# Chelsea Public Schools

Comprehensive District Review Report

October 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)

dese logo

American Institutes for Research Logo



Contents

[Executive Summary 1](#_Toc187158655)

[Chelsea Public Schools: District Review Overview 5](#_Toc187158656)

[Leadership and Governance 11](#_Toc187158657)

[Curriculum and Instruction 18](#_Toc187158658)

[Assessment 25](#_Toc187158659)

[Human Resources and Professional Development 29](#_Toc187158660)

[Student Support 38](#_Toc187158661)

[Financial and Asset Management 44](#_Toc187158662)

[Appendix A. Summary of Site Visit Activities A-1](#_Toc187158663)

[Appendix B. Districtwide Instructional Observation Report B-1](#_Toc187158664)

[Appendix C. Resources to Support Implementation of DESE’s District Standards and Indicators C-1](#_Toc187158665)

[Appendix D. Enrollment, Attendance, Expenditures D-1](#_Toc187158666)

[Appendix E. Student Performance Data E-1](#_Toc187158667)

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

Patrick Tutwiler, Ph.D.

Interim Commissioner

April 2025

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, an affirmative action employer, is committed to ensuring that all of its programs and facilities are accessible to all members of the public. We do not discriminate on the basis of age, color, disability, national origin, race, religion, sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation. Inquiries regarding the Department’s compliance with Title IX and other civil rights laws may be directed to the Human Resources Director, 135 Santilli Highway, Everett, MA 02149. Phone: 781-338-6105.

© 2025 Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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

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 Chelsea Public Schools (hereafter, Chelsea) in October 2024. Data collection activities associated with the review included interviews, focus groups, and document reviews and were designed to understand how districts operate in support of continuous improvement efforts. The review focused on the six standards (and related indicators) that DESE identified as important components of district effectiveness. The resulting report provides an in-depth look at district systems, policies, and practices and includes recommendations to promote systemic improvements and advance equitable student outcomes and experiences.

In addition, to collect data on instructional practices, four observers, who focused primarily on instruction in the classroom, visited Chelsea during the week of October 28, 2024. The observers conducted 83 observations in a sample of classrooms across grade levels, focused primarily 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,[[1]](#footnote-2) 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).

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

In Chelsea, strong working relationships among the school committee, city manager, and district leaders are strengths of the district. However, teachers characterized their relationships with leaders as more tense than usual due to contract negotiations around the time of the visit. The school committee evaluates the superintendent, though the most recent evaluation, in December 2023, occurred in an executive session, and materials released with meeting minutes did not include details of the evaluation. Reporting on the details of the superintendent’s evaluation publicly is an area for growth. Chelsea has several distributed leadership structures that are strengths, including superintendent’s cabinet, district leadership team, and empowered school instructional leadership teams (ILTs).

The district has a shared vision in which, “everyone will know our students by name, strength, and story,” which is a strength of the district. Furthermore, the district has developed a strategic plan, and all schools have Accelerated Improvement Plans (AIPs) that align with the district’s plan, which is a strength. Chelsea’s specific indicators of success are also strengths, since the superintendent reports regularly on these measurable targets in school committee meetings. The school committee and district leaders collaborate to support students and improve student outcomes, which is another strength.

District staff outlined Chelsea’s strategies for recruiting and retaining diverse leaders to ensure stability during leadership turnover. The number of Hispanic or Latino administrators doubled between 2021 and 2023, which is a strength of the district because it shows that Chelsea’s concerted effort to recruit and retain diverse leaders is yielding positive results. Still, multiple educators reported the district has had a high administrator turnover rate. Chelsea partners with key stakeholders and intentionally seeks input from underrepresented groups in decision making, and family liaisons are a key part of this strategy. Parents reported family liaisons reaching out to them about events and providing excellent programming, though they expressed mixed views about opportunities for families to participate in school decision-making, which is an area for growth.

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

Chelsea has a broad set of plans and guidelines for curriculum and instruction, but some of these plans may need to be clarified and staff need may need additional supports to fully implement them. District leaders described a broad instructional vision, though teachers and school leaders reported inconsistent understanding of the district’s instructional vision, making this an area for growth. The district does have a plan for monitoring instruction, as staff described a strong commitment to the instructional rounds process, which is a strength. Similarly, Chelsea has a process to evaluate and adopt curriculum that is clearly defined, which is another strength, as are efforts to offer formal districtwide professional learning opportunities to support uniform curriculum implementation for ELA and mathematics K-12 and science 5-11. However, an area for growth in implementation is the need to support educators to develop scaffolds and differentiate instruction for the selected materials.

Chelsea offers an array of academic interventions to support students in accessing the general curriculum, which is a strength. However, teachers expressed a need for additional support scaffolding and differentiating instruction for English learners (ELs) and Students with Disabilities.

### [Assessment](#_Assessment)

Chelsea is a data-rich district that places an emphasis on data collection and use. The district strategically selects and implements formal and informal assessments that align with instructional content and staff disaggregate student data to inform decision-making, a strength of the district. However, staff reported that, while district leadership conducts trainings related to equity in assessment and grading, there have been times in which they were told not to provide accommodations or modifications in assessments for students. These comments suggest that the district needs to clarify expectations and adjust practices for administering assessments to accommodate students’ needs.

The culture of data use is improving in Chelsea, and staff members understand how data collection and use are connected to the district’s priorities. Educators in Chelsea have access to relevant data and use a variety of data, but Chelsea does not yet have consistent districtwide goals, routines, and procedures in place around data use at all school levels.

Chelsea does expect teachers to communicate with families about student performance and they have systems and processes in place for this communication, a strength of the district. However, Chelsea does not set expectations related to engaging all students in goal setting and data review in developmentally appropriate ways, an area for growth for the district. According to multiple groups of respondents, the district does have some parts of a transparent and accessible grading system that it calibrates across schools. District staff reported that Chelsea has started the work to create more equitable and consistent grading practices, another strength of the district.

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

Chelsea’s human resources infrastructure includes access to resources such as policies and procedures documents, a strength of the district. Areas for growth in infrastructure include creating channels for staff to more readily access employee records and developing processes for addressing interpersonal disputes among staff. Other strengths of the district include the office providing and supporting the use of data to inform its recruitment and hiring policies and practices, though leaders reported challenges with hiring qualified staff.

The district has diversified the teaching force to be more reflective of the student body during the past five years, which is a strength. Strategies include the Pathway Program, which supports parents becoming paraprofessionals, paraprofessionals becoming teachers, and teachers becoming administrators. Retaining staff, however, remains a challenge. According to DESE data, Chelsea’s teacher retention rate has been below the state’s for the past five years, and the retention of Hispanic or Latino teachers has declined, though district data showed different results. Resolving this discrepancy, and retaining teachers overall, particularly Hispanic or Latino teachers, is an area for growth. In addition, high rates of staff absenteeism negatively impacts the working environment in Chelsea. In terms of career advancement opportunities, the Pathways Program has successfully supported staff advancement, and teachers reported opportunities to become leaders in several areas, and these opportunities and pathways for staff to advance in their careers are strengths in Chelsea.

District records suggest that school-level evaluators consistently complete teacher evaluations. A review of evaluations indicates that the district consistently highlights areas of strength during evaluations. However, an area for growth is more consistently articulating areas for staff improvement. Although district principals described frequently observing classrooms, multiple teachers reported inconsistency in this process. More frequent observations and greater consistency in providing feedback are areas for growth**.** The district offers professional development to staff in line with district objectives, but lacks a formal, written professional development plan, and some staff reported that professional learning opportunities are not relevant to them, such as learning targeting newer staff. Creating a more coherent formal plan for professional development is an area for growth. The district has a two-year mentoring program for new educators, and staff reported supports for new teachers are differentiated and data-informed, making the mentoring program a strength.

### [Student Support](#_Student_Support)

Chelsea has made several efforts in recent years to establish safe and supportive learning environments for students, a strength of the district. The district uses Panorama and other student surveys to monitor school and district culture. Currently, each school has its own behavior and attendance policies, though the district is working toward aligning behavior expectations across Chelsea. Chronic student absenteeism is something Chelsea is currently working on and the district is currently rolling out new attendance initiatives. Despite these efforts, staff at multiple levels reported that student absenteeism is a significant issue. The district offers health and physical education, aligned with the Massachusetts Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Framework; however, Chelsea’s offering of health and physical education is inconsistent across grades and schools.

Chelsea maintains relationships with organizations in the community to provide wraparound services and enriching experiences to students and families during and outside of the school day. The Chelsea Children’s Cabinet is a strong and active part of the district’s effort to connect students with community resources and services. Chelsea provides guidance to staff regarding family communication, and policies are culturally responsive and multilingual, and many staff are multilingual. Although Chelsea has some broad guidance on facilitating student support teams, the district doesnotprovidedetailed guidance on how schools should implement each component of the MTSS, an area for growth. Furthermore, despite offering both academic and non-academic interventions to students, the options at the high school level are not sufficient to meet students’ needs. Thus, improving access to academic interventions at the high school level is an area for growth.

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

The Administration and Finance Office is staffed such that it efficiently manages various operations as well as financial services, which is a strength of the district. Another strength is the district’s record-keeping and use of backup records. The office has a productive relationship with their counterparts in city government. However, the office could improve collaboration with city partners, and aligning technologies and procedures to increase efficiency is an area for growth. In addition, district-city collaboration lacks a written agreement, which is also an area for growth.

The district has a transparent budgeting process, with community involvement and detailed timelines, and this is a strength. The district exceeded net school spending requirements in the most recent fiscal year, but competitive teacher compensation remains an issue (see Human Resources). The district utilizes state and federal grants in alignment with its strategic plan to supplement local resources, and this is another strength of the district.

The finance office also manages various operational elements, including transportation, food services, and information technology (IT). Furthermore, the district has a strong commitment to maintaining facilities and collaborates with the city in this regard. Regular meetings among key departments to discuss capital projects and operations create strong communication, and this is a strength.

## Chelsea 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.[[2]](#footnote-3) Reviews provide the state, district leaders, and the public with an in-depth look into the systems, structures, and practices of a district and how they affect student experiences and opportunities. District reviews provide information and recommendations to support districts in implementing systemic improvements and advance equitable student outcomes and experiences.

### 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 municipal staff, school committee members, teachers’ association representatives, district and school administrators, teachers, students, and students’ families. Reviewers also conduct focus groups and virtual interviews 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, all interview and focus group data is transcribed using automated transcription. The transcripts are then coded using both deterministic coding, based on the protocol questions, as well as natural language processing models. Team members analyze the coded 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 provide recommendations for the district, based on the findings of strengths and areas for 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 Chelsea occurred during the week of October 28, 2024. The site visit included 21 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 63 stakeholders, including school committee members, district administrators, school staff, students, students’ families, and teachers’ association representatives. The review team conducted four teacher focus groups (two different focus groups with a total of 12 elementary school teachers, a focus group with six middle school teachers, and a focus group with six high school teachers), two student focus groups (one focus group with six middle school students and one focus group with seven high school students), and two family focus groups (one focus group in English and one focus group in Spanish, with a total of four parents). Data collection also included distributing a questionnaire to district leaders, as well as to each principal, to gather information about district and school processes and operations; respondents in Chelsea completed the district questionnaire and nine of 10 principal questionnaires.

The site team also conducted 83 observations of classroom instruction in nine schools. Certified team members conducted instructional observations using the Teachstone CLASS protocol.

### District Profile

The City of Chelsea is located north of Boston and borders the cities of Everett and Revere. According to [census data](https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/MA,chelseacitymassachusetts/PST045223), Chelsea’s median income from 2018 to 2022 was $71,051, which is below the state median income of $96,505. In 2023, Chelsea had an estimated 38,319 residents.

Appointed in 2019, the superintendent of Chelsea Public Schools is Almudena Abeyta, Ed.D. A school committee composed of nine members elected for two-year terms governs the district; eight committee members represent voting districts, and one member is elected at-large.

During the past decade, enrollment in Chelsea has fluctuated, from a high of 6,350 students in 2014-15 to a low of 5,936 students in 2020-21 during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the 2024-2025 school year, the district served 6,094 students across its 11 schools, which represents an increase of 158 students since the 2020-2021 school year. Table 1 provides an overview of student enrollment by school for the 2024-2025 school year.

