing challenges with evaluator caseloads so that teachers receive high-quality, actionable, and timely feedback on strengths and areas of improvement</li> <li>■ Creating an accountability system for ensuring administrator and educator evaluations are completed at the end of each cycle and include feedback on identified areas of improvement</li> <li>■ Updating the new teacher mentoring program to centralize important topics that all new staff need to know and incentivizing the program so it is mutually rewarding for mentor teachers</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>Recognition, leadership development, and advancement</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The district has some formal opportunities to recognize exemplar teachers (e.g., Evening of Celebrations), and school leaders have informal methods to recognize exemplary staff members.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Standardizing the informal methods of recognizing exemplar teachers across schools to ensure equitable practices</li> </ul>

## Infrastructure

Hudson employs effective human resources policies, procedures, and practices. According to Hudson's *Fiscal Year 2023 Organizational Chart*, the human resources department has three main staff members, including a director, assistant, and receptionist, and is one of five main cabinet offices underneath the superintendent directly involved in district-level leadership decisions. District leaders stated that the director of human resources is part of the superintendent's leadership team and participates in weekly meetings with the other cabinet members. These meetings focus on the district's priorities, and in terms of human resources, maintain an ongoing, intentional focus on diversifying the district's hiring practices. The interconnectedness between the human resources department, the superintendent, and the other members of the superintendent's cabinet through these weekly meetings is a strength of the district as they elevate the focus of human resources practices.

In interviews, district leaders identified that the human resources department is focusing on encouraging diversity in their hiring practices. (See Recruitment, Hiring, and Assignment for additional information.) In addition, a district leader described how the human resources department also focuses on "constantly taking a look at our policies and procedures and trying to ensure that they're equitable." One way in which the human resources department is working to accomplish this goal is by standardizing the department's operating procedures to enhance consistency across the district. At the time of the district review, the human resources department had recently developed a human resources manual to ensure standardization across all employees (see Recruitment, Hiring, and Assignment section below).

## Recruitment, Hiring, and Assignment

One of the primary focuses of Hudson's human resources department is diversifying the district's workforce to better reflect their student population, which has been a priority for the past several years. According to interviews with district leaders and documentation, the human resources department developed a J1 Visa program through the Cordell-Hull Foundation and Cultural Visas to intentionally find and recruit "heritage-speaking Portuguese staff" to come to Hudson to represent the growing number of Portuguese-speaking students within the district. Reportedly, this J1 Visa program has been a success:

Our J1 visa program, this year especially, it's really blown up for us. We brought over five teachers in this year alone, and they're not just Portuguese or world language teachers. We have two that are in math, one in science. A couple of them are world language. But I think a lot of these countries that they are coming from are relating to our kids.

In addition to the J1 Visa program, human resources personnel explained that they attend a multicultural fair once a year and run a job booth there, handing out pamphlets in English, Spanish, and Portuguese that describe available positions in the district. Reportedly, all hiring ads for Hudson are routinely translated into Spanish and Portuguese, and the district's diversity statement is prominently included in all job postings. In addition, all current job postings for Hudson specify "Spanish/Portuguese speaking preferred." As a district leader noted,

That's a big thing that I've started to try to promote with a lot of our principals; [it] is not just like, "is this person going to be a good fit here? Instead, are they going to add value and add something to the team that we need and maybe don't have" to help diversify it?

The combination of these approaches to improve the diversification of Hudson's workforce is an area of strength for the district.

Although Hudson leaders acknowledged that they have had some successes with diversifying staff, a shared sentiment throughout the district is that there is still a long way to go in diversifying the teacher population to match the district's student demographics. Hudson's reported difficulty in hiring a diverse workforce is one reason that numerous stakeholders within the district, both leaders and teachers, were excited about the district's equity audit. Overall, diversifying the teacher workforce is a continued area for growth in Hudson, with many steps currently underway to accomplish this goal.

According to district leaders, another priority is standardizing the hiring process across school buildings and principals to ensure equity. Two documents support the standardization of hiring processes: the *Human Resources Procedure Manual* and the *Hiring Manager Toolkit*. The *Human Resources Procedure Manual* is the result of a newly developed effort to standardize processes within the human resources department. The manual focuses primarily on recruitment efforts for candidates and onboarding. The manual also details various stakeholders' responsibilities throughout the hiring process, including the superintendent, school principals, and the school committee. The *Hiring Manager Toolkit* is a complementary resource focused on standardizing screening across school buildings. Within Hudson, hiring starts at the school level, with the principals, assistant principals, and curriculum directors. If a new position is necessary or if an incoming student needs one-on-one support, school-level leaders will make the request to district leaders for additional staffing. Created by the human resources department, the purpose of the *Hiring Manager Toolkit* is "to help guide [hiring] at the building level" and ensure consistency. It includes information on different aspects of the hiring process, such as a behavioral interviewing guide; competency-based interview questions; and diversity, inclusion, and belonging interview questions. The toolkit also has information about how to equitably present a new hire to the rest of the faculty, including an announcement email template. The development of both the *Human Resources Procedure Manual* and the *Hiring Manager Toolkit* to standardize recruitment and hiring processes is a strength of the district.

Regarding teacher assignment, school leaders explained that teachers are typically hired to work at a specific building, so it is rare for teachers to be assigned to a school that they were not hired for or to teach in a subject that they were not hired to teach. Teachers in focus groups described the process: "You're pretty much safe to stay at that [a specific] school. And then for the most part, you're going to stay within your subject matter because of your certifications." According to DESE's Employed Educators Report, in 2022, 96 percent of Hudson teachers are licensed in the subject area they teach (compared to 93 percent statewide). In addition to these natural methods of ensuring teacher assignment, the human resources department maintains a spreadsheet that they audit a few times a year, and they send out reminder letters, as necessary, to teachers based on

their licensure information to ensure that certifications are up-to-date and teachers are teaching within their certified subject areas.

## Supervision, Evaluation, and Educator Development

Overall, teacher evaluation within Hudson is a self-identified area of growth. According to focus groups, teachers almost unanimously view their evaluation system as a “perfunctory” process. As one teacher described, evaluations are “a box checking, hoop jumping system that everybody goes through. Nobody loves it. And I don’t think really anybody gets much meaningful out of it.”

Reportedly, educators are observed “once or twice a year theoretically,” but the evaluators are so busy that sometimes educators do not get evaluated as frequently as expected and described. Many administrators in interviews and focus groups expressed this lack of time devoted to evaluations, which one explained as follows:

I think one thing that we all talked about recently was that we have so many teachers to evaluate on our caseloads that it gets really hard to do it with fidelity and giving them the proper amount of time and feedback necessary. . . . A few years back, the curriculum directors also served as evaluators, so caseloads were more manageable. . . I do want to echo what [another evaluator] said, that it is challenging in terms of formal written observations through TeachPoint with the caseloads we have between my assistant principal and myself. We do get into classrooms every day, but more so informally than formally leaving informal feedback.

With a lack of time to conduct formal observations and evaluations through TeachPoint, many principals report leaving sticky notes with feedback behind for teachers instead of a formal observation.

This negative perception of the district’s evaluation process is, in part, attributed to increases in the number of teachers assigned to each evaluator. Teachers explained that “previously [they] had content directors doing evaluations as well, in conjunction with a building administrator.” This structure allowed for content directors to evaluate the lesson based on their expertise in the specific content area and give useful feedback on the teachers’ lessons, but now it is the building administrators who conduct the evaluations. Although the content director positions continue to exist, due to other job responsibilities, they no longer serve as primary evaluators, and instead take on a more advisory role where they periodically examine evaluations for quality and provide input as necessary. According to interviews with teachers, this structural change has made evaluation feedback less useful. As one teacher explained:

The people who are evaluating teachers [now] are. . . not content-focused administrators. They’re building administrators so they can come in and see a classroom that is functioning with routines and functioning with respect. But they [do not know] whether the way you’re teaching is helping the kids actually acquire the content because they don’t know the content.

This sentiment was expressed across multiple focus groups. Additionally, both administrators and teachers acknowledged that evaluators don’t have the same amount of time to devote to their evaluations and their improvement. As one administrator noted, “We’re aware that there are



problems, and we are working towards improvement versus just blissfully sitting in ignorance that we both think that there are problems.” Overall, reviewing and addressing these challenges so that teachers receive high-quality, actionable, and timely feedback to improve their instruction is an area of growth for the district.

For educator evaluations, Hudson consistently used TeachPoint in 2021-2022. A review of the educator evaluation files 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 professional teacher status teachers scheduled for a summative evaluation for the 2021-2022 school year. Of the 10 teacher evaluations selected for review, all summative evaluations were available for review and marked as complete and not missing required components, including a rating for each standard or an overall rating. A review of the records shows that the expected use of specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely (SMART) goals is consistent. The review of evaluation documents indicated that nearly all evaluations (90 percent) contained student learning and professional practice SMART goals. Most evaluations (80 percent) referenced 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 most of the evaluations (90 percent) included feedback identifying strengths, whereas only 30 percent of the evaluations included feedback identifying areas of improvement.

Of the 27 administrator evaluations due for a summative evaluation for 2021-2022, only 11 evaluations (41 percent) were complete and available for review, with performance ratings and assessment of progress toward goals. Of the 11 summative evaluations reviewed, 73 percent (eight evaluations) included student learning goals and professional practice goals, whereas 55 percent (six evaluations) included school improvement goals. No evaluations included or referenced multiple sources of evidence to assess performance on summative evaluation standards. All of the summative administrator evaluations (100 percent) reviewed included evaluator comments with feedback identifying each administrator’s strengths; however, only 55 percent (six evaluations) provided administrators with identified areas for improvement. Creating a system that ensures both administrator and educator evaluations are consistently completed at the end of each evaluation cycle and include feedback on identified areas of improvement is an area of growth for the district.

Regarding professional development, stakeholders agree on two main priorities across the district: learning strategies to work with the EL population across grade levels and social-emotional learning. For social-emotional learning, the district now uses the Choose Love curriculum. (See Classroom Instruction for additional information.) This curriculum had mixed responses, with many teachers feeling overwhelmed by the emotional depth and time commitment required by the program (see Classroom Instruction for more information). Across multiple teacher focus groups, teachers reported that they would rather have the district spend more professional development time learning to teach ELs because of their lack of confidence in supporting this population. Overall, professional development opportunities are well aligned with district and school improvement plans and teacher needs, which is a strength of the district. However, there is room for improvement, with teachers requesting more professional development dedicated to instructional practices for teaching ELs.



