# Leominster Public Schools

Comprehensive District Review Report

March 2024

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Office of District Reviews and Monitoring

135 Santilli Highway

Everett, MA 02149

781-338-3000

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

American Institutes for Research

Education Systems and Policy

201 Jones Road, Suite 100
Waltham, MA 02451

202-403-5000

[www.air.org](http://www.air.org)



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Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Russell D. Johnston

Acting Commissioner

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Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

135 Santilli Highway, Everett MA 02149

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

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

## Executive Summary

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 Leominster Public Schools (hereafter, Leominster) in March 2024. Data collection activities associated with the review included interviews, focus groups, and document reviews and were 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.[[1]](#footnote-2)

Four observers, who focused primarily on instruction in the classroom, visited Leominster during the week of March 25, 2024. The observers conducted 91 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,[[2]](#footnote-3) guided all classroom observations in the district. These observations used the three grade-band levels of the CLASS protocols: K-3, Upper Elementary (4-5), and Secondary (6‑12). Overall, for the K-5 grade band, instructional observations suggest generally strong evidence of emotional support, classroom organization, and mixed evidence of consistently strong student engagement (Grades 4-5), and rigorous instructional support. For the 6-8 and 9-12 grade band, instructional observations provide mixed evidence of consistently strong emotional support, classroom organization, student engagement, and rigorous instructional support but strong classroom organization.

### [Leadership and Governance](#_Leadership_and_Governance)

Leominster exemplifies effective communication and collaboration between its superintendent and the school committee, facilitating alignment with strategic goals during the superintendent’s evaluation process. This process includes the regular participation of student representatives in school committee meetings to provide valuable input. Furthermore, the district actively monitors various data points to allocate instructional resources that support ongoing improvements across schools. A comprehensive five-year strategic plan that serves as a blueprint for districtwide initiatives guides this approach. In addition, school leaders strategically align their individual school improvement plans with the overarching district goals, ensuring coherence and synergy in educational initiatives. Leaders also work with Attuned Education Partners, which supports aligned observation tools across buildings and builds principal capacity. Enhancing parental involvement by providing more meaningful opportunities for parents to contribute to district and school improvement planning processes is an area for growth. Moreover, Leominster maintains a transparent and collaborative budget development process, involving district leaders, school committee members, and city officials, to ensure fiscal responsibility and alignment with educational priorities. These coordinated efforts underscore the district’s commitment to effective governance, continuous improvement, and community engagement in advancing educational outcomes.

### [Curriculum and Instruction](#_Curriculum_and_Instruction)

Leominster demonstrates a strong commitment to curriculum quality as evidenced by positive feedback from elementary teachers regarding the interdisciplinary opportunities in the Wonders 2020 curriculum. The district established a rigorous process for reviewing curricular materials and prioritizes selecting high-quality resources endorsed by CURATE[[3]](#footnote-4) and EdReports. Moreover, the district actively engages teachers in the curriculum selection process, although more effort is necessary to make sure that teachers feel that their input is meaningful and influential in shaping classroom instruction. In terms of classroom instruction, Leominster supports students’ social-emotional learning through programs such as Second Step and culturally responsive teaching practices. This approach aims to create an inclusive and supportive learning environment across schools; however, more structures for systematically incorporating culturally responsive teaching represent a growth area, as is establishing a districtwide vision for instruction. At the high school level, Leominster offers a wide range of courses and emphasizes career readiness through well-structured pathways provided by the Center for Technical Education Innovation (CTEi). Efforts are underway to enhance equitable access to these opportunities, particularly on expanding access to popular vocational programs (“shops”) through the innovation center. These initiatives reflect the district’s dedication to providing comprehensive educational experiences that meet the diverse needs of its student population.

### [Assessment](#_Assessment)

Leominster employs multiple assessment tools to monitor student development in ELA and mathematics, facilitating the identification of student needs and progress. The CTEi school uses specific data points to track students’ advancement toward vocational goals, a process that is still emerging. Moreover, the district employs comprehensive data analysis to address both academic and nonacademic student needs effectively, emphasizing collaborative efforts among general education teachers, special education teachers, and English as a second language specialists through structured meetings such as data teams and professional learning communities (PLCs), although more could be done to give general education and English learner (EL) teachers more meaningful time to collaborate. Furthermore, Leominster should focus on promoting consistent communication with families across all educational levels—elementary, middle, and high school. The district aims to foster transparency and engagement, keeping families well informed about their children’s educational progress and opportunities within the district, although some gaps still exist in this area.

### [Human Resources and Professional Development](#_Human_Resources_and)

Leominster demonstrates a proactive approach to human resources management by using Open Architects for tracking staff data such as attendance, scheduling, evaluations, and licensures. Implementing an online system for maintaining all employee records is an area for growth. The district collaborates with Fitchburg State University to recruit teachers and aims to enhance diversity within the teaching and leadership workforce, particularly targeting hard-to-fill positions such as speech language pathologists and occupational therapists. Partnerships with organizations such as BC Lynch and Attuned bolster administrative capacity and focus on building leadership skills among school administrators. Teachers reported positive experiences regarding the quality of feedback received, both formally and informally, to enhance their teaching practices; however, ensuring that teacher and administrator evaluations include feedback on areas for improvement is a growth area for Leominster. exist in the evaluation process. Content-based specialists offer nonevaluative classroom support to teachers, and Leominster has a well-defined mentorship program designed to support new educators in the district. Professional development opportunities are available, although fostering meaningful engagement through the professional development committee is still an area for improvement. The district also promotes staff professional growth through external partnership pathways and encourages participation in teacher leadership activities.

### [Student Support](#_Student_Support)

Leominster has implemented positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) systems across all elementary schools, with ongoing efforts to expand collaborative problem-solving approaches. The district is working to actively disaggregate discipline data to systematically address and improve student outcomes with an equity lens. In addition, each school has problem-solving teams such as teacher assistance teams (TATs) for academic supports and student support teams (SSTs) and student assistance teams (SATs) for social-emotional learning supports, ensuring comprehensive student assistance. The elementary and middle schools integrate structured support mechanisms into their schedules through initiatives such as the What I Need (WIN) block, providing dedicated time for additional student support as needed. The district has implemented Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions for both academic and nonacademic needs, with a focus on enhancing formal Tier 1 academic supports, particularly in the secondary schools. Efforts also are underway to improve communication to ensure that students and parents know about the available Tier 1 supports within the district. Recognizing the diversity of its community, Leominster prioritizes communication with families across multiple languages, supported by bilingual parent liaisons at each school and a parent information center. Strong community partnerships further enhance wraparound services for students. Moreover, Leominster is working to ensure the accuracy of online translations to effectively support families who primarily speak languages other than English at home. These initiatives underscore the district’s commitment to inclusivity, support, and effective communication in fostering a positive learning environment for all students.

### [Financial and Asset Management](#_Financial_and_Asset)

The district is taking proactive steps to align its budget priorities with its strategic plan to allow equitable access for all students. The district has allocated funding for purchasing all school supplies, ensuring equitable access for all students. Collaborating with the city to address transportation challenges for students after school hours and working to enable equal access to support services and extracurricular activities regardless of a student’s circumstances is an area for growth. Effective capital planning and facility maintenance also are priorities for the district. Recent building updates across the district demonstrate an investment in maintaining and improving the educational infrastructure. Open communication channels exist between city leaders, district administrators, and school principals to regularly discuss the budget status and priorities. This cross-stakeholder collaboration helps align budget decisions with broader strategic goals and community needs.

## Leominster Public Schools: District Review Overview

### Purpose

Conducted under Chapter 15, Section 55A of the Massachusetts General Laws, comprehensive district reviews support local school districts in establishing or strengthening a cycle of continuous improvement. Reviews 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 Leominster occurred during the week of March 25, 2024. The site visit included 19 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 110 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 18 elementary school teachers and 24 secondary teachers; two student focus groups with eight middle school and six high school students; and one family focus group with nine parents.

The site team also conducted 91 observations of classroom instruction in 10 schools. Certified team members conducted instructional observations using the Teachstone CLASS protocol.

### District Profile

At the time of the district review, Paula Deacon was the superintendent of Leominster, serving in this role since her appointment in 2017. She receives support from an assistant superintendent/human resources director, the director of teaching and learning, the director of accountability and student achievement, the business manager, the director of facilities, the EL director, the director of pupil personnel and special education, and more. The school committee, consisting of nine members who are elected for three-year terms, governs the district. At the time of the district review, Superintendent Deacon announced her upcoming retirement, and the district was searching for a new superintendent.

In the 2023-2024 school year, there were 440 teachers in the district, with 6,012 students enrolled in the district’s 13 schools. Table 1 provides an overview of student enrollment by school.

Table 1. Schools, Type, Grades Served, and Enrollment, 2023-2024

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| School  | Type | Grades served | Enrollment |
| Bennett Preschool | Elementary | PK | 89 |
| Lincoln Preschool | Elementary | PK | 40 |
| Priest Street Elementary School | Elementary | K | 139 |
| Fall Brook Elementary School | Elementary | K-5 | 632 |
| Frances Drake Elementary School  | Elementary | K-5 | 485 |
| Johnny Appleseed Elementary School | Elementary | K-5 | 655 |
| Northwest Elementary School | Elementary | 1-5 | 669 |
| Samoset Middle School | Middle | 6-8 | 468 |
| Sky View Middle School | Middle | 6-8 | 874 |
| Center for Technical Education Innovation | High | 9-12 | 807 |
| Leominster Center for Excellence | High | 9-12 | 65 |
| Leominster High School | High | 9-12 | 1,073 |
| Leominster Academy | High | 10-12 | 16 |
| Total |  |  | 6,012 |

*Note.* Enrollment data as of October 1, 2023.

Between 2021 and 2024, overall student enrollment increased by 153 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.

In fiscal year 2022, the total in-district per-pupil expenditure for Leominster was $15,127, which is $3,478 less than the average in-district per-pupil expenditure in districts with similar demographics ($18,605), and $1,884 less than the average in-district per-pupil expenditures in districts of similar wealth ($17,011).[[4]](#footnote-5) In-district per pupil expenditures for Leominster were $4,427 less than the average state spending per pupil ($19,554). 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.

### School and Student Performance

The following section includes selected highlights regarding student performance in Leominster. This section is meant to provide a brief synopsis of data, not a comprehensive analysis of district performance data. For additional details and data on district performance, please see Appendix E and [School and District Profiles (mass.edu)](https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/general/general.aspx?topNavID=1&leftNavId=100&orgcode=01530000&orgtypecode=5).

#### Achievement

* In Grades 3-8, the percentage of all students meeting or exceeding expectations on the 2023 Next Generation Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) in ELA, mathematics, and science was lower than the state rate.
	+ ELA: the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations was 35 percent and was 7 percentage points lower than the state rate of 42 percent.
	+ Mathematics: the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations was 36 percent and was 5 percentage points lower than the state rate of 41 percent.
	+ Science: the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations in grades 5 and 8 was 36 percent and was 5 percentage points lower than the state rate of 41 percent.
* In Grade 10, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on the 2023 Next Generation MCAS was lower than the state rate for each student group in ELA and mathematics, excluding Asian students (results which are reported below).
	+ ELA: the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations was 1 to 19 percentage points lower than the state rate for each student group.
	+ Mathematics: the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations was 2 to 15 percentage points lower than the state rate for each student group.
* African American/Black students in Grades 3-8 met or exceeded expectations on the 2023 Next Generation MCAS at higher rates than their statewide peers.
	+ ELA: the percentage of African American/Black students meeting or exceeding expectations was 37 percent and was 11 percentage points higher than the state rate of 26 percent.
	+ Mathematics: the percentage of African American/Black students meeting or exceeding expectations was 33 percent and was 12 percentage points higher than the state rate of 21 percent.
	+ Science: the percentage of African American/Black students in Grades 5 and 8 meeting or exceeding expectations was 31 percent and was 10 percentage points higher than the state rate of 21 percent.
* Asian students in Leominster met or exceeded expectations on the 2023 Next Generation MCAS at lower rates than their statewide peers.
	+ ELA: the percentage of Asian students meeting or exceeding expectations was 21 percentage points lower in Grades 3-8 and 29 percentage points lower in Grade 10.
	+ Mathematics: the percentage of Asian students meeting or exceeding expectations was 30 percentage points lower in both Grades 3-8 and Grade 10.
	+ Science: the percentage of Asian students meeting or exceeding expectations was 28 percentage points lower in Grades 5 and 8 and 44 percentage points lower in Grade 10.

#### Growth

* In Grades 3-8, in ELA and mathematics, student growth percentiles (SGP)[[5]](#footnote-6) were typical in 2023 for each student group with reportable data.
* In Grade 10, SGPs were low for high needs students and ELs and former EL students in ELA and mathematics, and low for students from low-income backgrounds in ELA.
* Students with disabilities in Grade 10 had very low SGPs in ELA and low SGPs in mathematics.

#### Other Indicators

* Four-year graduation rates in 2022 in Leominster were higher for every student group with reportable data than their statewide peers by 1.3 percentage points to 11.3 percentage points.
* Dropout rates in Leominster in 2022 were lower than state rate for every student group with reportable data by 0.2 to 2.8 percentage points.
* Leominster’s in-school suspension rates in 2023 were more than double the state’s rates for every student group with reportable data.
* Leominster’s out-of-school suspension rates are higher than the state’s rates for every student group with reportable data, except for African American/Black students.
* Leominster ELs and former ELs completed advanced coursework at a rate of 4.4 percent, which is significantly lower than the statewide rate of 31.7 percent.

### Classroom Observations

Four observers, who focused primarily on instruction in the classroom, visited Leominster during the week of March 25, 2024. The observers conducted 91 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, plus 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 Leominster, 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 for individual dimensions within those domains. The full report of findings from observations conducted in Leominster is in Appendix B, and summary results are in Tables 17, 18, and 19 in this appendix.

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

* Emotional Support. Ratings were in the high-middle range for the K-5 grade band (5.4) and in the middle range for the 6-8 and 9-12 grade bands (4.5 and 4.1, respectively).
* Classroom Organization. Ratings were in the high range for all grade bands (6.2 for K-5, 6.3 for 6-8, and 6.0 for 9-12).
* Instructional Support. Ratings were in the low-middle range for the K-5 and 9-12 grade bands (3.5 and 3.2, respectively) and in the middle range for the 6-8 grade band (4.0).
* Student Engagement. For Grades 4 and up, where student engagement was measured as an independent domain, ratings were in the middle range for all grades bands (5.0 for K-5, 4.6 for 6-8, and 3.8 for 9-12).

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

## Leadership and Governance

At the time of the district review, Paula Deacon was the superintendent of Leominster, serving in this role since her appointment in 2017. However, as of summer 2024, Paula Deacon has retired, and the new superintendent is Robin Desmond. The superintendent receives support from the district leadership and cabinet, which consists of the assistant superintendent for human resources, the administrator for accountability and student achievement, the administrator for teaching and learning/EL learning, the special education director, the business manager, and the director of pupil services including Family Information Center.

With support from these district officials, the superintendent works closely with Leominster’s elected school committee members. The school committee has nine members, each serving a three-year term. The main responsibilities of the school committee include hiring and evaluating the superintendent and overseeing budget and policy decisions. The school committee meets twice per month with district leadership and community members to discuss the district’s needs. In addition, there are several subcommittees within the school committee related to budget, policy, contract negotiations, and other pertinent areas of focus. The superintendent and the school committee work closely with one another and the city mayor, who is the designated chair of the school committee as part of his mayoral responsibilities. At the time of the district review, the school committee had two foci: (a) hiring a new superintendent for the district given the current superintendent’s summer 2024 retirement and (b) renegotiating the educators’ association contract, which, at the time of the review, was set to expire in June 2024.

At the school level, all five elementary schools, two middle schools, and two of the high schools (Leominster High School and the CTEi) have a principal and at least one assistant principal. The other two high schools, Leominster Center for Excellence and Leominster Academy, have only a principal as the leader given their small size. All school principals receive support from the district leadership team and two external partners: Lynch Leadership Academy through Boston College and Attuned Education Partners. These two partners help build the capacity of all school leaders.

At the time of the district review, the district was in year four of its five-year strategic plan, which included six priority strategic goals. Likewise, each school has a school improvement plan that aligns with the district’s improvement plan. District leadership collaborates through weekly cabinet meetings on the state of the district’s strategic plan and communicates relevant components to school leadership.

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 |
| --- | --- | --- |
| [School committee governance](#_School_Committee_Governance) | * Strong processes for communication and collaboration exist between the superintendent and the school committee.
* The evaluation of the superintendent closely aligns with the district’s strategic goals.
* School committee meetings regularly include two student representatives to provide their input and perspectives.
 |  |
| [District and school leadership](#_District_and_School) | * The district monitors a variety of data and allocates instructional supports to assist schools in continuous improvement efforts.
* The Attuned partnership works closely with school and district leaders to align observations across buildings and monitor progress towards district benchmarks.
 |  |
| [District and school improvement planning](#_District_and_School_1) | * The district has a five-year strategic plan that guides the district’s work moving forward.
* School leaders intentionally align their school improvement plans with the district’s strategic plan.
 | * Providing more meaningful opportunities for parent involvement in district and school improvement planning
 |
| [Budget development](#_Budget_Development) | * The district has a clearly defined budget development process that includes close collaboration with district leaders, school committee members, and city officials.
 |  |

### School Committee Governance

The school committee’s overarching responsibilities include hiring and evaluating the superintendent annually, overseeing policy decisions in the district, and overseeing financial decisions in the district. At the time of the district review, Leominster was in search of a new superintendent given the current superintendent’s summer 2024 retirement, so the school committee had a subcommittee dedicated to the superintendent search. However, as of May 2024, Paula Deacon retired, and the new superintendent is Robin Desmond. Overall, district leaders and teachers agreed in interviews that the school committee mainly lets the superintendent and district leaders lead the district. As district leadership explained, “99% of the time, [district leadership] gets the [desired] votes to pass their preferred initiatives.”

The school committee mainly oversees the superintendent’s leadership through the superintendent’s yearly evaluation. Evaluations are aligned to DESE’s four Standards of Effective Administrative Leadership and monitors the progress of the superintendent’s established yearly goals, which closely align with the district’s strategic goals. As a district leader explained, “[The superintendent’s goals] come right from that document [the strategic plan].” This close alignment of the superintendent’s yearly goals with the strategic plan is a strength of the district. According to district leaders, after establishing the goals, there is a midyear check-in and then an end-of-year evaluation. For the end-of-year evaluation, all school committee members review the goals and provide feedback, and all this feedback is part of the final evaluation. As described in a public-facing school committee presentation for the 2022-2023 school year, the superintendent received a rating of proficient on the evaluation last year (on a scale of unsatisfactory, needs improvement, proficient, and exemplary). However, the superintendent’s evaluation is not publicly available on the district’s website.

Overall, the school committee members, the mayor (the chair of the school committee), and the superintendent have strong processes in place that facilitate collaboration, which is a strength of the district. As described by district leaders, at least one school committee member is heavily involved in each aspect of the superintendent’s work, including processes such as negotiations with the teacher’s association, the equity working group, and curriculum reviews, so that the school committee has a clear understanding about the district’s initiatives.

Further, in terms of collaboration, the superintendent, district leadership, and members of the school committee, including the mayor, also meet regularly in bimonthly public-facing meetings at CTEi’s Culinary Arts school restaurant. As stated in past school committee minutes, these bimonthly meetings typically include the superintendent, the assistant superintendent, the director of student support, curriculum leads, and the district’s business administrator, as well as two student representatives. According to interviews with district leaders, having student representatives is an important component of the school committee’s inclusion of student input. These student representatives are high school seniors whom the district appoints to the role. They do not have votes on the school committee, but they participate in all public meetings. The regular inclusion of student voice into the school committee’s discussions is a strength of the district.