Table 1. Schools, Type, Grades Served, and Enrollment, 2024-2025

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| School | Type | Grades served | Enrollment |
| Shurtleff Early Childhood | Elementary | PK-1 | 779 |
| Edgar F. Hooks Elementary | Elementary | 1-4 | 430 |
| Frank M. Sokolowski Elementary | Elementary | 1-4 | 472 |
| William A. Berkowitz Elementary | Elementary | 1-4 | 455 |
| George F. Kelly Elementary | Elementary | 1-5 | 527 |
| Clark Avenue School | Middle | 5-8 | 673 |
| Eugene Wright Science and Technology Academy | Middle | 5-8 | 436 |
| Joseph A. Browne School | Middle | 5-8 | 487 |
| Chelsea High | High | 9-12 | 1,649 |
| Chelsea Virtual Learning Academy | Alternative | 7-12 | 54 |
| Chelsea Opportunity Academy | Alternative | 9-12 | 132 |
| **Total** |  |  | 6,094 |

Figure 1 shows the distribution of Chelsea students by race/ethnicity. Figure 2 shows student makeup for selected populations as compared to state averages. Full enrollment figures compared with the state are in Tables D1 and D2 in Appendix D. Appendix D also provides additional information about district enrollment, student attendance, and expenditures.

Figure 1. Distribution of Students, by Race/Ethnicity (2024-25)

Figure 2. Distribution of Students, by Selected Populations (2024-25)

Figure 3 shows the percentage of all Chelsea students meeting or exceeding expectations on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) compared to the statewide percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations on MCAS. In 2024, the percentage of students meeting or exceeding expectations was lower for Chelsea than for the state in Grades 3-8 (ELA and mathematics), Grades 5 and 8 (Science), and Grade 10 (ELA, Math, Science).

Figure 3. Percentage of Students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations, MCAS, 2024

Chelsea’s High Heeds students, who comprise 90.9 percent of the district, met or exceeded expectations on the 2024 MCAS assessments at rates 5 to 13 percentage points below High Heeds students across the state (see Figure 4).

Figure 4. Percentage of High Needs Students Meeting or Exceeding Expectations, MCAS, 2024

Most high school students in Chelsea attend Chelsea High, but the district offers alternative settings for secondary students via the Chelsea Opportunity Academy and Chelsea Virtual Learning Academy. Across these three settings, Chelsea’s 2023 four-year cohort graduation rate (64.1 percent) was 25.1 percentage points lower than the state rate (89.2 percent). Furthermore, the district’s dropout rate is two-and-a-half times higher than the state rate. Of students who graduated from the district in 2022-2023, 29.2 percent attended college or university by March 2024, which is less than half the state rate of 62.4 percent. Additionally, 35.9 percent of 2022-2023 graduates planned to enter the workforce or an apprenticeship after high school, compared to 14.7 percent of students across the state.

In 2024 statewide accountability results, five Chelsea schools (Chelsea High, Clark Avenue School, Eugene Wright Science and Technology Academy, George F. Kelly Elementary, and Joseph A. Browne School) were identified as requiring assistance or intervention due to being among the lowest performing 10 percent of schools statewide, and the results identified another school (Chelsea Virtual Learning Academy) as requiring assistance or intervention due to low assessment participation for its All Students group. The accountability results also identified four of these schools as needing focused/targeted support due to low performing student groups. Furthermore, Edgar F. Hooks Elementary made substantial progress toward its targets in 2024; William A. Berkowitz Elementary met or exceeded its targets in 2024 and was also identified as a School of Recognition. Additionally, the state’s district and school accountability system classified the district as “in need of focused/targeted support” due to its low graduation rate. However, the district did make moderate progress toward achieving its accountability targets, as set by DESE.

In fiscal year 2023, the total in-district per-pupil expenditure for Chelsea was $20,014, which is $265 less than the average in-district per-pupil expenditure in districts with similar demographics ($20,279) and $1,799 less than the average in-district per-pupil expenditures in districts of similar wealth ($21,813)[[3]](#footnote-4). In-district per-pupil expenditures for Chelsea were $1,242 less than the average state spending per pupil ($21,256). Actual net school spending was slightly greater than what is required by the Chapter 70 state education aid program, as shown in Table D5 in Appendix D.

### Classroom Observations

Four observers, who focused primarily on instruction in the classroom, visited Chelsea during the week of October 28, 2024, conducting classroom observations in nine schools (the team visited all schools listed in Table 1, with the exception of the Chelsea Virtual Learning Academy). The observers conducted 83 observations in a sample of classrooms across grade levels, focused on literacy, ELA, and mathematics. The CLASS protocol guided all classroom observations in the district. These observations used the three grade-band levels of CLASS protocols: K-3, Upper Elementary (4-5), and Secondary (6-12).

The K-3 protocol includes 10 classroom dimensions related to three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support. The Upper Elementary and Secondary protocols include 11 classroom dimensions related to three domains: Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support, in addition to Student Engagement. The three domains observed at all levels broadly are defined as follows:

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

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

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

Figure 5. Chelsea CLASS Domain Averages, by Grade Band

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

## Leadership and Governance

This section examines the extent to which school committees, district leaders, school leaders, and advisory council members work collaboratively and strategically to promote high-quality teaching and learning that are antiracist, inclusive, multilingual, and multicultural; that value and affirm all students and their families; and that create equitable opportunities and experiences for all students, particularly students who have been historically underserved. This section also focuses on the extent to which districts establish, implement, and evaluate policies, plans, procedures, systems, and budgets with a primary focus on achieving districtwide strategic objectives, in part through equitable and effective use of resources, that ultimately lead to high-quality teaching and learning for all students.

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

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

| Indicator | Strengths | Areas for growth |
| --- | --- | --- |
| [Leadership and Governing Structures](#_Leadership_and_Governing_1) | * Strong working relationships exist between the school committee and the superintendent. * The district’s shared, distributed leadership structures are effective. | * Conducting, or at least reporting on, the superintendent’s evaluation publicly |
| [Strategic Planning, Implementation, and Monitoring](#_Strategic_Planning,_Implementation,) | * The district has a commonly understood vision, where all students are “known by name, strength, and story.” * All schools have Accelerated Improvement Plans (AIPs) for 2024-2025 that align with the district plan. * The district has specific indicators of success and regularly communicates progress toward its identified goals, including implementation and progress at each school, with the school committee and the public. |  |
| [District Culture](#_District_Culture) | * Together, the school committee, superintendent, and district leaders collaborate to support students and improve outcomes. * The number of Hispanic or Latino administrators doubled between 2021 and 2023. | * Involving families in shared decision-making |

### Leadership and Governing Structures

Appointed in 2019, the superintendent of Chelsea is Dr. Almudena Abeyta. A school committee composed of nine members elected for two-year terms governs the district; eight members represent voting districts, and one member is elected at large.

The Chelsea school committee creates and implements policies and helps to make budget decisions to support the district’s priorities, according to a review of the district’s school committee website, meeting minutes, and interviews. In interviews, committee members highlighted their responsibilities to support the superintendent by aligning resources with the district’s strategic goals. For instance, one school committee member explained that the district now has at least two family liaisons in every school to help facilitate parent engagement, which is one of the district’s goals. The committee includes a student representative who often provides updates at the meetings.

The school committee’s strong working relationship with the superintendent is a strength of the district. The superintendent described her relationship with the school committee as favorable. School committee members agreed, describing their relationship as “very good” and noting their appreciation for how the superintendent keeps them informed. Another member described the superintendent as the “best superintendent that Chelsea has had.” Similarly, a municipal official reported the superintendent as doing “a phenomenal job” managing the many demands placed on the school system, including working with the school committee to meet the district’s goals. Multiple interview participants reported positively on the superintendent’s navigation of pandemic-related school disruptions.

A major responsibility of the school committee is to evaluate the superintendent. The superintendent was evaluated annually from 2019-2024 and will now be evaluated every other year, starting in 2025. The superintendent reported preparing documents with evidence and submitting a self-reflection as part of the evaluation process. According to the January 4, 2024, school committee minutes, the school committee accepted subcommittee reports that were included in the packet of minutes and supplementary materials posted online. A report from the human resources subcommittee referred to the superintendent’s evaluation, but that part of the meeting occurred in an executive session. The school committee did not hold a public meeting focused on the superintendent’s evaluation, and the subcommittee minutes do not include a summary of the discussion that occurred during that meeting or the outcome of this evaluation (e.g., a public report of the superintendent’s performance rating). Reporting on the superintendent’s evaluation publicly is an area for growth for the district.

Distributed leadership structures are a strength of the district. The superintendent has developed an effective leadership team structure that includes two teams and allows the district to attend to strategic planning and implementation of the district’s five priorities from their strategic plan (see Strategic Planning). The superintendent’s Leadership Cabinet includes the superintendent; assistant superintendent for teaching and learning; assistant superintendent of schools; chief of staff and equity; communication director; officer of innovation, access, and opportunity; executive director of administration and finance; and director of human resources. According to district leaders, the Leadership Cabinet meets weekly, and these meetings focus primarily on strategic planning and implementation. In addition, Chelsea has a 50-person district leadership team that includes the 11 school principals and program directors and coordinators for special education, multilingual education, and curriculum and instruction. This team meets monthly, and its focus is generally on reviewing student data and co-observing classrooms, according to focus group participants and school leader questionnaires. The September 4, 2024, district leadership team meeting agenda states that the purpose of the meeting is “to collaborate to lead the implementation and strengthen a culturally responsive instructional system that integrates both academic and social-emotional development to promote deeper learning and ensure the success and well-being of all students.” The superintendent also reported sharing “glows, grows, and shout-outs to the schools that are having the most growth” as part of these meetings. Moreover, a review of district leadership team meeting agendas indicated that, in addition to the team looking at data, topics for discussion included rolling out the new *Code of Character, Conduct, and Support*; a book study about leadership; family engagement; analyzing student work; and the creation and submission of school accelerated improvement plans (AIPs).

In focus groups with staff from across the district,participants agreed that the district empowers school instructional leadership teams (ILTs) to establish an inclusive environment and foster positive and collaborative learning. Focus group participants noted that the level of autonomy granted to these teams enhances their effectiveness in implementing school initiatives aligned with the district’s educational vision and strategic goals. District leaders provided examples of how the district supports school leadership teams by modeling how to look at student work and data in district leadership meetings, with the goal that leaders will do the same with their ILTs at the school level. Similarly, school leaders shared their experiences, describing district leaders supporting them and serving as “thought partners.” Leaders reported having autonomy over scheduling and hiring. Collaboration between district staff in school-level instructional leadership activities typically occurs during quarterly instructional rounds,according to school leaders, and the focus of these interactions is typically on the problem of practice that the school has identified as part of its AIP.

School leaders also described the various teams or committees that are active at schools across the district, which include ILTs, student support teams, school councils, and grade-level and subject-area teams. Several school leaders reported having active ILTs. Additionally, leaders noted that some schools include district staff members on their ILTs, although this is not a universal expectation.

District leaders reported that Chelsea has established representative school and parent advisory councils, including school councils, SEPAC, and ELPAC. For schools that have SEPACs and ELPACs, those groups meet either monthly or quarterly, depending on the school. According to school leader questionnaires, not all school leaders reported having an active SEPAC and ELPAC.

### Strategic Planning, Implementation, and Monitoring

According to the district’s public website, the district’s mission is that Chelsea will be “a gateway school system that welcomes and educates ALL students.” Furthermore, “the vision for Chelsea is to provide every student with a high-quality education in a system that is devoted to equity, diversity, and social justice. Every student will have multiple learning opportunities to meet challenging standards in a safe, caring and respectful environment. Every student will graduate college and career ready.” The district’s five priorities are “[to provide] rigorous and culturally relevant instruction for all students; increase access to engaging and enriching opportunities for all students; recruit, support, and retain diverse and high-quality teachers and leaders**;** engage parents and community organizations in shared decision making to improve teaching and learning; and ensure efficient and effective systems, operations, and state-of-the-art technology to support instruction and student learning.” Focus group responses indicate that a number of staff throughout the district consistently understand this mission/vision. This sentiment was evident in focus groups, with multiple district- and school-level participants sharing that the district is guided by the saying that “everyone will know our students by name, strength, and story,” This shared vision across the district for student learning is a strength of the district.

The district developed a five-year district strategic plan (2021-2026) and a Student Opportunity Act Plan in May 2024. The superintendent described the process for creating the strategic plan, which began with going to all the school buildings and going out into the community to listen to people about the district’s strengths and areas for improvement. After analyzing the feedback, district leaders identified the five priorities for the district (cited above in the mission). According to district leaders, the district’s main goals/priorities for the year include improving instruction and strengthening belonging for students and adults. The district’s strategic plan, with its clear priorities and components and quantifiable measures, is a strength of the district.