In addition to professional development opportunities for teachers, mentoring is becoming a more formalized process in Hudson. There is a district mentor coordinator, which is a stipend teacher position. In this role, the coordinator vets the mentors who have applied and connects them with incoming staff. The mentor coordinator also works with school leaders to make sure that mentor-mentee pairings are appropriate. The mentor program is guided by the *Hudson Mentor Handbook 2022-2023* document, which is updated annually. According to this handbook, mentor/mentee relationships exist across four different types of “new” teachers to Hudson: “first year teachers; teachers new to Hudson who currently have taught and have a provisional or initial license; teachers new to Hudson who hold a professional license; and teachers not new to Hudson but in a significantly new position.” Depending on which level of “new” a teacher is, they have a different set of guidelines to follow and have a different frequency of meeting with their mentor teachers.

Aside from coordinating the matches between mentors and mentees, the district has a more limited role in the mentoring programs, which are run at each school independently. Teachers identified the central office’s more limited role in the teacher mentorship and induction programs as an area for improvement. One teacher described this process as follows:

A long time ago when I started, [the induction program] was like a three- or four-day process. Now it’s like a day, and I’d really like to see more of an emphasis put on supporting them prior to the start of school, both at the district and building level.

Many school leaders echoed this concern and identified several logistics-focused sessions that would be useful for the district to instruct new teachers on prior to the start of the school year because all teachers need to know this information. Recommended topics included how to use TeachPoint and how to use the district’s online absentee system. Principals described how they are not covering these topics within the mentoring program, so staff do not receive explicit instruction on how to use these important systems.

Overall, both school and district leaders acknowledged that it was hard to find volunteers for the mentorship program, and “it ends up being the same person over and over again.” Instead of being empowering, many teachers reported that “mentorship feels like an obligation or chore” that they do because no one else is willing to step up and take over. Updating the mentoring program by incentivizing mentor participation and centralizing important topics that all new staff need to know is an area of growth for the district.

## Recognition, Leadership Development, and Advancement

In terms of teacher recognition, school leaders acknowledged having limited, systematic, districtwide or formalized structures in place to recognize exemplary teachers. One district-led method of recognizing excellent teachers that both teachers and district leaders identified was the annual Evening of Celebrations event hosted by the district. According to documentation, the Evening of Celebrations includes dinner for all teachers as appreciation, in addition to presenting three different awards that educators and staff members can win in recognition of their superior performance within the district: the Darcia Constantine Award for Paraeducator Excellence, the Hudson Hero’s Award, and the SEPAC Hudson Third Annual Making a Difference Award. In addition, this Evening of Celebrations also recognizes those educators and staff members who are retiring and

thanks them for their contributions to their schools and the district. The Evening of Celebrations event is a strength of the district in terms of formally recognizing teacher contributions.

At the school level, leaders described using a variety of personal methods to acknowledge teachers who went above and beyond in their classrooms and promote a positive culture within their school building. According to focus groups, some school leaders are more explicit about recognizing and acknowledging excellent teaching practices than others. School leaders identified strategies such as giving teachers certificates highlighting the positive change that they bring to their school, sharing pictures of classrooms that did an amazing thing during their weekly update to staff, giving out a bottle of wine every month to a certain teacher or staff member, and putting a positive note on a teacher “shoutout board” to recognize superior teacher performance and contributions. These different methods of informal teacher recognition are positive for the district, although there could be greater consistency within this recognition process to ensure that staff are treated equitably across buildings, an area of growth for the district.

In addition to recognizing excellence, providing teachers with opportunities for leadership development and advancement is important for retaining staff. Teachers who want to grow within the district can participate in the district’s mentoring and induction programs as mentors for new staff. (See the Supervision, Evaluation, and Educator Development section.) Additionally, teachers interested in learning more about instructional practices for EL students can apply for the teacher diversification grant. According to the *TD Grant Report* document, 16 individuals received education assistance into education preparator programs in fiscal year 2022 through this grant. These teachers specifically received training and education “for [English as a second language] ESL-related coursework,” which the district hopes will increase “the collective cultural proficiency of Hudson Public Schools” and create “a district environment that brings equity and diversity to the forefront for both students and staff.” Lastly, according to the teacher’s union contract, tuition reimbursement for completing college courses aligned with the district’s improvement plan is available.

## Recommendations

- The district should continue its ongoing work of diversifying its educator pipelines and workforce.
- The district should review its evaluation and performance processes and ensure that they provide administrators with sufficient time to give teachers frequent, actionable feedback that allows them to improve their instruction.
- The district should ensure evaluations for both teachers and administrators include areas of improvement or critical feedback.
- The district should provide a more centralized, district-wide structure for its mentoring and induction programs that also incentivizes participation of mentor teachers
- The district should norm the ways in which it (currently) informally recognizes teachers, so that all staff have the opportunity to be recognized for their performance.

## Student Support

As described in focus groups and a document review, Hudson is making a concerted effort to ensure that schools support students’ safety, well-being, and sense of belonging. The district aims to identify and address students’ needs while engaging families and students in planning and decision-making efforts to improve the school community. To achieve this, Hudson is actively incorporating various practices to meet the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs of students. To improve supporting the school community, Hudson has made a concerted effort to reduce community language barriers and better address families’ needs.

Table 6 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in student support.

**Table 6. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Student Support Standard**

Indicator	Strengths	Areas for growth
<a href="#">Safe and supportive school climate and culture</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The high school has a variety of student clubs and activities that help students feel connected to school.</li> <li>■ The district ensures that all families have equitable access to information by consistently translating communications into Spanish and Portuguese.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Improving the high school’s culture and climate so that all students feel safe, supported, and welcomed</li> <li>■ Providing staff with more professional development on diversity, equity, and inclusion</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Tiered systems of support</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The district has well-defined documents that outline their MTSS framework to address students’ academic, attendance, behavioral, and social-emotional needs.</li> <li>■ Each school has a problem-solving team (e.g., SST, IST) to make collaborative decisions about students.</li> <li>■ The district’s MTSS process actively involves parents to get their input and feedback.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Providing afterschool programming, and transportation so students can equitably access that programming, at the elementary level</li> <li>■ Ensuring that the IST focuses on all areas of students’ needs (e.g., academic, attendance, behavioral, and social-emotional) at the secondary level</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Family, student, and community engagement and partnerships</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The district has clearly prioritized stakeholder engagement in their district improvement plan.</li> <li>■ The district encourages a variety of ways for families to engage with the district, including through parent organizations (e.g., PTA, SEPAC, and ELPAC), and school events (e.g., community health resource fair).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ensuring that school communications are timely and relevant to families</li> <li>■ Working with the SEPAC and ELPAC to keep online resources for families up to date with relevant information</li> <li>■ Promoting greater parent engagement at the high school</li> </ul>

## Safe and Supportive School Climate and Culture

Hudson recognizes the importance of creating a safe and supportive school environment in which students feel a sense of belonging and have opportunities to succeed academically, behaviorally, and socially. To accomplish this, the district has two goals in their improvement plan to establish a safe and supportive school community: (a) “provide a safe and supportive environment for our students and staff” and (b) “develop a culture that promotes equity, eliminates opportunity gaps, and empowers students and adults to build strong relationships, psychological safety, and mutual accountability.” Each goal has several priorities. Staff and students at the elementary and middle schools report positive school climates, but the high school faces challenges in creating a safe and inclusive environment for all students.

Staff at all levels highlighted the changing demographics at Hudson, as the district continues to gain more Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking students. According to district leaders, some staff across the district are slow to adjust to these changing demographics and how to best support all students in their classrooms; these challenges are particularly pronounced at the high school level. A district leader commented, “Often [the] comment that I hear [is], ‘Well, 10 years ago we weren’t like this . . .’ In other words, ‘the kids are changing, and I don’t like it.’” District leaders described challenges with teasing and microaggressions, and “teachers do not put a stop to it or become silent on the issue.” Further, “[students] feel they are the recipient of microaggressions . . . but an adult is not intervening on their behalf.” Not addressing these instances can result in a psychologically unsafe and negative building culture across time.

Similar to district leaders, students also had differing descriptions of their school’s culture and climate, which varied by school level. At the middle school, students reported a safe and supportive school climate, as exemplified by a student’s comment about their school connectedness: “[The school is] also is very inclusive, so if you feel comfortable talking to a teacher, you can always talk to them.” However, high school students described room for improvement in establishing a safe and supportive school climate. Students reported a “very divided” school community, particularly between students from different backgrounds. A student elaborated, “I feel like if you’re American, you probably don’t talk to the Brazilian kids. And if you’re Brazilian, you probably don’t talk to the American kids.” High school students also reported unsafe conditions, including the regular destruction of school bathrooms, frequent fights, and targeted racial slurs. Students reported feeling that staff do not consistently address these instances, as one student explained, “It feels like you’re just not going to be listened to [by staff] . . . So then there’s a complete lack of that feeling of safety [or focus on safety] that should be there.” These experiences are negatively impacting the school’s culture and students’ sense of safety and well-being, indicating an area of growth around improving school climate so that all students feel safe, supported, and welcomed.

To support staff with implementing culturally responsive teaching practices and improve school culture, the district has been working to provide professional development. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the district had contracted with Assabet Valley Collaborative to provide cultural competency training to 60 members of the staff, including district leaders, administrators, counselors, nurses, and secretaries. The intention was to begin this training with these core roles and then gradually scale up the training to be district wide. However, closures from the COVID-19 pandemic paused this training; and at the time of the district review, had not yet resumed as the

district was waiting for results of the equity audit to guide the work moving forward. This year, the district has increased professional development around supporting EL students, although teachers reported wanting more professional development on this topic (see Supervision, Evaluation, and Educator Development for more information). Providing staff with more training on diversity, equity, and inclusion to ensure that all students feel safe and supported is an area of growth for the district.