All school committee meetings are open to the public through in-person attendance, virtual viewing through the Microsoft Teams platform, and television broadcast on Leominster Access Television. At the beginning of each public meeting, school committee members respond to public comments, and throughout the meeting, school committee members report on progress made in the designated subcommittees. At the time of the district review, minutes from school committee meetings through the beginning of February 2024 were publicly available on the district’s website. In addition, recordings of the school committee meetings are available to view afterward in the recording archives on Leominster Access Television. District leadership describes that these bimonthly meetings can often deviate from the intended agenda, and in these cases, can become “conversational” in nature; however, they are a good way to facilitate public interest in the district and establish collaboration between the school committee and district leadership.

### District and School Leadership

Leominster has an overall district leadership team consisting of the superintendent, the assistant superintendent for human resources, the administrator for accountability and student achievement, the administrator for teaching and learning/EL learning, the special education director, the business manager, and the director of pupil services including Family Information Center. These district-level leaders meet weekly on Monday mornings for cabinet meetings. During these cabinet meetings, district leadership tracks progress toward the district’s strategic plan by examining benchmarks and generally monitoring the progress of initiatives. District leadership described cabinet meetings as “heavy on [using] data: we use district assessments, [a] SEL [social-emotional learning) survey, MCAS, standards, data collection built into curriculum [products], and iReady” to track student academic progress. The District Leadership Team meets twice per month, and meetings frequently involve deeper data discussions. Staff who participate in these meetings include building-level administrators, the district EL director, the district special education coordinators, and other district administrators. Overall, the cabinet team uses these meetings to determine which schools need additional support and where to best employ district-level content coaches.

In addition to the aforementioned district leadership team, under the director of teaching and learning, the district employs seven district-level content specialists to aid instruction across the district. These content specialists target particular grade ranges and include two elementary content specialists; one mathematics content specialist for Grades 4-8; two ELA/social studies content specialists for Grades 6-12; one STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) content specialist for Grades 6-12; and one EL content specialist for Grades PK-12. The addition of these seven district-level content specialists aligns with the district’s second strategic priority relating to high-quality instruction within the district (see District and School Improvement Planning for a discussion of each strategic priority). The specialists support all schools through teacher instruction and classroom-based supports. Teachers reported positive perceptions of these content specialists across schools, especially at the elementary level, and district administrators are looking to increase the number of content specialists within the district in the upcoming years to promote high-quality instruction (see Supervision, Evaluation, and Educator Development section for more information).

At the school level, each elementary school, the two middle schools, and two of the high schools (Leominster High School and the CTEi) have a school leadership structure with a principal and at least one assistant principal. The other two high schools, Leominster Center for Excellence and Leominster Academy, have only a principal and not an assistant principal due to their small size. Rather than an assistant principal, the principal at the Leominster Center for Excellence receives support from a school-based special education administrator. Likewise, at Leominster Academy, in lieu of an assistant principal, the school principal receives support from the district’s director of social-emotional learning, who is based in their building. According to one school leader, the district also provides support for teachers on their leadership team and this leader explained that this support has been “a real strength” for their building. Professional development for school leaders mainly comes from the Attuned partnership; school leaders shared that they meet twice per month with Attuned to align observation tools across buildings based on standards of rigor and presentation of appropriate grade-level work based on state standards. Most school leaders agree that the Attuned partnership has helped build leader capacity and helps them better understand their role as school leaders. One district leader even describes the Attuned partnership as “vital” when tracking progress on benchmarks during weekly cabinet meetings. Due to this praise from both school and district leaders, working with the Attuned partnership to align observations across buildings and monitor progress towards district benchmarks has been identified as a strength for the district.

### District and School Improvement Planning

Leominster has a five-year strategic plan from 2022-2023 to 2026-2027 that is publicly available on the district’s website in three languages: English, Spanish, and Portuguese. According to the strategic plan presentation, the district has six main strategic priorities during the next few years:

1. Implementing rigorous, aligned, and culturally relevant curricular material and assessments for all students.
2. Promoting content and instructional expertise through training, unit and lesson plan internalization, student work and data analysis, and other systems.
3. Recruiting and retaining a diverse and talented team through equitable hiring, evaluation, promotion, distributed leadership, and pipeline practices.
4. Implementing tiered academic and social-emotional learning supports to meet students’ specialized needs (e.g., special education, EL, credit recovery, social-emotional)
5. Developing and inspiring stakeholders with a vision, mission, and graduate aims focused on equity and high expectations.
6. Building and maintaining a culturally inclusive, joyful, engaging, and safe student culture.

District leaders mentioned that although the current strategic plan is in place through 2026-2027, they anticipate modifications to the current plan once the new superintendent arrives.

District leaders identified the district leadership’s weekly cabinet meeting cadence as the primary mechanism for monitoring progress toward the strategic plan goals. Specifically, these cabinet meetings are useful for monitoring progress toward goals one, two, and four, which all directly relate to students’ classroom learning experiences. As described in the District and School Leadership section, district leadership tracks benchmarks and progress across all schools, using district assessments, the district’s social-emotional learning survey, MCAS results, curriculum-centered data collection, and iReady assessments.

The district leadership team then informs individual school leaders of the progress of the district’s strategic plan through data debriefs at each school. School leaders and instructional staff further engage in the process through data debrief meetings, which occur as needed during the weekly cabinet meetings. During these meetings, district and school staff look at areas for growth, and district leaders strategically target places that need additional support. As one district leader described the process, “We use this [aforementioned assessment] data to know where to send our content coaches” throughout the district in response to academic and instructional school needs. Because the district’s seven content coaches are in high demand and are shared across all schools, the district hopes to add three more content coaches next year.

The district’s monitoring efforts and provision of instructional supports to assist schools is a strength of the district. Each school has their own school improvement plan that intentionally aligns with the district’s strategic plan, which is a strength of the district. In the district’s five elementary schools, four school improvement plans were publicly available and easily accessible on the district’s website, except for Frances Drake Elementary School. Both middle school improvement plans were publicly available on the district’s website, as well as Leominster High School’s improvement plan. Across all grade levels, improvement plans contain at least three categories of focus for goals, including academic (aligned with strategic goals one and two), social-emotional learning (aligned with strategic goal four), and community engagement or attendance. Some schools have additional goals focused outside these areas to address their unique needs.

In interviews, school leaders noted that the creation of school improvement plans included input from parents and community members through the school committee. When asked about opportunities to contribute to school improvement planning, parents described some opportunities for leadership and input on school improvement. One parent noted opportunities available for parents to give input on school improvement plans, such as the parent teacher organization (PTO), but said that they do not always feel as if their suggestions are part of the plan. Another parent added that the Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) works with liaisons at each school to “be the eyes and ears of that particular school and pair up with administration” to make sure that parents know what is going on throughout the district. This structure is similar to the English Learner Parent Advisory Council (ELPAC) as well, but again, neither of these opportunities for parent leadership explicitly connect to providing input on school improvement planning. Consequently, creating more meaningful opportunities for parent input on district and school improvement plans is an area for growth.

### Budget Development

The district’s business department, in close collaboration with the city, leads budget development within Leominster. According to the *FY25 Budget Development Timeline*, budget development generally begins in December, when principals and department heads begin to have conversations surrounding the budget. In January, members of district and school leadership teams come together for a cabinet meeting to have a general discussion about the budget. Once the cabinet makes decisions about budget priorities, district leadership meets again with principals and department heads at each school to discuss budget needs. According to interviews and the aforementioned document, every school has a budget manager who maintains the budget. School leaders overall reported feeling satisfied in the amount of autonomy they have over the budget development process and the district’s responsiveness to their requests for supplies and materials.

In February, district and school leaders work closely together to develop each school’s proposed budget for the upcoming year. District leaders said that they give school-level budget managers input and feedback throughout the budgeting process, which culminates in the submission of their proposed budgets to the district’s business office. District leaders also coordinate with the city’s comptroller to discuss the district’s budget needs for the upcoming year. According to district leader interviews, the district has a great and “trusting” relationship with the city comptroller. In April, district leaders deliver a presentation to the school committee on the status of the proposed budget. Throughout April, district leaders, the school committee, and city leaders make adjustments and decisions on the budget. At the time of the district review, the upcoming budget for fiscal year 2025 was presented to the school committee for their consideration. In May, there is a public hearing during which the school committee has the opportunity to approve the budget. If approved, the budget is then released to the schools and departments to begin spending in June for the upcoming school year. Overall, the district has a clearly defined budget development process that includes close collaboration with district leaders, school leaders, school committee members, and city officials, a strength of the district.

District and city leaders emphasized in interviews that Leominster is a “net school spending district,” meaning that they obtain the net school spending amount designated by the state to fund their schools. In addition to that required net school spending amount, for FY23, Leominster spent $150,000 above their net school spending requirement. This additional amount included funds for the district’s transportation services, and other budget items which legally cannot be included in the net school spending amount. Other than transportation costs, the district spends limited additional funds every year to fund their school district above the net school spending amount. In general, district leaders reported that this net school spending approach to budget development impacts the budgeting process, because district leaders only plan their budgets around the amount that is required by school spending requirements. District leaders noted that being a net school spending district highly influences their budgeting process because they do not count on making additional requests to the town for funding above the net school spending threshold.

### DESE Recommendations

* *The district should create explicit opportunities for all families to participate in district and school improvement planning.*

## Curriculum and Instruction

Leominster employs a comprehensive approach to curriculum selection and uses both published and teacher-created materials. Most curriculum used by the district is rated as meets expectations according to CURATE and/or EdReports. At the time of the district review, Leominster is seeking a new social studies curriculum. Additionally, the district supports students social and emotional learning through the Second Step curriculum at all levels.

The district has systems in place to ensure students have access to broad and varied experiences in the classroom. Students access a variety of course options, including Advanced Placement (AP) courses, vocational education at the CTEi, and alternative education at Leominster Center for Excellence. Even with a variety of advanced learning opportunities, improving equitable access to advanced courses and vocational programs is an area for growth.

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 |
| [Curriculum selection and use](#_Curriculum_Selection_and) | * The district prioritizes selecting and implementing curricula rated as high quality according to CURATE and/or EdReports.
* The district has a well-defined process for critically reviewing curricular materials.
 | * Supporting secondary teachers to implement curriculum that increases students’ opportunities to engage in higher order thinking
* Providing active, meaningful teacher involvement in the curriculum selection process
 |
| [Classroom instruction](#_Classroom_Instruction) | * Elementary teachers have positive impressions of the interdisciplinary opportunities within the Wonders 2020 curriculum.
* The district supports students’ social-emotional learning through Second Step and lessons led by guidance counselors.
* Instructional staff have strong structures for consistent collaboration and planning time around instructional practices.
 | * Developing a clear instructional vision across the district.
* Systematizing culturally responsive teaching
 |
| [Student access to coursework](#_Student_Access_to) | * Leominster offers a broad number of course offerings, especially at the high school level.
* Through the CTEi, the district provides well-articulated career pathways.
 | * Improving equitable access to the various learning opportunities available within the district
* Increasing access to popular vocational programs (i.e., “shops”) through the CTEi
 |

### Curriculum Selection and Use

According to a review of Leominster’s curricular materials, the district uses a variety of published and teacher-created curricula, with an emphasis on high-quality curricular materials whenever possible. At the elementary level, schools use Wonders 2020 supplemented by Wilson’s Fundations in K-2 for literacy; Illustrative Mathematics for mathematics; and Mystery Science and Discovery Ed for science. At the middle school level, schools use StudySync 2021 for literacy, enVision 2020 for mathematics, and OpenSciEd for science. At the high school level, schools use HMH Into Literature in Grades 9 and 10 for literacy and Agile Math for mathematics; all other subject areas currently use teacher-developed curricula. The district offers a separate curriculum, National Geographic, for newcomers and Level 1 ELs, which has a focus on literacy for preliterate students. A review of curricular rating systems, including CURATE and EdReports, found that most published curricula used across the district meet expectations. Curricula identified as meeting expectations include Wonders 2020, Illustrative Mathematics, enVision 2020, Agile Math, and OpenSciEd. StudySync partially meets expectations, whereas Wilson’s Fundations, Mystery Science, and Discovery Ed have no ratings on CURATE or EdReports. The district’s commitment to selecting high-quality curricular materials is a strength.

At the time of the district review, Leominster was in the review process for a new social studies curriculum across all levels. All curriculum documents are in a Google drive that all teachers can access. Along with official documentation, district staff add new and updated documents to the application throughout the year.

Elementary teachers spoke highly of the Wonders ELA curriculum, particularly noting that it lends itself to integration content areas. Teachers also appreciate opportunities to supplement with Foundations A-Z in earlier grades. However, reactions to other curricula at the secondary level were more mixed, with teachers at the middle schools and Leominster High School expressed similar sentiments. In particular, because StudySync, OpenSciEd, and the mathematics curricula are new, teachers are still adjusting to how to differentiate these curriculum products to meet students’ needs. Multiple teachers mentioned that although Illustrative Math and OpenSciEd provide great opportunities for students to develop their academic vocabulary and relate lessons to real-life experiences, both require conceptual thinking that can be difficult for some students. Relatedly, some teachers expressed concern that the curriculum changes so frequently that they do not have time to learn it and modify it as necessary. Classroom observation scores for grades 6-12 reflect teacher reports (2.1 for Grades 6-8, 1.9 for Grades 9-12 on a scale from 1 [low] to 7 [high] for Analysis & Inquiry). These scores suggest that on average, students are participating in low levels of or few opportunities for higher order thinking in the classrooms. Taken together, providing support for teachers in implementing curriculum at the secondary level in a way that increases opportunities for students to engage in higher order thinking is an area for growth.

Academic subject teachers at the CTEi also spoke about opportunities to integrate lessons and assignments to the work students are doing in their vocational classes. For example, teachers described students completing writing assignments such as developing résumés and cover letters. Others talked about emphasizing the importance of mathematical knowledge on job applications and entrance examinations for placement with local employers. Vocational teachers say they regularly ask students on work placements what they did not learn in the classroom that would have been helpful to know in the field, and teachers use this feedback and information from contacts in the industry to make sure that the vocational curriculum meets current standards.

The director of teaching and learning and the director of accountability and student achievement lead decisions about curricular materials. DESE’s research and implementation process using the GLEAM grant is part of the process in selecting and implementing new curricula. District staff also involve other staff, including administrators, one general education teacher per grade, EL specialist representatives, special education representatives, and curriculum specialists in the process through curriculum adoption teams. Opportunities to serve on a curriculum adoption team are available through the district’s human resources department, and the positions receive a small stipend.

The curriculum adoption team begins by creating a shared vision for instruction, which according to a district leader includes “must-haves, nice-to-haves, and equity pieces” in addition to an emphasis on vertical alignment in the content area of focus. A district leader elaborated as follows:

I think setting that vision statement and what we’re looking for in a product first really helped us zone in on our ELL (English learner) and SPED (special education) population because that’s where our teachers always struggle, and they know that they’re going to be in their classrooms, because that’s where they need to be. So I think that helps, because when they go back and look at that vision, it will remind them.

The team also defines district priorities for the curricular review and adoption process. For example, according to the *Math K-5 Curriculum Adoption* presentation, non-negotiables for the district include examining only high-quality curricular materials (as defined with an overall rating of “meets expectations” from CURATE and/or EdReports) when available and alignment to the Massachusetts state standards. The district also uses a rubric to critically assess curricular materials, which emphasize elements such as usability for teachers and students, accessibility for all students, the availability of additional supplemental materials, and the availability of predictive assessments.

Once these components are in place, the district narrows down the available curricula to those that meet their specifications and then conducts some field testing of the materials. A district leader described the field-testing process as providing teachers with an opportunity to conduct a few lessons and administer a mini-assessment and then come together and share their reactions. Comparing the current process to a previous approach in which the district conducted a full pilot of a curriculum, a district leader explained, “It’s a lot less burdensome than what we have done in the past, and there’s still consensus building.” This process concludes with the committee’s recommendation for which curriculum to purchase for the district. In total, district leaders estimated that this process takes approximately one year to complete.

Several teachers across levels and in different focus groups reported participating in the curriculum selection process, both as members of the selection committee and in pilots. General and special education teachers mentioned being part of the process. However, a few teachers stated that they did not feel as if their participation in the curriculum selection process was meaningful. For example, one teacher who served on the science selection team stated that they felt their input was not considered because district leadership “knew going in exactly what they were going to pick” before considering teacher input. Although the district has a well-developed plan for curriculum selection, a strength of the district, evidence of the use of teacher input needs to be part of the process, which is an area of growth for the district.

### Classroom Instruction

As described previously (see Classroom Observations), across all grade levels, ratings within the classroom organization domain were in the high range throughout the district. Observations provide evidence that rules and guidelines for behavior are clear and consistently reinforced by the teacher, and teachers provide a steady flow of activities to help the classroom run smoothly.

However, classroom observations also revealed that throughout the district, analysis and reasoning scores are in the low-middle range for all grade ranges (3.3 for Grades 4-5, 2.1 for Grades 6-8, and 1.9 for Grades 9-12 on a scale from 1 [low] to 7 [high]). Observations provide evidence that students have few opportunities to engage in higher-order thinking skills through novel or open-ended tasks, such as developing arguments, analyzing data, or hypothesizing and brainstorming. In classrooms with lower scores for analysis and inquiry, instruction often occurs in a rote manner, with limited opportunities to apply previous knowledge and skills to a new problem. Teachers do not consistently provide opportunities for students to reflect on their own learning.

Academic subject teachers at the CTEi also spoke about opportunities to integrate lessons and assignments to the work students are doing in their vocational classes. For example, teachers described students completing writing assignments such as developing résumés and cover letters. Others talked about emphasizing the importance of mathematical knowledge on job applications and entrance examinations for placement with local employers. Vocational teachers say they regularly ask students on work placements what they did not learn in the classroom that would have been helpful to know in the field, and teachers use this feedback and information from contacts in the industry to make sure that the vocational curriculum meets current standards.

With the exception of project-based learning at the CTEi, the district lacks a single clear instructional vision, according to focus group responses. Staff across focus groups described various approaches and models used, including standards-based learning, student-centered learning, and student collaboration. Students agreed that they see all these models in their classrooms, particularly an emphasis on collaboration through group work at the middle school. High school students have mixed feelings about collaboration opportunities, stating that they believe some courses do not have enough balance between lectures, small-group work, and class discussions. Student feedback about how instructional quality varies by teacher aligns with CLASS scores in the low-middle range for all grade bands in the Instructional Support domain (3.5 for Grades K-5, 4.0 for Grades 6-8, and 3.2 for Grades 9-12). Taken together, developing a clear instructional vision across the district has been identified as an area for growth.

As mentioned in Curriculum Selection, elementary teachers said that they appreciate the “essential question” model of Wonders, which provides them with a topic to connect ELA units with other content areas. Teachers in focus groups gave multiple examples of what this integration looks like in practice, including one teacher who mentioned a Wonders unit about animals, which they can then integrate with science and writing assignments. Another teacher reported using the prompt, “What excites you about nature?” to connect with reading poetry, writing assignments, science, and math via geometry. Teachers’ integration of ELA with other subjects at the elementary level is a strength of the district.

Even with no common schoolwide vision for instruction in each building, guaranteeing that all students can access the curricula is a district expectation of all teachers. Teachers reported using multiple strategies to differentiate instruction and determine which students need extra support. Teachers also noted that content specialists and specialists such as EL and special education teachers are available to provide support with adjusting the curriculum. However, teachers also acknowledged that some curricula are more conducive to differentiation than others.