All schools have developed AIPs for 2024-2025 that align with the district’s plan, according to documents submitted, which is a strength of the district. In focus groups, school leaders explained collaborating with the district to align their plans with broader district goals, stating that all schools start with the district strategic plan and then set their own goals based on their own strengths and needs. In focus groups, school leaders described their school improvement goals for the year, which include improving instruction, implementing higher-order thinking tasks, and strengthening student sense of belonging. A school leader elaborated, “The district’s AIP plays a large role in the individual school‘s AIPs. There certainly has to be alignment between what we’re doing.” All the plans begin with a summary of the school data, including strengths, weaknesses, and trends. The plans then describe problems of practice and key instructional practice. These plans include instructional priorities and strategies for reducing disparities in student opportunities and outcomes, such as one school’s priority:

In order to provide opportunities for students to engage daily in higher-order tasks that enhance their open response skills, we will: “Thoughtfully backwards plan and design lessons using [High-quality instructional materials] HQIM to intentionally meet the needs of MLLs [multi-lingual learners] and SWDs [Students with Disabilities], ensuring the Least Restrictive Environment and equitable learning opportunities for all students.”

For each priority, the plans include the specific actions steps needed, person or team responsible, timeline to complete, resource needs, and data to show evidence of implementation. District leaders review each plan and give feedback.

Discussions with the school leaders and the superintendent revealed the district has establishedformal processes to assess its effectiveness and communicate progress to the district community. Every school committee meeting includes a presentation of indicators of success. The indicators of success, which align with the district’s strategic plan, include a range of data, including student attendance rates; students enrolled in calculus, Advanced Placement (AP) courses, and algebra; i-Ready progress; MCAS scores; teacher retention data; and other relevant data points. One district leader explained, “This is how we hold ourselves accountable to the work.” Each school shares its progress regarding these indicators, and regular instructional rounds provide opportunities to assess implementation and progress toward goals. The district adjusts its resource allocations and programs to meet its goals. For instance, during an interview, a district leader reported on the district’s effort to support improvement in student attendance. Chelsea is launching efforts to reach out to families with students who are chronically absent. Chelsea’s efforts will include hiring educators to conduct home visits and reach out in multiple ways to families. A strength of the district is the use of specific indicators of success; leaders regularly communicate progress toward identified goals, including implementation and progress at each school, with the school committee and the public.

### District Culture

The school committee, the superintendent, and district administrators foster collaboration and shared decision-making to improve opportunities and outcomes for all students. A city official attends school committee meetings, and a school committee member attends city council meetings, both as nonvoting members, to stay informed about each other’s work. Municipal officials and the superintendent described working together to create a Children’s Cabinet to support children in Chelsea (see Student Support). Similarly, school committee members reported working closely with the superintendent to advance opportunities for children. One member reported, “We work together on everything to support the schools. Every event that’s done. There‘s nothing that happens with the schools that I can‘t say we don‘t work with the superintendent on.” The members reported attending events, and one member explained, “One of the most important parts is that these kids need to see us and see us as part of the process of their schooling and to know that we’re involved.” Together, the school committee, superintendent, and district leaders collaborate to support students and improve outcomes, which is a strength of the district.

Elected officials, district leaders, and school leaders havedefined roles and a collaborative relationship, as described in interviews. A focus group participant explained that, although the city and the district do not have a written agreement, “there’s historic practice, and there’s funding mandated by law.” The participant then offered capital planning as an example of the city’s support for the school district above and beyond Chapter 70. Respondents reported that city representatives maintain strong working relationships with other leaders in the district, supporting the district’s strategic objectives and improvement plans. Elected leaders, school committee members, and district leaders reported a positive working relationship between the city and the district. The superintendent reported receiving support from the city manager and noted rebuilding the high school cafeteria as an example of their collaboration.

Teachers and school committee members described relationships between the union and committee as challenging at the time of the site visit, in part due to ongoing contract negotiations; the parties settled the contract in the weeks following the on-site visit. Teachers reported lacking agreement about paid leave and wages as a major point of contention with negotiations (see Human Resources and Professional Development). District staff reported that normally leaders try to meet regularly with teacher representatives to maintain communication. Leadership Cabinet members meet with union members monthly to discuss agenda items. One focus group participant reported that, although the district is responsive to concerns, its follow-through to resolve the issue is not always strong. According to one participant, when they brought forward the issue of how students are divided into cohorts across the districts for English Learners, Students with Disabilities, and dually identified services, the district acknowledged the concern, but did not fully address the issues raised. Another focus group participant similarly observed “gross disparities” in how students are distributed across the district, and said these issues continue to persist even after being discussed.

District staff outlined Chelsea’s strategies for recruiting and retaining diverse leaders, who better represent the demographics of the student body, in order to maintain the overall collaborative culture of the district and to ensure stability and sustain initiatives during leadership turnover. Specifically, the recruitment strategy includes what Chelsea calls the “Pathway Program.” The program supports parents and caregivers in the community to become paraprofessionals, paraprofessionals to become teachers, and teachers to become administrators. Through the Pathways Program, Chelsea has promoted 10 teachers to administrators, according to the Indicators of Success. A district leader reported that, when they started recruiting more diverse staff, they learned that not all schools were equally welcoming. As a result, the district started holding districtwide events for educators of color to foster a greater sense of belonging. Another district leader described the diversification of the Leadership Cabinet and district leadership team as changing from “lily white” to “multicultural, bilingual, and multilingual.” Similarly, a school committee member reported a significant increase in the number of Hispanic or Latino school committee members. According to DESE’s Educator Data Dashboard, the number of Hispanic or Latino administrators doubled between 2021 and 2023, and these efforts to help leadership reflect the student body are a strength of the district.

To foster additional collaboration, Chelsea partners with key stakeholders and intentionally seeks input from underrepresented groups in decision making. When the superintendent was gathering information to inform the strategic plan, she held focus groups with La Colaborativa and GreenRoots, two nonprofit organizations in Chelsea. She also sought out the views of families and teachers. A district leader outlined the district’s efforts to engage the broader community, calling the family liaisons “the crown jewel” in their relationships with families. The liaisons live in Chelsea, and many liaisons are graduates from the district. In addition, several school leaders live in Chelsea and/or are also alumni of the district. As members of the community, they have relationships with families in their neighborhoods and communities. The district uses ParentSquare to communicate with families. Parents reported family liaisons reaching out to them about events and “trying to involve parents.” Parents also described “excellent programming” and helping with translation services, but parent focus group participants did not have the same views regarding how parents are engaged in their children’s educations. In describing messages on ParentSquare, one parent stated, “I wouldn’t quite say it’s engaging in their education, but it’s outreach and events and trying to involve parents.” In contrast, another parent reported having a lot of “access to teachers in person” while their child was in prekindergarten and this enabled them to be “partners” in their child’s education. Family focus group participants provided mixed views about opportunities for parental input. Although some parents reported that “there is a lot of openness” for parent participation in meetings, other parents reported a lack of opportunity for parent input into the accelerated improvement plan. Overall, the families reported that the district is great at “sharing information” but that parents and families are not involved in shared decision making, suggesting greater need for parental involvement as an area for growth.

### Recommendations

* *The school committee should publicly report on the results of the superintendent’s evaluation on an annual basis.*
* *The district should leverage its existing family engagement systems to increase opportunities for authentic family involvement in school and district decision-making.*

## Curriculum and Instruction

This section examines the extent to which district leaders have established a shared instructional vision, anchored in culturally and linguistically sustaining practices, that guides all curricular and instructional decisions toward equitable outcomes for all students. It also focuses on the extent to which the district pairs HQIMs and high expectations for all students with individualized supports so that every student can engage in deeper learning and develop the knowledge and skills that will prepare them to succeed in college and/or the workplace.

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

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

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Indicator | Strengths | Areas for growth |
| [Instructional Leadership](#_Instructional_Leadership) | * District leaders and school leaders described a shared commitment to the rounds process for monitoring instruction. | * Implementing a consistent instructional vision that is known and supported throughout the district |
| [Curriculum and Instructional Materials](#_Curriculum_and_Instructional) | * The district has a collaborative and clearly designed HQIM selection and implementation process. * The district staff provide formal districtwide professional learning opportunities to support effective curriculum implementation for ELA and mathematics K-12 and science 5-11 that take place districtwide and at the school level. | * Developing scaffolds to support teachers in differentiating lessons for English Learners and students who need additional background knowledge to access to the selected curricula |
| [Equitable Practices and Access](#_Equitable_Practices_and) | * Chelsea offers an array of academic interventions across all grade levels. | * Providing assistance to teachers to individualize supports for English Learners and Students with Disabilities to access the curriculum materials |
| [Effective Instruction and Curricular Implementation](#_Effective_Instruction_and) |  |  |

### Instructional Leadership

The superintendent, assistant superintendents, and the school committee’s instruction subcommittee are responsible for overseeing decisions about curriculum and instruction for the district. Additionally, district leaders described a broad instructional vision focused on centering the needs and experiences of all students, particularly students from historically underserved groups and communities. However, although school- and district-level staff articulated a consistent districtwide goal of “knowing each student by their name, strength, and story,” teachers and school leaders reported inconsistent understandings of the district’s instructional vision. For example, middle school teachers reported that the vision is “higher order thinking tests where the students do the majority of the load,” but elementary teachers reported that the vision is “identifying the different levels [of tiered instruction] where we want our students to kind of fall.” Conversely, district leaders reported that the instructional vision “is that we’re providing rigorous and culturally relevant instruction to all students.” These varied responses indicate that district staff need greater support in articulating and implementing the district’s instructional vision, which is an area for growth for the district.

The superintendent, assistant superintendents, and school leaders agreedthat the district has systems in place to monitor instruction in the district and support continuous improvement. The model for monitoring these activities is instructional rounds, a routine based in medical education adapted for use in schools by the late Professor Richard Elmore of Harvard University. Under this model, leaders collectively observe and discuss examples of instruction at each school. Every school in Chelsea gets four instructional round visits throughout the school year. District administrators and school-based teams participate in the rounds, and school leaders select the focus of the review, based on the school’s goals in the AIP. For each round, school leaders select a specific goal on which to focus and provide feedback. District leaders and school leaders described a shared commitment to the rounds process for monitoring instruction, which is a strength of the district.

Principals and other officials within the district reportedthat Chelsea has some guidance and systems in place to empower an ILT, or its equivalent, at each school. At the high school, the ILT includes representation from administrators and instructional coaches. The ILT at the middle school level includes representation from administrators, instructional coaches, department heads, teachers, special educators and English as a second language (ESL) teachers. At the elementary school level, the members of the ILT vary across schools. All elementary school ILTs include the principal, assistant principal, and instructional coaches, teachers (including ESL and special educators, in some cases), and other student support staff. There is also a district-level literacy ILT, which focuses on the implementation of High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM), and a district-level mathematics ILT.

### Curriculum and Instructional Materials

The district has a strategic process to evaluate and adopt curricula. The established curriculum adoption councils initiate the process by researching, selecting, and recommending HQIM. District and school staff participate on the councils. District staff reported primarily using CURATE,[[4]](#footnote-5) EdReports, and culturally relevant indicators to evaluate curricular decisions and reported that the curriculum selection and review procedures include representation from district staff, school administrators, instructional coaches, and teachers. Staff explained that Chelsea selected new HQIM from prekindergarten through high school in ELA, mathematics, and science in the 2021-2022 school year. The district provided middle school students with the opportunity to review pilot lessons from the new curriculum, and elementary school teachers piloted some units. The council then presented the superintendent with its curriculum recommendations. Once the superintendent approved the curriculum, the rollout process of the new curriculum began in the 2022-2023 school year, with ELA in elementary school and mathematics in middle school. The district has scheduled the new HQIM curriculum to be in all core subjects in all grades by the 2027-2028 school year. The collaborative and clearly designed selection process is a strength of the district.

Although the district has selected HQIM, some staff reported that the selected curriculum does not provide the necessary scaffolding for all students in Chelsea, which is an area for growth in the district. For example, one middle school teacher noted:

As a multilingual teacher, when we have to write content objectives, a lot of times we have to purposefully build in opportunities for talking, for conversation, for listening to assess those skills because the curriculum does not always provide that differentiation.

Elementary teachers agreed, and one teacher noted:

[The curriculum] assumes a lot of previous knowledge from the kids, … I mean, they definitely were taught, but a lot of our students need lots of repeated practice . . . so we have to go back and do a lot of kind of backtracking at some points and giving them kind of like access points so that they can then reach to where this curriculum is asking to.

Table 4 summarizes the status of all districtwide curricula being used.