Although there is a need for further training, observation scores from the Districtwide Instructional Observation Report indicate that there are positive relationships across the district. At the time of the district review, Hudson teachers were not consistently implementing formal positive behavioral approaches (e.g., positive behavioral interventions and supports) although the Choose Love curriculum was being implemented to guide social emotional support districtwide. According to the Districtwide Instructional Observation Report, observation scores on the Emotional Support domain vary somewhat by grade range, with Grades K5 scoring at the high end of the middle range and Grades 6-8 and 9-12 scoring in the middle range. Despite the lack of formal positive behavioral approaches, instructional observation scores on the Behavior Management dimension are high for the K-5 and 9-12 grade bands (6.3 and 6.1, respectively) and high end of the middle range for the 6-8 grade band (5.8). These results suggest that the rules and guidelines for behavior are generally clear and consistently reinforced by teachers.

At the high school, staff were working to facilitate students' connectedness to the school is through a variety of student-run clubs and organizations. According to the high school's list of clubs and activities posted on its website, the school has a Gender and Sexuality Alliance group, which is an affinity group for students who may identify as part of the LGBTQ+ community to meet and discuss how to make the school more inclusive and welcoming for all. The school also has a student wellness team to increase understanding of the diverse identities that make up the high school community. Such initiatives show that the school is committed to creating an inclusive and welcoming environment so that all students feel connected to school and is an area of strength for the district. However, as described earlier, there is room for improvement in creating a truly inclusive environment.

District and school leaders described regularly reviewing available school climate data to inform decision making and identify areas needing improvement. To understand school climate, adolescent health, and social-emotional learning from the student perspective, district leaders examine several surveys throughout the year. District and school leaders described regularly reviewing available school climate data to inform decision making and identify areas needing improvement. Specifically, the district uses two student surveys:

- The School and Climate Report is administered every other year to learn more about each school's climate. The survey addresses four main domains: engagement (how engaged students are in their learning), safety (the physical and emotional safety of students), environment (the physical and social environment of the school), and demographic information (students' age, gender, and ethnicity).
- The Views of Climate and Learning student survey is administered annually as part of the MCAS. The results indicate relatively strong school climate across all school levels and student subgroups, as evidenced by overall school climate scores in the "favorable" range (51 to 70, with a maximum score of 100). The only exception was in the district subgroup of

students who fall into the “African American/Black” racial category, whose results indicated an overall school climate score in the “somewhat favorable range” range (43 within the range of 31 to 50, with a maximum score out of 100). Overall, these data suggest that Hudson is making progress in cultivating a safe, challenging, and supportive learning environment for students.

District leaders described disaggregating these data to understand how different student groups are experiencing school.

To keep parents informed of what is happening in schools, the superintendent sends a weekly newsletter to families. School principals also send regular newsletters, and individual teachers keep in contact with families through mobile applications or email. All newsletters and other important district or school documents are available in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. Ensuring that all families have equitable access to information is a strength of the district.

## Tiered Systems of Support

Hudson is actively implementing an MTSS for students at each school and grade level. The district has three goals in their improvement plan to implement tiered supports for academic, social-emotional, and attendance needs. Specifically, the district’s improvement plan includes the following goals:

- Implement the district’s MTSS framework for social-emotional learning [Goal 2.2]
- Implement the district’s MTSS framework for attendance [Goal 2.3]
- Implement the district’s MTSS framework to identify systems of support for students experiencing academic failure [Goal 3.3]

The district has a well-defined MTSS framework that provides three tiers of support and specifies responsibilities at the environmental (schoolwide), staff, student, and family levels.

As described in the district’s MTSS framework documents, tiered supports are organized by domain (including academic, attendance, and behavior/social-emotional supports) Tier 1 supports are universal practices in general education classrooms including: high-quality standards-based instruction, clearly stated learning expectations and goals, explicit instruction, strategies to enhance student engagement, scaffolding, and frequent and purposeful feedback, and using universal screenings to identify the needs of each student. Tier 1 includes. Tier 1 social-emotional and behavioral supports include implementing the Choose Love curriculum, positive social incentives to follow behavioral expectations, modeling, and consistently implementing behavioral expectations.

As described in these same documents, Tier 2 interventions are targeted supports based on data from the universal screenings to “identify students whose academic or behavioral performance and rate of progress are below what is expected for their grade and educational setting.” Tier 2 academic supports include providing supplemental, targeted instruction using practices modified to students’ needs; regularly monitoring their progress; and providing students with explicit feedback related to their goals. Tier 2 social-emotional and behavioral supports include collaborating with specialists to



support students' needs, tracking student progress, teaching targeted instruction in the areas of need, and generalizing the skills to the general education classroom.

According to the framework documents, Tier 3 supports are intensive supports for students who continue to struggle despite high-quality Tier 1 and 2 instruction. Tier 3 academic supports include providing intensive instruction to small groups of three or fewer students (or individually) and instructional practices that include more modeling, scaffolding, increased opportunities for students to respond, immediate feedback, and regular mastery assessments. Tier 3 social-emotional and behavioral supports often include working with a school psychologist or an adjustment counselor. A student's unresponsiveness to interventions at all three tiers may be part of the documentation for special education eligibility. The district's well-defined MTSS framework documents provide a comprehensive approach to supporting the academic, social-emotional, and behavioral growth of all students and is a strength of the district.

In addition to supports that take place during the school day, the middle and high schools provide afterschool supports to students. At the middle school level, a program for students who are frequently absent requires them to stay after school for help if they are absent or tardy for five or more days. At the middle and high schools, teachers must stay after school to provide academic support for students. However, the elementary level does not currently offer afterschool programming for students. A school leader shared some of the barriers:

[The elementary schools do not] have any sort of enrichment programs after school, which for years we've been sort of trying to get. And then even with that, in regards to equity, we would really need transportation because a lot of my little ones, their parents are working, and we don't have really good afterschool care that's not super expensive.

Providing afterschool programming, and transportation so students can equitably access that programming, is an area of growth for the district at the elementary level.

To connect students who are struggling with additional supports, Hudson uses a collaborative problem-solving teaming approach at each school to discuss and address students' needs. At the elementary level, these teams are the SSTs, whereas at the secondary level, these teams are the ISTs. Despite differences in name, these teams consist of a group of staff within the building who collaborate with the classroom teacher to identify supplemental supports (e.g., Tier 2 or Tier 3 supports) for students who are struggling with Tier 1 instruction. The establishment of these problem-solving teams at each school to collaboratively make decisions about student needs is an area of strength for the district.

To initiate the SST or IST process, a staff member who has an academic, attendance, behavioral, or social-emotional concern about a student (most typically one of the student's teachers) completes a referral form. Prior to completing the referral form, the teacher documents the high-quality Tier 1 instructional supports that are in place in the classroom. Once the IST meets to discuss the student, the team develops a six-week goal that is consistently monitored. These monitoring meetings do not occur on a specific time basis and continue until the student's needs are met or they require testing for additional support. Although the district has a defined protocol for this process, focus group respondents described that the process is better established at the elementary level. At the



secondary level, counselors run the IST process; as a result, district leaders described the process as focusing primarily on students' social-emotional needs over academic needs. A leader explained:

[The conversation] tends to stay at that social-emotional piece versus the academic piece. What's happening is the school counselors do not understand academics, so when they have a teacher in front of them talking about the concerns of a student, there isn't that academic-based person that can come out and talk about instructional strategies to try.

Ensuring that all student needs, including academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs, are discussed and addressed is an area of growth at the secondary level.

Parents and families also have an active role in the SST/IST process. To involve families in the referral process, a parent interview is conducted to inform them about the proposed intervention and requires the completion of an acknowledgment form at the end. This form typically requests information about the family's history and challenges that the school may not be aware of. The purpose of this process is to make a concerted effort to obtain information and incorporate input and feedback from parents and families in the process. As previously mentioned, the district's MTSS framework documents also explicitly include the role of the family when providing tiered supports. The district's emphasis on actively including families in the referral process to get their input and feedback is an area of strength.

## Family, Student, and Community Engagement and Partnerships

Interviews, focus groups, and a document review indicated that Hudson recognizes the importance of engaging with families, students, and the broader Hudson community. The district has emphasized its importance by having two goals dedicated to community engagement and partnership in their improvement plan. Specifically, the district's improvement plan states that the district will "build a strong community among all stakeholders" and "strengthen stakeholder engagement with, and equitable access to, district information." The prioritization of stakeholder engagement and partnership in the district's improvement plan is an area of strength for the district.

At the district level, the superintendent sends a weekly newsletter to parents and families, in addition to more frequent emails or robo-calls if needed for important reminders or notifications. As described previously, all district notifications are available in English, Spanish, and Portuguese. Overall, families had positive impressions of district-level newsletters and emails, describing them as "excellent," although the robo-calls could be used more discerningly. Parents also wanted an avenue to opt-in to their preferred contact method (e.g., telephone calls, emails), so there would be less duplication and they would be more likely to pay attention to the information.

In contrast to the district newsletters described in the previous paragraph, parents had generally mixed feedback about school newsletters and weekly updates from schools, and parents would like to have "more timely and appropriate communication" from their child's school. For example, parents described often learning about extracurricular activities at the last minute. In addition to the newsletters, classroom teachers frequently communicate with families via mobile applications such as Talking Points, which also translates communications into the parents' preferred language. Making sure that school communications are timely and relevant to families is an area of growth for the district.

The schools also encourage active parent involvement through the Home and School Associations. This parent-organized volunteer group plays an essential role in supporting the school by organizing classroom volunteers, fundraising events, and cultural activities. For example, at the elementary level, multiple cultural events are parent organized and volunteer based. One of the most popular events is the annual book fair, which collaborates with Portuguese and Spanish liaisons because of the district's wide range of ELs. In addition, the district has both SEPAC and ELPAC groups that work collaboratively with district and school leaders to build community and advocate for their children's needs. However, a review of the SEPAC's webpage found outdated information from the 2018-2019 school year posted most recently, and the ELPAC's Facebook page primarily had postings about the district superintendent search. The lack of current and relevant publicly posted information limits each resource's usefulness for parents seeking information and support and is an area for improvement.