Leominster allocates time within teacher schedules to meet weekly within PLCs to have instructional conversations. PLCs typically occur by department at each school, or grade level in Grades K-5, and include special education teachers. According to a *PLC Note Taking Template* provided by the district, teachers must set an agenda for each PLC. Related to classroom instruction, a review of PLC agendas revealed that PLCs often include discussions about unit planning, identifying skills to target, adapting curricular materials, and lesson pacing, in addition to general updates and data analysis (see Data Use). Teachers at the elementary and middle school levels reported that members of the administration, such as principals or instructional coaches, will frequently sit in on PLC meetings. These staff members will provide lesson breakdowns, model lessons, and provide general support for teachers to better horizontally and vertically align their instruction. Leominster’s efforts to create structures for consistent collaboration and planning time around instructional practices for instructional staff has been identified as a strength.

When asked about culturally responsive teaching, teachers said that this is a developing area for the district. They reported receiving some training on the topic and are expected to pay attention to it in their classrooms, but at the time of the district review, few structures appear to support this effort. Although numerous students noted having opportunities for choice, such as selecting some of their own reading material based on their interests, culturally responsive teaching practices are missing in some areas. Students see and appreciate the attempts toward diversity, although they do not necessarily see their own lives reflected in reading material or topic choices. Systematizing an approach to more frequently incorporate culturally responsive teaching in the classroom is an area for growth.

For social-emotional learning, elementary and middle school classrooms include regular lessons using the Second Step curriculum, once a week on Fridays. According to teachers and specialists, guidance counselors and social workers supplement these lessons to focus on specific topics to address students’ behavioral and social emotional needs. Topics covered have included bullying, respect, making friends, and appropriate language for school. The elementary grades also have daily morning meetings, which is another opportunity for social-emotional learning. Although the high school has less formal social-emotional learning instruction, the health class includes related lessons (covering topics such as personal wellness and mental and social well-being), and guidance counselors regularly come into classrooms to provide targeted instruction on areas of need. Leominster’s commitment to supporting students’ social and emotional learning through Second Step is a strength of the district.

### Student Access to Coursework

All Leominster elementary schools offer “specials,” including gym, music, art, media (which can include time in the school library), and STEM, although the exact offerings vary by school. Some elementary schools also have offerings related to band and chorus, but these are outside the regular school day. Parents in focus groups discussed the “Leap” program, which previously provided accelerated learning for students with high test scores. However, this program was discontinued and not replaced. As a result, some parents feel that enrichment is the teacher’s responsibility, and, as a result, students who are excelling do not have consistent access to accelerated coursework.

Both middle schools provide a broad selection of electives and honors programs. Sky View Middle School elective opportunities include gym, media, STEM, music, and art. Samoset Middle School offers the same courses, with band and chorus practices after school. Middle school students provided several examples of afterschool clubs, including dance, gardening, leadership, gaming, and diversity. Both middle schools offer honors in mathematics in Grade 8. According to teachers, Samoset also has an accelerated program of study in all subjects for students based on iReady and MCAS scores; Sky View offers a similar program for ELA and mathematics only. Teachers described the program as offering more differentiated instruction and allowing students to go more deeply into the curriculum.

A variety of options are available to best meet the needs of students at Leominster High School, the CTEi, Leominster Center for Excellence, and Leominster Academy.[[6]](#footnote-7) Through these schools, Leominster offers a wide variety of advanced academic, career and technical education, and alternative education opportunities for students, which is a strength of the district. At Leominster High School, students have opportunities to participate in multiple advanced coursework opportunities, including honors and 14 AP courses, the Massachusetts Early College Initiative in partnership with Mount Wachusett Community College and Fitchburg State University, Project Lead the Way pathways, and independent study for juniors and seniors. Honors and AP opportunities are available in ELA, mathematics, science, history, studio and performing arts, and three world languages (French, Italian, and Spanish). Parents noted the availability of AP courses, with one saying the school is adding new advanced courses “all the time.” Students in the Early College initiative can enroll in free college courses at Mount Wachusett Community College and/or Fitchburg State University through four pathways: early childhood education, business, criminal justice, and liberal arts. Leominster High School also uses Project Lead the Way, a project-based learning program that incorporates STEM with pathways in biomedical engineering, engineering, and computer science. For juniors and seniors, independent study is an opportunity to explore an area of interest that the curriculum does not address with support from a mentor teacher. Lastly, high school students can earn the Massachusetts Seal of Biliteracy by showing proficiency in English and one other language.

Leominster High School also offers a broad selection of electives to students. Electives are available in all content areas, including English (e.g., journalism, news writing), fine arts and media (e.g., art history, guitar lab), mathematics (e.g., personal finance), social studies (street and practical law, current problems), and more. Students at Leominster High School appreciate having many options to complete their graduation requirements.

The CTEi is a beloved program within Leominster, described as “a treasure” by district leaders. According to the *2023-24 Program of Studies*, the CTEi program begins with Freshmen Exploratory, a one-semester, one-period course that provides a basic grounding in science and technology and a survey of different career options. After successfully completing this course, freshmen choose which vocational program they would like to pursue, referred to by teachers, parents, and students as a shop. Shops include automotive technology, automotive collision repair and remodeling, business technology, carpentry, culinary arts, drafting, electronics, electrical, graphic communications, health assisting, HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning), internet support services and networking, machine technology, and plumbing and pipe fitting. Through the cooperative education program (“co-op”), seniors who qualify have the opportunity for paid work experience in their trade. The CTEi students also may take a range of academic courses through Leominster High School, including honors or AP courses and all electives. Based on interest from the community, the district recently expanded access to the shops, making approximately 800 slots available. However, parents described how slots in more popular shops fill quickly, so not all students get their first choice. Further expansion of the CTEi is an area for growth.

Parents and students say that the CTEi provides strong supports and clear pathways to careers after graduation. For example, eighth graders can tour the shops at the CTEi, and one parent reported being “very impressed” with the experience. The CTEi maintains articulation agreements with several local community and technical colleges, which allow students to take college courses for both high school and college credit. These institutions are Mount Wachusett Community College, the New England Institute of Technology, Massasoit Community College, Middlesex Community College, Quinsigamond Community College, Mass Bay Community College, New Hampshire Community Technical College, Bunker Hill Community College, and Johnson & Wales University (a culinary school). The extensive support of career pathways through the CTEi is a strength of the district.

According to DESE’s 2023 district profile, 49 percent of 11th and 12th graders completed at least one advanced course, compared to the state average of 66 percent. Further, 807 high school students enrolled in one of the Chapter 74 career and technical education programs (representing 43 percent of students at Leominster High School and the CTEi) and 219 high school students enrolled in the Early College program (representing 12 percent of students at Leominster High School and the CTEi). At the time of the district review, leaders and school staff were not yet regularly and systematically examining course enrollments to determine whether access to these opportunities is equitable. Examining disaggregated enrollment data to monitor for potential inequities in student access to coursework.

Serving students in grades 9-12, Leominster Center for Excellence is an alternative program built on the Big Picture Learning Schools model. The Center’s Empower Education is for students in grades 11 or 12 who have fallen behind their peers for any reason and need an opportunity to catch up. According to the *2024-25 Program of Studies*, the program is for students who have experienced prior obstacles to learning, such as poor attendance, social and emotional challenges, difficult family/personal circumstances, or other challenges. Students complete their coursework online using the Edgenuity platform to determine their specific skill gaps. With the highly flexible structure, students can earn credits at an accelerated pace. To be admitted to Leominster Center for Excellence, students and their parents or guardians work closely with a school counselor and the principal to determine whether it is the right fit. During the 2023-2024 school year, Big Picture Learning and Empower Education served 65 students.

### DESE Recommendations

* *The district should examine its curricular review process to identify meaningful opportunities to increase teacher participation.*
* *The district should collaborate with secondary teachers to implement curricula that allow for student participation and engagement in higher-order thinking.*
* *The district should partner with its school leaders to develop a districtwide instructional vision, with consistent approaches and models across its buildings.*
* *The district should develop a coherent system to support educators in implementing culturally responsive practices.*
* *The district should use disaggregated course enrollment data to identify trends in which student groups participate in the various course offerings and devise strategies to address any inequities that arise.*
* *The district should consider ways to increase access to popular vocational programs offered through the CTEi.*

## Assessment

Leominster has been actively enhancing its data and assessment systems, spearheaded by the division of curriculum, research, and assessment. This division works to align assessments across schools and grades through a structured assessment schedule and collaboration with content specialists and the Attuned partnership. The district uses various assessments, such as iReady, Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), and curriculum-based measures. To house the data from these assessments, the district recently hired Open Architects to create data dashboards for district and school leaders, which enable holistic analysis of student data.

At the school level, data “step-backs” and weekly PLC meetings provide structured opportunities for teachers to discuss student progress and set goals based on data analysis. Examples of data-driven discussions include addressing attendance and graduation rate disparities among student groups and enhancing academic support. Leominster ensures communication of student progress to families through standards-based report cards, sharing of assessment data, parent-teacher conferences, and online platforms such as Aspen and Google Classroom. However, parents and students across schools and grade levels reported variations in communication effectiveness.

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 |
| [Data and assessment systems](#_Data_and_Assessment) | * The district uses a variety of assessments to track student progress and identify student needs in both ELA and mathematics.
 | * Identifying data points to track student progress toward vocational goals at the CTEi
 |
| [Data use](#_Data_Use) | * District and school leaders use student data regularly and purposefully to monitor progress toward district and school goals.
* The district uses a variety of data to identify and address the academic and nonacademic needs of the student population.
 | * Allotting time for teachers and English as a second language specialists to meet together to discuss student data (e.g., data teams, PLCs)
 |
| [Sharing results](#_Sharing_Results) |  | * Promoting consistency in communications across teachers with families
 |

### Data and Assessment Systems

The director of accountability and student achievement leads assessment and data use. To align assessments across the district, Leominster has an assessment schedule for the school year to make sure all schools are on a similar assessment schedule. According to district leaders, content specialists play a role in making sure that assessment content and schedules consistently appear on PLC meeting agendas throughout the district. District leaders also noted that the partnership with Attuned is supporting data alignment in PLCs. According to district and school leaders, working with the Attuned partnership has supported the district focus on equity, mainly through supporting data collection during classroom walkthroughs and using this data to highlight gaps in the classroom at DLT meetings (see District and School leadership).

According to focus groups and the *2023-2024 Leominster Public Schools Assessment Schedule*, Leominster administers iReady in Grades K-8 as the primary screening assessment for ELA and mathematics. Elementary and middle school students take iReady three times per year in the fall, winter, and spring. In addition, all kindergarten students take DIBELS twice per year in the winter and spring and three times per year for Grades 1-5 (fall, winter, and spring). At the high school level, students take HMH assessments for ELA in Grades 9 and 10 three times per year. Leominster also administers MCAS according to DESE’s statewide testing schedule.

More frequently, the district tracks student outcomes through ongoing curriculum-based assessments, such as Wonders end-of-unit assessments for Grades 2-5 in ELA, writing, and Illustrative Math end-of-unit assessments for Grades K-5. At the elementary level, the district also expects teachers to administer Fundations unit assessments for Grades K-2. Similarly, teachers administer and track Transfer Tasks for OpenSciEd in Grades 6-8. Other assessments at the middle school level include Envisions in ELA and mathematics for Grades 6-8, and StudySync for Grades 6-8 in ELA. At the high school level, Teacher-developed end-of-unit assessments in ELA and end-of-topic assessments in Math for Grades 9-10 occur regularly throughout the year. Teachers also gave examples of which assessments they use in specific departments, such as end-of-topic assessments in Agile Mind for Algebra 1, Algebra 2, and Geometry.

At the CTEi, school leaders and teachers are still determining the best data points to track student outcomes toward career and technical education goals. According to one teacher, a committee is looking at these data to identify indicators to measure student progress, such as an indicator focused on work ethic and skill in a student’s vocation and employability after high school. To help build student capacity toward this employability goal, the committee is working to review a curriculum for Grade 11 to learn about soft skills and understand what it takes to be employable after graduation. Continuing to identify more concrete data points to track student outcomes toward vocational goals is a self-identified area for growth within the district.

### Data Use

The district recently hired Open Architects to create data dashboards that make student data accessible to district and school leaders. This platform creates data dashboards that align with the curriculum and assessment products. Interviews with district leaders revealed the presence of dashboards for HMH Into Literature, Wonders end-of-year assessments, iReady, and DIBELS. District leaders also praise Open Architects for the overall student dashboard that ties together different data points, ranging from ACCESS scores to attendance, which allows district and school administrators to look at student data holistically and identify trends among students and student groups in a way that is easy to navigate. As previously mentioned in the District and School Leadership section, at the district level, staff allocate time during weekly cabinet meetings to discuss student and school-level data. One district leader noted that the superintendent always has data points on the agenda that align with Leominster’s strategic plan. District leaders also meet weekly with content specialists and share data about twice per month related to each building’s student outcomes, using the data to drive discussions. This purposeful and regular use of student data, including sharing it in accessible formats with leaders at the school and district levels, is a strength of the district.

Data step-backs at the building level happen three times per year with teacher teams. These step backs are similar across schools regardless of grade level and subjects taught, and the district uses a structured protocol for conducting data step-backs. The protocol consists of a data table with columns for data source, strengths, and gaps. To further guide discussions, there are sections dedicated to celebrating and spreading success, continuous improvement, and sharing and collaborating. This structure allows for school staff to focus on certain data points, discuss student groups who may need extra support, and create discussions that will allow staff to set goals and track student outcomes using data. Schools pull from a wide variety of data sources while discussing their students’ progress, such as MCAS, ACCESS, DIBELS, iReady, attendance, and more.

In addition to dedicated data step-back meetings, Leominster creates time within teacher schedules to meet weekly within PLCs. Organized by department at each school, or grade level in Grades K-5, the PLCs include special education teachers. According to the district’s PLC template, each meeting is structured around an agenda that is prepared in advance.Related to data and assessments, the agenda could consist of reviewing logistics about assessment administration or reviewing results from various assessments. Teachers described the effectiveness of these meetings to varying degrees. Middle school staff reported that instructional coaches work to coordinate PLCs and create practice guides to help teachers stay on track, and elementary school teachers noted that they have time allotted in their PLCs to discuss students who are struggling and brainstorm with colleagues about what supports may be appropriate. Based on focus groups from school-level staff, specialists typically attend departmentalized PLCs, giving them a chance to align support and interventions for students who are receiving special education services. One specialist described these PLC times as “very valuable.” However, EL specialists typically reported that they do not have the same opportunities to participate in general education PLCs, according to mixed reports from school-level staff. Even with some discrepancies in the time that EL teachers collaborate with general education teachers, EL teachers described having their own PLCs, which gives them formal time to collaborate with one another, but time spent collaborating with general education teachers is typically “informal.” Creating more scheduled opportunities for EL and general education teachers to meet together to discuss student data is an area for growth.

At the district level, leaders provided multiple examples of how data drives decisions to identify academic and nonacademic equity among student groups. One example, shared by a district leader, is in relation to classroom walkthroughs, during which school leaders collect data on teacher progress toward teacher- and principal-identified student achievement goals. To measure a reading goal, evaluators look for indicators of high-quality student questioning measured using a walkthrough tool. Another example comes from the high school level, in which EL students, Hispanic students, and students with disabilities have lower attendance and graduation rates compared with their peers.[[7]](#footnote-8) As a result of this finding, the district special education director started collaborating with the high school deans and the guidance department on how to prioritize these students and create a solution to improve attendance and graduation rates. The district also hired parent liaisons to help combat disparities in these groups; the parent liaisons collaborate with the CTEi to help students transition from high school to work to combat rising dropout rates. The systems and structures present at the district level that allow leaders to use a variety of data to address student needs is a strength of the district.

### Sharing Results

Leominster shares multiple different data points with families about student progress. At the elementary level, teachers share standards-based reports cards three times per year. Along with student report cards, district and school staff confirmed that teachers provide the results of iReady and DIBELS data to all families, as well as a one pager that explains why students may be at different levels. Parents of ELs also receive progress reports for ACCESS testing, and parents of students with disabilities receive updates on their child’s progress toward the measurable annual goals within their individualized educational program.

All elementary and middle school teachers hold parent teacher conferences in November, and district leaders noted that teachers are to use at least one piece of data to start these conversations (e.g., iReady, DIBELS). Teachers at the elementary level say that they send home parent reports for DIBELS and iReady regardless of student results. At the middle and high school levels, parents and students have access to student grades through Aspen. Parents also have access to student grades and assignments in Google Classroom, which most teachers use in their classrooms, but it is not a requirement of the district for all teachers. When asked about how their schools share progress about student outcomes, parents explained that communication is inconsistent across schools and grade levels, with some affirming that communication from teachers is timely, whereas others say that information is shared too late in the school year or too infrequently. Even with some discrepancies in how parents perceive effectiveness and communication, most agree that they receive updates from teachers on student progress, and if parents reach out first, teachers typically are responsive. This inconsistency in two-way communication between teachers and families regarding student progress is an area for growth for the district.

In addition, middle school students confirmed that they can see all grades on Aspen, although there are similarly mixed reports of how timely teachers enter grades. One student said,

I have teachers that are a month, three weeks behind in grading. So I’ll get a grade back and it’ll be a low score. And it’s kind of difficult for me to go talk to the teacher about it because it was a month ago and I won’t even remember what I did.

Despite some discrepancies among teachers in terms of timeliness of sharing information, students agreed that teachers are generally good at meeting with students who miss assignments and work to help them set goals, and high school students said that they receive feedback on their assignments that includes comments explaining why they received a certain grade. Similarly, a document review revealed an attempt to share progress with students while they are in the classroom. According to documents, the middle school has an iReady Goal Action Plan designed to give students a say in setting their own academic goals. The document lays out a flowchart organizer to help students navigate progress that they are proud of, as well as goals for the school year moving forward geared toward how they can improve. Teachers explain that after each iReady assessment, students and teachers sit down one on one to discuss what their goals are and how to meet those goals. Students receive a copy of this document, and they are encouraged to share their goals with their parents as well.

### DESE Recommendations

* *The district should continue the process of identifying appropriate measures to track student progress toward vocational goals within the CTEi program.*
* *Where possible, the district should arrange schedules to allow for increased formal collaboration time between EL teachers and general education teachers.*
* *The district should develop and disseminate guidance around maintaining consistent communication with families across all school levels.*

## Human Resources and Professional Development

The assistant superintendent/human resources director leads Leominster’s human resources department, receiving support from an administrative assistant and two secretaries. This department oversees human resource–related activities, including staff employment-related documentation, recruiting staff, and retaining school staff. The department hired Open Architects for efficient management of some staff records, but transitioning to fully electronic employment records remains a growth area. Hiring managers (most often principals) and the human resources department collaborate around identifying and meeting each building’s staffing needs. Although the district strives for consistency in hiring processes, challenges in timely postings and communication persist.

Efforts to further diversify the educator workforce include partnerships with local universities and equity-focused initiatives. The teacher and administrator evaluation process emphasizes strengths but lacks feedback on areas of improvement according to teacher reports and evaluation random sampling, indicating room for growth. Professional development opportunities, facilitated by partnerships with organizations such as Lynch Leadership Academy and Attuned, receive praise for their explicit focus on actionable feedback and instructional support. However, some regarding the perceived overemphasis on social-emotional learning professional development for teachers.

Leominster prioritizes mentorship for new teachers and offers pathways for career advancement, including educational opportunities and teacher leadership programs. Despite the efforts, school staff perceive inadequacy in recognizing excellent teaching. Addressing these gaps presents an opportunity for further improvement in the district’s recognition, leadership development, and advancement initiatives.