Table 4. Summary of Districtwide Curricula Being Used

| Grade level(s) | Subject | Curriculum | Type | CURATE  Rating | EdReports  Rating |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| K-2 | ELA | Fishtank Plus | Comprehensive | ME | ME |
| 3-5 | ELA | Fishtank Plus | Comprehensive | PM | ME |
| 6-8 | ELA | Fishtank Plus | Comprehensive | NR | ME |
| 1-6 | ELA | ARC Core[[5]](#footnote-6) | Comprehensive | ME | ME |
| K-2 | ELA | From Phonics to Reading | Supplemental | NR | ME |
| 3 | ELA | From Phonics to Reading | Supplemental | NR | NR |
| K-5 | Mathematics | Imagine Learning | Comprehensive | PM | ME |
| K-5 | Science | Engineering is Elementary | Comprehensive | NR | NR |
| 5-7 | History & Social Science | Investigating History | Comprehensive | NR | NR |
| 6-8 | Science | OpenSciEd | Comprehensive | ME | ME |
| 9-12 | Science | OpenSciEd | Comprehensive | NR | NR |
| 9-12 | ELA | Odell Education | Comprehensive | NR | ME |
| 6-8 | Mathematics | Illustrative Mathematics | Comprehensive | ME | ME |
| 9-12 | Mathematics | Reveal Math | Comprehensive | ME | ME |

Note: ME=Meets Expectations; NR=Not Rated; PM=Partially Meets Expectations; OpenSciEd and Investigating History are DESE developed or informed.

Fishtank Plus, Imagine Learning, and Illustrative Mathematics are currently in the implementation phase in Grades K-8. Odell Education and Reveal Math are currently in the implementation phase in Grades 9-12. OpenSciEd is currently in the implementation phase in Grades 6-8. OpenSciEd is currently in the planning phase in Grades 9-12. The district generallyselects and implements instructional materials that are vertically and horizontally aligned across all tiers of instruction, a strength of the district. For example, all elementary schools in Chelsea are using the same comprehensive ELA, mathematics, and science curricula.

School leaders largely reported using curricula consistent with district choices. High school leaders and middle school leaders reported using the curricula selected by the district. School leaders at one elementary school reported using different ELA and science curricula than the other elementary schools in the district because the school is a dual-language school. Leaders at this school reported using ARC Core, Lunita Program, and From Phonics to Reading for ELA curricula and Amplify Science for the science curriculum.

District staff added that the district provides formal districtwide professional learning opportunities to support effective curricula implementation for ELA and mathematics K-12 and science 5-11 that take place districtwide and at the school level, a strength of the district. School leaders at all levels noted that their coaches are supporting teachers at their schools with professional development on instruction during grade-level team meetings and afterschool meetings and in other school spaces. Coaches also provide individual coaching to support teachers in implementing instructional practices.

### Equitable Practices and Access

Chelsea offers an array of academic interventions across all grade levels, a strength of the district. The academic interventions vary by grade level and school. School leaders reported that the following academic interventions are available in ELA and mathematics:

* Elementary school leaders differed in the academic interventions available by school. All elementary school leaders reported they offer Ignite! Reading tutoring as an ELA intervention.
* Hooks Elementary offers additional ELA supports, including read to a child and reading specialists, and mathematics intervention blocks as a Tier 2 and Tier 3 mathematics intervention.
* Sokolowski Elementary school leaders reported Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions in ELA and mathematics, including fluency boosters, i-Ready MyPath, and Orton-Gillingham in ELA and Tier 2 mathematics block, i-Ready MyPath, mathematics intervention with mathematics specialist and tutors, and morning mathematics for targeted groups in mathematics.
* Kelly Elementary offers Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions in ELA, which include Imagine Learning/Imagine Español; i-Ready MyPath; Escaleras Spanish reading intervention; English reading intervention using Orton-Gillingham or Heggerty in small group; and C-Grid special education services aligned to students’ reading/writing goals, often but not always using Orton-Gillingham, Heggerty, or curriculum-aligned resources; and Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions in mathematics, which include teacher-created intervention materials, C-Grid mathematics services, and i-Ready MyPath.

Middle school leaders reported differing academic interventions available by school:

* Clark Avenue Middle School has Tier 3 supports in ELA (reading specialists) and Tier 2 supports in mathematics (Teacher Created Materials [TCM] Focused Mathematics Intervention).
* Eugene Wright Science and Technology Academy has Tiers 2 and 3 supports in ELA (flex block, English language development, small-group reading, and i-Ready) and Tiers 2 and 3 supports in mathematics (flex block and mathematics interventionist small groups).
* Browne Middle School has Tiers 2 and 3 supports in ELA (i-Ready MyPath, 95 Comprehension, and Orton-Gillingham Comprehensive Plus) and Tier 2 support in mathematics (i-Ready MyPath).

High school leaders reported Tier 2 supports in ELA and mathematics, which include tutoring during and after school and TCM Focused Mathematics Intervention.

Teachers mostly agreed with the interventions reported by the school leaders.

Although the application of academic interventions is not consistent across the district, Chelsea aims to provide historically underserved students with access to high-quality curriculum and materials, and the district selects materials with these goals in mind. However, teachers across the district reported that providing English Learners and Students with Disabilities individualized supports to access the curriculum materials is the responsibility of teachers and that they do not get adequate support from the district, which is an area for growth. One teacher reported, “Most people would probably agree that our multilingual learners and our Students with Disabilities are the least served population in our school.” A teacher noted that the Fishtank curriculum at the elementary level is “very intense, [and] that’s not conducive to a lot of our [historically underserved] students.”

According to school and district leaders, Chelsea provides services that support Students with Disabilities and English Learners to access Tier 1 instruction. Additionally, schools supplement the general curriculum with various educational programs including teacher created materials for reading, Chelsea Opportunity Academy ELA/MLL curriculum, DESE ESL Model Curriculum Unit: Personal Narrative, Where we’re from, Orton-Gillingham, Project Read, Teach Town Social Skills, Time Zones for MLEs, K-3 Foundational Skills: From Phonics to Reading, Children Discovering Justice, and ACE. Principals and other officials within the district reported using data to continuously monitor the experiences and outcomes of all students, and to continuously evaluate the effectiveness of ESL and special education programs.

However, data shows that the district continues to face challenges around ensuring that Students with Disabilities have equitable access to educational outcomes and experiences. For example, in 2023, Chelsea’s dropout rate for Students with Disabilities was 1.7 percentage points higher than the state rate. Additionally, in 2022-23, students aged 6-21 were placed in substantially separate classrooms at a rate that is 8.7 percentage points higher than the state average and students aged 3-5 were placed in substantially separate classrooms at a rate 42.2 percentage points higher than the state average.

In April 2023, DESE's Public School Monitoring (PSM) team reviewed [Chelsea](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.doe.mass.edu%2Fpsm%2Ftfm%2Freports%2F2023%2F00570000.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) and issued a corrective action to the district around ensuring that Students with Disabilities are placed into the least restrictive program. Since then, the district has been working with DESE to implement the corrective action, but has made limited progress. In 2024, Chelsea began working with a technical assistance provider around ensuring the least restrictive environment.

A review of the district’s course catalog at the high school level indicated that the district provides students with a range of rigorous coursework in all grades. The district provides equitable access to courses for all students, such as opportunities for individual students to pursue honors credit by choice rather than by nomination to a course. This coursework includes content areas not subject to statewide testing,advanced courses, electives, and career and technical education courses. High school students agreed that they had opportunities to take classes other than their core academic classes that were of interest to them, such as a law class and a microeconomics course with Bunker Hill Community College.

Additionally, high school staff within the district reported that they were piloting open access to honors credit in an Algebra 1 course and English 10 course. In these classes, all students enrolled in the course have the ability to earn honors credit by independently completing additional criteria provided by the teacher. Principals also noted that they are working to ensure all “teachers are teaching grade-level standards”. Conversely, high school students explained that the quality and manner of teaching vary throughout the school. For example: “You have the AP students, the honors students, and your regular classes. I think as you go up that ladder, there’s more expectations. There’s more opportunity in those higher-level classes that I don’t think the people in honors or even regular classes get.”

### Effective Instruction and Curricular Implementation

Teachers from across the district somewhat agreed that their district provides supports for developing a safe and supportive learning environment in which most students can engage in academic content. An example of these supports includes the coteaching models. Teachers explained that they had to create additional supports for Students with Disabilities and English Learners to access the district-selected curriculum. Additionally, teachers explained that, at times, the students in their classrooms are not at the level necessary to access the curriculum, so the teachers are having to create additional scaffolding for their students. Students reported that teachers support instruction by providing objectives, adding that, at the high school level in AP classes, the objective is clear, but that is not consistent in other classes. Middle school students reported that their classrooms have clear procedures and routines, even when the teachers are introducing new content.

Students mostly agreed that they have access to safe and supportive learning environments, a strength of the district. Middle school students agreed that their teachers were aware of their emotional well-being, noting that, if a student arrives at class upset, “the teachers wouldn’t waste any time and they would go straight to that student and ask them whether they want to talk, whether they want to step out and talk about it. They tend to care about students’ health and . . . mental health.” High school students explained that they felt like, overall, the high school was becoming a safer physical and emotional environment; however, they also reported that teachers do not always provide opportunities for explanation of thinking or integrate students’ cultures or backgrounds into learning. Classroom observation scores mostly in the middle range for dimensions in the Emotional Support domain support these depictions. These ratings suggest that teachers and students may share warm and supportive relationships, but some students may be excluded from those relationships; teachers are sometimes aware of student needs; and student choice is limited in lessons. Classroom observation scores in the high range for the Negative Climate dimension suggest classrooms have no display of negativity (e.g., no strong expressions of anger, aggression, threats, or sarcasm).

The district has set expectations for and supports educators in implementing lessons that reflect grade-level standards and WIDA English language development standards. Teachers reported that coaches often support them with implementing lessons. The district upholds the expectation that teachers identify strategies for providing supports that enable students to engage in grade-level content. Teachers, particularly at the elementary level, and district officials reported the district expects that teachers identify both content and language objectives for all lessons.

In addition to the district supporting grade-level expectations, according to teachers, Chelsea somewhat supports them in implementing evidence-based instructional practices by providing professional development for the new curriculum, having instructional coaches, and conducting walkthroughs and instructional rounds reviews. An elementary school coach reported that they meet with their grade-level teams weekly, lead PLTs for unit launches, and help with lesson planning. However, classroom observation scores in the low to middle range for dimensions in the Instructional Support domain counter these depictions and suggest that teachers sometimes facilitate engagement in lessons; there are few opportunities for students to create or generate ideas; the focus of the class is sometimes on meaningful discussion and explanation of broad, organizing ideas; students do not engage in higher order thinking skills; teachers sometimes facilitate feedback loops to allow students to elaborate and expand their thinking; and there are no or few discussions in the class.

### Recommendations

* *The district should work with school leaders to support instructional staff in better understanding and implementing the district’s instructional vision.*
* *The district should work with its instructional coaches and teachers to develop scaffolded and differentiated curricular materials that support language development and help students develop the necessary background knowledge to access the curriculum.*
* *The district should provide greater support for ESL and special education teachers in developing individualized supports that help all students access the general curriculum.*

## Assessment

This section examines the extent to which, through the establishment of strategic data and assessment systems, the district supports a robust, data-centered culture that advances equitable student experiences and outcomes. It also focuses on the extent to which the district collects an array of data and uses the data to inform decisions at the classroom, school, and district levels, as well as the ways in which, by analyzing assessment results and other data, educators develop an understanding of the whole student, can examine trends across student groups, and can adjust their instruction accordingly.

Table 5 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in assessment in Chelsea.

Table 5. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Assessment Standard

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Indicator | Strengths | Areas for growth |
| [Data Collection](#_Data_Collection) | * Chelsea collects multiple data points and disaggregates student-group data to inform district planning, decision-making, policies, and practices. | * Adjusting the administration and use of assessments to better serve Students with Disabilities |
| [Data Use and Culture](#_Data_Use_and) |  | * Creating a robust districtwide system to support teachers in using academic and nonacademic data to inform instruction |
| [Sharing Data](#_Sharing_Data) | * The district has systems and processes for communicating student achievement with families. * Chelsea is developing equitable and consistent grading practices districtwide. | * Engaging all students in goal setting and data review in developmentally appropriate ways |

### Data Collection

According to the superintendent, and other district stakeholders, Chelsea staff collect multiple data points and disaggregate student group data to inform district planning, decision making, policies, and practices, a strength of the district. Additionally, the strategic plan informs the success indicators that the district reports out on in regular school committee meetings (see Leadership & Governance).