According to school leaders and staff, the high school has encountered challenges with parental engagement, reporting that the open house and parent-teacher conferences are not well attended. However, a strength is the school hosting a community health resource fair, which staff described as a tremendous success. This event allows families to register for health insurance immediately and potentially receive their first appointment on the spot as well as free dental checkups. The fair has been a unique way of engaging families and supporting their well-being more holistically and is a strength of the district. The district hopes to build on this success and continue to create innovative ways to engage families and support their well-being in the future. While this particular event is a strength of the district, promoting more parent engagement at the high school is overall an area of growth given that other efforts are not yet well attended.

## Recommendations

- The district should diagnose and address issues of school culture and climate at the high school, so that all students feel safe, comfortable, and welcome – regardless of their background.
- The district should further develop its professional development programming to include focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Where feasible, the district should expand after-school programming and transportation to the elementary level, so that students can continue to grow and develop outside the traditional school day.
- The district should review its IST processes at the secondary level to ensure equal focus on all areas of students' needs.
- The district should support its schools in ensuring communications and newsletters to families are timely and provide regular updates on events and activities happening in the school.
- The district should work with its SEPAC and ELPAC groups to ensure its online resources are updated and contain relevant about district information.
- The district should diagnose and address its low parental engagement at the high school level.

## Financial and Asset Management

Budget development in Hudson is a collaborative process between the town and the district that begins at the school level. According to the district website, Hudson School District’s finance department manages and supports budgeting, payroll, accounts payroll, purchase order requisitions, contracts, grants management, transportation, and food service. The finance department includes a director of finance and operations, senior accountant, payroll specialist, accounting specialist, grants accounting specialist, administrative assistant, food services secretary, and food services manager.

Once school leaders draft zero-based budgets, the superintendent, the assistant superintendent, and the director of finance work within the town budget to determine how funds will be spent. Overall, the district and the town have a communicative relationship, and the town funds the district above net school spending requirements.

Hudson has a facilities maintenance department that maintains school property and buildings. This department employs maintenance workers, including electricians, carpenters, HVAC technicians, and custodians. The district’s budget book includes maintenance for buildings and the grounds that are smaller in scope and do not require a capital plan, as well as a three-year capital improvements plan.

Table 7 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in financial and asset management.

**Table 7. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Financial and Asset Management Standard**

Indicator	Strengths	Areas for growth
<a href="#">Budget documentation and reporting</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Budget documents are clear, accurate, complete, and user-friendly, and they provide historical spending data for comparisons.</li> <li>Hudson has a well-defined budgeting process across district and town stakeholders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Developing a written municipal agreement around shared costs between the district and the town</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Adequate budget</a>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning for when ESSER funds conclude as the district anticipates that the town appropriation will not be enough to cover the current level of programming</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Financial tracking, forecasting, controls, and audits</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>District leaders provide regular financial reporting to the school committee to ensure transparency.</li> <li>The district has an established process to forecast three to five years out to estimate long-term financial needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementing an official tracking system to maintain salary information</li> <li>Implementing all findings from the annual audit</li> </ul>

**Capital planning and facility maintenance**

- Hudson has a comprehensive facilities department that contains necessary maintenance personnel.

## Budget Documentation and Reporting

Hudson maintains clear and accurate budget documents that include information about all sources of funds and the allocation of resources. District budget books from fiscal years 2017 to 2023 are publicly available on the district website in a user-friendly format that is accessible to stakeholders, along with the contact information for all members of the district’s finance team. According to interviews with district leaders, this accessibility is intentional, and the goal of the extensive budget book narrative section is to keep people “updated on why we budgeted, the way we budgeted, and what we hope to accomplish.” The current budget document provides information on funding sources, including state funding such as the Student Opportunity Act, Chapter 70 aid, and town funding, as well as federal funding through the ESSER grants, town appropriation money, circuit breaker reimbursement, and school choice revenue. In a district presentation about the budget to the school committee, it includes per pupil spending amounts, benchmark data, and enrollment trends and explicitly includes the district’s improvement plan and the school committee’s goals. The presentation also includes historical spending data from the previous four budget years for comparison to the current year’s resource allocations for each line item within a spending category. Budget documents are a strength of the district because 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.

According to interviews with district and town personnel, Hudson does not have a current municipal agreement that guides the relationship between the town and district in terms of shared costs. However, district and town leaders pointed toward examples of shared costs in interviews, such as the town supplying health insurance for all qualified district employees, the town and district splitting the cost of the school resource officers, and the town covering the costs for plowing and supplying crossing guards. In interviews, stakeholders from both the town and the district described the relationship between the district and the town as “fine,” with community members and town officials generally supportive in providing high-quality educational opportunities for students within the Hudson school system. The need to develop a written municipal agreement between the district and the town to clearly define financial responsibilities also was identified in the most recent audit (see Financial Tracking, Forecasting, Controls, and Audits for more information) and continues to be an area of growth for the district.

District leaders described collaboration between school administrators, town officials, and the district central office staff in developing the overall budget. As described in interviews, the budget owners (e.g., principals, department heads) first draft their budgets based on a zero-based budgeting system. Then the budget owners convene with the superintendent and director of finance to discuss their proposed budgets. Concurrently, the town administrator is working with the Select Board to determine the town’s appropriations. Once the town determines the amount that will be awarded to the district, the superintendent and the director of finance work together, reportedly taking into account the

district's improvement plan and other relevant district-level data, to rectify each budget owner's proposed budget for the upcoming year with the amount of money allotted by the town. This well-defined budgeting process is a strength of the district.

## Adequate Budget

According to the district's fiscal year 2023 budget book, Hudson has a \$45.2 million operating budget for 2022-2023. The town's appropriation accounts for \$41.5 million and represents a 2.75 percent increase from the fiscal year 2022 appropriation. Additional funds include circuit breaker funds (\$1 million), school choice carryover (\$2.6 million) including school choice revenue (\$900,000), and ESSER III funds (\$852,500). Currently, Hudson's per pupil expenditure is \$20,073. The Town of Hudson funds the schools above net school spending requirements.

When deciding on the town's appropriation funds for the district, town officials described how they begin with a recommended 2.5 percent increase from the prior year's appropriation, the same approach used for the budget of each town department. Yet, town officials described this increase as a starting point for discussion, and it often increases before finalizing the budget. Despite this general practice, in the years of COVID-19, the town decreased the fiscal year 2021 appropriations to all town departments by 2 percent. This reduction equated to approximately \$800,000 for the district; according to interviews and budget documents, those funds have not been restored as of the time of the district review. The fiscal year 2023 budget book describes the need for these funds: "Additionally, the District continues to feel the impact of the 2% FY21 budget reduction in June 2020, a decrease of \$800,000. The District needs this reduction restored as well as additional revenue to sustain our level of services going forward."

Nevertheless, the district was able to add new staff positions this year, including EL teachers, adjustment counselors, board certified behavior analysts, and reading specialists, with the justification that these positions respond to the needs of students. However, as interviews with district and school leaders indicated, although these positions are a needed and welcome addition, officials are uncertain whether these positions will remain when ESSER funds run out, unless the town appropriates additional funding to the district.. The fiscal year 2023 budget book further details this challenge:

The sun setting of federal COVID-19 funds will significantly impact the FY25 budget. As projected, the District will require additional revenue through Town Appropriation in order to maintain the standard level of services currently in place. There is also a critical need to expand programs and services, which are associated with the increased enrollment of Multi-lingual learners and post-pandemic social, emotional learning needs.

District leaders are intentionally trying to raise awareness of this upcoming "financial cliff" during meetings with town officials and community members so that their request for additional funds is not unexpected. However, at the time of the district review, these conversations were still ongoing, and a formal agreement had not yet been reached. The anticipated loss of funds is an area of concern for school leaders and teachers across the district, who rely on these funds to provide programming that benefits their students. A school leader explained as follows:

My full-time adjustment counselor is tied to those [ESSER] funds, and that is a critical position. You know, if I lose that [position] a year from now, if we go back to splitting the adjustment counselor with [school name], I think both schools are really going to be at a disadvantage.

Many others shared this sentiment, as one teacher commented: “I do worry, you know, a year or two down the line where we do have to tighten our belts a little bit, that we are going to be losing some things that I think are good for kids.” Overall, stakeholders across the district and the town are aware of this upcoming loss of ESSER funds (see District and School Planning for how district leaders are communicating about this challenge), although addressing the need for additional funds to continue the current standard level of services within the district is an area of growth for Hudson in the upcoming years.

## Financial Tracking, Forecasting, Controls, and Audits

According to district leaders, the district finance department provides regular, monthly updates to the superintendent and quarterly updates to the school committee about what money from the budget has been spent. Overall, regular financial reporting to both the superintendent and the school committee to ensure transparency is an area of strength for the district.

A unique area of focus for district leaders when forecasting needs throughout the year is anticipating the number of students who will enter and exit the district during the school year. According to district leaders, who carefully monitor enrollment data, although many students come and go throughout the year, the district usually sees a “net growth” in the number of students during a given school year. With this trend, they need to keep classroom sizes smaller at the start of the year to accommodate midyear arrivals. This translates into a need to preemptively hire teachers to accommodate increased enrollment.

To project needs further out by three to five years, the director of finance and operations described looking at growth rates in number of personnel and student enrollment. Specifically, according to district leaders, they use projected student enrollment to increase or decrease the number of teachers to address classroom size needs across buildings and grade levels. Additionally, district leaders plan for an annual increase in personnel’s salaries of approximately 3% to account for inflation, and this is built into their forecasting. Lastly, district leaders proactively plan for large purchases (e.g., curricula materials) by accounting for these costs in their long-term plan. All requests that are outside of the planned budget, such as servers for the IT department or other emergent needs, are reported directly to the superintendent and the director of finance and operations and are managed on a case-by-case basis. If the need is not immediate, it is planned for in a future budget proposal. Hudson’s practice of forecasting three to five years out to estimate long-term financial needs is a strength of the district.

For financial tracking, district leaders reported that the finance department maintains an “Excel spreadsheet” with salary information. In addition to the salary-related spreadsheet, district officials also described a second spreadsheet, which stores “information from [the district’s] accounting system that is used for quarterly reporting to the school committee.” According to district leaders,



these two spreadsheets are the primary documents that [we] use for tracking expenses. And we have formulas that bring in the salary projections into that document so that we present the whole picture for the school committee. So those are kind of the two primary things, the two spreadsheets that we use for tracking expenses throughout the district.