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 |
| [Infrastructure](#_Infrastructure) | * The human resources department uses Open Architects to track data such as staff attendance, staff rosters, evaluations, and teacher licensures.
 | * Implementing an online system for maintaining all employee records
 |
| [Recruitment, hiring, and assignment](#_Recruitment,_Hiring,_and) |  | * Expanding efforts to recruit for difficult-to-fill positions such as speech language pathologists and occupational therapists
* Posting internal positions in a timely manner and minimizing delays in the hiring process
* Developing more efforts to improve and diversify the teacher and leader workforce
 |
| [Supervision, evaluation, and educator development](#_Supervision,_Evaluation,_and) | * Teachers have positive impressions of the quality of feedback they receive both formally and informally to improve teaching practices.
* The district has content-based specialists who provide teachers with nonevaluative, classroom-based support.
* A well-defined and comprehensive mentorship supports new teachers in the district.
* The district has meaningful partnerships (BC Lynch Leadership Academy and Attuned) which provide high-quality professional development for administrators.
 | * Expanding teacher and administrator evaluations to include meaningful feedback on areas for improvement.
* Ensuring the professional development committee is a meaningful opportunity to inform professional learning
 |
| [Recognition, leadership development, and advancement](#_Recognition,_Leadership_Development) | * The district has some internal pathways to support staff professional growth.
* The district provides many opportunities for participation in teacher leadership activities.
 | * Establishing structures to celebrate excellent teaching practices
 |

### Infrastructure

Leominster’s human resources department consists of an assistant superintendent/human resources director, an administrative assistant, and two secretaries. The director is responsible for overseeing the monitoring and tracking of human resource documents, recruiting candidates, and retaining school staff. Also, the director works with principals on various topics such as hiring, staff interpersonal issues, and staff attendance.

Leominster hired Open Architects this year to track staff attendance, staff rosters, evaluations, teacher licensure, and staff rosters. Multiple district leaders praised this system for expediting the process of running reports on trends and outcomes across the district. Open Architects has been a beneficial resource to track important employee records and improve efficiency and is a strength of the district.

Based on a district leader report, Leominster is still moving employment records to be fully electronic; many current and inactive employee records are still in archived paper folders stored at the district central office. Identifying and implementing an online system for maintaining employee records to improve efficiencies is an area of growth for the district.

### Recruitment, Hiring, and Assignment

According to school staff and district leaders, principals monitor and determine staffing needs, serving as the hiring managers for their buildings, with help from the human resources department. The hiring process starts at the building level during the budget season, during which each principal prepares a budget and identifies requests for staffing needs. Then, the human resources department reviews the school’s current staffing to determine the need for that position and whether resources are available to meet the requests. If a staffing need comes up midyear, buildings can make a request to the superintendent, and district leaders then discuss this request during weekly cabinet meetings. No matter which avenue is used to bring the need to the human resources department, district leaders reported looking at student enrollment data, including ELs and special education caseloads. If the staffing need is deemed appropriate and needed after district leaders review the budget and enrollment data, the request is approved. If not, district leaders look at other factors, such as staff scheduling, that may aid in resolving a building need without hiring more staff.

After the approval of an identified need for staffing, a search committee at the building level begins work. According to district leaders, these committees include three or more staff members, depending on the role needed. For a principal or an assistant principal opening, district leaders noted that they may have 10-12 staff members on the building search committee, which can include district staff, building administration, and/or teachers.

Before looking to hire external candidates, the district checks for the existence of any internal voluntary transfer requests. Beginning in the spring, if a teacher or building staff member requests a transfer to another building or another department within the district, then they can begin the transfer process. Those teachers who apply internally automatically receive an interview invitation if there is an appropriate match with the current need of the requested building. Even with a system in place to prioritize internal candidates for open positions within the district, some school-level staff noted that the human resources department does not always proceed through this process on a convenient timeline. For example, a school staff member said that posting for positions is not always timely, which does not give staff ample opportunity to apply and put in a voluntary transfer request.

For external candidates, the human resources department reports recruiting through a variety of portals and groups, such as School Spring or the Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators. Multiple district and school staff members also mentioned a recent partnership with Fitchburg State University to help recruit potential staff members for the district’s open positions. Although there are solid efforts in place to support recruitment and hiring, multiple district leaders noted difficulty in filling school-level positions such as speech language pathologists, occupational therapists, and special education teachers. Thus, continuing to expand efforts to fill these specialized positions is an area for growth.

When the district identifies external candidates, district leaders prefer to see multiple rounds of interviews and, if possible, a demo lesson if the candidates are applying for an instructional position. After identifying a final candidate, the building principal is responsible for conducting a background check to make sure that the candidate has the appropriate qualifications and licensure for the role. The principal will then make a recommendation to the human resources department, and the assistant superintendent/human resources director and the human resources administrative assistant meet to discuss all materials collected from the interview process. If there are no issues, they will extend the candidate an offer. School staff agreed that the district has a history of delays during the hiring process, and based on reports in staff focus groups, previous internal candidates declined positions because of the wait time for human resources to update them on the process.

As a self-identified area of growth, the district is focusing on improving the diversity of their educator workforce. District leaders and school-level staff discussed the challenges of recruiting diverse candidates, such as the competitiveness of their pay scale compared with surrounding districts. To combat challenges, district leaders created an equity working group, consisting mainly of district leaders and administrators, to brainstorm ideas on how to recruit more diverse candidates. At the time of the district review, district leaders said this equity working group was in its beginning stages, and the district is still developing their equity vision in partnership with Attuned. When asked, school-level staff members were not aware of any recent efforts or plans from the district to prioritize workforce diversification.

### Supervision, Evaluation, and Educator Development

To begin the supervision and evaluation process for teaching staff, the administrative team meets in the summer to develop areas of focus during that year’s upcoming evaluation cycles within the four standards of DESE’s *Massachusetts Model System for Educator Evaluation*. The *Classroom Observation (General)* rubric outlines four standards of focus, including curriculum, planning, and assessment; teaching all students; family and community engagement; and professional culture. School-level staff gave examples in the curriculum, planning, and assessment standard of what these focus areas look like, such as the completion of grade-level work, identifying learning targets and helping students understand what they are learning about, and student participation in discussions and/or the classroom as a whole. For administrators (e.g., principals, assistant principals, special education administrators), the four standards of focus differ slightly. Administrator evaluations include family and community engagement and professional culture in addition to instructional leadership and management and operations.

As described in the *Administrator Goals and Action Plan* document, both teachers and administrators pick SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound) goals for each school year, listing their goals and action plans, timelines, and benchmarks for each*.* According to teachers, administrators conduct formal observations three times per year for new teachers and once per year for all other teachers with professional status. Administrators notify teachers in advance of when they will be entering their classroom, and some teachers reported having a preliminary meeting with evaluators during which they can set expectations and plan for the evaluation goals. Within a week of the observation, administrators will meet with teachers to share their findings and discuss all evaluative materials, including materials that teachers uploaded as evidence of meeting district, school, and individual goals. The online platform Open Architects shows evaluation completions and percentages to make sure that everyone is on track for evaluation on the previously outlined timeline.

District records suggest that teacher evaluations are consistently completed within the Vector Solutions platform, formerly TeachPoint. As part of the district review, AIR used simple random sampling to select the sample of 10 percent of 517 teachers (52 teachers) due for summative evaluations for the 2022-2023 school year. Approximately two thirds of teacher evaluations selected for review (35) had a summative evaluation available for review. All teacher evaluations available for review (35) were complete and did not omit required components, including a rating for each standard or an overall rating. All but one evaluation reviewed included student learning and professional practice SMART goals. Although not all teachers randomly selected for review had a summative evaluation available for review, all developed a student learning and professional practice SMART goal, as found on the teacher’s goal-setting form. Also, goals are consistently part of the summative evaluation report and the teacher’s reported progress toward them. Nearly all evaluations reviewed (34) included multiple sources of evidence, such as observations, student work samples, or other evidence to support progress toward student learning goals, professional learning goals, standards, and indicators. About three quarters of the evaluations (27) included feedback for each standard or overall feedback related to the teacher’s overall rating and included naming strengths or practices the teacher should continue. However, very few evaluations included feedback indicating areas for improvement.

Administration evaluations also use the Vector Solutions platform. As part of the district review, all administrative staff due for summative evaluations for the 2022-2023 school year were reviewed. Of the 29 administrative district staff due for a summative evaluation, nearly all evaluations (28) were available for review and complete with performance ratings and assessment of progress toward goals. Of the 28 summative evaluations reviewed, all included student learning and professional practice SMART goals, and a large majority (24) included school improvement SMART goals. The majority of evaluations reviewed (24) also included multiple sources of evidence to assess performance on summative evaluation standards. Most of the summative evaluations reviewed (21) included feedback for each standard, complete with evaluator comments with specific, actionable feedback naming each administrator’s strengths, but only slightly more than half of the evaluations reviewed (16) identified areas of improvement for administrative district staff. Ensuring that teacher and administrator evaluations consistently include feedback on areas for improvement is an area for growth for the district.

Yet, as indicated by the random sampling of summative evaluations, this feedback is not yet consistently documented within the evaluation platform. Taken together, the review of teacher and administrator evaluations demonstrates that although the district frequently highlights educators’ strengths in the evaluation process, critical gaps exist in documenting educators’ areas of improvement. Teachers also explained that the evaluation process does not emphasize professionalism indicators, so if teachers are skipping meetings or showing up late frequently, the current evaluation process does not highlight these issues.

Despite the aforementioned lack of critical feedback in teacher evaluations, school-level staff agreed that principals provide appropriate and helpful feedback when they are in their classrooms. Evaluators confirmed that they focus their feedback on one or two areas to not overwhelm teachers with improvements to focus on, which is beneficial according to both school- and district-level staff. When speaking about the evaluation process, one teacher described how evaluators try to be actionable and purposeful in their feedback. Another teacher reported that since principals completed training through the Lynch Leadership Academy, they noticed a positive improvement in the types of feedback that they received versus years ago. Teachers have positive impressions of the quality of feedback they receive both formally and informally to improve their teaching practices, making this an area of strength for the district.

To support teachers outside the evaluation process, the district hired new content coaches who provide teachers with nonevaluative, classroom-based support. According to school-level staff, content specialists have been a beneficial addition because they are available to support teachers with implementing the new curriculum, such as Illustrative Math, by modeling lessons and working with teachers on planning and sequencing their lesson plans. School staff also praised content specialists on their availability to attend common planning and PLC time (if needed) to demonstrate lesson breakdowns, create pacing guides, and incorporate MCAS questions into existing lessons. Because content specialists support teachers’ professional learning and teachers view them as value adds, the utilization of content specialists is a strength for the district.

Leominster also has a strong induction and mentoring program for teachers new to the district. According to the *Leominster Public Schools New Teacher Orientation Agenda 2022-2023* document, the curriculum, instruction, and assessment team leads teachers through a three-day mentoring process in mid-August. District and school staff confirmed that each new teacher has an assigned mentor, whose role is to meet with new teachers and keep a log of meetings and progress toward their instructional goals. Leominster laid out the expected responsibilities of mentors and mentees in the *Mentor/New Teacher Responsibilities* document, including qualities and responsibilities such as being a “positive motivator” and having “deep knowledge of content and Common Core standards” for mentors. Most teachers interviewed had positive things to say about the mentoring program, with the middle school teachers specifically praising the mentoring process, saying it was helpful, and mentors are “open to doing anything you need.” The district’s mentorship program is a well-defined and comprehensive support for new teachers and is a strength of the district.

In terms of professional development for teachers, Leominster is making attempts to give school staff a voice in what professional development activities they participate in, such as through the creation of a professional development committee. According to the *Leominster Public Schools Professional Development Plan*, this committee consists of administrators, teachers, tutors, and paraprofessionals. School staff reported that this committee's purpose is to plan the three full-day professional development days that school staff participate in during the year. One school staff member noted that the committee does not currently meet on a frequent schedule. Although the structure of the committee is to give school staff a say in their own professional development, teachers agree that professional development focuses too much on social-emotional learning and not enough on curriculum and instruction. Ensuring that the professional development committee is a meaningful opportunity to inform professional learning for teachers is an area of growth for the district.

In terms of professional development for administrators, Leominster has two external partners: the Lynch Academy through Boston College and Attuned Education Partners. Lynch Academy partners with principals to conduct walkthroughs in their buildings and provide more meaningful feedback to teachers. Teaching staff agree that the partnership is beneficial, saying that they are receiving more actionable feedback since Lynch training started. Attuned also focuses on building educator capacity; according to one district leader, the goal of working with Attuned is to increase the ability of building-level leaders to have an equity focus (see the fifth strategic priority from the *Leominster Strategic Plan*). With the praise school and district staff give the Lynch Academy and Attuned partnerships, these partnerships are a strength for Leominster.

### Recognition, Leadership Development, and Advancement

Leominster dedicates resources and provides access to pathways through which staff can develop their skills and advance their careers. For paraprofessionals, the district partners with Fitchburg State University to support them with attaining higher degrees. According to the *Overview of Recognition, Leadership Development, and Advancement* document, the district is encouraging and supporting paraprofessionals to get bachelor’s degrees and attend graduate programs in special education or to become a certified reading specialist. One district staff member noted an example of these pathways, in which a tutor in the district received financial support through a master’s degree in special education. When this tutor graduates in May, they will continue to work for Leominster with this new certification. For teachers interested in developing more leadership skills, the district partners with Boston College’s Lynch Leadership Academy, through which they can participate in the Improving Instruction Through Developing Leaders sessions. The *Lynch Leadership Academy Culture of Achievement* document lays out the goals and outcomes of these sessions, which include “a shared understanding of excellent instruction and how to coach teachers and teams to become more excellent in their teaching,” and “a shared understanding of the essentials of facilitative leadership and how to use it to build effective teams for adult learning.” Taken together, these pathways support staff professional growth within the district and are a strength of the district.

The district also provides opportunities for teachers to participate in leadership activities. Internally, teachers can join various leadership teams and committees, such as their school’s instructional leadership teams (ILTs). According to school staff, ILTs are a new structure in 2023-2024. Teachers also can serve on district committees, such as curriculum adoption committees, although staff have mixed impressions on how meaningful these opportunities are and the extent to which teachers feel as if the district values their voices and perspectives.

Regarding structures for staff recognition, numerous teachers agreed that the district’s current process does not distinguish excellent teaching and did not provide opportunities for recognition outside of the formal evaluation system. One teacher leader described as follows:

[The] evaluation process is a race to the middle; I don’t think that good teaching is valued as much as it should be because the rubric that’s used is . . . everybody gets pretty much the same grade regardless of whether they’re doing spectacular things.

Other teachers agreed that getting an exemplary rating is rare, and teachers mentioned that they feel principals shy away from giving exemplary ratings because of district guidance to maintain exemplary ratings for a small percentage of teachers. Some teacher leaders also explained that teachers are not consistently held to high enough standards within the district. They went on to explain that because observations are announced, this gives teachers a chance to put their best foot forward but may not be representative of their day-to-day instruction when not observed. With these teacher-identified gaps, recognizing excellence in teaching is an area for growth.

### DESE Recommendations

* *The district should continue efforts to streamline human resources functions by adopting a digital records management and archival system.*
* *The district should work with community-based partners to develop and implement a recruitment plan for hard-to-staff positions, such as speech language pathologists, occupational therapists, and special education teachers.*
* *The district should identify and resolve bottlenecks in its process to timely post and hire for internal positions.*
* *The district should continue its work in identifying barriers to hiring diverse staff and implement a recruitment and retention plan that is explicitly focused on diversifying its teacher and leader workforce*.
* *The district should set expectations around incorporating greater constructive feedback in evaluations for both teachers and administrators.*
* *The district should increase teacher voice in professional development decisions to ensure that professional development offerings meet the needs of instructional staff*.
* *The district should expand the ways it recognizes excellent teaching, both within and outside of the formal evaluation system.*

## Student Support

Leominster prioritizes creating a safe and supportive environment for students, emphasizing positive behavior reinforcement and proactive approaches to addressing behavioral issues. At the elementary level, each school implements a PBIS system; the middle and high schools have less formalized systems with more emphasis on individual classroom autonomy. Collaborative problem-solving (CPS) training is occurring districtwide to identify and address the root causes of student behaviors. The district is in the early stages of reviewing disciplinary data with an equity lens and plans to enhance training to address inconsistencies in behavior enforcement.

The district employs a multitiered system of support (MTSS) to provide academic and behavioral interventions tailored to student needs. This system includes TATs focusing on academics and SATs/SSTs focusing on behavior and social-emotional learning. Structured intervention blocks allocate time for staff to provide students with additional support. However, this time is not part of the high school schedule, and high school students expressed a need for more formalized academic support and awareness of available resources.

The district and schools prioritize family, student, and community engagement, but communication inconsistencies exist across schools. Language translation accuracy and the coordination of events across schools are areas identified for growth.

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 |
| [Safe and supportive school climate and culture](#_Safe_and_Supportive) | * The district invests resources into positive and proactive behavioral approaches through PBIS systems and CPS training.
 | * Systematically disaggregating and analyzing discipline data
 |
| [Tiered systems of support](#_Tiered_Systems_of_1) | * All schools have problem-solving teams: TAT for academic supports and SST/SAT for social-emotional learning supports.
* All elementary and middle schools include dedicated, structured time in the schedule for students to receive additional supports (e.g., WIN block), as needed.
* The district has Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions in place for academic and nonacademic needs.
 | * Offering more formal, structured Tier 1 academic supports, especially in the secondary schools, as well as improving communication to students and parents about available Tier 1 supports
 |
| [Family, student, and community engagement and partnerships](#_Family,_Student,_and) | * The district prioritizes communication with families across a variety of languages with bilingual parent liaisons at each school.
* The district maintains a parent information center and strong community partnerships to provide wraparound services.
 | * Providing a central calendar for all schools in the district
* Improving the structure and consistency of communications across schools
* Confirming the accuracy of online translations for families that do not speak English at home
 |

### Safe and Supportive School Climate and Culture

According to the Leominster Strategic Plan, one of the strategic priorities is to “[b]uild and maintain a culturally inclusive, joyful, engaging, and safe student culture.” District leadership also talked about setting expectations for behavior with parents and students during assemblies and parent nights. At the elementary level, each school has its own PBIS system, with a unique name or acronym to support positive behavior. For example, Priest Street Elementary has PALS of the Month (Positive and Accountable Learners), whereas Johnny Appleseed Elementary offers Apple Tickets. Common across these systems is the practice of rewarding students with tickets for good behavior, which they can redeem for prizes and recognition. Other common practices in the elementary schools include classroom morning meetings, “buddy” programs in which students regularly check in with an adult who is not their primary classroom teacher, and awards for students who attain perfect attendance. Less formalized behavioral systems are in the middle and high schools, although one middle school teacher mentioned having regular communication within grade levels about setting common expectations across classrooms. Overall, middle and high school teachers agreed that each teacher ultimately has autonomy over the rules in their own classroom.

When asked about consistent application of behavior expectations across groups, school staff and teachers consistently suggested that they tend to focus on the needs and situation of each individual student. For example, a school psychologist described, “If a student is stealing because they didn’t get food that morning, [we] may look differently than [we would at] a student who had been fed that morning and is stealing. . . . We try very hard to examine all the factors.” District staff, teachers, and student support staff at all levels also mentioned an emerging focus on CPS to identify and address the root cause of student behaviors. In partnership with Think: Kids at Massachusetts General Hospital, the district is providing CPS training to selected teachers and staff at each school. Next year, these individuals will serve as internal trainers and coaches to bring the model districtwide. Teachers and support staff who participated in these trainings described them as helpful, and they are looking forward to the model’s broader implementation. Taken together, the district’s dedication to positive and proactive behavioral approaches through PBIS systems and CPS training, as well as professional learning for staff on identifying and addressing the root cause of concerning behaviors, is a strength within the district.