As part of the Chelsea strategic plan, the district highlights that it will “use data to evaluate and continuously improve the effectiveness of instructional practices to support and accelerate learning.” According to school and district staff,Chelsea strategically selects and implements formal and informal assessments that align with instructional content. This assessment system includes multiple types of academic (e.g., STAR 360, i-Ready, and DIBELS) and nonacademic (e.g., Panaroma) data about each student. When describing the assessment selection process, district staff shared that they use reliable assessments, including i-Ready and STAR 360 at the high school level.Teachers noted that the curriculum, which the district reviewed for equity when selecting it, dictates most curriculum-based assessments. School and district staff reported that the district did add a common writing assessment when district leaders noticed low writing scores in the previous year’s MCAS results.

According to teachers, they have access to results from formal assessments, such as MCAS and i-Ready, and use informal assessments, such as exit tickets. According to principals, “We have appropriate assessments at the right time,” and the district has added assessments, such as a districtwide common writing assessment, when it noted a need for them. A teacher representative mentioned that, in their opinion, students are assessed too much: “We have more than adequate access to assessments . . . kids are getting assessed about 10 percent of their instructional days in Chelsea.” Although the district has multiple assessments and staff can access them, staff reported that the district does not publicly share the assessment plan or schedule.

Adjusting the administration and use of assessments to better serve students who need accommodations, such as those with disabilities, is an area of growth for the district. District staff noted that the equity lead conducts training and helps to lead principals in discussions related to equity in assessments and grading. However, high school teachers noted that the district recently implemented the STAR 360 assessment and they “were told not to give any adaptations or modifications for Students with Disabilities.” This statement highlights a discrepancy between the district goals to create equity in assessments for all students and the messaging teachers have received. The proper administration of assessments and examination of data is a priority for Students with Disabilities in Chelsea, given MCAS data reports from recent years that indicate that growth was low for Students with Disabilities in both ELA and math in grades 3-8, as well as all students with such data reported in Grade 10.

### Data Use and Culture

District staff reported that the superintendent “brought the use of data to the district” and noted the district’s partnership with the Data Wise project at Harvard University has been beneficial to the district. District staff also mentioned that Chelsea has “really worked on creating a culture of looking at data where data is not used in a punitive manner but really is being used to be insightful and informative.”

According to school leaders and teachers, the districtprovideseducators with access to relevant data. Principals noted that they have assessments aligned with curriculum, but middle school and high school principals noted that, in science and social studies, unit assessments are still in progress. Teachers noted that they use a variety of data, academic and nonacademic, to get comprehensive pictures of their students but echoed the sentiment that Chelsea does not yet have districtwide goals, routines, and procedures in place. For example**,** teachers stated that, at the high school level, nonacademic data from social workers or guidance counselors are not always consistently shared with them. Additionally, middle school teachers noted that, at their team meetings they discuss students of concern who are struggling and need additional support; staff said they are “not specifically looking at the trends” of students who are struggling in multiple areas (e.g., attendance and academic).

Teachers reported that the district does not always provide the resources necessary to understand and analyze the data. District staffexplained that the districtsupports teacher understanding and use of data through professional development with Data Wise. However, some teachers noted that the amount and frequency of professional development are not always adequate for all staff, especially newer teachers. High school teachers also noted that, with the new STAR 360 assessment they are using, they are not trained in how to interpret the data. Teachers have access to data dashboards for some assessments, including i-Ready for mathematics and ELA, but dashboards are not consistent for all assessments and for all subjects. School leaders noted that teachers have planning and collaborative time, during which they can review data. For example, elementary school principals noted that they “have data meetings with teachers to go over how students do and then use that to come up with action steps as to what we need to do moving forward,” but providing planning and collaborative time—and support for using the data provided-- is not a consistent practice within the district. As such, creating a robust districtwide system to support teachers in using academic and nonacademic data to inform instruction is an area for growth for the district.

According to district leaders, district staff regularly use grades, attendance, student support team reports, IEPs, behavioral evaluations, office referrals, suspensions, MCAS, ACCESS, AP scores, and SAT/ACT scores to evaluate students’ academic, social-emotional, and behavioral needs. The district disaggregates all data by specific categories, including English Learner status, disability status, race/ethnicity, and gender. In focus groups, school staff further explained that the district has set some expectations regarding student data review and has developed structures that facilitate data review cycles and adjustments to instruction. Teachers noted using their PLT or faculty meeting to review data from district-mandated assessments (e.g., MCAS and i-Ready).

### Sharing Data

Teacher and student focus group participants reported that the district does not set expectations related to engaging all students in goal setting and data review in developmentally appropriate ways, an area for growth for the district. High school students explained that the data shared with students and timing that they share it varies among teachers. Additionally, middle school students explained that teachers at times talk to them privately if they are struggling in a class but did not explain a consistent way teachers share students’ progress. Teachers at the elementary level set goals with students for their assessments: “We’ll give students kind of like a goal card in conference before they take the assessment and say, okay, like you’re doing the middle of the year assessment, your goal is to try to reach this number as you’re working.”

The district has systems and processes for communicating student achievement with families, which is a strength. District leaders expect teachers to communicate with families about student performance. To this point, teachers and families noted that the district regularly communicatesevidence of student, school, and district performance. The district has a transparent system, Aspen and Google Classroom, that enables families to monitor student academic data, including grades on assignments and overall course grades***.*** Teachers also noted that the schools share i-Ready data with families. Families also reported parent-teacher conferences occur twice a year. Additionally, families noted the use of ParentSquare to communicate with teachers.

Grading is another academic data point shared with families. According to teachers, school leaders, and district staff, the district does have some parts of a transparent and accessible grading system that it calibrates across schools. District staff reported that Chelsea has started the work to create more equitable and consistent grading practices, which is a strength of the district. The elementary level is using standards-based report cards, leaders at the middle school level have norming conversations, and leaders at the high school level have discussed grading policies and calibrate the use of rubrics using student work. Middle school teachers also reported a consistent “minimum 50 percent on assessments so that students have a chance to boost up their grade . . . but otherwise grading is really up to the teacher’s discretion.”

According to district leaders, the district regularly reviews and monitors digital platforms that collect, store, and share student data to ensure ongoing compliance with student data privacy laws and regulations. In addition, district staff reported that, for staff who oversee data, the district does offer professional learning regarding student data privacy law, policies, and best practices for safeguarding student information.

### Recommendations

* *The district should clarify expectations around providing assessment accommodations and ensure that all students receive the accommodations they are entitled to according to their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).*
* *The district should develop a robust system for data analysis and use that empowers teachers to utilize academic and nonacademic to and drive instructional decision-making.*
* *The district should work with its school leaders to develop expectations around sharing data with students in ways that promote agency and ownership over learning.*

## Human Resources and Professional Development

This section examines the extent to which the district has established systems, policies, and practices that allow administrators to effectively recruit, hire, onboard, and support a highly effective, diverse, and culturally responsive workforce. It also focuses on the systems and structures that the district uses to provide all educators with ongoing access to high-quality professional learning and actionable feedback and establishes a culture that fosters collaboration, retention, recognition, and advancement.

Table 6 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in human resources and professional development in Chelsea.

Table 6. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Human Resources and Professional Development Standard

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Indicator | Strengths | Areas for growth |
| [Human Resources Infrastructure, Policies, and Practices](#_Human_Resources_Infrastructure,) | * The district maintains an easily accessible human resources website that shares links to relevant human resources policies, procedures, expectations, and resources. * Chelsea uses data to inform its recruitment and hiring policies and practices. | * Creating more ready access to employee records * Developing districtwide processes for addressing interpersonal issues among staff |
| [Staffing](#_Staffing) | * The district has diversified the teaching force to be more reflective of the student body during the past five years. * Chelsea has leadership opportunities for teachers and has developed pathways for staff to advance in their careers. * Evaluation records show consistency in highlighting areas of strength through the evaluation process. | * Articulating areas for improvement more consistently in the evaluation process to support all staff in continuous instructional and professional improvement * Retaining teachers overall, particularly Hispanic or Latino teachers * Reducing staff absences |
| [Professional Learning](#_Professional_Learning_1) | * Chelsea uses data to evaluate, track, and differentiate its mentoring program to meet the needs of new teachers. | * Maintaining greater consistency across observations and evaluations and conducting observations more frequently * Creating a more consistent and coherent formal plan for professional development |

### Human Resources Infrastructure, Policies, and Practices

The district’s seven-person human resources team includes the director, three employees who focus on operations, and three employees who focus on programs, according to a district leader. The operations staff maintain employee records; post vacancies; identify substitute teachers; and manage FMLA (Family and Medical Leave Act), worker’s compensation, and other operational activities. The program staff run the Pathway Program (see Staffing), help recruit staff by posting jobs, help retain staff by planning districtwide events and creating ways to recognize staff, and oversee the New Teachers Academy (see Professional Learning). The director of human resources requests positions for the human resources department based on the department’s needs. For instance, when the district hired more than 300 staff positions throughout a few years with Student Opportunity Act funding, the director requested another position to be able to process all the paperwork associated with the new hires.

District leaders reported that employees are able to use Munis as a self-service system to access information such as pay stubs and benefits. In contrast, participants in the teacher focus group stated they cannot adequately access necessary employment information (e.g., paystubs, benefits, W-2s, other employee records). Teachers acknowledged that the department is trying “really hard to update our systems” but that this update process is “a difficult process with the city.” Currently, according to teacher focus group participants, employees do not have online access to see their paychecks. Creating more ready access to employee records (or making employees aware of new access methods) is an area of growth for the district.

The district maintains an easily accessible human resources website that includes links to relevant human resources policies, procedures, expectations, and other resources, which is a strength of the district. The policies posted on the website include ethics law, computer and internet policy, civil rights policies, bullying and wellness policies, professional learning attendance policies, and other general district policies. The website ensures that these policies are accessible and set expectations. However, members of the district’s teachers’ association reported that the district has some but not all the necessary formal processes in place to resolve staff conflicts and grievances. According to representatives and district leaders, currently, individual principals are primarily responsible for resolving conflicts between staff members. The district is still working on developing districtwide processes for resolving interpersonal issues among staff, which is an area for growth.

District staff reported that their district has policies and procedures in place to professionally and promptly verify educator licensure status. First, principals are required to get licensure information from job applicants. In addition, applicants submit licensure information through the TalentNet platform, and staff from the human resources department verify licensure status. They also keep current staff up to date about their licensure status and what they need to do to maintain their licenses. One of the human resources staff members meets with staff individually to answer questions.

Chelsea uses a data-driven strategy to improve its hiring policies and processes as it seeks to diversify its workforce, which is priority #3 of its strategic plan: Recruit, support, and retain diverse and high-quality teachers and leaders. For example, one of the district’s first steps towards growing and diversifying its workforce was to look at the educational levels of paraprofessionals and support their career growth, since many of these staff live in the community and reflect the student population. Because district leaders found that many paraprofessionals have bachelor’s degrees, they created the Pathways Program to support paraprofessionals moving into teaching roles by obtaining the necessary education and credentials. Similarly, after looking at Chelsea’s diversity data, the district created a hiring policy to ensure hiring committees are diverse and that the committee interviews diverse applicants, according to district leaders (see Leadership and Governance). The district also has specific diversity targets and regularly monitors efforts to diversify its staff. As part of the district’s indicators of success, the district tracks and reports annually on the increases in diversity of teachers, administrators, and central office staff. Chelsea’s use of data to inform its recruitment and hiring policies and practices is a strength of the district.

The district’s human resources website does not include information about employee attendance policies, and it is unclear how the district is tracking staff attendance. Interviews and a review of documents did not indicate what system or systems were in place for tracking staff attendance. However, multiple school leaders reported staff attendance is a consistent challenge across the district (see Staffing).

### Staffing

District leaders agreed that their district has effective policies and processes in place to recruit, hire, and onboard new staff. District leaders reported that Chelsea uses data to inform its goals and strategies and leverages existing pipelines through their Pathways programs. Both practices are consistent with DESE’s hiring best practices. Despite these efforts, multiple school leaders reported challenges with hiring qualified staff, mirroring national trends. One leader reported being “severely understaffed right now in regards to special [education].” Another leader agreed: “The [staffing] pipeline has been the biggest challenge.”

The district has made strides in increasing staffing levels while making the composition of staff more reflective of the student body. According to the October 9, 2024, school committee meeting notes, staff diversity has increased each year since 2020-2021, indicating that district leaders are tracking and publicly reporting on these efforts. State-reported data confirm this reported change: from 2019 to 2024, the district total number of staff increased; simultaneously, the percentage of Hispanic or Latino teachers increased from 17.1 percent to 31.5 percent (from 127.8 teacher full-time equivalencies (FTEs) to 293 teacher FTEs), and the percentage of Black or African American teachers increased from 1.3 percent to 4.5 percent (from 9.8 teacher FTEs to 42 teacher FTEs). The efforts to diversify the teaching force to be more reflective of the student body are a strength of the district.