The lack of a robust salary tracking system is an area of growth for the district.

In terms of spending down grant money, district financial leaders reported that the district generally “does a good job” of spending down grant money. However, district leaders reported a need to occasionally return funds. A district leader elaborated, “Usually it’s a small amount, like a couple hundred dollars or something.” However, last year the district had to return approximately \$30,000 from an adult learning grant used to provide ESL programming to adults that was not spent down. District leaders attributed this oversight to a transition in the role responsible for overseeing the grant, and a district leader elaborated as follows:

Generally, the grant specialist is very good at keeping track of that and, you know, hounding the directors that are supposed to be the ones spending that money . . . But we’re definitely keeping an eye on spending and the deadline to spend the money.

District leaders reported that Melanson, an external accounting firm, audits both the town and the district annually. District leaders explained that they attempt to implement each recommendation received from the audits. A review of the End-Of-Year Financial Report audit conducted by Melanson for the 2021-2022 school year had three recommendations:

- Properly maintain a schedule of rental/leased equipment that includes all DESE-required columns
- Execute a written agreement between the school committee and municipal officials documenting agreed on methodologies for allocating, distributing, or assigning municipal expenditures to the school department
- Properly report transportation riders on Schedule 7 accurately and consistently with detailed records

Overall, an area for growth is implementing all the findings to maintain best financial practices within the district.

## Capital Planning and Facility Maintenance

As described in the publicly available fiscal year 2023 budget book, Hudson’s general expense budget includes several capital planning–related categories, including operations (\$758,000), maintenance (\$433,596), networking and technology (\$157,500), and technology maintenance (\$10,000). Funds in these areas were budgeted for priorities such as building and ground maintenance, equipment purchases and repairs, utilities (e.g., oil, gas, electricity), technology (e.g., hardware, supplies, repairs and maintenance), and more.

According to the district website, Hudson School District’s facilities department includes a director, an administrative assistant, a carpenter, a master electrician, a master plumber, an HVAC



technician, and a custodial manager who supervises 23 custodians. In interviews, district leaders explained that

Hudson is lucky enough to have a certified HVAC [heating, ventilation and air-condition] technician on staff and also a master electrician and a carpenter, so they are well qualified to kind of maintain and do preventative maintenance on our system. We have another general maintenance specialist that helps with the preventive maintenance. I think they have a pretty good handle on what needs to be done. We also have an outside plumbing contract for our plumbing maintenance.

The comprehensive facilities department is an area of strength for the district because many maintenance needs are managed internally.

The facilities department is responsible for regular preventive maintenance and assessing the district's long-term capital needs. As district leaders reported, the district receives "capital money from the town to do projects" as needed. The district also has a three-year capital plan included in their 2023 budget book. This plan describes \$3,750,00 worth of work across three schools in the district: Mulready, Farley, and Forest Avenue. The capital needs plan includes line items for replacing windows and installing univents in 22 rooms at Mulready; adding air-conditioning, replacing the boilers, and replacing the roof at Farley; and replacing the windows, replacing 30 univents, and replacing the boilers at Forest Avenue.

## Recommendations

- The district should memorialize its understanding with the municipality on shared costs in a formal agreement that is approved by district and municipal leadership.
- The district should collaborate with town officials and community groups to proactively plan and budget for the 2025 fiscal year, when ESSER funds will be exhausted.
- The district should create a more systematized, reliable structure for position control and managing personnel costs.
- The district should address and resolve all of the findings from its audits in future years.

## 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 Hudson. The team conducted 85 classroom observations during the week of March 13, 2023, and held interviews and focus groups between March 14 and 17, 2023. 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
- 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. Districtwide Instructional Observation Report

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## *Hudson Public Schools*

### **Classroom Visits: Summary of Findings**

## **Districtwide Instructional Observation Report**

**March 2023**



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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.

Four observers visited Hudson Public Schools during the week of March 13, 2023. Observers conducted 85 observations in a sample of classrooms across five 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

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### *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\*: 5.3**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	0	1	0	5	8	6	15	35	5.8
Grades 6-8	1	2	0	2	7	6	3	21	5.0
Grades 9-12	1	1	4	3	6	9	5	29	5.0

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 3, the district average is computed as:  $([1 \times 2] + [2 \times 4] + [3 \times 4] + [4 \times 10] + [5 \times 21] + [6 \times 21] + [7 \times 23]) \div 85 \text{ observations} = 5.3$

**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

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*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\*: 5.6**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	0	1	0	2	6	12	14	35	6.0
Grades 6-8	1	0	1	4	3	8	4	21	5.3
Grades 9-12	0	3	1	3	4	13	5	29	5.3

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 4, the district average is computed as:  $([1 \times 1] + [2 \times 4] + [3 \times 2] + [4 \times 9] + [5 \times 13] + [6 \times 33] + [7 \times 23]) \div 85 \text{ observations} = 5.6$

**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\*: 4.2**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	1	3	5	2	11	7	6	35	4.8
Grades 6-8	1	4	4	6	4	1	1	21	3.7
Grades 9-12	4	3	9	2	6	4	1	29	3.7

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 5, the district average is computed as:  $([1 \times 6] + [2 \times 10] + [3 \times 18] + [4 \times 10] + [5 \times 21] + [6 \times 12] + [7 \times 8]) \div 85 \text{ observations} = 4.2$

**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\*: 6.8**

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	34	35	7.0
Grades 6-8	0	0	0	1	2	1	17	21	6.6
Grades 9-12	0	0	0	0	1	3	25	29	6.8

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 6, the district average is computed as:  $([4 \times 1] + [5 \times 3] + [6 \times 5] + [7 \times 76]) \div 85 \text{ observations} = 6.8$

**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\*: 6.1**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	0	1	0	2	5	5	22	35	6.3
Grades 6-8	0	2	2	0	1	6	10	21	5.8
Grades 9-12	1	0	2	1	3	4	18	29	6.1

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 7, the district average is computed as:  $([1 \times 1] + [2 \times 3] + [3 \times 4] + [4 \times 3] + [5 \times 9] + [6 \times 15] + [7 \times 50]) \div 85 \text{ observations} = 6.1$

**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\*: 6.0**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	0	0	0	1	7	10	17	35	6.2
Grades 6-8	1	1	2	0	5	1	11	21	5.6
Grades 9-12	1	0	3	1	1	4	19	29	6.1

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 8, the district average is computed as:  $([1 \times 2] + [2 \times 1] + [3 \times 5] + [4 \times 2] + [5 \times 13] + [6 \times 15] + [7 \times 47]) \div 85 \text{ observations} = 6.0$

**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\*: 5.1**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-5	0	0	0	5	13	2	15	35	5.8
Grades 6-8	1	0	2	3	10	0	5	21	5.0
Grades 9-12	0	5	3	4	12	3	2	29	4.4

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 9, the district average is computed as:  $([1 \times 1] + [2 \times 5] + [3 \times 5] + [4 \times 12] + [5 \times 35] + [6 \times 5] + [7 \times 22]) \div 85 \text{ observations} = 5.1$

**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\*: 4.3**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-3**	0	5	6	1	2	4	4	22	4.3

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 10, the district average is computed as:  $([2 \times 5] + [3 \times 6] + [4 \times 1] + [5 \times 2] + [6 \times 4] + [7 \times 4]) \div 22 \text{ observations} = 4.3$

\*\*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

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\*: 4.6**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades 4-5**	0	2	2	1	4	2	2	13	4.6
Grades 6-8	0	3	3	4	6	0	5	21	4.6
Grades 9-12	1	3	2	8	7	2	6	29	4.6

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 11, the district average is computed as:  $([1 \times 1] + [2 \times 8] + [3 \times 7] + [4 \times 13] + [5 \times 17] + [6 \times 4] + [7 \times 13]) \div 63 \text{ observations} = 4.6$

\*\*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\*: 3.3

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades 4-5**	3	3	1	1	2	1	2	13	3.5
Grades 6-8	3	7	3	3	2	0	3	21	3.3
Grades 9-12	7	8	2	2	5	2	3	29	3.3

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 12, the district average is computed as:  $([1 \times 13] + [2 \times 18] + [3 \times 6] + [4 \times 6] + [5 \times 9] + [6 \times 3] + [7 \times 8]) \div 63 \text{ observations} = 3.3$

\*\*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	3	7	7	7	5	5	35	4.5
Grades 6-8	3	2	4	2	5	3	2	21	4.0
Grades 9-12	7	4	2	4	5	4	3	29	3.7

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 13, the district average is computed as:  $([1 \times 11] + [2 \times 9] + [3 \times 13] + [4 \times 13] + [5 \times 17] + [6 \times 12] + [7 \times 10]) \div 85 \text{ observations} = 4.1$

**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\*: 4.5**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades K-3**	0	1	4	5	8	3	1	22	4.5

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 14, the district average is computed as:  $([2 \times 1] + [3 \times 4] + [4 \times 5] + [5 \times 8] + [6 \times 3] + [7 \times 1]) \div 22 \text{ observations} = 4.5$

\*\*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

*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\*: 3.7**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades 4-5**	3	2	1	2	2	1	2	13	3.7
Grades 6-8	7	0	6	0	2	3	3	21	3.5
Grades 9-12	6	4	4	5	2	4	4	29	3.7

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 15, the district average is computed as:  $([1 \times 16] + [2 \times 6] + [3 \times 11] + [4 \times 7] + [5 \times 6] + [6 \times 8] + [7 \times 9]) \div 63 \text{ observations} = 3.7$

\*\*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\*: 5.2**

Grade Band	Low Range		Middle Range			High Range		n	Average
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
Grades 4-5**	0	0	1	0	3	5	4	13	5.8
Grades 6-8	0	1	0	4	9	2	5	21	5.2
Grades 9-12	2	0	1	6	12	6	2	29	4.8

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 16, the district average is computed as:  $([1 \times 2] + [2 \times 1] + [3 \times 2] + [4 \times 10] + [5 \times 24] + [6 \times 13] + [7 \times 11]) \div 63 \text{ observations} = 5.2$