Results from the Views of Climate and Learning (VOCAL) student survey indicate a relatively strong school climate at all elementary schools and across student groups, as evidenced by overall school climate scores in the “favorable” range (51 to 70, with a maximum score of 100). However, both middle schools had slightly lower scores (42 at Samoset Middle School and 40 at Sky View Middle School) that fall within the “somewhat favorable” range (31 to 50)8. Similarly, on the Panorama surveys administered in 2021 and 2023, students in Grades 3-5 responded more positively than students in Grades 6-12 in all categories. CLASS scores show strong evidence for consistent behavior management, with high or middle-high scores in all grade bands (6.4 for K-5, 6.0 for 6-8, and 5.7 for 9-12), although it is noteworthy that scores are slightly lower in higher grades. Students in both focus groups felt that their schools are welcoming and supportive, but middle school students say that different teachers do not consistently enforce behavior expectations. Parents concurred with this sentiment, saying that they see differences in behavior expectations between teachers and schools. Parents also agreed that teachers and school staff “try really hard” to be welcoming and supportive of all students. For example, one parent mentioned a cultural night at Frances Drake Elementary, saying it “was nice [to] explore so many different cultures and backgrounds in one evening.”

District staff described examining disciplinary data to look for trends in the middle and high schools, but they did not have any specific details or findings to report. Leaders stated that they plan to start reviewing data more consistently and providing training to more staff to improve the district’s capacity in this area moving forward. Because the district is still in the early stages of reviewing disciplinary data through an equity lens, this is an area of growth.

### Tiered Systems of Support

Leominster’s elementary and middle schools have dedicated time during each school day to provide tiered supports. These are called enrichment or intervention blocks in the elementary schools and WIN blocks in the middle schools. Elementary teachers use this time to focus on whatever they determine their students need most. Activities mentioned included iReady, reteaching or reviewing subjects for the whole class, extra enrichment, and pull-out services. On Fridays, this time is for social-emotional learning instruction, either using the Second Step curriculum or special areas of focus selected by guidance counselors. Middle school teachers and support staff use WIN blocks for iReady, makeup work, small groups, individual support, and enrichment, with social-emotional learning instruction also occurring once per week. Middle school students confirmed this use of WIN blocks, but reports provide mixed messages on whether they find this time useful. Some students appreciate the opportunity to catch up on work, whereas others feel it is not enough new information on top of what they are already learning. The high school does not have a similar block schedule. Building structured time into the schedule for elementary and middle school students to receive interventions and enrichments is an area of strength for the district.

All schools in the district have teams of teachers and staff that meet to examine and track student data to determine tiered supports. Each school has a TAT that focuses on academic performance. TATs consist of general education and special education teachers, and they meet on an as-needed basis to discuss students in need of academic support. Except for Samoset Middle School, schools also have an SAT, sometimes referred to as an SST or wellness team, that focuses more on behavior and social and emotional learning and consist of guidance and counseling staff, the school nurse, and an administrator. According to teachers and support staff, these teams meet biweekly at the elementary schools and monthly at the secondary schools. At Samoset Middle School, the TAT also includes students who need social-emotional and behavioral supports. The structure of having problem-solving teams that meet regularly is a strength of the district.

After students receive a referral to a TAT or SST, the team will recommend Tier 2 or Tier 3 interventions and monitor progress. Academic interventions vary depending on the skill gap identified, but Tier 2 often includes targeted small-group instruction on skills such as comprehension, phonics, and extra EL supports. At Tier 3, interventions include Orton Gillingham, Wilson, and more. At the high school level, the Flex program offers a classroom in which any student can receive both academic and social-emotional learning support via a referral system. Behavioral and social-emotional interventions also vary depending on student need, but Tier 2 often includes guidance counselor-run small groups during lunch on skills such as social skills, anxiety, conflict resolution, and substance abuse. At Tier 3, interventions include individual counseling, referrals to external therapists and mental health professionals, and behavior intervention plans. The availability of extensive Tier 2 and 3 academic supports is a strength of the district.

For students who do not make progress after several cycles of interventions and monitoring, the TAT or SST may refer a student for a disability evaluation. As detailed in the *Specialized Services* document, and reiterated by district and school leaders, the district provides a variety of settings and specialized programming for students with disabilities, including the following:

* Life Skills (Johnny Appleseed, Samoset, Leominster High): A substantially separate program for students with significant needs. Students may need a higher staff-to-student ratio and related services.
* Student Support Center (Fall Brook, Northwest, Samoset, Leominster High School, CTEi): A programmatic approach that allows students to access academics in the general education classroom while accessing a therapeutic environment when needed.
* Resource Room (all elementary schools): Substantially separate content area classes that allow students to access required curriculum in the special education setting. Students access content in a smaller setting that allows for more easily modified content to meet their individual needs.
* ABA Programming (Bennett, Lincoln, Frances Drake, Sky View, Leominster High School, CTEi): A special education program for students on the autism spectrum designed to provide students with support on developing communicative, social, emotional, and behavioral skills. This program includes both substantially separate and inclusion settings depending on student needs.
* Tutorial (Leominster High School, CTEi): A special education class designed to increase students’ academic skills (e.g., completion of classroom assignments, general student skills such as note taking and organization).
* Inclusion (all schools): Students receive their instruction in the general education setting.

Students consistently speak highly of the social-emotional support services, particularly mentioning the school adjustment counselors and a general feeling that they could always find help with mental health concerns. However, they feel that there is insufficient emphasis on academic supports at the high school level. High school students find that academic supports are too informal, and they do not know what formal supports are available to which students. One student said that they “literally don’t know if we have tutors or not.” Another student explained being out for a few weeks for medical reasons and had difficulty catching up. This student made no reference to the BRYT program, which according to high school counselors is for such cases. Teachers, students, and parents all mentioned that teachers often make themselves available for extra help before and after classes, but because the district does not have a late bus, students with transportation issues may not be able to access this help.[[8]](#footnote-9) Providing more structured academic supports and providing more access to and communication about existing academic supports is an area of growth for the district.

The district supports middle and high school students who plan to pursue a college education. Eighth graders and high school students both mentioned receiving help from guidance counselors on choosing courses and getting help with the college application process. Students, parents, and staff all express concern that the number of guidance counselors is insufficient to provide support to all the students who require it. Some middle school students receive support from the TRIO Student Support Services (TRIO SSS) Program, referring to a Fitchburg State University (FSU) Upward Bound program open to Leominster students. According to the FSU website, TRIO SSS prioritizes first-generation college students and students experiencing poverty, offering academic workshops, tutoring, and a six-week summer residential program at the college.

### Family, Student, and Community Engagement and Partnerships

The district provides several avenues for parents to become involved with schools and the district, including PTOs at each school, the ELPAC, and the SEPAC. The district reports working with the ELPAC and SEPAC to ensure that communications with parents in these groups in particular are sensitive and clear.

Families have mixed perceptions of communication from the district and schools. Parents appreciated the weekly email from the district superintendent but would like more transparency about which events are highlighted and why. The district does not provide a central calendar listing all events at all schools, which parents agree would be helpful, especially for those with children in multiple levels. They also said that schools seem to not coordinate with each other when scheduling events. For example, all the schools have their annual open houses during the same week, which makes it difficult for parents with children in multiple levels to attend. Along with the mixed feedback on district communication, parents in focus groups identified a need for a regularly updated district calendar listing all events across schools, making district communication with families an area of growth for the district.

Regarding school communications, some schools and teachers provide regular information through multiple channels (e.g., one elementary parent mentioned receiving weekly emails from the principal and their child’s teacher, along with weekly fliers from the PTO), whereas others are less communicative. This issue became more acute by the recent switch to School Status, a central communications tool. Although School Status helps with email communication, all messages come from the same sender, which makes it difficult for parents to later refer back to specific messages because it is hard to use search terms. In addition, for parents with children in multiple schools, the school’s name is not in the subject line, which can make it difficult to refer back to. At the time of the district review, families reported that not all schools and teachers have made the switch to School Status, which also can cause issues with consistency. Some teachers communicate via text messages, whereas some teachers and schools rely entirely on social media, especially Facebook. Parents consistently expressed frustration with this level of inconsistency and wish for stronger, better-enforced district policies on communication with families. Improving the structure and consistency of communications across schools is an area of growth for the district.

The district emphasizes communication in multiple languages, often facilitated through the bilingual parent liaisons at each school and online translation resources. However, bilingual parents and ELPAC members indicated that online translations often are not completely accurate, which can be confusing to families and make them feel as if they do not belong to the school community. Confirming the accuracy of translations for families that do not speak English at home is an area of growth for the district.

To engage students, both middle schools and Leominster High School have student councils. Middle school students said that they feel that the councils are student led, with school leadership genuinely listening to their suggestions. High school students did not discuss the student council or other leadership opportunities. In addition, two high school students regularly serve on the school committee in an advisory role. Although the students do not have a say in any official votes, they can represent the student perspective and ask questions during school committee meetings. (See School Committee Governance for more information.)

To support students and families, the district has multiple community partners that provide wraparound services. The district has a central Family Information Center plus a plethora of information available on its website. Online resources include information on school registration, joining SEPAC or ELPAC, community and mental health resources (e.g., how to access a variety of assistance within the local community such as clothing, fuel, health care, food, and shelters), and more. All school buildings have a Karen’s Closet, a permanent resource through an organization that provides new clothing, school supplies, supplemental food supplies, and other school-specific needs. Parents, teachers, support staff, and students mentioned this service, suggesting that Karen’s Closet is widely recognized and appreciated. Other community partners allow schools and the district to offer such services as dental care, food resources, disaster relief, mobile crisis response, and a community reader program. The SEPAC also has a resource fair that is open to all families, which they describe as a success. When asked if there was a central coordinator for these services, support staff responded that they “work as a team,” which suggests no individual or a small group managing these supports. Nevertheless, teachers, support staff, and parents all discussed the availability of wraparound community supports as a strength of the district.

### DESE Recommendations

* *The district should develop a process by which school and district leaders consistently disaggregate and analyze discipline data to monitor trends.*
* *The district should evaluate the quality and formality of its instructional supports at the high school level and develop a plan to both strengthen the quality of available supports and reduce barriers to accessing them.*
* *The district should post a centralized calendar of events on its website that includes information about events happening at all schools in the district.*
* *The district should clarify expectations around family engagement and work with school leaders to consistently implement strong family engagement practices.*
* *The district should develop systems to confirm the accuracy of translations used in written family communications.*

## Financial and Asset Management

Leominster’s business department, in collaboration with the district superintendent and city comptroller, manage finances within Leominster. District and city leaders work collaboratively with each other to track and report the district’s spending throughout the school year. They use enrollment projections and three-year forecasts to predict costs.

Currently, the district has a capital plan through fiscal year 2028 to address capital needs across school buildings. The district has been working to address capital needs and used COVID-19 relief money to update buildings across the district. In fall 2023, the district experienced substantial flooding across multiple school buildings, and at the time of the district review, the city was still working on rectifying the damage. Overall, the city is responsible for larger capital needs requests, and the district is responsible for all operating costs, such as plowing.

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 |
| [Budget documentation and reporting](#_Budget_Documentation_and) | * The district has detailed and narrative-rich budget documents that are accessible to a financial layperson.
 | * Organizing budget information so it is accessible to the general public
* Aligning the district’s budget priorities with the strategic plan
 |
| [Adequate budget](#_Adequate_Budget_1) | * The district allocated funding for purchasing all school supplies, ensuring equitable access for all students.
 | * Working with the city to provide transportation to students after normal school hours so that all students have equitable access to supports
 |
| [Financial tracking, forecasting, controls, and audits](#_Financial_Tracking,_Forecasting,) | * City, district, and school leaders communicate regularly on the status of the budget.
 |  |
| [Capital planning and facility maintenance](#_Capital_Planning_and_1) | * The district recently updated their buildings across the district.
 |  |

### Budget Documentation and Reporting

Leominster’s business department, in collaboration with the district superintendent and city comptroller, manages finances within Leominster. The business office includes the business manager, a financial analyst, the director of facilities, the assistant facilities director, and more.

District leaders described budget documentation within Leominster as “a great big binder” broken down into sections. As found on the district’s website and corroborated by district interviews, separate budget document sections for fiscal year 2024 includes budgets for athletics, expense and salary report, food service, technology, and requests by school. Each different budget piece is a spreadsheet with different line items for each expenditure. The longest of these budget documents, the *FY24 Budget Requests by School*, is 86 pages and contains both spreadsheets and narrative sections relating to each school. These narrative sections include several main components, such as a school overview, the proposed budget overview, a breakdown of enrollment by race and selected populations, a student achievement narrative, a narrative description of space-related challenges or availability, and a capital needs section. These narrative sections help expound the line items included in the school’s correlating spreadsheet, and they improve the readability of the overall document to a financial layperson. Leominster’s detailed and narrative-rich budget book is a strength.

However, the structure of the budget document sections is difficult to navigate and lacks cohesion, making it challenging to draw meaningful connections. For example, the document lacks a table of contents to help the reader easily navigate to the narrative section of a particular school. Further, within the largest budget document, *FY24 Budget Requests by School*, each school’s narrative section is in a different font from the previous section, and any charts are in different formats. Lastly, multiple sections make it difficult to draw meaningful connections between the line items in the school’s spreadsheets at the start of the document and the narrative text presented later in the document. Organizing budget information so that it is accessible to the general public is an area of growth for the district.

Another area of growth for the district is aligning the budget document with the district’s strategic goals. Although the aforementioned components of each school’s narrative section loosely relate to the superintendent’s “measurements of success,” the connections are not explicitly stated. As a result, it is not clear how budgeting decisions relate to the district’s strategic plan and move the district forward toward realizing its vision.

In terms of reporting, Leominster’s budget manager provides monthly reports to the superintendent and the school committee’s finance subcommittee on the status of the district’s budget. These monthly reports include information on revolving accounts, grants, and Chapter 70 funds plus footnotes that explain any changes regarding the status of the budget. In addition, district leaders said that they provide informal weekly updates on the status of the budget to school and district leaders during cabinet meetings, discussing the district’s revolving funds and its planned versus actual expenses, as necessary, during the school year.

### Adequate Budget

In multiple interviews and focus groups, district leaders describe Leominster as a net school spending district. As referenced in the Budget Development section, net school spending means that Leominster obtains exactly the amount determined by net school spending requirements, with little room for negotiation with the city for an increased budget. According to Resource Allocation and District Action Reports (RADAR) data, Leominster’s in-district per-pupil expenditure in 2022 was $15,127, which is less than the state average of $19,554.

Despite Leominster’s per-pupil expenditure being less than the state average, district leaders explained that they have an adequate budget that meets the needs of the district, excluding larger capital needs requests and transportation costs. As one district leader summarized, “We are good budgeters, and we appreciate what we have.” District leaders explained that Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief funding that the district received helped them prioritize larger capital needs improvement projects; otherwise, it would have been necessary to request additional appropriation funds from the town outside their net school spending budget.

Transportation is not in the net school spending budget. As per legal requirements, the city covers the district’s transportation budget. As district leaders described,

One thing they [the city] do pay is they pay all our transportation costs . . . so the transportation bill is paid by the city. They do an appropriation for us. So each year they’ll do an estimated appropriation and then we work off of that and towards the end of the year, a lot of times we get close, so we’ll do an estimate for them, and they’ll do a final appropriation in like May just to cover the remaining costs.

According to documentation, the city has a written agreement to provide transportation for the district. This transportation agreement includes daily transportation to and from schools according to established bus routes and additional transportation for field trips and off-campus extracurricular activities. In focus groups, both parents and teachers voiced concerns about students’ lack of access to additional transportation during after-school hours. Teachers particularly feel that this scenario does not provide equitable access to students who want additional help with schoolwork after school. Because no late buses are available, only those students who have transportation from a parent or guardian can take advantage of after-school help. Providing equitable access to after-school transportation is an area of growth for the district.

As interviewees described, the district’s budget includes employee health and dental insurance, and the city uses a charge-back process to cover these costs. Because the amount for the charge-backs for these items varies from year to year, the district asks the city for annual predictions of the total amount and looks at historical data relating to this expenditure. District leaders mentioned numerous other categories of charge-backs from the city to the district relating to maintenance and capital needs. (See Capital Planning and Facility Maintenance for more information.) District personnel continually monitor all these charge-back costs to align with the district’s net school spending policy.

One area of strength for the district is that in 2023, the district prioritized paying for free school supplies for all students. This budget provision was in line with the district’s strategic equity goal, “closure of mastery achievement gap between White students and LPS student groups (racial, cultural, SPED, ELL, etc.),” which was one of the superintendent’s measurements of success. The budget priority to provide school supplies to all students regardless of socioeconomic status was in alignment with the district’s aforementioned strategic goal, a strength of the district.

### Financial Tracking, Forecasting, Controls, and Audits

District leaders affirmed a highly collaborative process between the city, the district, and school leadership—a strength of the district. Every week, the city comptroller sends the district an update on the status of the budget, including any charge-backs that the city incurred that the district needs to pay. As noted in the Adequate Budget section, the city’s continuous reporting on charge-backs is important to the district’s budget monitoring process because the city initially pays for many large services with the district, such as health and dental insurance for all employees.

In addition to communications between the city and district leaders, district leaders also reported communicating regularly with school leaders on the status of the budget. As a district leader described, there is consistently “open and regular communication between the business manager and principals” on the status of each school’s budget. District leaders also said that weekly cabinet meetings with school and district personnel are a popular platform for discussing any budgeting concerns with district personnel. In addition, district leaders indicated that school leaders have other platforms to communicate about the status of their budgets. For example, if a school leader needs to move around any money within a school’s budget, district leaders explained that “we have transfer sheets that go out to every school and department so if they want to transfer any money, they need to fill that out and send it back to business manager.” School leaders also reported a high level of collaboration with district leaders regarding the current status of the budget and any discrepancies in spending.

District leaders agreed that they regularly communicate budget reports for each school to the school committee’s budget committee. Once per month, district leaders make presentations to the school committee about differences between the district’s proposed budget and the actual budget. In addition, district leaders send a copy of all these documents to the city comptroller to increase transparency between the district and the city. Each report also includes student enrollment and demographic trends for the last couple of years. The district’s budget book compiles all these reports for public posting on the district’s website.

Regarding forecasting, district leaders described that they closely monitor specific populations to forecast funding and needs. For example, district leaders explained that they consistently keep track of their low-income populations to project how much additional money they will receive from state Chapter 70 Aid. In addition, the district closely monitors their special education population to estimate how much money the district will need to pay for out-of-district student tuition. District leaders reported that the district’s special education director routinely pulls the number of students who require special education services. This number is about $2.6 million every year. Because this amount is large and unpredictable, district leaders “try to hold one year of circuit breaker as buffer” to offset this cost. Another student group that district leaders monitor is the EL population, which has been growing within the district year over year. In 2023-2024, the percentage of ELs increased approximately 8 percent compared with 2022-2023. District leaders reported that the most recent budget additions included line items for new personnel to support the EL population.

In terms of grant funding, district leaders reported that they have a dedicated staff member who oversees grants throughout the district. This staff member works with school leaders to appropriately spend all grant monies on time. As a grant comes to an end, the grant administrator will communicate with school leaders what they understand the ending balance to be to confirm that the school leader agrees. Then the grants administrator will go into the financial platform and make the account inactive. The grant administrator collaborates with the business manager to “make sure that everything is reconciled to the city.” According to district leaders, occasionally some grant money was sent back, although these amounts historically have been very small (e.g., a couple hundred dollars). Overall, district leaders agree that returning grant money was not a regular occurrence in the district.