According to school and district leaders, school leaders are responsible for hiring their building’s staff. The district provides an annual training regarding procedures. The district has goals for increasing the share of diverse teachers, and it shares information with each school leader regarding the diversity of their past hires. To assist with staffing, the superintendent reported that she looks at human resources reports and the number of vacancies each summer to assess staffing needs across schools. She described vacancy rates as “an indicator of school culture.” The district also recently created a new district position to assist with recruitment. That person posts positions on different platforms and is developing initiatives in how to recruit candidates. School leaders described challenges finding qualified staff to hire, particularly in hiring and retaining qualified applicants in multilingual education and special education. At the time of the focus group in late October, one leader was still trying to fill positions. In this situation, the leader reported working with the human resources department to identify candidates. District leaders reported their onboarding process includes helping new hires complete all the required paperwork and a one-on-one meeting with every new hire to welcome them and answer questions. School leaders are then expected to give new hires an orientation to their school. In their focus group, teachers described their district’s onboarding process as a four-day process that includes additional support for people who have not previously been a classroom teacher. Although teachers expressed appreciation for the structure, they did not always find the information useful.

Chelsea uses DESE’s rubric for its educator evaluations. The rubric includes 10 common standards across the district, and each school can choose five of its own standards, according to focus group participants. District leaders reported that, to ensure consistency across schools, district staff offer the same training to all leaders regarding the evaluation procedures, and then leaders train their staff members so that everyone has the same information. New teachers receive support through the mentoring program about what kind of artifacts to upload and what evaluators are looking for during these meetings. Teachers described the mentoring program as rigorous and noted they are happy with its current structure. In addition, staff receive professional development and training about the expectations. Teachers reported that many veteran teachers receive observations and feedback “very infrequently” because of the large number of new teachers who require a minimum of five observations. Every year the district has a performance review process, during which the union can raise any questions or issues related to evaluations, and usually the union cites issues of consistency in implementing the evaluation process across schools, according to district leaders. Although the district expects that school leaders hold teachers accountable through the evaluation process, particularly in schools that are not performing well, the district does not have a districtwide procedure to look at evaluation data.

District records suggest that schools consistently complete teacher evaluations using Vector Solutions. AIR used simple random sampling to select the sample of 10 percent of 389 teachers (38 teachers) due for summative evaluations for the 2023-2024 school year. Nearly all (35 of 38) teacher evaluations selected for review (92 percent) had a summative evaluation available for review. All (35) of the teacher evaluations available for review were complete and did not omit required components, including a rating for each standard or an overall rating. All evaluation documents reviewed included a student learning SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely) goal and a professional practice SMART goal. However, the summative evaluation reports did not consistently report progress toward the student learning and professional practice SMART goals. Only half of the teachers’ evaluation reports included information about progress toward their student learning and professional goals. Most evaluations reviewed (91 percent) included multiple sources of evidence, such as observations, student work samples, or other evidence to support progress toward student learning goals, professional learning goals, standards, and indicators. Only half of summative evaluations (17) included feedback for each standard and overall feedback related to the teacher’s overall rating. All (100 percent) of the evaluations included feedback naming strengths or practices the teacher should continue, but only slightly more than half (51 percent) of evaluations included feedback indicating areas for improvement.

A review of records indicates that the district completes administration evaluations using Vector Solutions. Of the 40 administrative district staff who were due for a summative evaluation for the 2023-2024 school year, 36 evaluations were available for review, and nearly all (36 of 40) evaluations were complete with performance ratings and an assessment of progress toward goals. Of the 36 summative evaluations reviewed, all included student learning and professional practice SMART goals. None of the evaluations included school improvement SMART goals. Fewer than half of the evaluations reviewed (14) included multiple sources of evidence to assess performance on summative evaluation standards, and the majority (78 percent) of the summative evaluations reviewed (28) included feedback for each standard. All evaluations reviewed had evaluator comments with specific, actionable feedback naming each administrator’s strengths, but only half (18) of the evaluations reviewed identified areas for improvement for administrative district staff.

The review of teacher and administration evaluations indicates that a strength of the district is in highlighting areas of strength through the evaluation process. On the other hand, this evidence also indicates that an area for growth for the district is in articulating areas for improvement to support all staff in continuous instructional and professional improvement. According to DESE Educator Evaluation Performance Rating data (2021-2022), the percentage of teachers in Chelsea rated as *needs improvement* is twice the state rate, 6.3 percent compared with 2.9 percent statewide.

Teachers expressed appreciation for district and school recognition of their work. The district has several districtwide awards to recognize teachers. A review of school committee minutes indicated that staff are frequently recognized during these public meetings for contributions to the district. During the September 2024 school committee meeting, for example, the superintendent presented the annual butterfly award to a teacher to “support creative ideas and innovative instructional practices,” as well as a “Name, Strength, and Story” award. The October meeting’s “Name, Strength, and Story” segment recognized several teachers, and the November meeting recognized several family liaisons. According to documents submitted, “Schools have their own procedures for staff recognition monthly.” Teacher focus group participants reported that their schools typically recognize their work and effort through staff shout-outs and newsletters. One teacher stated, “When I get a shout-out, like really makes your day like better.”

Regarding career advancement opportunities, teachers reported that Chelsea has the resources to support their professional learning and pathways to advancement. Chelsea developed the Pathways Program to help staff advance, and the program has successfully supported the advancement of nonteaching staff and teaching staff into new positions, such as classroom teachers and administrators. In 2023-2024, according to the superintendent’s report to the school committee on the indicators of success, schools in Chelsea promoted 23 people, including 16 paraprofessionals who became teachers and 3 teachers who became administrators. The district helps with financial support for staff pursuing education to advance their careers. The district offers some scholarships to allow staff to pursue a degree in education that will lead to becoming a licensed teacher, as well as tuition reimbursement for teachers who are pursuing additional education. The district also partners with Salem State University for educators to obtain their Certificate of Advanced Graduate Study, which is equivalent to the doctorate salary lane in the teacher contract. In addition, teachers reported opportunities to become PLT leads, mentor leads, social-emotional learning leads, and content-area leads. Also, according to school leader questionnaires and focus group participants, some of the school’s ILTs include teachers. Leadership opportunities for teachers and pathways for staff to advance in their careers are strengths of the district.

District leaders reported that, to retain staff, they analyze data to understand the reasons that staff leave the district and then create a strategy based on that understanding. The district hired an external organization to look at retention. In analyzing the exit surveys, they found that, after COVID, people are more likely to leave because of working conditions, promotion opportunities, and school leadership. Previously, they found people were leaving more for personal reasons, such as being closer to their homes or having a child. Similarly, participants in the teacher focus group shared the common reasons staff leave in the district are lower pay or benefits or choosing a district that is closer to their home. A teacher explained, “Our paras and teachers are leaving in high rates for districts around us where they can make significantly more money doing the exact same job with a similar commute and a similar population of kids.” At the time of the visit, the average teacher salary in Chelsea was $6,010 less than the state average, according to state data. Teachers also reported that the workload is often less intense in other districts and that the caseloads for Chelsea multilingual educators are often more compared with surrounding districts, such as Revere and Everett. The reasons that people stay in Chelsea, according to teachers, is that the district is a more manageable size compared with Boston and that they get to know families and the community as a whole. One educator explained appreciating “the opportunity to teach older and younger siblings and cousins this year in every single homeroom,” and reported feeling a “strong connection to Chelsea in particular.”

District leaders described the Pathway Program as a key part of their retention strategy. They believe that if they focus on developing educators from their community, those educators will be more likely to stay in the district. Another aspect of their approach to retention includes recognizing teachers and planning events and celebrations. District leaders reported decreases in the share of staff leaving each year. Nonetheless, according to DESE’s retention data, Chelsea’s teacher retention has been below the state rate for the past five years. In 2023-2024, the retention rate was 77.5 percent, compared with a state average of 85.8 percent. Furthermore, the retention of Hispanic or Latino teachers dropped from 90.0 percent to 68.9 percent between 2021 and 2023. Overall teacher retention and retention of Hispanic or Latino teachers are areas for growth.

To improve working conditions and improve staff retention, fostering a sense of belonging among students and staff is a priority, according to district and school leaders. The district has provided professional development to school leaders regarding belonging and culturally responsive learning practices. The district has also hosted districtwide educators of color events to help build community. School leaders reported intentional activities to foster a sense of belonging, including creating committees to plan activities, hiring people from the community, and regularly checking with staff.

Participants in educator focus groups, however, cited the high turnover rates of staff as a barrier to nurturing a sense of belonging, because of difficulties developing relationships and trust. An educator explained, “It’s a lot of emotional investment in people who aren’t necessarily going to stick around for very long.” Daily staff absences during the school year also have an impact on the working environment. One leader called staff absenteeism “pervasive across the district.” Another leader explained that staff absences impact their ability to have “highly effective educators in front of our students on a daily basis,” and other leaders described having to pull staff from supervising hallways and other areas to cover classrooms, which also impacts the school environment, including safety. Reducing staff absences is an area for growth for the district.

Regarding support for wellness and mental health, teacher focus group participants indicated that their district providesan Employee Assistance Plan (EAP), an online resource that offers counseling and courses. Although one participant described the resource as “robust,” they also wondered if staff know about the EAP, despite the district’s effort to raise awareness about the resource.

### Professional Learning

Although district principals described frequently observing classrooms, including walkthroughs with coaches, multiple teachers in focus groups reported that their district and school leaders do notconsistently observe them andprovide feedback and that the formal evaluation process lacks consistency. According to one educator, the large number of new staff means that veteran teachers receive infrequent observations and that veteran teachers would like more feedback. Similarly, a different educator suggested more frequent observations throughout the school year would be more beneficial than one or two longer observations in the whole school year. With regard to educator evaluations, one educator reported inconsistent educator evaluations: “It is in theory very standardized, but in practice varies tremendously by who your evaluator is.” Other teachers reported that the formal evaluations have not been happening as designed with an observation, evidence, helpful feedback, and areas for growth. More frequent observations and greater consistency across observations and evaluations are areas for growth.

The district offers professional development to staff in line with the district objectives, including professional development on Data Wise work with assessments, new curriculum materials, and support for family liaisons. Some additional efforts support the schools in the district with the greatest need. In some cases, the district offers this professional learning to invite leaders, who return to their schools in a train-the-trainer model. However, the district does not have a formal, written professional development plan, and some staff reported that professional learning opportunities are not relevant to them. Creating a more consistent and coherent formal plan for professional development is an area for growth for the district.

According to district leaders, the district selects its professional development priorities based on the strategic plan and the schools’ AIPs. This year, the district is rolling out Data Wise, a professional development initiative to support schools and systems to take an equity lens while using a collaborative data inquiry approach. The goal is to create consistency across the district in how people look at data. The district has provided professional development on nurturing a sense of belonging and implementing HQIM. The district is also focused on making certain lessons are meeting “Depth of Knowledge (DOK) Level 3.” District leaders also reported differentiating professional development for different schools, depending on their specific needs. The district’s coaches plan and facilitate professional development. Coaches also focus on implementation during PLTs. The district monitors the efficacy of its professional development when it does instructional rounds and walkthroughs by assessing how teachers are bringing the lessons back to their classrooms and schools.

According to teacher focus group participants, the district offers a lot of professional development, but they also noted it can feel disjointed and not part of a coherent plan. In addition, one educator reported that, because of high staff turnover, professional development feels increasingly geared toward newer teachers, and institutional knowledge is difficult to maintain (see Staffing). Teachers consistently reported opportunities to meet and collaborate as part of professional learning communities (PLCs). PLCs can be effective professional learning, but their utility, some teachers said, is limited by high levels of recent staff turnover. A teacher explained that they “spend a lot of PLC teaching people how to implement the curriculum instead of working as a team to improve our practice…because I’m with folks that are new.” Additionally, teachers agreed that teachers have input for professional development at the school level but less opportunity for feedback regarding district professional development.

District and school leaders reported teachers have regular time to collaborate in their schedules. Based on school leader questionnaires, depending on the specific school, subject-area and grade-level teams meet either multiple times per week, weekly, every other week, or monthly. In addition, depending on the school, some grade-level teachers share prep periods and have grade-level meetings, but the amount of time teachers have is not consistent across schools. In contrast, teachers *disagreed* that they have sufficient time to collaborate across subject areas and grade levels at their school. Several secondary teachers reported that their opportunities to collaborate are improving but are not yet sufficient. One teacher explained that they have about two days to co-plan, but they wish they could meet as a team daily. The teacher stated, “I feel like that’s essential.” Similarly, another teacher reported being pulled from their co-planning time to attend IEP and other meetings, so they do not actually get the two days to co-plan. Other teachers reported using their common meeting time to discuss students of concern rather than work on improving their practice.