\*\*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>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>5.9</b>
Positive Climate	0	1	0	5	8	6	15	35	5.8
Negative Climate**	0	0	0	0	0	1	34	35	7.0
Teacher Sensitivity	0	1	0	2	6	12	14	35	6.0
Regard for Student Perspectives	1	3	5	2	11	7	6	35	4.8
<b>Classroom Organization Domain</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>6.1</b>
Behavior Management	0	1	0	2	5	5	22	35	6.3
Productivity	0	0	0	1	7	10	17	35	6.2
Instructional Learning Formats***	0	0	0	5	13	2	15	35	5.8
<b>Instructional Support Domain</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>4.3</b>
Concept Development (K-3 only)	0	5	6	1	2	4	4	22	4.3
Content Understanding (UE only)	0	2	2	1	4	2	2	13	4.6
Analysis and Inquiry (UE only)	3	3	1	1	2	1	2	13	3.5
Quality of Feedback	1	3	7	7	7	5	5	35	4.5
Language Modeling (K-3 only)	0	1	4	5	8	3	1	22	4.5
Instructional Dialogue (UE only)	3	2	1	2	2	1	2	13	3.7
<b>Student Engagement (UE only)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>5.8</b>

\*The district average is an average of the scores. For example, for Positive Climate, the district average is computed as:  $([2 \times 1] + [4 \times 5] + [5 \times 8] + [6 \times 6] + [7 \times 15]) \div 35 \text{ observations} = 5.8$

\*\*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:  $([6 \times 1] + [7 \times 34]) \div 35 \text{ observations} = 7.0$ . 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>3</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>4.7</b>
Positive Climate	1	2	0	2	7	6	3	21	5.0
Teacher Sensitivity	1	0	1	4	3	8	4	21	5.3
Regard for Student Perspectives	1	4	4	6	4	1	1	21	3.7
<b>Classroom Organization Domain</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>6.0</b>
Behavior Management	0	2	2	0	1	6	10	21	5.8
Productivity	1	1	2	0	5	1	11	21	5.6
Negative Climate**	0	0	0	1	2	1	17	21	6.6
<b>Instructional Support Domain</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>4.1</b>
Instructional Learning Formats	1	0	2	3	10	0	5	21	5.0
Content Understanding	0	3	3	4	6	0	5	21	4.6
Analysis and Inquiry	3	7	3	3	2	0	3	21	3.3
Quality of Feedback	3	2	4	2	5	3	2	21	4.0
Instructional Dialogue	7	0	6	0	2	3	3	21	3.5
<b>Student Engagement</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>5.2</b>

\*The district average is an average of the scores. For example, for Positive Climate, the district average is computed as:  $([1 \times 1] + [2 \times 2] + [4 \times 2] + [5 \times 7] + [6 \times 6] + [7 \times 3]) \div 21 \text{ observations} = 5.0$

\*\*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:  $([4 \times 1] + [5 \times 2] + [6 \times 1] + [7 \times 17]) \div 21 \text{ observations} = 6.6$

## 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>5</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>4.7</b>
Positive Climate	1	1	4	3	6	9	5	29	5.0
Teacher Sensitivity	0	3	1	3	4	13	5	29	5.3
Regard for Student Perspectives	4	3	9	2	6	4	1	29	3.7
<b>Classroom Organization Domain</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>6.3</b>
Behavior Management	1	0	2	1	3	4	18	29	6.1
Productivity	1	0	3	1	1	4	19	29	6.1
Negative Climate**	0	0	0	0	1	3	25	29	6.8
<b>Instructional Support Domain</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>3.9</b>
Instructional Learning Formats	0	5	3	4	12	3	2	29	4.4
Content Understanding	1	3	2	8	7	2	6	29	4.6
Analysis and Inquiry	7	8	2	2	5	2	3	29	3.3
Quality of Feedback	7	4	2	4	5	4	3	29	3.7
Instructional Dialogue	6	4	4	5	2	4	4	29	3.7
<b>Student Engagement</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>4.8</b>

\*The district average is an average of the scores. For example, for Positive Climate, the district average is computed as:  $([1 \times 1] + [2 \times 1] + [3 \times 4] + [4 \times 3] + [5 \times 6] + [6 \times 9] + [7 \times 5]) \div 29 \text{ observations} = 5.0$

\*\*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:  $([5 \times 1] + [6 \times 3] + [7 \times 25]) \div 29 \text{ observations} = 6.8$

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## Appendix C. Resources to Support Implementation of DESE’s District Standards and Indicators

**Table C1. 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.
<a href="#">Principal Induction and Mentoring Handbook</a>	A series of modules designed to support novice principals and their mentors in the development of antiracist leadership competencies aligned to the Professional Standards for Administrative Leadership.
<a href="#">Coherence Guidebook</a>	The guidebook illustrates a systems-level path toward deeper learning. School system leaders and teams may use the guidebook, along with its companion self-assessment, to articulate a vision of deeper learning, identify high-leverage instructional priorities, refine tiered supports, and leverage systems and structures—all in service of the articulated vision.

**Table C2. Resources to Support Curriculum and Instruction**

Resource	Description
<a href="#">Curriculum Matters MA</a> Webpage	A suite of resources to support the use of high-quality curriculum, including <a href="#">Implement MA</a> , our recommended four-phase process to prepare for, select, launch, and implement new high-quality instructional materials with key tasks and action steps. Also includes <a href="#">CURATE</a> , which convenes panels of Massachusetts teachers to review and rate evidence on the quality and alignment of specific curricular materials and then publishes their findings for educators across the Commonwealth to consult.
<a href="#">MA Curriculum Frameworks Resources</a>	Some of the most frequently used resources include “ <a href="#">What to Look For</a> ” classroom observation guides; the <a href="#">Family Guides</a> to help families understand what students are expected to know and do by the end of each grade; and the Standards Navigator tool and app, which can be used to explore the standards, see how they are connected to other standards, related student work samples, reference guides, and definitions.
<a href="#">Mass Literacy</a> Guide	An interactive site with research, information, and resources on evidence-based practices for early literacy that are culturally responsive and sustaining. There is current information on complex text, fluent word reading, language comprehension, students experiencing reading difficulties, equity in literacy, how to support a MTSS for ELA/literacy, and much more.
<a href="#">Coherence Guidebook</a>	The guidebook illustrates a systems-level path toward deeper learning. School system leaders and teams may use the guidebook, along with its companion self-assessment, to articulate a vision of deeper learning, identify high-leverage instructional priorities, refine tiered supports, and leverage systems and structures—all in service of the articulated vision.

**Table C3. 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 C4. Resources to Support Human Resources and Professional Development**

Resource	Description
<a href="#">Educator Evaluation Implementation Resources</a>	A suite of resources and practical tools that reflect feedback from educators on how to implement educator evaluation in support of more equitable, culturally responsive schools and classrooms for all. These resources include Focus Indicators, a subset of Indicators from the Classroom Teacher and School Level Administrator Rubrics that represent high-priority practices for the 2022-2023 school year.
<a href="#">Guide to Building Supportive Talent Systems</a>	Resources, considerations, and updates for recruiting, hiring, evaluating, and supporting educators and school staff, with a focus on racial equity.
<a href="#">Professional Learning Partner Guide</a>	A free, online, searchable list of vetted professional development providers who have expertise in specific sets of high-quality instructional materials. Schools and districts can use this guide to easily find PD providers to support the launch or implementation of high-quality instructional materials.

**Table C5. Resources to Support Student Support**

Resource	Description
<a href="#">Safe and Supportive Schools (SaSS) Framework and Self-Reflection Tool</a>	Based on <a href="#">Five Essential Elements</a> , these resources (see <a href="#">At-a-Glance overview</a> ) can help guide school- and district-based teams in creating safer and more supportive school climates and cultures. Through a phased process (with preliminary and deeper dive self-reflection options) teams can create plans based on local context and data and through examination of <a href="#">six areas</a> of school operation.
<a href="#">MTSS Blueprint</a>	This MTSS resource offers a framework for how school districts can build the necessary systems to ensure that all students receive a high-quality educational experience.
<a href="#">Prenatal through Young Adulthood Family Engagement Framework for Massachusetts</a>	This resource offers a roadmap for practitioners and families in health, human services, and education. A companion document is the <a href="#">Family, School and Community Partnership Fundamentals Self-Assessment Version 2.0</a> .
State and local student survey data such as <a href="#">Views of Climate and Learning</a> and <a href="#">Youth Risk Behavior Survey</a>	State and local student survey data can provide information about student experiences, strengths, and needs. They also can help prompt additional local inquiry through focus groups, advisories, and ongoing communication with students, families, staff, and partners to inform continuous improvement efforts.



**Table C6. Resources to Support Financial and Asset Management**

Resource	Description
<a href="#">Spending Money Wisely: Getting the Most From School District Budgets</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.
<a href="#">Resource Allocation and District Action Reports (RADAR)</a>	RADAR is a suite of innovative data reports, case studies, and other resources that provide a new approach to resource decisions.
<a href="#">Planning for Success (PfS)</a>	An inclusive, hands-on planning process designed to build district and school capacity and coherence while also building community understanding and support.
<a href="#">DESE spending comparisons website</a>	A clearinghouse of school finance data reports and other resources available to district users and the public.

## Appendix D. Enrollment, Attendance, Expenditures

**Table D1. Hudson Public Schools: Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity, 2022-2023**

Group	District	Percentage of total	State	Percentage of total
All	2,323	100.0%	913,735	100.0%
African American	63	2.7%	85,662	9.4%
Asian	35	1.5%	67,010	7.3%
Hispanic	417	18.0%	221,044	24.2%
Native American	3	0.1%	2,155	0.2%
White	1,734	74.6%	496,800	54.4%
Native Hawaiian	1	0.0%	787	0.1%
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	70	3.0%	40,277	4.4%

Note. As of October 1, 2022.