In keeping up with the end-of-year reporting status, the finance department oversees the end-of-year financial report audit for DESE and, according to district leaders, is on time in fulfilling their reporting requirements. According to district leadership and documentation, the district conducts an annual audit on the state of their finances. Melanson conducted the most recent audit for fiscal year 2024 and revealed no significant findings or problems. District leaders explained that Leominster implemented previous audit recommendations, including connecting the district’s accounts payable to the city, implementing warrant sheets so that the city can easily distribute checks to the district, and instituting an “okay to pay” process for upcoming expenses so that financial auditors know that an upcoming expense will be paid by the district.

### Capital Planning and Facility Maintenance

Leominster has a facilities department that includes the director of facilities, the assistant facilities director, and a safety and security specialist. The director of facilities works closely with the district’s business office to predict capital needs and align with budget priorities. The district’s business manager also works closely with city officials to pay for the district’s maintenance needs that the city initially pays for but charges back to the district. According to interviews with district leaders, the city has a written agreement with the district stating that the city initially pays for several of the district’s expenses, such as plowing and school resource officers, and then provides “charge-backs” to the district through the city comptroller on a weekly basis. In addition, the city will provide the district with a summary sheet and detail calculations on an annual basis to report the initial city costs for the end of year report (See Adequate Budget for more information.)

In terms of capital planning, the document *Capital Plan FY24 to FY 28 Prioritized 1-3-24* includes capital planning across schools within the district. The current projected capital needs budget from fiscal year 2024 to fiscal year 2028 is $6,308,400 across all schools within the district. As described by district leaders, currently “60-70% [of this capital needs plan] is already done.” Leominster leveraged the money it received from the COVID-19 pandemic relief funds to improve school buildings throughout the district. District leaders explained that some of the larger capital improvement projects recently completed by the district are “building three new playgrounds, updating the gym, updating the doors, and hiring a safety specialist.” According to the capital plan spreadsheet, other district priorities include expanding school parking lots, replacing boilers, replacing bleachers, replacing school cameras, improving lighting, and various other maintenance projects across schools. The facilities director is highly attuned to the capital needs across the district and routinely “crosses things off his list” and provides updates on the capital needs plan.

According to city leaders, excess capital improvements that expand beyond “normal operating costs” are not part of the district’s budget. The district maintains a budget line for building maintenance to ensure that their buildings are “clean, lit, and safe,” but other capital needs requests are within the city’s domain. To address these requests, city leaders said that the city “see[s] what money is available and make[s] decisions as we go.” Overall, district and city leaders agreed that the district’s buildings have been recently updated, with new buildings built in response to needs, which is a strength of the district. For example, recent renovations to Leominster High School were in response to need, and the recent construction of a new school building replaced an older building within the district.

The district is still addressing the flood damage that occurred within Leominster in fall 2023. As reported in interviews with city and district leaders, several district buildings flooded in fall 2023, and the city has been working with the district to address the issues. Specifically, Fall Brook Elementary School had substantial flood damage. To address this need, the city drafted a Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) application through the governor’s office. If the district receives FEMA funding, they have already identified a contractor to repair the damage.

### DESE Recommendations

* *The district should organize its budget documents so that they are more easily navigable and accessible to the public.*
* *The district should explicitly connect its budget priorities to its strategic plan to demonstrate the ways in which its resource allocation decisions support the district’s strategic goals.*
* *The district should work with its municipal leaders to explore the financial viability of additional transportation options for its students.*

## Appendix A. Summary of Site Visit Activities

The AIR team completed the following activities as part of the district review activities in Leominster. The team held interviews and focus groups and conducted 91 classroom observations during the week of March 25, 2024. 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
* City 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



Leominster Public Schools

Classroom Visits: Summary of Findings

Districtwide Instructional Observation Report

March 2024



201 Jones Road
Waltham, Massachusetts
781-373-7000 | TTY 877.334.3499

[www.air.org](http://www.air.org)

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Introduction

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 Leominster Public Schools during the week of March 25, 2024. Observers conducted 91 observations in a sample of classrooms across ten 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 |
| * Positive Climate
* Negative Climate
* Teacher Sensitivity
* Regard for Student Perspectives
 | * Behavior Management
* Productivity
* Instructional Learning Formats
 | * Concept Development
* Quality of Feedback
* Language Modeling
 |

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 |
| * Positive Climate
* Teacher Sensitivity
* Regard for Student Perspectives
 | * Behavior Management
* Productivity
* Negative Climate
 | * Instructional Learning Formats
* Content Understanding
* Analysis and Inquiry
* Quality of Feedback
* Instructional Dialogue
 |
| Student Engagement |

When conducting a visit to a classroom, the observer rates each dimension (including Student Engagement) on a scale of 1 to 7. A rating of 1 or 2 indicates that the dimension was never or rarely evident during the visit. For example, a rating of 1 or 2 on Teacher Sensitivity indicates that, at the time of the visit, the teacher was not aware of students who needed extra support or attention, was unresponsive to or dismissive of students, or was ineffective at addressing students’ problems; as a result, students rarely sought support from the teacher or communicated openly with the teacher. A rating of 3, 4, or 5 indicates that the dimension was evident but not exhibited consistently or in a way that included all students. A rating of 6 or 7 indicates that the dimension was reflected in all or most classroom activities and in a way that included all or most students.

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

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

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

Positive Climate

Emotional Support domain, Grades K−12

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

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

Positive Climate District Average\*: 4.8

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Middle Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 91 | 4.8 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 12 | 9 | 9 | 36 | 5.5 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 11 | 2 | 2 | 25 | 4.5 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 9 | 5 | 2 | 30 | 4.3 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 3, the district average is computed as:
([2 x 7] + [3 x 14] + [4 x 9] + [5 x 32] + [6 x 16] + [7 x 13]) ÷ 91 observations = 4.8

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

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

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

Teacher Sensitivity

Emotional Support domain, Grades K−12

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

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

Teacher Sensitivity District Average\*: 5.3

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Middle Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 91 | 5.3 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 11 | 14 | 7 | 36 | 5.6 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 7 | 25 | 5.5 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 13 | 5 | 8 | 2 | 30 | 4.8 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 4, the district average is computed as:
([2 x 1] + [3 x 4] + [4 x 19] + [5 x 23] + [6 x 28] + [7 x 16]) ÷ 91 observations = 5.3

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

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\*: 3.3

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Middle Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 91 | 3.3 |
| Grades K-5 | 1 | 11 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 36 | 3.3 |
| Grades 6-8 | 2 | 8 | 2 | 6 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 25 | 3.3 |
| Grades 9-12 | 3 | 11 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 0 | 30 | 3.3 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 5, the district average is computed as:
([1 x 6] + [2 x 30] + [3 x 13] + [4 x 18] + [5 x 18] + [6 x 6]) ÷ 91 observations = 3.3

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

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.[[9]](#footnote-10)

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

Negative Climate District Average\*: 6.9

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Middle Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 91 | 6.9 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 35 | 36 | 7.0 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 23 | 25 | 6.9 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 24 | 30 | 6.8 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 6, the district average is computed as:
([6 x 9] + [7 x 82]) ÷ 91 observations = 6.9

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

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

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

Behavior Management

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 | 91 | 6.1 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 9 | 23 | 36 | 6.4 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 9 | 10 | 25 | 6.0 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 12 | 30 | 5.7 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 7, the district average is computed as:
([2 x 1] + [3 x 2] + [4 x 8] + [5 x 12] + [6 x 23] + [7 x 45]) ÷ 91 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

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 | 91 | 6.0 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 26 | 36 | 6.6 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 13 | 25 | 5.8 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 13 | 30 | 5.6 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 8, the district average is computed as:
([2 x 1] + [3 x 5] + [4 x 9] + [5 x 12] + [6 x 12] + [7 x 52]) ÷ 91 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

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\*: 5.2

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Middle Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 91 | 5.2 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 20 | 12 | 3 | 36 | 5.5 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 9 | 7 | 5 | 25 | 5.5 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 11 | 13 | 2 | 1 | 30 | 4.5 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 9, the district average is computed as:
([2 x 2] + [3 x 1] + [4 x 16] + [5 x 42] + [6 x 21] + [7 x 9]) ÷ 91 observations = 5.2

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

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\*: 3.1

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Middle Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 23 | 3.1 |
| Grades K-3\*\* | 0 | 10 | 5 | 6 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 23 | 3.1 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 10, the district average is computed as:
([2 x 10] + [3 x 5] + [4 x 6] + [6 x 2]) ÷ 23 observations = 3.1

\*\*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\*: 3.8

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Middle Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 68 | 3.8 |
| Grades 4-5\*\* | 1 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 13 | 4.3 |
| Grades 6-8 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 1 | 1 | 25 | 3.8 |
| Grades 9-12 | 2 | 1 | 10 | 11 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 30 | 3.6 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 11, the district average is computed as:
([1 x 4] + [2 x 6] + [3 x 15] + [4 x 21] + [5 x 18] + [6 x 3] + [7 x 1]) ÷ 68 observations = 3.8

\*\*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

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\*: 2.2

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Middle Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 68 | 2.2 |
| Grades 4-5\*\* | 0 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 13 | 3.3 |
| Grades 6-8 | 9 | 8 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 25 | 2.1 |
| Grades 9-12 | 13 | 10 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 30 | 1.9 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 12, the district average is computed as:
([1 x 22] + [2 x 21] + [3 x 15] + [4 x 8] + [5 x 2]) ÷ 68 observations = 2.2

\*\*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\*: 3.6

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Middle Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 91 | 3.6 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 8 | 13 | 6 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 36 | 3.6 |
| Grades 6-8 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 9 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 25 | 4.2 |
| Grades 9-12 | 5 | 9 | 3 | 7 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 30 | 3.0 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 13, the district average is computed as:
([1 x 7] + [2 x 18] + [3 x 19] + [4 x 22] + [5 x 16] + [6 x 6] + [7 x 3]) ÷ 91 observations = 3.6

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

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\*: 3.2

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Middle Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 23 | 3.2 |
| Grades K-3\*\* | 2 | 5 | 7 | 7 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 23 | 3.2 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 14, the district average is computed as:
([1 x 2] + [2 x 5] + [3 x 7] + [4 x 7] + [6 x 1] + [7 x 1]) ÷ 23 observations = 3.2

\*\*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\*: 3.6

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Middle Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 68 | 3.6 |
| Grades 4-5\*\* | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 13 | 3.8 |
| Grades 6-8 | 3 | 0 | 4 | 5 | 9 | 4 | 0 | 25 | 4.2 |
| Grades 9-12 | 3 | 9 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 30 | 3.1 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 15, the district average is computed as:
([1 x 7] + [2 x 11] + [3 x 12] + [4 x 14] + [5 x 18] + [6 x 6]) ÷ 68 observations = 3.6

\*\*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

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\*: 4.3

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Middle Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 68 | 4.3 |
| Grades 4-5\*\* | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 4 | 0 | 13 | 5.0 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 10 | 0 | 25 | 4.6 |
| Grades 9-12 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 30 | 3.8 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 16, the district average is computed as:
([1 x 4] + [2 x 6] + [3 x 8] + [4 x 15] + [5 x 16] + [6 x 18] + [7 x 1]) ÷ 68 observations = 4.3

\*\*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 |
| Emotional Support Domain | 1 | 11 | 13 | 13 | 30 | 25 | 51 | 144 | 5.4 |
| Positive Climate | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 12 | 9 | 9 | 36 | 5.5 |
| Negative Climate\*\* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 35 | 36 | 7.0 |
| Teacher Sensitivity | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 11 | 14 | 7 | 36 | 5.6 |
| Regard for Student Perspectives | 1 | 11 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 36 | 3.3 |
| Classroom Organization Domain | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 25 | 26 | 52 | 108 | 6.2 |
| Behavior Management | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 9 | 23 | 36 | 6.4 |
| Productivity | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 26 | 36 | 6.6 |
| Instructional Learning Formats\*\*\* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 20 | 12 | 3 | 36 | 5.5 |
| Instructional Support Domain | 4 | 28 | 32 | 31 | 16 | 8 | 2 | 121 | 3.5 |
| Concept Development (K-3 only) | 0 | 10 | 5 | 6 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 23 | 3.1 |
| Content Understanding (UE only) | 1 | 0 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 13 | 4.3 |
| Analysis and Inquiry (UE only) | 0 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 13 | 3.3 |
| Quality of Feedback | 0 | 8 | 13 | 6 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 36 | 3.6 |
| Language Modeling (K-3 only) | 2 | 5 | 7 | 7 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 23 | 3.2 |
| Instructional Dialogue (UE only) | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 13 | 3.8 |
| Student Engagement (UE only) | **0** | **0** | **1** | **2** | **6** | **4** | **0** | **13** | **5.0** |

\*The district average is an average of the scores. For example, for Positive Climate, the district average is computed as: ([3 x 3] + [4 x 3] + [5 x 12] + [6 x 9] + [7 x 9]) ÷ 36 observations = 5.5

\*\*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 x 1] + [7 x 35]) ÷ 36 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 |
| Emotional Support Domain | 2 | 11 | 6 | 14 | 25 | 8 | 9 | 75 | 4.5 |
| Positive Climate | 0 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 11 | 2 | 2 | 25 | 4.5 |
| Teacher Sensitivity | 0 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 7 | 25 | 5.5 |
| Regard for Student Perspectives | 2 | 8 | 2 | 6 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 25 | 3.3 |
| Classroom Organization Domain | 0 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 9 | 13 | 46 | 75 | 6.3 |
| Behavior Management | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 9 | 10 | 25 | 6.0 |
| Productivity | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 13 | 25 | 5.8 |
| Negative Climate\*\* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 23 | 25 | 6.9 |
| Instructional Support Domain | 15 | 14 | 17 | 24 | 32 | 15 | 8 | 125 | 4.0 |
| Instructional Learning Formats | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 9 | 7 | 5 | 25 | 5.5 |
| Content Understanding | 1 | 5 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 1 | 1 | 25 | 3.8 |
| Analysis and Inquiry | 9 | 8 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 25 | 2.1 |
| Quality of Feedback | 2 | 1 | 3 | 9 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 25 | 4.2 |
| Instructional Dialogue | 3 | 0 | 4 | 5 | 9 | 4 | 0 | 25 | 4.2 |
| Student Engagement | 0 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 10 | 0 | 25 | 4.6 |

\*The district average is an average of the scores. For example, for Positive Climate, the district average is computed as: ([2 x 2] + [3 x 4] + [4 x 4] + [5 x 11] + [6 x 2] + [7 x 2]) ÷ 25 observations = 4.5

\*\*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 x 2] + [7 x 23]) ÷ 25 observations = 6.9

Summary of Average Ratings: Grades 9–12

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

|  | Low Range | Middle Range | High Range | n | Average Scores\* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| Emotional Support Domain | 3 | 16 | 12 | 19 | 18 | 18 | 4 | 90 | 4.1 |
| Positive Climate | 0 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 9 | 5 | 2 | 30 | 4.3 |
| Teacher Sensitivity | 0 | 0 | 2 | 13 | 5 | 8 | 2 | 30 | 4.8 |
| Regard for Student Perspectives | 3 | 11 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 0 | 30 | 3.3 |
| Classroom Organization Domain | 0 | 2 | 4 | 9 | 10 | 16 | 49 | 90 | 6.0 |
| Behavior Management | 0 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 12 | 30 | 5.7 |
| Productivity | 0 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 13 | 30 | 5.6 |
| Negative Climate\*\* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 24 | 30 | 6.8 |
| Instructional Support Domain | 23 | 31 | 25 | 38 | 28 | 4 | 1 | 150 | 3.2 |
| Instructional Learning Formats | 0 | 2 | 1 | 11 | 13 | 2 | 1 | 30 | 4.5 |
| Content Understanding | 2 | 1 | 10 | 11 | 6 | 0 | 0 | 30 | 3.6 |
| Analysis and Inquiry | 13 | 10 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 30 | 1.9 |
| Quality of Feedback | 5 | 9 | 3 | 7 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 30 | 3.0 |
| Instructional Dialogue | 3 | 9 | 6 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 30 | 3.1 |
| Student Engagement | 4 | 4 | 3 | 8 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 30 | 3.8 |

\*The district average is an average of the scores. For example, for Positive Climate, the district average is computed as: ([2 x 5] + [3 x 7] + [4 x 2] + [5 x 9] + [6 x 5] + [7 x 2]) ÷ 30 observations = 4.3

\*\*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 x 6] + [7 x 24]) ÷ 30 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 |
| [Coherence Guidebook](https://www.doe.mass.edu/csdp/guidebook/coherence-guidebook.pdf) | 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.  |
| [Principal Induction and Mentoring Handbook](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeffectiveness/mentor/principal.html) | 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. |
| [Planning for Success In Massachusetts](https://www.doe.mass.edu/research/success/) | An inclusive, hands-on planning process designed to build district and school capacity and coherence while also building community understanding and support. |

Table C2. Resources to Support Curriculum and Instruction

| Resource | Description |
| --- | --- |
| [Coherence Guidebook](https://www.doe.mass.edu/csdp/guidebook/coherence-guidebook.pdf) | 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. |
| [Curriculum Frameworks Resources](https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/) | Some of the most frequently used resources include “What to Look For” classroom observation guides; the Family Guides 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 and related student work samples, and access reference guides and definitions. |
| [Curriculum Matters Webpage](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/impd/default.html) | A suite of resources to support the use of high-quality curriculum, including [IMplement MA](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/impd/implement-ma.html), 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 [CURATE](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate/default.html), which convenes panels of Massachusetts teachers to review and rate evidence on the quality and alignment of specific curricular materials and then publish their findings for educators across the Commonwealth to consult. |
| [Digital Literacy and Computer Science (DLCS) Curriculum Guide](https://www.doe.mass.edu/stem/dlcs/curriculum-guide.pdf?v=4/12/2023) | This curriculum guide provides curricular overviews for schools to engage students in learning DLCS concepts and skills aligned to the standards in the 2016 Massachusetts DLCS Framework. |
| [Early Warning Indicator System (EWIS)](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ccte/ccr/ewis/) | Tools for districts to identify students who are at risk of not meeting important academic goals to help students get back on track. This comprehensive system spans first grade through high school graduation and beyond. |
| [Foundations for Inclusive Practices](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/guidebook/) | This guidebook includes tools for districts, schools, and educators that align to the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework and promote evidence-based best practices for inclusion. |
| [Guidebook of Culturally Diverse Artists and Artworks](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.doe.mass.edu%2Finstruction%2Farts%2Fdiverse-arts-guidebook.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) | This resource promotes culturally responsive teaching in the arts through the study of culturally diverse artists and their artworks. This guidebook highlights art made by people with racial identities that historically have been and continue to be marginalized. |
| [Mass Literacy Guide](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/) | 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 multitiered system of support for ELA/literacy, and much more.  |
| [Massachusetts Blueprint for English Learner Success](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/blueprint/default.html) | A framework for EL education in Massachusetts, with embedded Quick Reference Guides and other resources to support implementation. |
| Massachusetts Curricular Resources: * [Appleseeds](https://sites.google.com/view/appleseedsk2/home)
* [Investigating History](https://www.doe.mass.edu/investigatinghistory/)
* [OpenSciEd](https://www.doe.mass.edu/stem/ste/openscied.html)
 | Free, open-source curricular resources aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. |
| [Planning for Deeper Learning](https://www.doe.mass.edu/kaleidoscope/planning/default.html) | KCL worked with educators and leaders across the Commonwealth to develop tools, protocols, examples, and professional learning experiences. |
| [Supporting Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/culturally-sustaining/default.html) | Culturally and linguistically sustaining practices are essential for all students in the classroom, regardless of their background, culture, or identity. |
| [Synthesized ILT Framework](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.doe.mass.edu%2Fcsdp%2Fguidebook%2Fappendix-ilt-framework.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) | District and school teams can use this resource to reflect and identify specific actions they could take to establish or improve their ILTs. |