Teacher focus group participants indicated that the district provides novice educators with support and resources to be successful. The district has a two-year mentoring program for educators who are new to the district. According to district leaders, the director of instruction oversees the program with one of the teacher leaders who is a districtwide mentor lead. These two leaders train the mentor leads, who are the leads at each school. The mentors receive training, and then the mentors work with their mentees.According to a document entitled *New Educator’s Induction Program 2023-2024*, the first year of the mentoring program contains three tracks, with varying levels of support based on a new educator’s experience. The district surveys participants about their satisfaction with the program. In 2023-2024, more than 60 percent of survey respondents reported that the program more than met their needs in terms of time, resources, and assistance. Similarly, teacher focus group participants described the program as “amazing” and as “a strength of the district.” They reported their mentors helping to welcome them and get them oriented to the district. The survey also asks mentees about areas for improvement. In summer 2023, the district launched its New Teacher Academy to provide additional support to teachers who do not have prior teaching experience or a formal educational background in the field of education and have not attended a teacher preparation program. These teachers will receive one-on-one support from the new teacher developer and the coaching program as part of their two-year mentoring program. Chelsea uses data to evaluate, track, and differentiate its mentoring program to meet the needs of new teachers. The program is a strength of the district.

With regard to supports for noninstructional staff, district leaders reported that they provide professional development opportunities for the district’s clerks. They send out surveys to the clerks to determine the topics of interest, and they then create a professional development series of four or five sessions for all clerks.

### Recommendations

* *The district should partner with its municipal counterparts to enable the modules within Munis so that staff can access their employee records and paystubs.*
* *The district’s human resources team should work with its stakeholders to develop a formalized system for reporting and resolving interpersonal conflicts and addressing grievances.*
* *The district should set expectations around incorporating greater levels of constructive feedback on evaluations for both teachers and administrators.*
* *The district should investigate the disparity in retention data between district and DESE data, and continue its teacher administrator initiatives to address the root causes of teacher attrition.*
* *The district should diagnose and address the systematic challenges that have led to high rates of staff absenteeism.*
* *The district should support school leaders, administrators, and instructional coaches with building and implementing a plan to conduct more frequent informal observations that provide actionable feedback to teachers.*
* *The district should create a data-informed, formal professional development plan that is aligned with the district’s strategic priorities.*

## Student Support

This section focuses on the extent to which the district supports the whole student by creating safe and supportive environments, meeting students’ health and well-being needs, and engaging all families. It also focuses on the extent to which these supports are built on a robust MTSS that flexibly assesses and addresses each student’s academic, social-emotional, and behavioral strengths and needs.

Table 7 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in student support in Chelsea.

Table 7. 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) | * Chelsea has made several efforts in recent years to establish safe and supportive learning environments for students. * Chelsea uses Panorama and other student surveys to monitor school and district culture. | * Addressing behavioral issues through a combination of more consistent policies and additional resources * Addressing chronic absenteeism rates, which are higher in Chelsea than the state rate |
| [Health and Well-Being](#_Tiered_Systems_of) |  |  |
| [Family and Community Partnerships](#_Family_and_Community) | * The district’s community partnerships allow it to provide strong wraparound services to students and families. |  |
| [Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)](#_Multi-Tiered_Systems_of) |  | * Providingclear guidance for school leaders regarding how to implement each component of the MTSS at the school level * Improving high school students’ access to academic interventions |

### Safe and Supportive School Climate and Culture

Chelsea has made several efforts in recent years to establish safe and supportive learning environments for students, a strength of the district. A review of district documents and information the superintendent provided indicated that the district has a multi-hazard evacuation plan, an emergency response plan,and a bullying prevention plan. Similarly, all schools within the district conduct a school climate survey. According to students and their families, students generally feel welcome, respected, and safe in their schools. Students reported that, at school, they feel welcome and relate to the other students. Middle school students noted that they “feel super welcome and safe at [their] school” and they have “never faced any like racism or discrimination from any other student or teacher.” High school students reported that security has increased, so they feel safer, but at times security can be too strict. For example, the students raised issues with accessibility to bathrooms due to how they are monitored. Families noted that they feel like the district does work to incorporate students’ identities in the schools and classrooms, especially with hiring a more diverse workforce. Middle school and high school students noted that they are asked to provide feedback via surveys. High school students noted that some teachers incorporated their feedback, but they did not report lasting changes. Middle school students reported that they did communicate with teachers about wanting recess, and the following school year the school implemented recess.

According to district leaders, the district collects and uses Panorama to regularly monitor school and district culture, and the consistent and widespread use of this information is a strength of the district. The superintendent and other district leaders added that they also conduct other student surveys to look at general trends of students’ feelings and relationships within the school and use SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment) screenings in middle school and high school. School-based student support staff shared other data they use to monitor school culture and student social-emotional needs, but the tools used are not consistent across schools.

District and school staff noted that the district recently revised its code of conduct. Leaders are also training staff this year on the new code of conduct, to improve alignment across the district regarding behavior expectations. These efforts are in response to variations in behavior policies across the district. School staff reported that, currently, each school has its own behavior and attendance policies. High school students noted that behavioral consequences are not always enforced consistently, and middle school students noted that not all the behavioral expectations written in the handbook are upheld.

According to the district’s student support staff, the district provides resources to address intensive behavioral support needs. For example, at the high school they have community outreach through ROCA, at Eugene Wright Middle School they have Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools, and Kelly Elementary School they use a check-in check-out for students with a behavior support plan. However, because of the large number of students at the middle and high school levels who need these supports, student support staff reported needing more resources. They also agreed that they help to support educators in fostering social-emotional development among students through different trainings for teachers. However, student support staff noted that “because of the high level of turnover in Chelsea, [they are] constantly providing [trainings]… and you lose the institutional knowledge.” Addressing behavioral issues through a combination of more consistent policies and additional resources is an area of growth for the district.

District leaders, including the superintendent, noted that chronic student absenteeism is something that they are currently working on, and the district is currently rolling out a new system to connect with students who are chronically absent. Currently, the chronic absenteeism rate is 15.7 percentage points higher than the state rate, and students miss an average of 7.0 more days than the state average, according to DESE data. The district has an attendance policy manual, and the superintendent noted that the district is hiring staff to act as navigators to conduct home visits and check in with families of students who are chronically absent. There are attendance interventions at some of the schools: for example, at Chelsea High School, they have afternoon and Sunday school as an attendance intervention, and at Sokolowski Elementary School, they have an attendance officer and have bi-weekly attendance meetings with students as a Tier 3 intervention. In addition, the superintendent makes monthly reports on student absenteeism rates to the school committee as part of her indicators of success (see Leadership and Governance). Students reported that their families received calls when the students were absent; students at the middle school reported that their teachers communicated with them when they were late for class. Despite these efforts, staff at multiple levels reported that student absenteeism is a significant issue that makes supporting student learning difficult, so this remains an area for growth for the district.

### Health and Well-Being

The district offers health and physical education aligned with the Massachusetts Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Framework. A review of the district school schedulesindicated that the district provides students with multiple opportunities to engage in physical activity and strengthen their bodies while attending school. However, according to school leaders, the district’s offering of health and physical education is inconsistent across grades and schools. Chelsea High School offers a semester of physical education for students in Grades 9-12 and a semester of health to students in Grades 9-11. Browne Middle School and Wright Academy Middle School offer less than a semester of physical education and health for all students. Clark Avenue Middle School offers a semester of physical education and less than a semester of health for all students. Elementary school leaders reported that students receive a full year of physical education.

The district maintains a local wellness policy, as required by law. The policy provides a protocol that establishes an environment that prioritizes student health, well-being, and the ability to learn. Different district staff members are responsible for ensuring compliance with the McKinney-Vento Act, overseeing special education needs and supports, managing the needs of English Learners across schools, and overseeing health and wellness programs in the district.

District leaders and principals reported that their district has tiered mental and behavioral health services that support most students’ mental and emotional wellness. District leaders reported that there is Trails for Wellness, RCADS (Revised Children’s Anxiety and Depression Scale), small group counseling, Cartwheel Care Telehealth, Alongside App, and individual counseling available for all students. There are also mental health services that support students’ mental and emotional wellness that differ by school:

* Kelly Elementary School has group and individual counseling;
* Sokolowski Elementary School has counselor lessons and counselor and social worker groups;
* Browne Middle School has social skills group and MindEaze;
* Clark Avenue Middle School has group counseling, support groups, targeted social-emotional learning interventions, crisis intervention and support, and meditation services;
* Wright Academy Middle School has group counseling, support groups, cognitive behavioral intervention for trauma in schools, and iDECIDE program;
* Chelsea High School has Chelsea Hub, which is an initiative led by the Chelsea PD; and
* Chelsea Opportunity Academy offers progress journaling, trust visits, SEL support groups, restorative practices, "stress less" in-house curriculum, and community meetings.

### Family and Community Partnerships

District leaders reported several strategies to try and engage parents, including having family liaisons, hosting family mathematics and literacy nights, and sending letters to families. Multiple levels in the system reflect these efforts. Individual school committee members, some of whom have children in the Chelsea schools, help facilitate parent engagement because parents reach out to them individually to share their concerns. The district has family liaisons in their buildings who serve as connections for families with the district, schools, and additional community resources; many of these staff are multilingual, which facilitates communication with more members of the community. The district and its schools also provideguidance to staff regarding family communication. This guidance positions all families as equal partners in their students’ educations through language and policies that are culturally responsive and multilingual, and a number of staff are multilingual as well, according to multiple interview participants. District leaders reported using ParentSquare to communicate with families, in English and other languages.

District staff and school leaders reported that the district maintains relationships with organizations in its community to provide services and enriching experiences to students and families during and outside of the school day. According to the district superintendent, the district supports student connections to wraparound services through the Children’s Cabinet, which is a collaborative committee of district leaders and community organizations in Chelsea that provide a variety of support services. The Children’s Cabinet has helped to create these organizational connections between the schools and these community organizations. In interviews, staff explained how the district partnered with the city and multiple community partners, including the Boys and Girls Club, Chamber of Commerce, Bunker Hill Community College, and North Suffolk Community Services, to create this Cabinet to support primarily nonacademic needs of children in Chelsea. The Children’s Cabinet has focused on student mental health and well-being, as well as out-of-school time. According to one district leader, the district uses MOUs (memorandums of understanding) to delineate roles and responsibilities for each partner. The district’s community partnerships allow it to provide strong wraparound services to students and families, which is a strength of the district.

Regarding mental and behavioral health, the district engages in several community partnerships, some of which were established through the Children’s Cabinet. Additionally, district principals stated that Chelsea has an adequate number of tiered mental and behavioral health services that support most students’ mental and emotional wellness. For example, district schools use screeners, the student support team process, and other sources of data to connect students to community resources**.** School support staff reported that they help identify what students need and connect them with the necessary resources through relationships established by the Children’s Cabinet partnerships. The following section outlines the process for connecting students with supports.

### Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

Chelsea has a broad vision for school-level support teams. This vision reinforces personalized support for students and engagesfamilies to some degree in decision making and the delivery of tiered supports. However, the district does not have a multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) guidebook that details how the district applies an adaptable MTSS to implement interventions for students across schools, which has allowed for variation in supports available to students. Schools inform families of some interventions their students receive; however, families noted that, often, they had to proactively reach out to their students’ teachers and schools to understand the supports available for their students.

Some principals and staff reported that they use disaggregated, student-centered data from i-Ready assessments, DIBELS, and other progress monitoring to select academic intervention materials that align with the common curricula. Teachers noted that the schools leverage ILTs, grade-level meetings, and student support teams to match students to Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions to meet students’ needs. Some teachers agreed that schools have sufficient staff and time allocated to implement and adapt Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions to meet students’ needs, but this agreement was inconsistent across the district.

Although Chelsea provides some broad guidance on facilitating student support teams, the district doesnotprovideclear guidance for school leaders regarding how to implement each component of the MTSS at the school level, an area for growth for the district. According to the district’s curriculum leads, the district’s tiered system of support includes support for academic, social-emotional, behavioral, and health needs. The district monitors the effectiveness of this system with progress monitoring that aligns with schools’ AIPs. The district does not define the systems’ three tiers of support across all the schools; however, Chelsea does implement Tier 1 academic, social-emotional, and behavioral supports for all students and has Tiers 2 and 3 interventions for students who need additional support to access the curriculum. Teachers agreed with this variation in approach and reported, “There’s not a districtwide vision for intervention . . . and the amount of intervention kids get is very much dependent on which school they’re in and also what the staffing looks like for that year.” School leaders added that the district is working on making interventions more systematic, but this effort to systematize the process for providing supports is still in progress.