**Table D2. Hudson Public Schools: Student Enrollment by High Needs Populations, 2022-2023**

Group	District			State		
	N	Percentage of high needs	Percentage of district	N	Percentage of high needs	Percentage of state
All students with high needs	1,250	100.0%	53.0%	508,820	100.0%	55.1%
Students with disabilities	461	36.9%	19.6%	179,095	35.2%	19.4%
Low-income households	866	69.3%	37.3%	386,060	75.9%	42.3%
ELs and former ELs	368	29.4%	15.8%	110,554	21.7%	12.1%

Note. As of October 1, 2022. 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 2,357; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 923,349.

**Table D3. Hudson Public Schools: Chronic Absence<sup>a</sup> Rates by Student Group, 2020-2022**

Group	N (2022)	2020	2021	2022	State (2022)
All students	2,476	12.9	22.8	26.8	27.7
African American/Black	77	16.1	28.6	35.1	32.0
Asian	37	11.1	11.9	24.3	15.4
Hispanic/Latino	408	21.3	40.7	42.2	42.3
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	76	15.3	16.7	23.7	28.4
Native American	3	--	--	--	37.8
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	--	--	--	--	32.1
White	1,875	11.2	19.3	23.3	22.1
High needs	1,360	21.2	36.6	37.4	37.1
Low income <sup>b</sup>	1,032	--	--	40.9	40.6
ELs	416	21.2	39.0	41.8	39.9
Students w/disabilities	472	20.0	34.5	32.8	36.9

<sup>a</sup> The percentage of students absent 10 percent or more of their total number of student days of membership in a school. <sup>b</sup> Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a newly defined low-income student group. This change also affects the high needs group.

**Table D4. Hudson Public Schools: Expenditures, Chapter 70 State Aid, and Net School Spending Fiscal Years, 2020-2022**

	Fiscal Year 2020		Fiscal Year 2021		Fiscal Year 2022	
	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Estimated	Actual	Estimated
<b>Expenditures</b>						
From local appropriations for schools						
By school committee	\$39,043,302	\$38,545,437	\$39,349,089	\$39,091,291	\$40,449,999	\$41,258,837
By municipality	\$14,559,744	\$14,579,508	\$14,063,031	\$14,563,558	\$15,621,536	\$15,050,224
Total from local appropriations	\$53,603,046	\$53,124,945	\$53,412,120	\$53,654,849	\$56,071,536	\$56,309,061
From revolving funds and grants	—	\$4,016,748	—	\$5,500,749	—	\$5,464,551
Total expenditures	—	\$57,141,693	—	\$59,155,598	—	\$61,773,612
<b>Chapter 70 aid to education program</b>						
Chapter 70 state aid <sup>a</sup>	—	\$12,020,446	—	\$12,020,446	—	\$12,095,806
Required local contribution	—	\$17,734,729	—	\$18,666,759	—	\$18,931,449
Required net school spending <sup>b</sup>	—	\$29,755,175	—	\$30,687,205	—	\$31,027,255
Actual net school spending	—	\$44,732,157	—	\$45,589,916	—	\$47,582,288
Over/under required (\$)	—	\$14,976,982	—	\$14,902,711	—	\$16,555,033
Over/under required (%)	—	50.3%	—	48.6%	—	53.4%

Note. Data as of February 10, 2023, and sourced from FY2022 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 D5. Hudson Public Schools: Expenditures Per In-District Pupil, Fiscal Years 2020-2022**

Expenditure category	2020	2021	2022
Administration	\$689	\$668	\$740
Instructional leadership (district and school)	\$1,016	\$1,090	\$1,263
Teachers	\$7,103	\$8,091	\$8,343
Other teaching services	\$1,803	\$2,034	\$2,251
Professional development	\$414	\$388	\$287
Instructional materials, equipment, and technology	\$456	\$494	\$471
Guidance, counseling, and testing services	\$754	\$867	\$923
Pupil services	\$1,234	\$1,515	\$1,834
Operations and maintenance	\$1,284	\$1,828	\$1,600
Insurance, retirement, and other fixed costs	\$2,184	\$2,331	\$2,360
Total expenditures per in-district pupil	\$16,938	\$19,306	\$20,073

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 E. Student Performance Data

The COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact on the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years. 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. Hudson Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Achievement by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2019-2022**

Group	N (2022)	Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations				Percentage not meeting expectations			
		2019	2021	2022	State (2022)	2019	2021	2022	State (2022)
All	1,119	51	42	35	41	11	16	17	17
African American/Black	25	21	18	12	26	37	41	32	27
Asian	16	85	74	69	63	0	0	6	8
Hispanic/Latino	184	31	22	19	22	21	27	24	31
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	33	50	41	52	48	20	18	18	14
Native American	1	—	—	—	29	—	—	—	25
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	—	43	—	—	—	17
White	860	53	46	38	48	9	14	14	11
High needs	617	28	22	19	24	23	29	26	28
Low income <sup>a</sup>	461	—	—	20	24	—	—	25	28
ELs and former ELs	225	26	18	12	20	22	36	35	34
Students w/disabilities	230	13	13	11	11	40	39	38	46

<sup>a</sup> Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](#). This change also affects the high needs group.

**Table E2. Hudson Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2019-2022**

Group	N (2022)	Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations				Percentage not meeting expectations			
		2019	2021	2022	State (2022)	2019	2021	2022	State (2022)
All	149	64	63	57	58	5	11	13	8
African American/Black	2	—	—	—	41	—	—	—	13
Asian	5	—	—	—	79	—	—	—	4
Hispanic/Latino	14	—	33	29	38	—	29	29	17
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	2	—	—	—	62	—	—	—	6
Native American	—	—	—	—	53	—	—	—	8
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	—	45	—	—	—	16
White	126	66	67	60	65	3	9	10	4
High needs	66	24	37	29	38	16	22	27	15
Low income <sup>a</sup>	46	—	—	35	40	—	—	26	14
ELs and former ELs	16	6	13	25	21	25	50	31	30
Students w/disabilities	34	11	26	9	20	16	24	47	26

<sup>a</sup> Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](#). This change also affects the high needs group.

**Table E3. Hudson Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2019-2022**

Group	N (2022)	Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations				Percentage not meeting expectations			
		2019	2021	2022	State (2022)	2019	2021	2022	State (2022)
All	1,114	47	25	27	39	12	23	17	17
African American/Black	25	16	5	8	19	37	41	36	31
Asian	16	85	68	50	69	4	5	0	6
Hispanic/Latino	183	26	13	11	18	26	41	31	32
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	33	50	31	39	44	23	28	18	16
Native American	1	—	—	—	27	—	—	—	23
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	—	39	—	—	—	19
White	856	49	27	30	47	10	19	13	11
High needs	614	25	11	14	22	25	39	28	28
Low income <sup>a</sup>	459	—	—	14	20	—	—	27	29
ELs and former ELs	223	23	9	10	21	31	48	35	32
Students w/disabilities	231	12	7	9	12	43	52	43	45

<sup>a</sup> Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](#). This change also affects the high needs group.



**Table E4. Hudson Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2019-2022**

Group	N (2022)	Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations				Percentage not meeting expectations			
		2019	2021	2022	State (2022)	2019	2021	2022	State (2022)
All	150	61	49	53	50	5	14	14	10
African American/Black	2	—	—	—	26	—	—	—	20
Asian	5	—	—	—	78	—	—	—	4
Hispanic/Latino	15	—	19	20	26	—	48	47	21
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	2	—	—	—	53	—	—	—	10
Native American	—	—	—	—	37	—	—	—	16
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	—	48	—	—	—	19
White	126	62	55	57	59	2	9	9	6
High needs	67	25	17	27	28	16	27	30	19
Low income <sup>a</sup>	46	—	—	30	29	—	—	26	19
ELs and former ELs	17	25	9	12	17	13	48	53	32
Students w/disabilities	34	6	6	12	15	28	41	50	33

<sup>a</sup> Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](#). This change also affects the high needs group.

**Table E5. Hudson Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS Science Achievement by Student Group, Grades 5 and 8, 2019-2022**

Group	N (2022)	Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations				Percentage not meeting expectations			
		2019	2021	2022	State (2022)	2019	2021	2022	State (2022)
All	384	44	35	36	42	13	18	19	18
African American/Black	6	—	—	—	21	—	—	—	31
Asian	6	—	—	—	65	—	—	—	8
Hispanic/Latino	61	36	18	13	20	33	31	31	33
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	13	62	29	46	48	15	43	23	15
Native American	—	—	—	—	28	—	—	—	25
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	—	41	—	—	—	20
White	298	45	37	40	52	9	14	16	10
High needs	199	25	16	20	24	25	31	30	29
Low income <sup>a</sup>	150	—	—	20	23	—	—	31	30
ELs and former ELs	69	19	7	9	18	36	44	46	37
Students w/disabilities	73	15	11	12	15	40	36	44	44

<sup>a</sup> Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](#). This change also affects the high needs group.

**Table E6. Hudson Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS Science Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2019-2022**

Group	N (2022)	Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations				Percentage not meeting expectations			
		2019	2021	2022	State (2022)	2019	2021	2022	State (2022)
All	139	—	—	53	47	—	—	20	14
African American/Black	—	—	—	—	25	—	—	—	25
Asian	5	—	—	—	70	—	—	—	6
Hispanic/Latino	12	—	—	25	23	—	—	58	28
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	1	—	—	—	51	—	—	—	12
Native American	—	—	—	—	38	—	—	—	14
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	—	45	—	—	—	23
White	121	—	—	55	56	—	—	16	8
High needs	59	—	—	27	26	—	—	44	24
Low income <sup>a</sup>	42	—	—	33	26	—	—	40	25
ELs and former ELs	15	—	—	13	13	—	—	60	43
Students w/disabilities	30	—	—	7	16	—	—	67	37

<sup>a</sup> Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](#). This change also affects the high needs group.

**Table E7. Hudson Public Schools: ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile in Grades 3-8, 2019 and 2022**

Group	N (2022)	2019	2022	State (2022)
All students	872	46.5	48.5	49.8
African American/Black	20	—	47.6	48.8
Asian	13	—	—	58.5
Hispanic/Latino	135	47.0	48.6	46.5
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	23	49.2	43.0	51.5
Native American	1	—	—	46.2
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	51.7
White	680	46.3	48.5	50.0
High needs	469	43.9	46.3	46.7
Low income <sup>a</sup>	349	—	46.8	46.5
ELs and former ELs	172	49.3	47.0	47.7
Students w/disabilities	179	40.4	42.5	41.8

<sup>a</sup> Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](#). This change also affects the high needs group.