Table C3. Resources to Support Assessment

| Resource | Description |
| --- | --- |
| [Approved Early Language and Literacy Assessments for Preschool](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/earlylearning/default.html) | DESE’s Early Learning Team in collaboration with the Department of Early Education is working with a vendor to approve preschool language and literacy assessments to support classroom instruction. |
| [Assessment Literacy Continuum](https://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/assessment/continuum.pdf) | Tool to help teachers identify what aspects of assessment literacy they should focus on for their own goal setting. |
| [District Data Team Toolkit](http://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/toolkit/) | A set of resources to help a district establish, grow, and maintain a culture of inquiry and data use through a district data team. |
| [Early Literacy Universal Screening Assessments](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/screening-assessments.html) | Guidance and support for schools and districts to select and use an early literacy universal screening assessment. Grant funding may be available. |
| [Student Assessment](https://www.doe.mass.edu/assessment/) | Statewide assessments help parents, students, educators, and policymakers determine where districts, schools, and students are meeting expectations and where they need additional support. |

Table C4. Resources to Support Human Resources and Professional Development

| Resource | Description |
| --- | --- |
| [Early Literacy Observation Form](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/early-literacy-observation.html) | This tool supports the observation and provision of high-quality feedback to teacher candidates on their practice in evidence-based early literacy. |
| [Educator Evaluation Implementation Resources](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/implementation/default.html) | A suite of resources and practical tools for effective and equitable implementation of educator evaluation, including Focus Indicators, a subset of Indicators from the Classroom Teacher and School Level Administrator Rubrics that represent high-priority practices for the school year. |
| Induction and Mentoring:* [Teacher Induction and Mentoring](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeffectiveness/mentor/default.html)
* [Principal Induction and Mentoring](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeffectiveness/mentor/principal.html)
 | Resources that highlight best practices and reinforce the recently updated guidelines and standards for induction and mentoring. |
| [Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL)](https://www.doe.mass.edu/mtel/) | Information on MTEL examinations, MTEL alternatives, and licensure requirements for educators.  |
| [OPTIC](https://www.ma-optic.com/) | A professional development tool that supports Massachusetts educators to build a shared understanding of high-quality instruction and improve the feedback that teachers receive. |
| [Professional Learning Partner Guide](https://plpartnerguide.org/) | 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 professional development providers to support the launch or implementation of high-quality instructional materials. |
| [“What to Look For” Observation Guides](https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/observation/) | Observation tools to help district staff observe instruction. |
| [Talent Guide](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeffectiveness/talent-guide/default.html) | An online hub of resources, considerations, and updates for recruiting, hiring, evaluating, and supporting educators and school staff, with a focus on equity. |
| [WIDA Professional Development](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/prof-learning/wida/default.html) | Provides great information and strategies to support multilingual learners in Massachusetts public schools, and WIDA PDPs satisfy educator licensure renewal requirements. These DESE-sponsored courses are available at no cost to participants and are perfect for teams of teachers seeking impactful collaboration to support students’ access to rigorous course content. |

Table C5. Resources to Support Student Support

| Resource  | Description |
| --- | --- |
| [Bullying Prevention and Intervention](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/bullying/default.html) | DESE’s guidance and technical assistance for districts and schools related to state requirements for bullying prevention and intervention.  |
| Emergency Management* [Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools](https://rems.ed.gov/) (Federal Guidance)
* [Emergency Management Planning](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/emergencyplan/default.html) (State Guidance)
 | Guidance and technical assistance for districts and schools related to emergency management planning and implementation.  |
| Family Partnerships* [DESE Family Portal](https://www.doe.mass.edu/families/)
* [Strengthening Partnerships: A Framework for Prenatal through Young Adulthood Family Engagement in Massachusetts](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/family-engagement-framework.pdf)
* [Learning Standards For Families](https://www.doe.mass.edu/highstandards/default.html)
 | Resources for authentically engaging families in their child’s education and centering families voices in school and district decision-making. |
| [Guidance on Updated Expectations for School and District Leaders Related to Student Discipline](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/discipline/updated-expectations.docx) | Guidance on updated expectations for school and district leaders related to student discipline associated with the 2022 mental health law (G.L. c. 71, §37H¾). |
| MTSS Resources: * [MTSS Blueprint, Self-Assessment, and Resources](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfss/mtss/)
* [Massachusetts Tools for Schools](https://matoolsforschools.com/)
 | MTSS is a framework for how districts can build the necessary systems to ensure that every student receives a high-quality educational experience. |
| [Resources for Supporting Immigrant and Refugee Students](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/resources/immigrant-refugee.html) | An evolving compilation of resources that can support districts in meeting the needs of immigrant and refugee students. |
| [Safe and Supportive Schools Framework and Self-Reflection Tool](https://www.sassma.org/) | These resources can help guide school- and district-based teams to create 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 six areas of school operation.  |
| [School Breakfast: Breakfast After the Bell Resources](https://www.projectbread.org/resource-directory/breakfast-after-the-bell-resources) | The goal of the Breakfast After the Bell Toolkit Series is to help with the launch and implementation of alternative breakfast models.  |
| [School Wellness Initiative for Thriving Community Health](https://massschoolwellness.org/) (SWITCH) | SWITCH provides resources that support and advance wellness efforts for Massachusetts students, schools, and communities. |
| Social Emotional Learning:* [SEL Resources Grades 1-3](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/earlylearning/resources/sel1-3/resources-g1-3.docx)
* [SEL Guide](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/bullying/selguide.docx) (K-12)
* [SEL/APL Standards](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/earlylearning/resources/#standards) (PK/K)
* [Playful Learning Institute, Preschool through 3rd Grade](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/earlylearning/pli.html)
* [Culturally Responsive Social-Emotional Competency Development](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/sel/sel-all.docx)
 | These resources provide evidence-based and developmentally appropriate guidance around supporting social-emotional learning in schools. |
| [Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/slife/default.html) | Guidance and resources to support districts in meeting the needs of Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education. |

Table C6. Resources to Support Financial and Asset Management

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Resource  | Description |
| [DESE Spending Comparisons Website](https://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/statistics/default.html) | A clearinghouse of school finance data reports and other resources available to district users and the public. |
| [General Resources for Federal Grant Programs](https://www.doe.mass.edu/federalgrants/resources/default.html) | General federal grants resources.  |
| [Massachusetts Farm to School Grant Opportunities](https://www.massfarmtoschool.org/announcement/grant-opportunities/) | A summary of state, regional and national grant opportunities related to farm to school, school gardens, hydroponics, school food, and more. |
| [Office for Food and Nutrition Programs](https://www.doe.mass.edu/cnp/) | Resources for school districts, childcare centers, family day care homes, adult day health programs, Summer Eats community organizations, U.S. Department of Agriculture food storage and distribution vendors, food banks, and antihunger organizations across the Commonwealth. |
| [Planning for Success](https://www.doe.mass.edu/research/success/) | An inclusive, hands-on planning process designed to build district and school capacity and coherence while also building community understanding and support. |
| [Resource Allocation and District Action Reports (RADAR)](https://www.doe.mass.edu/research/radar/) | RADAR is a suite of innovative data reports, case studies, and other resources that provide a new approach to resource decisions. |
| [Spending Money Wisely: Getting the Most From School District Budgets](https://gtlcenter.org/products-resources/spending-money-wisely-getting-most-school-district-budgets) (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.  |
| [Summer Eats | Free Meals for Kids and Teens in MA](https://www.projectbread.org/summer-eats-program?utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=summereats_pmax&utm_content=english-2023&utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=summereats_pmax&utm_content=english-2023&gclid=CjwKCAjwzo2mBhAUEiwAf7wjkljB4ngm0uZLSTYsl5hK5QGTkC3mKF_4ae_5AUxyrVs6UiPIIrys1RoCQV0QAvD_BwE) | Summer Eats is a free-of-charge program that provides free meals to all kids and teens, ages 18 and under, at locations all across Massachusetts during the summer months. |
| [Transforming School Funding: A Guide to Implementing Student-Based Budgeting (SBB) from Education Resource Strategies](https://www.erstrategies.org/cms/files/2752-student-based-budgeting-guide.pdf%29%2C%20from%20Education%20Resource%20Strategies) | This guide describes a process to help districts tie funding to specific student needs. |

## Appendix D. Enrollment, Attendance, Expenditures

Table D1. Leominster Public Schools: Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity, 2023-2024

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | District | Percentage of total | State | Percentage of total |
| All | 6,012 | 100.0% | 914,959 | 100.0% |
| African American | 573 | 9.5% | 88,104 | 9.6% |
| Asian | 187 | 3.1% | 67,847 | 7.4% |
| Hispanic | 2,512 | 41.8% | 229,930 | 25.1% |
| Native American | 5 | 0.1% | 2,178 | 0.2% |
| White | 2,463 | 41.0% | 484,692 | 53.0% |
| Native Hawaiian | 1 | 0.0% | 790 | 0.1% |
| Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic  | 271 | 4.5% | 41,418 | 4.5% |

*Note*. As of October 1, 2023.

Table D2. Leominster Public Schools: Student Enrollment by High Needs Populations, 2023-2024

|  | District | State |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Group | *N* | Percentage of high needs | Percentage of district | *N* | Percentage of high needs | Percentage of state |
| All students with high needs | 4,095 | 100.0% | 67.2% | 515,939 | 100.0% | 55.8% |
| Students with disabilities | 1,465 | 35.8% | 24.0% | 187,160 | 36.3% | 20.2% |
| Low-income  | 3,279 | 80.1% | 54.5% | 385,697 | 74.8% | 42.2% |
| English learners | 893 | 21.8% | 14.9% | 119,749 | 23.2% | 13.1% |

*Note*. As of October 1, 2023. 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 6,092; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 924,947.

Table D3. Leominster Public Schools: Chronic Absencea Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | *N* (2023) | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All students | 6,298 | 23.2 | 30.4 | 23.7 | 22.2 |
| African American/Black | 576 | 18.5 | 20.7 | 14.8 | 25.3 |
| Asian | 199 | 20.5 | 19.9 | 20.1 | 13.9 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 2,628 | 32.5 | 39.0 | 30.4 | 34.5 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 280 | 21.7 | 28.1 | 25.0 | 23.3 |
| Native American | 4 | — | 33.3 | — | 33.5 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 2 | — | — | — | 28.3 |
| White | 2,609 | 16.2 | 25.1 | 19.2 | 17.0 |
| High needs | 4,340 | 29.6 | 35.2 | 28.2 | 30.3 |
| Low income | 3,693 | — | 37.1 | 30.2 | 33.5 |
| English learners | 936 | 33.0 | 39.0 | 33.5 | 33.5 |
| Students w/disabilities | 1,546 | 30.4 | 36.4 | 28.1 | 30.4 |

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

Table D4. Leominster 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 | Actual | Estimated | Actual |
| Expenditures |
| From local appropriations for schools |  |
| By school committee | $75,890,964 | $76,635,411 | $79,790,670 | $79,713,707 | $81,645,286 | $82,775,710 |
| By municipality | $8,010,000 | $7,722,146 | $7,243,629 | $8,094,053 | $6,862,368 | $9,069,329 |
| Total from local appropriations | $83,900,964 | $84,357,557 | $87,034,299 | $87,807,760 | $88,507,654 | $91,845,039 |
| From revolving funds and grants | — | $11,652,548 | — | $9,536,885 | — | $14,512,412 |
| Total expenditures | — | $96,010,105 | — | $97,344,645 | — | $106,357,451 |
| **Chapter 70 aid to education program** |
| Chapter 70 state aida | — | $47,045,537 | — | $48,769,595 | — | $49,388,806 |
| Required local contribution | — | $30,127,166 | — | $30,886,014 | — | $32,019,531 |
| Required net school spendingb | — | $77,172,703 | — | $79,655,609 | — | $81,408,337 |
| Actual net school spending | — | $78,600,141 | — | $80,844,595 | — | $81,685,489 |
| Over/under required ($) | — | $1,427,438 | — | $1,188,986 | — | $277,152 |
| Over/under required (%) | — | 1.8% | — | 1.5% | — | 0.3% |

*Note*. Data as of July 25, 2023, and sourced from fiscal year 2022 district end-of-year reports and Chapter 70 program information on DESE website.

a Chapter 70 state aid funds are deposited in the local general fund and spent as local appropriations. b 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. Leominster Public Schools: Expenditures Per In-District Pupil, Fiscal Years 2020-2022

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Expenditure category | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
| Administration | $327 | $334 | $374 |
| Instructional leadership (district and school) | $790 | $1,004 | $1,053 |
| Teachers | $5,467 | $5,369 | $5,920 |
| Other teaching services | $1,492 | $1,350 | $1,597 |
| Professional development | $43 | $32 | $46 |
| Instructional materials, equipment, and technology | $264 | $618 | $499 |
| Guidance, counseling, and testing services | $450 | $448 | $464 |
| Pupil services | $1,211 | $1,306 | $1,586 |
| Operations and maintenance | $830 | $967 | $945 |
| Insurance, retirement, and other fixed costs | $2,870 | $2,885 | $2,644 |
| Total expenditures per in-district pupil | $13,743 | $14,312 | $15,127 |

*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. Leominster Public Schools: Student Performance Data

[Table E1. Next-Generation MCAS ELA Achievement by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2023 E-2](#_Toc158035353)

[Table E2. Next-Generation MCAS ELA Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2023 E-2](#_Toc158035354)

[Table E3. Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2023 E-3](#_Toc158035355)

[Table E4. Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2023 E-3](#_Toc158035356)

[Table E5. Next-Generation MCAS Science Achievement by Student Group, Grades 5 and 8, 2022-2023 E-4](#_Toc158035357)

[Table E6. Next-Generation MCAS Science Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2023 E-4](#_Toc158035358)

[Table E7. Next-Generation MCAS ELA Achievement by Grade, 2022-2023 E-5](#_Toc158035359)

[Table E8. Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Grade, 2022-2023 E-5](#_Toc158035360)

[Table E9. Next-Generation MCAS Science Achievement by Grade, 2022-2023 E-6](#_Toc158035361)

[Table E10. Next-Generation MCAS ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2023 E-7](#_Toc158035362)

[Table E11. Next-Generation MCAS ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2023 E-7](#_Toc158035363)

[Table E12. Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2023 E-8](#_Toc158035364)

[Table E13. Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2023 E-8](#_Toc158035365)

[Table E14. Next-Generation MCAS ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile by Grade, 2022-2023 E-9](#_Toc158035366)

[Table E15. Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile by Grade, 2022-2023 E-9](#_Toc158035367)

[Table E16. Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Student Group, 2020-2022 E-9](#_Toc158035368)

[Table E17. Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Student Group, 2019-2021 E-10](#_Toc158035369)

[Table E18. Annual Dropout Rates by Student Group, 2020-2022 E-10](#_Toc158035370)

[Table E19. In-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023 E-11](#_Toc158035371)

[Table E20. Out-of-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023 E-11](#_Toc158035372)

[Table E21. Advanced Coursework Completion Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023 E-12](#_Toc158035373)

[Table E22. Accountability Percentile and Classification, 2023 E-13](#_Toc158035374)

Table E1. Next-Generation MCAS ELA Achievement by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2023

| Group | # included (2023) | Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations | Percentage partially meeting expectations | Percentage not meeting expectations |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All | 2,678 | 34 | 35 | 42 | 46 | 43 | 39 | 20 | 21 | 19 |
| African American/Black | 242 | 36 | 37 | 26 | 46 | 47 | 45 | 18 | 17 | 29 |
| Asian | 79 | 39 | 43 | 64 | 50 | 47 | 27 | 11 | 10 | 9 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 1,092 | 21 | 22 | 22 | 51 | 48 | 43 | 28 | 30 | 34 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 133 | 39 | 41 | 49 | 46 | 41 | 35 | 15 | 17 | 16 |
| Native American | 2 | — | — | 29 | — | — | 42 | — | — | 28 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | 45 | — | — | 37 | — | — | 18 |
| White | 1,126 | 46 | 47 | 50 | 41 | 38 | 37 | 14 | 15 | 13 |
| High needs | 1,857 | 25 | 25 | 24 | 48 | 46 | 45 | 27 | 29 | 31 |
| Low income | 1,580 | 26 | 26 | 24 | 49 | 46 | 44 | 25 | 28 | 32 |
| ELs and former ELs | 684 | 16 | 18 | 20 | 51 | 46 | 42 | 33 | 36 | 38 |
| Students w/disabilities | 690 | 10 | 8 | 12 | 39 | 39 | 40 | 50 | 53 | 48 |

Table E2. Next-Generation MCAS ELA Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2023

| Group | # included (2023) | Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations | Percentage partially meeting expectations | Percentage not meeting expectations |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All | 455 | 37 | 45 | 58 | 53 | 35 | 30 | 10 | 20 | 11 |
| African American/Black | 37 | 40 | 35 | 42 | 52 | 38 | 41 | 7 | 27 | 17 |
| Asian | 14 | 42 | 50 | 79 | 47 | 29 | 16 | 11 | 21 | 5 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 200 | 31 | 35 | 36 | 55 | 37 | 39 | 14 | 28 | 24 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 16 | 58 | 44 | 63 | 42 | 44 | 29 | 0 | 13 | 9 |
| Native American | 1 | — | — | 42 | — | — | 41 | — | — | 18 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 1 | — | — | 41 | — | — | 47 | — | — | 11 |
| White | 186 | 40 | 56 | 67 | 53 | 33 | 27 | 7 | 10 | 6 |
| High needs | 295 | 29 | 30 | 37 | 56 | 40 | 42 | 14 | 30 | 21 |
| Low income | 259 | 31 | 32 | 39 | 55 | 39 | 40 | 14 | 28 | 21 |
| ELs and former ELs | 78 | 14 | 8 | 16 | 61 | 41 | 39 | 25 | 51 | 45 |
| Students w/disabilities | 98 | 7 | 12 | 22 | 63 | 35 | 47 | 30 | 53 | 31 |

Table E3. Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2023

| Group | # included (2023) | Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations | Percentage partially meeting expectations | Percentage not meeting expectations |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All | 2,674 | 33 | 36 | 41 | 46 | 45 | 41 | 20 | 19 | 18 |
| African American/Black | 238 | 29 | 33 | 21 | 52 | 53 | 47 | 19 | 15 | 32 |
| Asian | 79 | 44 | 41 | 71 | 47 | 52 | 23 | 9 | 8 | 6 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 1,094 | 21 | 22 | 19 | 51 | 50 | 47 | 28 | 28 | 34 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 133 | 40 | 47 | 46 | 41 | 36 | 38 | 19 | 17 | 16 |
| Native American | 2 | — | — | 28 | — | — | 46 | — | — | 26 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | 41 | — | — | 43 | — | — | 16 |
| White | 1,124 | 44 | 48 | 49 | 41 | 39 | 40 | 14 | 13 | 11 |
| High needs | 1,854 | 24 | 25 | 23 | 49 | 48 | 47 | 27 | 26 | 30 |
| Low income | 1,578 | 24 | 25 | 21 | 50 | 49 | 48 | 26 | 26 | 31 |
| ELs and former ELs | 689 | 18 | 19 | 21 | 53 | 50 | 44 | 29 | 30 | 34 |
| Students w/disabilities | 687 | 9 | 10 | 13 | 39 | 40 | 41 | 52 | 50 | 46 |

Table E4. Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2023

| Group | # included (2023) | Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations | Percentage partially meeting expectations | Percentage not meeting expectations |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All | 454 | 38 | 35 | 50 | 50 | 53 | 42 | 12 | 11 | 9 |
| African American/Black | 37 | 36 | 24 | 27 | 55 | 62 | 58 | 9 | 14 | 15 |
| Asian | 14 | 42 | 50 | 80 | 53 | 50 | 17 | 5 | 0 | 3 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 199 | 24 | 23 | 25 | 57 | 59 | 57 | 19 | 18 | 18 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 15 | 36 | 40 | 54 | 55 | 60 | 39 | 9 | 0 | 8 |
| Native American | 1 | — | — | 32 | — | — | 59 | — | — | 10 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 1 | — | — | 36 | — | — | 57 | — | — | 7 |
| White | 187 | 52 | 49 | 60 | 41 | 45 | 36 | 7 | 5 | 4 |
| High needs | 293 | 31 | 21 | 27 | 52 | 62 | 57 | 18 | 17 | 16 |
| Low income | 256 | 31 | 22 | 27 | 50 | 61 | 57 | 18 | 16 | 16 |
| ELs and former ELs | 81 | 12 | 10 | 14 | 62 | 57 | 58 | 26 | 33 | 28 |
| Students w/disabilities | 96 | 14 | 8 | 16 | 53 | 63 | 59 | 33 | 29 | 25 |

Table E5. Next-Generation MCAS Science Achievement by Student Group, Grades 5 and 8, 2022-2023

| Group | # included (2023) | Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations | Percentage partially meeting expectations | Percentage not meeting expectations |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All | 892 | 36 | 36 | 41 | 44 | 44 | 40 | 20 | 20 | 19 |
| African American/Black | 74 | 33 | 31 | 21 | 36 | 55 | 47 | 31 | 14 | 32 |
| Asian | 27 | 46 | 37 | 65 | 50 | 44 | 27 | 4 | 19 | 8 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 349 | 23 | 21 | 20 | 49 | 52 | 45 | 29 | 26 | 35 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 45 | 43 | 38 | 47 | 43 | 40 | 37 | 14 | 22 | 15 |
| Native American | — | — | — | 31 | — | — | 44 | — | — | 25 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | 43 | — | — | 41 | — | — | 16 |
| White | 397 | 48 | 50 | 50 | 42 | 36 | 38 | 10 | 14 | 11 |
| High needs | 597 | 25 | 24 | 23 | 48 | 49 | 46 | 26 | 27 | 31 |
| Low income | 505 | 26 | 26 | 22 | 48 | 47 | 46 | 26 | 27 | 32 |
| ELs and former ELs | 191 | 18 | 12 | 18 | 50 | 52 | 43 | 32 | 36 | 39 |
| Students w/disabilities | 240 | 10 | 11 | 14 | 41 | 40 | 40 | 49 | 49 | 45 |

Table E6. Next-Generation MCAS Science Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2023

| Group | # included (2023) | Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations | Percentage partially meeting expectations | Percentage not meeting expectations |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All | 412 | 41 | 38 | 47 | 47 | 50 | 42 | 13 | 12 | 11 |
| African American/Black | 33 | 41 | 30 | 26 | 50 | 55 | 55 | 9 | 15 | 20 |
| Asian | 13 | 60 | 31 | 75 | 27 | 62 | 21 | 13 | 8 | 4 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 173 | 25 | 28 | 24 | 57 | 56 | 52 | 19 | 16 | 24 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 16 | 27 | 38 | 51 | 73 | 63 | 39 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Native American | 1 | — | — | 30 | — | — | 58 | — | — | 12 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 1 | — | — | 31 | — | — | 54 | — | — | 15 |
| White | 175 | 54 | 50 | 55 | 38 | 41 | 39 | 8 | 9 | 6 |
| High needs | 261 | 29 | 24 | 26 | 52 | 57 | 54 | 18 | 19 | 21 |
| Low income | 232 | 30 | 25 | 26 | 52 | 58 | 53 | 18 | 18 | 21 |
| ELs and former ELs | 57 | 13 | 12 | 13 | 55 | 60 | 50 | 32 | 28 | 38 |
| Students w/disabilities | 91 | 12 | 11 | 16 | 51 | 49 | 53 | 37 | 40 | 31 |

Table E7. Next-Generation MCAS ELA Achievement by Grade, 2022-2023

| Grade | # included (2023) | Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations | Percentage partially meeting expectations | Percentage not meeting expectations |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| 3 | 440 | 39 | 40 | 44 | 43 | 42 | 40 | 18 | 18 | 16 |
| 4 | 451 | 36 | 37 | 40 | 47 | 46 | 43 | 18 | 18 | 17 |
| 5 | 423 | 35 | 42 | 44 | 51 | 43 | 40 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 6 | 440 | 32 | 30 | 42 | 43 | 40 | 34 | 26 | 30 | 24 |
| 7 | 447 | 33 | 29 | 40 | 46 | 49 | 40 | 21 | 22 | 19 |
| 8 | 477 | 32 | 35 | 44 | 46 | 40 | 34 | 22 | 25 | 22 |
| 3-8 | 2,678 | 34 | 35 | 42 | 46 | 43 | 39 | 20 | 21 | 19 |
| 10 | 455 | 37 | 45 | 58 | 53 | 35 | 30 | 10 | 20 | 11 |

Table E8. Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Grade, 2022-2023

| Grade | # included (2023) | Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations | Percentage partially meeting expectations | Percentage not meeting expectations |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| 3 | 438 | 43 | 43 | 41 | 35 | 39 | 39 | 22 | 18 | 20 |
| 4 | 449 | 37 | 42 | 45 | 47 | 39 | 37 | 17 | 19 | 18 |
| 5 | 422 | 36 | 41 | 41 | 48 | 49 | 46 | 17 | 10 | 13 |
| 6 | 438 | 34 | 34 | 41 | 46 | 45 | 42 | 19 | 21 | 17 |
| 7 | 450 | 21 | 29 | 38 | 52 | 47 | 40 | 26 | 24 | 22 |
| 8 | 477 | 31 | 26 | 38 | 50 | 52 | 42 | 19 | 22 | 20 |
| 3-8 | 2,674 | 33 | 36 | 41 | 46 | 45 | 41 | 20 | 19 | 18 |
| 10 | 454 | 38 | 35 | 50 | 50 | 53 | 42 | 12 | 11 | 9 |

Table E9. Next-Generation MCAS Science Achievement by Grade, 2022-2023

| Grade | # included (2023) | Percentage meeting or exceeding expectations | Percentage partially meeting expectations | Percentage not meeting expectations |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| 5 | 421 | 37 | 40 | 42 | 42 | 42 | 40 | 22 | 19 | 19 |
| 8 | 471 | 36 | 33 | 41 | 47 | 47 | 40 | 18 | 20 | 19 |
| 5 and 8 | 892 | 36 | 36 | 41 | 44 | 44 | 40 | 20 | 20 | 19 |
| 10 | 412 | 41 | 38 | 47 | 47 | 50 | 42 | 13 | 12 | 11 |

Table E10. Next-Generation MCAS ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # included (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All students | 2,018 | 50.0 | 49.4 | 49.7 |
| African American/Black | 181 | 54.3 | 52.3 | 48.0 |
| Asian | 52 | 56.2 | 47.4 | 56.4 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 813 | 47.4 | 48.5 | 47.5 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 106 | 48.8 | 51.4 | 50.0 |
| Native American | 1 | — | — | 46.7 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | 50.5 |
| White | 865 | 51.1 | 49.5 | 50.0 |
| High needs | 1,349 | 48.0 | 48.5 | 47.3 |
| Low income | 1,142 | 48.1 | 48.2 | 47.0 |
| ELs and former ELs | 466 | 49.1 | 50.1 | 49.7 |
| Students w/disabilities | 469 | 43.6 | 46.7 | 43.7 |

Table E11. Next-Generation MCAS ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # included (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All students | 384 | 41.7 | 44.5 | 49.5 |
| African American/Black | 30 | 46.6 | 41.8 | 45.5 |
| Asian | 13 | — | — | 56.2 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 161 | 44.9 | 43.1 | 45.1 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 14 | — | — | 51.3 |
| Native American | 1 | — | — | 46.4 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 1 | — | — | 45.2 |
| White | 164 | 37.6 | 45.5 | 50.7 |
| High needs | 235 | 43.7 | 39.8 | 44.7 |
| Low income | 206 | 43.8 | 40.1 | 44.9 |
| ELs and former ELs | 49 | 52.4 | 38.1 | 42.1 |
| Students w/disabilities | 81 | 38.5 | 29.8 | 39.9 |

Table E12. Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # included (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All students | 2,020 | 52.0 | 52.5 | 49.8 |
| African American/Black | 179 | 54.4 | 55.6 | 47.8 |
| Asian | 53 | 56.6 | 56.5 | 57.7 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 815 | 47.7 | 50.1 | 47.5 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 106 | 57.0 | 49.7 | 50.3 |
| Native American | 1 | — | — | 47.1 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | 51.5 |
| White | 866 | 54.8 | 54.4 | 50.1 |
| High needs | 1,352 | 49.9 | 51.0 | 47.8 |
| Low income | 1,147 | 50.0 | 50.6 | 47.3 |
| ELs and former ELs | 469 | 50.8 | 49.7 | 49.3 |
| Students w/disabilities | 470 | 44.1 | 48.7 | 44.8 |

Table E13. Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # included (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All students | 380 | 46.5 | 40.3 | 49.6 |
| African American/Black | 30 | 52.3 | 37.5 | 41.4 |
| Asian | 13 | — | — | 55.9 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 158 | 43.8 | 39.5 | 41.8 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 13 | — | — | 51.1 |
| Native American | 1 | — | — | 45.4 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 1 | — | — | 56.1 |
| White | 164 | 47.5 | 42.3 | 52.9 |
| High needs | 231 | 47.4 | 38.3 | 43.9 |
| Low income | 201 | 46.5 | 38.6 | 43.2 |
| ELs and former ELs | 50 | 52.7 | 32.4 | 40.2 |
| Students w/disabilities | 79 | 44.6 | 35.0 | 41.7 |

Table E14. Next-Generation MCAS ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile by Grade, 2022-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade | # included (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| 3 | — | — | — | — |
| 4 | 400 | 50.5 | 48.9 | 49.4 |
| 5 | 383 | 51.6 | 55.9 | 49.8 |
| 6 | 394 | 45.0 | 46.5 | 49.9 |
| 7 | 401 | 54.2 | 49.8 | 49.9 |
| 8 | 440 | 48.4 | 46.5 | 49.7 |
| 3-8 | 2,018 | 50.0 | 49.4 | 49.7 |
| 10 | 384 | 41.7 | 44.5 | 49.5 |

Table E15. Next-Generation MCAS Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile by Grade, 2022-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade | # included (2023) | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| 3 | — | — | — | — |
| 4 | 399 | 54.5 | 44.3 | 49.6 |
| 5 | 383 | 62.3 | 60.8 | 50.0 |
| 6 | 393 | 45.9 | 49.2 | 49.9 |
| 7 | 404 | 43.4 | 52.0 | 49.9 |
| 8 | 441 | 55.5 | 56.3 | 49.7 |
| 3-8 | 2,020 | 52.0 | 52.5 | 49.8 |
| 10 | 380 | 46.5 | 40.3 | 49.6 |

Table E16. Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Student Group, 2020-2022

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # included (2022) | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | State (2022) |
| All | 469 | 93.5 | 95.6 | 92.8 | 90.1 |
| African American/Black | 41 | 94.0 | 92.7 | 87.8 | 86.2 |
| Asian | 19 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 96.2 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 159 | 91.8 | 96.2 | 89.9 | 81.2 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 14 | 100 | 92.9 | 100 | 88.7 |
| Native American | 1 | — | — | — | 82.2 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | — | 81.3 |
| White | 235 | 93.7 | 95.6 | 94.5 | 93.2 |
| High needs | 327 | 90.0 | 92.7 | 89.9 | 83.9 |
| Low income | 298 | 91.5 | 92.8 | 90.6 | 83.2 |
| English learners | 43 | 92.5 | 87.2 | 81.4 | 73.1 |
| Students w/disabilities | 119 | 80.0 | 89.4 | 84.9 | 78.0 |

Table E17. Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Student Group, 2019-2021

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # included (2021) | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | State (2021) |
| All | 474 | 92.3 | 94.8 | 97.3 | 91.8 |
| African American/Black | 41 | 95.0 | 96.0 | 95.1 | 88.1 |
| Asian | 12 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 97.0 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 156 | 85.0 | 93.8 | 98.1 | 84.0 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 14 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 91.2 |
| Native American | — | — | — | — | 84.1 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | — | 87.7 |
| White | 251 | 94.4 | 94.6 | 96.8 | 94.4 |
| High needs | 287 | 87.7 | 92.0 | 95.5 | 85.8 |
| Low income | 265 | 86.8 | 93.9 | 95.8 | 85.1 |
| English learners | 39 | 79.1 | 92.5 | 89.7 | 78.0 |
| Students w/disabilities | 94 | 83.7 | 83.5 | 94.7 | 80.6 |

Table E18. Annual Dropout Rates by Student Group, 2020-2022

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # included (2022) | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | State (2022) |
| All | 1,860 | 0.5 | 0.5 | 1.3 | 2.1 |
| African American/Black | 159 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 2.8 |
| Asian | 73 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.6 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 711 | 1.0 | 1.0 | 2.3 | 4.3 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 62 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 2.4 |
| Native American | 2 | — | — | — | 4.3 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 1 | — | — | — | 1.2 |
| White | 852 | 0.4 | 0.3 | 1.1 | 1.3 |
| High needs | 1,163 | 0.6 | 0.8 | 1.7 | 3.6 |
| Low income | 1,003 | — | — | 1.8 | 3.8 |
| English learners | 158 | 4.5 | 1.6 | 5.1 | 7.8 |
| Students w/disabilities | 424 | 0.3 | 1.0 | 1.2 | 3.4 |

Table E19. In-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # included (2023) | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All | 6,278 | 0.5 | 4.5 | 4.0 | 1.4 |
| African American/Black | 582 | — | 4.1 | 4.6 | 2.1 |
| Asian | 197 | — | 3.0 | — | 0.3 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 2,620 | 0.6 | 6.0 | 4.9 | 1.8 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 279 | — | 3.3 | 3.6 | 1.6 |
| Native American | 4 | — | — | — | 1.5 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 1 | — | — | — | 1.4 |
| White | 2,595 | 0.4 | 3.3 | 3.2 | 1.2 |
| High needs | 4,343 | 0.7 | 5.1 | 4.8 | 2.0 |
| Low income | 3,678 | — | 5.3 | 4.7 | 2.1 |
| English learners | 941 | — | 5.0 | 5.0 | 1.3 |
| Students w/disabilities | 1,566 | 0.8 | 6.6 | 5.7 | 2.5 |

Table E20. Out-of-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # included (2023) | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All | 6,278 | 0.3 | 3.9 | 3.7 | 2.5 |
| African American/Black | 582 | — | 3.4 | 3.3 | 5.0 |
| Asian | 197 | — | 2.5 | — | 0.6 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 2,620 | 0.4 | 5.0 | 4.9 | 3.9 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 279 | — | 2.2 | 3.2 | 3.0 |
| Native American | 4 | — | — | — | 4.1 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 1 | — | — | — | 3.1 |
| White | 2,595 | 0.3 | 3.2 | 2.7 | 1.6 |
| High needs | 4,343 | 0.5 | 4.5 | 4.5 | 3.8 |
| Low income | 3,678 | — | 4.6 | 4.4 | 4.3 |
| English learners | 941 | — | 3.2 | 4.6 | 2.7 |
| Students w/disabilities | 1,566 | 0.8 | 7.2 | 6.0 | 4.7 |

Table E21. Advanced Coursework Completion Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # included (2023) | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | State (2023) |
| All | 927 | 40.2 | 49.3 | 48.8 | 65.8 |
| African American/Black | 90 | 31.7 | 47.0 | 50.0 | 57.3 |
| Asian | 38 | 61.3 | 76.3 | 68.4 | 84.9 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 347 | 28.3 | 35.0 | 37.8 | 51.2 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 30 | 42.9 | 43.8 | 56.7 | 67.4 |
| Native American | — | — | — | — | 50.6 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | — | — | — | — | 60.0 |
| White | 422 | 48.3 | 57.7 | 55.2 | 70.4 |
| High needs | 569 | 22.6 | 33.8 | 37.3 | 49.8 |
| Low income | 479 | — | 35.7 | 39.7 | 50.7 |
| English learners | 68 | 0.0 | 5.3 | 4.4 | 31.7 |
| Students w/disabilities | 208 | 7.1 | 14.6 | 17.3 | 36.0 |

Table E22. Accountability Percentile and Classification, 2023

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| School | Progress toward improvement targets (%) | Percentile | Overall classification | Reason for classification |
| District | 54 | — | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Substantial progress toward targets |
| Bennet Preschool | — | — | Insufficient data | Insufficient data |
| Lincoln School Preschool | — | — | Insufficient data | Insufficient data |
| Priest Street Elementary School | — | — | Insufficient data | Insufficient data |
| Fall Brook Elementary School | 72 | 79 | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Substantial progress toward targets |
| Frances Drake Elementary School | 73 | 42 | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Substantial progress toward targets |
| Johnny Appleseed Elementary School | 53 | 59 | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Substantial progress toward targets |
| Northwest Elementary School | 70 | 31 | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Substantial progress toward targets |
| Samoset Middle School | 71 | 28 | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Substantial progress toward targets |
| Sky View Middle School | 38 | 27 | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Moderate progress toward targets |
| Center for Technical Education Innovation | 40 | 31 | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Moderate progress toward targets |
| Leominster Center for Excellence | — | — | Insufficient data | Insufficient data |
| Leominster High School | 61 | 25 | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Substantial progress toward targets |
| Leominster Academy | — | — | Insufficient data | Insufficient data |

1. DESE’s District Standards and Indicators are at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/district-review/district-standards-indicators.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. For more information on the Teachstone CLASS protocol, visit <https://teachstone.com/class/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. CURATE: Curriculum Ratings by Teachers. See <https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate>. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Districts with similar demographics and similar wealth are based on [Resource Allocation and District Action Reports (RADAR)](https://www.doe.mass.edu/research/radar/) (retrieved February 2024). [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Average student growth percentile (SGP) ranges: Very Low Growth = 1.0—29.9, Low Growth = 30.0—39.9, Typical Growth = 40.0—59.9, Exceeded Typical Growth = 60.0 or higher. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Leominster Academy is a virtual school that provides a virtual option for high school students who are Leominster residents. Consequently, it was not included in the district review. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. According to DESE’s district profile for Leominster High School, student attendance from the beginning of the school year through March 1, 2024, for all students was 91 percent, compared with 85 percent for EL students, 88 percent for Hispanic students, and 88 percent for students with disabilities. Further, four-year graduation rates for all students was 93 percent, compared with 57 percent for EL students and 87 percent for Hispanic students; the percentage of students with disabilities graduating was the same as all students (93 percent). For the CTEi, no major discrepancies occurred across student groups for attendance, although the four-year graduation rate for EL students was lower compared with all students (83 percent for EL students and 97 percent for all students). [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. As a net school spending district, per legal requirements, the district’s transportation budget comes from the city. Transportation includes buses to and from school during normal school hours but does not include afterschool transportation for students who would like to stay late to receive tutoring or support. See Adequate Budget for additional details. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. 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. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)