**Table E8. Hudson Public Schools: ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile in Grade 10, 2019 and 2022**

Group	N (2022)	2019	2022	State (2022)
All students	126	43.8	47.0	50.0
African American/Black	2	—	—	49.8
Asian	4	—	—	56.0
Hispanic/Latino	11	—	—	47.6
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	—	—	—	50.6
Native American	—	—	—	54.1
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	49.5
White	109	43.0	46.1	50.1
High needs	45	39.8	47.6	47.7
Low income <sup>a</sup>	32	—	53.0	47.2
ELs and former ELs	8	—	—	50.5
Students w/disabilities	22	—	33.6	45.1

<sup>a</sup> Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](#). This change also affects the high needs group.

**Table E9. Hudson Public Schools: Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile in Grades 3-8, 2019 and 2022**

Group	N (2022)	2019	2022	State (2022)
All students	863	40.4	44.4	49.9
African American/Black	20	—	43.9	47.0
Asian	13	—	—	59.8
Hispanic/Latino	132	37.0	43.3	46.4
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	23	48.5	45.2	51.0
Native American	1	—	—	49.5
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	49.9
White	674	40.4	44.7	50.4
High needs	461	38.6	44.0	47.1
Low income <sup>a</sup>	342	—	43.6	46.4
ELs and former ELs	167	41.5	43.8	48.6
Students w/disabilities	178	37.8	41.5	43.3

<sup>a</sup> Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](#). This change also affects the high needs group.

**Table E10. Hudson Public Schools: Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile in Grade 10, 2019 and 2022**

Group	N (2022)	2019	2022	State (2022)
All students	126	44.8	50.3	50.0
African American/Black	2	–	–	45.6
Asian	4	–	–	57.3
Hispanic/Latino	11	–	–	44.4
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	–	–	–	50.0
Native American	–	–	–	46.6
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	–	–	–	41.2
White	109	45.3	50.1	51.6
High needs	45	38.4	50.3	46.7
Low income <sup>a</sup>	32	–	49.8	45.6
ELs and former ELs	8	–	–	48.9
Students w/disabilities	22	–	43.8	47.3

<sup>a</sup> Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](#). This change also affects the high needs group.

**Table E11. Hudson Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS ELA Achievement by Grade, 2019-2022**

Grade	N (2022)	Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations				Percentage not meeting expectations			
		2019	2021	2022	State (2022)	2019	2021	2022	State (2022)
3	196	57	47	38	44	5	8	10	15
4	201	52	53	30	38	7	12	15	16
5	187	49	39	33	41	9	9	11	13
6	168	47	39	41	41	18	28	20	22
7	168	49	36	38	41	14	22	20	19
8	199	51	36	31	42	14	21	25	18
3-8	1,119	51	42	35	41	11	16	17	17
10	149	64	63	57	58	5	11	13	8

**Table E12. Hudson Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Grade, 2019-2022**

Grade	N (2022)	Percentages meeting or exceeding expectations				Percentage not meeting expectations			
		2019	2021	2022	State (2022)	2019	2021	2022	State (2022)
3	196	59	29	34	41	7	26	21	20
4	199	55	35	26	42	9	21	18	17
5	188	39	21	23	36	16	18	16	16
6	168	44	13	29	42	11	29	11	15
7	168	50	31	29	37	15	19	17	19
8	195	35	22	24	36	15	27	16	17
3-8	1,114	47	25	27	39	12	23	17	17
10	150	61	49	53	50	5	14	14	10

**Table E13. Hudson Public Schools: Next-Generation MCAS Science Achievement by Grade, 2019-2022**

Grade	N (2022)	Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations				Percentage not meeting expectations			
		2019	2021	2022	State (2022)	2019	2021	2022	State (2022)
5	188	50	39	36	43	10	17	18	18
8	196	37	31	36	42	15	19	20	18
5 and 8	384	44	35	36	42	13	18	19	18
10	139	—	—	53	47	—	—	20	14

Note. Grade 10 results for the spring 2021 STE (Science and Technology/Engineering test) are not provided because students in the class of 2023 were not required to take the STE test. Information about the 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 E14. Hudson Public Schools: ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile by Grade, 2019 and 2022**

Grade	N (2022)	2019	2022	State (2022)
3	—	—	—	—
4	189	48.4	45.1	50.0
5	180	47.0	44.7	49.9
6	158	48.0	56.6	49.8
7	160	48.6	53.5	49.7
8	185	40.3	44.2	49.7
3-8	872	46.5	48.5	49.8
10	126	43.8	47.0	50.0

**Table E15. Hudson Public Schools: Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile by Grade, 2019 and 2022**

Grade	N (2022)	2019	2022	State (2022)
3	—	—	—	—
4	186	46.0	35.2	50.0
5	178	25.0	34.7	50.0
6	158	44.9	51.6	49.8
7	160	58.9	60.8	49.9
8	181	28.0	42.6	49.8
3-8	863	40.4	44.4	49.9
10	126	44.8	50.3	50.0

**Table E16. Hudson Public Schools: Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Student Group, 2020-2022**

Group	N (2022)	2020	2021	2022	State (2022)
All students	168	90.1	83.1	87.5	90.1
African American/Black	7	—	—	85.7	86.2
Asian	1	—	—	—	96.2
Hispanic/Latino	27	78.3	45.5	74.1	81.2
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	4	—	—	—	88.7
Native American	—	—	—	—	82.2
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	1	—	—	—	81.3
White	128	92.0	88.9	90.6	93.2
High needs	88	77.1	64.6	77.3	83.9
Low income <sup>a</sup>	73	81.0	64.3	76.7	83.2
ELs	21	68.2	53.8	57.1	73.1
Students w/disabilities	29	66.7	58.1	65.5	78.0

<sup>a</sup> Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](#). This change also affects the high needs group.

**Table E17. Hudson Public Schools: Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Student Group, 2019-2021**

Group	N (2021)	2019	2020	2021	State (2021)
All students	172	90.1	92.7	87.2	91.8
African American/Black	1	—	—	—	88.1
Asian	1	100	—	—	97.0
Hispanic/Latino	22	76.5	82.6	50.0	84.0
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	3	—	—	—	91.2
Native American	1	—	—	—	84.1
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	—	87.7
White	144	90.9	94.4	93.1	94.4
High needs	82	82.4	83.1	73.2	85.8
Low income <sup>a</sup>	70	78.9	85.7	72.9	85.1
ELs	26	68.8	77.3	65.4	78.0
Students w/disabilities	31	80.6	78.8	71.0	80.6

<sup>a</sup> Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](#). This change also affects the high needs group.

**Table E18. Hudson Public Schools: In-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2020-2022**

Group	N (2022)	2020	2021	2022	State (2022)
All students	2,463	0.9	0.2	1.2	1.6
African American/Black	77	5.5	—	2.6	2.2
Asian	38	—	—	—	0.4
Hispanic/Latino	412	1.0	0.5	1.7	2.1
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	74	—	—	—	1.8
Native American	3	—	—	—	2.4
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	0	—	—	—	1.9
White	1,859	0.8	0.1	1.0	1.4
High needs	1,357	1.3	0.2	2.1	2.2
Low income <sup>a</sup>	1,027	—	—	2.2	2.3
ELs	420	0.9	—	1.4	1.4
Students w/disabilities	471	1.8	0.4	3.4	2.8

<sup>a</sup> Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](#). This change also affects the high needs group.



**Table E19. Hudson Public Schools: Out-of-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2020-2022**

Group	N (2022)	2020	2021	2022	State (2022)
All students	2,463	2.2	0.6	4.1	3.1
African American/Black	77	12.7	—	10.4	6.2
Asian	38	—	—	—	0.7
Hispanic/Latino	412	3.3	1.3	6.8	4.9
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	74	—	—	—	3.5
Native American	3	—	—	—	4.3
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	0	—	—	—	3.6
White	1,859	1.7	0.4	3.4	2.1
High needs	1,357	3.2	1.1	6.1	4.6
Low income <sup>a</sup>	1,027	—	—	7.0	5.2
ELs	420	1.8	—	3.1	3.5
Students w/disabilities	471	4.2	2.2	7.9	5.8

<sup>a</sup> Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](#). This change also affects the high needs group.

**Table E20. Hudson Public Schools: Dropout Rates by Student Group, 2020-2022**

Group	N (2022)	2020	2021	2022	State (2022)
All students	634	0.9	4.2	2.7	2.1
African American/Black	19	5.9	7.1	0.0	2.8
Asian	10	—	0.0	0.0	0.6
Hispanic/Latino	81	1.2	17.8	8.6	4.3
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	18	0.0	6.7	5.6	2.4
Native American	1	—	—	—	4.3
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	—	1.2
White	505	0.7	1.9	1.8	1.3
High needs	295	1.6	9.6	5.4	3.6
Low income <sup>a</sup>	225	2.1	8.6	5.8	3.8
ELs	49	0.0	23.3	10.2	7.8
Students w/disabilities	103	2.2	4.9	6.8	3.4

<sup>a</sup> Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](#). This change also affects the high needs group.

**Table E21. Hudson Public Schools: Advanced Coursework Completion Rates by Student Group, 2020-2022**

Group	N (2022)	2020	2021	2022	State (2022)
All students	318	69.2	68.9	72.6	64.9
African American/Black	11	66.7	62.5	63.6	55.5
Asian	3	—	—	—	84.9
Hispanic/Latino	42	62.1	28.9	59.5	49.2
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	9	—	66.7	77.8	66.1
Native American	1	—	—	—	50.0
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	—	—	—	—	65.4
White	252	69.9	75.4	75.4	69.5
High needs	141	38.8	42.2	48.2	49.1
Low income <sup>a</sup>	109	41.9	48.1	50.5	50.1
ELs	24	6.3	5.6	12.5	30.0
Students w/disabilities	43	30.0	27.8	37.2	34.3

<sup>a</sup> Since fall 2021, DESE no longer reports data for the economically disadvantaged student group and instead reports data for a [newly defined low-income student group](#). This change also affects the high needs group.