When students are accessing interventions, they vary by school. Elementary teachers explained that some schools have an intervention period to offer ELA and mathematics interventions, but this is not consistent across all elementary schools. Submitted schedules and documents indicate that most middle and elementary schools do have designated intervention time, other than the dual-language Kelly School. Middle school teachers described the coteaching model and intervention block at their schools. Middle school students agreed with school leaders and teachers, reporting tutoring supports and blocks during the day for ELA and mathematics support. Conversely, high school teachers reported that they no longer have an intervention block at the high school outside of the Bridge Program, making academic supports more difficult to deliver. In addition, high school teachers said time, space, and resources are not sufficient to provide the necessary academic interventions for the student body. Students at Chelsea High School explained that “for help, you mostly have to go to your teacher directly.” Improving high school students’ access to academic interventions is an area of growth for the district.

### Recommendations

* *The district should work with its school leaders to establish consistent behavioral expectations and management strategies across the district and provide additional resources to student support staff.*
* *The district should continue its efforts to address its high rates of chronic absenteeism and implement wraparound approaches to addressing the root causes of student absenteeism.*
* *The district should develop comprehensive guidance and provide professional development opportunities to support school leaders and educators in implementing each component of its tiered system of support.*
* *The district should work with high school administrators to identify resources and time in the school day to engage students in academic interventions.*

## Financial and Asset Management

This section focuses on the extent to which, through its policies, systems, and procedures, the district strategically allocates and utilizes funding and other resources in alignment with applicable laws to improve all students’ performance, opportunities, and outcomes. It also focuses on the ways in which the district collaborates with its partners to run daily operations, manage its assets, and develop long-term plans for sustainability.

Table 8 summarizes key strengths and areas for growth in financial and asset management in Chelsea.

Table 8. Summary of Key Strengths and Areas for Growth: Financial and Asset Management Standard

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Indicator | Strengths | Areas for growth |
| [Business Office Staffing and Infrastructure](#_Business_Office_Staffing) | * The Administration and Finance Office is well staffed and manages a wide range of financial and other activities (i.e., budget, grants management, payroll, purchasing) and building and grounds, transportation, food services, and information technology. * The district coordinates record-keeping processes and the use of backup records. | * Aligning technologies and procedures in financial processes with city partners, particularly in adopting technologies or procedures that could increase efficiency * Formalizing the shared services agreement between the City and schools |
| [Budgeting and Budget Process](#_Budgeting_and_Budget) | * The district maintains a transparent budgeting process, with community involvement, detailed timelines, and public notices of meetings. * The district makes effective use of state and federal grants aligned with the district’s strategic plan, with a grant administrator ensuring compliance. |  |
| [Operations](#_Operations_1) | * The district is committed to maintaining facilities, with routine and yearly maintenance and collaboration with the city for major capital expenses. |  |
| [Managing Capital Assets and Capital Planning](#_Managing_Capital_Assets) | * The district has regular meetings between the executive director of Administration and Finance and staff from Buildings and Grounds, IT, and the Business Office to discuss and plan for capital projects. |  |

### Business Office Staffing and Infrastructure

The Administration and Finance Office (Finance Office) is led by the executive director of administration and finance, who oversees a large department dealing with not only district finances but also with several aspects of school operations. The Administration and Finance Office is well staffed and manages a wide range of financial and other activities (i.e., budget, grants management, payroll, purchasing) and building and grounds, transportation, food services, and information technology, a strength of the district. The Finance Office provides oversight and management of school district finances, budget, payroll, purchasing, vendor payments, and financial reporting. The Finance Office works with all district funds, including but not limited to the general fund, grants, donations, student activity accounts, and lunch fund. As part of the Finance Office, the Business Office is responsible for accounts payable and payroll, buildings and grounds (including security), transportation, food services, IT, grants management, and monitoring all district spending. The number of individual staff who fall under the Finance Office is approximately 350, including 210 cafeteria workers. Additionally, the Business Office processes all work permits for Cheslea residents under 19 and provides direct support to all Chelsea schools and departments. According to a district leader, the Finance Office is well staffed: “Under [the current superintendent] and post-Student Opportunity Act, we are in really good shape.” The office performs a wide variety of functions, including financial activities (i.e., budget, grants management, payroll, purchasing), buildings and grounds, transportation, food services, and information technology. This level of staffing and coordination in one office is a strength of the district.

An area for growth in the district is aligning technologies and procedures in financial processes with city partners, particularly adopting technologies or procedures that could increase efficiency, such as using electronic systems for budget transfers. The Business Office staff collaborate with the City of Chelsea on purchasing, audits, and major capital expenses. A district leader explained that, although the Business Office is properly staffed and has adequate procedures in place, the staff do not always have fully aligned procedures with colleagues on the city side, due to differences in some processes and technologies. These differences, including using technology to process some procurements and in other cases processing procurements on paper, can slow down operations. A district respondent noted that there has been some progress in using common technologies and procedures, such as some financial systems and Talent Ed. However, the school district’s and city’s corresponding financial offices use some different procedures, such as paper processes for budget transfers and some uses of the Aspen system. One district respondent attributed this to some staff preferring not to make a “cultural change” to new procedures. The district uses Munis cash management to monitor and control resources, as does the city. The Business Office has comprehensive written policies and procedures that outline ongoing work, are designed to ensure compliance with state and federal requirements, establish an internal system of checks and balances, and provide continuity to operations when staffing disruptions arise.

Despite these procedural challenges, interview and focus group participants from both the district and the city characterized the two entities as having a strong working relationship. According to district staff and city officials, the district and the City of Chelsea do not have a formal, written agreement in place that describes the shared services between the city and the school district. Rather, as a representative from city government explained, “There is historic practice.” The city is responsible for capital planning and improvements, including improvements to buildings, facilities, and parks. Also, the city provides funding for the school department above and beyond that provided through Chapter 70 or required by net school spending. Regarding the commitment to schools, one respondent said of the city’s commitment to the students in Chelsea: “[City government is] very much involved and very invested in the schools in Chelsea . . . There is a lot of combined efforts to make schools work and do well in Chelsea.” While the City and schools share a productive and collaborative working relationship, formalizing the shared services agreement is an area of growth for the district.

District staff explained that the city is the official keeper of the financial records because all invoices go through the city’s system. However, the district does keep backup records. To ensure that the system is in alignment with the uniform Massachusetts accounting system, the city facilitates an annual audit and reviews the district’s large grants and the general fund. The district provides whatever backup is needed. The coordination of these record-keeping processes and the use of backup records are strengths of the district.

### Budgeting and Budget Process

The district maintains a transparent budgeting process, with community involvement, detailed timelines, and public notices of meetings, a strength of the district. The budget process begins with principals and includes other stakeholder input before the school committee and city council finalize the budget. The district lays out critical meeting dates and milestones for the budget. In January, the superintendent, finance director, and human resources director spend two weeks in meetings, during which school leaders present their preferred plans, including staffing and budgets, for the coming year. Principals write a narrative that demonstrates how their requests are aligned with the district’s strategic plan and consider enrollment numbers. The leadership team then reviews department budgets and staffing, weighs various options, and develops a rough draft of a budget. The finance office finalizes this draft in late February, and, while waiting for the Chapter 70 funding projection from the state, the district begins hosting budget presentations to the community (i.e., community conversations). These meetings, which take place in March, are intended to inform and engage families, educators, and other community members and get their input. The district leadership also reviews the budget with the school committee in March, and the school committee holds a public hearing in mid-March and holds a second meeting a week or so later to make revisions to the budget based on feedback. Right before the third and final meeting—during which voting takes place at the end of March—the district leaders share the final budget with local teachers’ association leaders. Once the school committee votes to approve the budget, the city manager presents the city’s combined budget, including the district budget, to the city council for a final vote. Throughout this process, the Chelsea school committee publishes public notices of all budget and finance subcommittee meetings, with detailed agendas on the district leadership page of the district’s website. District leaders, school-based staff, school committee members, and the city manager, all described the budget process as being an involved process that relies on a good deal of input from the community**.**

Budget records and documents are also transparent. Current budget documents for the 2023-2024 school year and documents released prior to fiscal year 2024 are available on the district’s website in PDF files. The district website also displays a graphic with the annual budget process, specifying the months in which activities take place, as well as information about the timing and location of community budget meetings and presentations and school committee budget hearings.

According to the Chapter 70 district profile, the district exceeded net school spending requirements for fiscal year 2024, though per-pupil funding in FY23 was $20,013,which is lower than the state average of $20,767. District budget documents clearly identify funds associated with grants, student activities and organizations, fees, and revolving funds. According to city leadership, school committee members, and teachers, the district’s budget does not provide appropriate levels of funding for key instructional resources. Among several staff respondents, competitive teacher compensation was a key issue in this regard. The average teacher salary in fiscal year 2023 was $84,724, which is lower than the state average of $89,576 (see Human Resources).

Regarding intradistrict equity, district leaders and educators agreed that funding is equitably distributed, if not as high as all parties would prefer. A teacher representative characterized the distribution of funding as “pretty equitable. The way the district’s done that is by dispersing the separate programs. . . . So, the budgeting feels pretty equitable within the district.”

District leaders added that the district plans for anticipated, out-of-district special education placements and related transportation costs. District leaders did not explicitly mention a specific reserve fund for unexpected budget increases. [However, the district develops projections for cost increases based on contractual obligations, anticipated costs such as health care, and new initiatives](https://www.chelseaschools.com/Budget). This process helps the district manage and balance the budget effectively.

The district makes effective use of state and federal grants aligned with the district’s strategic plan, with a grant administrator ensuring compliance, making grants management a strength of the district. A review of budget documents and interviews with district staff indicated that the district applies for state and federal grants that align with the district’s strategic plan. To ensure that grant terms and requirements are followed in a timely manner, the district employs a grant administrator, and the city conducts an annual financial audit that covers grants. District leaders further explained how the district uses restricted and unrestricted funds to maximize benefits to students. In addition, district leaders described being intentional about adding staff with grant funding so that the positions could be absorbed by the general fund when the grant ended. District leadership made no specific mention of a sustainability plan.

The district does not have a current multi-year financial plan that incorporates projected enrollment and required staffing, cost-of-living adjustments set in its collective bargaining agreements, and anticipated increases in its service contracts. Although the Finance Office lacks published plans to track these projections, the office does maintain tools that support forecasting. For example, the Business Office maintains the capacity to model various scenarios as plans change due to budget-planning negotiations (e.g., city budgets, collective bargaining) and other events, allowing district leaders to discuss the impacts to the budget from such changes in staffing or collective bargaining agreements. The knowledge provided by these models, however, may not be evident to all stakeholders. In interviews, a teacher representative reported, “The district’s financial planning tries to take into account the idea that there will be steps [in salary] but isn’t really reckoning with the kind of bigger shifts [needed] to get more equitable [in terms of salaries with other districts].”. District leaders explained that the city has a five-year capital plan informed by enrollment expectations that the district provides; the district bases these expectations on the experiences of actual capital costs in previous years. This capital plan, however, is focused on capital and not all other aspects of financial projections. The city maintains a multiyear financial plan, but this plan does not appear to include all details about school-related expenses. Furthermore, the district does not have its own auditor’s report, but the City of Chelsea, which includes school district finances, does procure regular independent financial auditing services each year and implements recommendations from those audits.

School committee meeting minutes and interviews provide evidence that the district has procedures in place to monitor spending and financial controls throughout the year. Specifically, in interviews with school committee members and district staff, respondents reported that the district provides a full budget update to the school committee yearly and more regular updates to the school committee’s finance subcommittee. The school committee’s finance subcommittee meets twice a month and reviews “any monies that are, [to] be moved, used, monies coming in, who it’s coming in from, what’s the purpose of it coming in.” For example, one respondent shared, updates include a discussion of “the grant monies that were coming in that are going to expire if were not used by a certain time” and how district staff plan to move those funds to the appropriate line and make sure they are properly used by grant deadlines. The Business Office consistently tracks and adjusts current year spending and makes this information available to regular subcommittee meetings.

### Operations

The district has several operational elements that the Finance Office manages. This arrangement allows for the coordination of these operations, particularly with regard to the maintenance of buildings and grounds.

District leadership highlighted the district’s ongoing commitment to facilities. Chelsea’s approach to maintaining facilities includes routine and yearly maintenance and collaboration with the city for major capital maintenance, which are strengths of the district. Most of Chelsea schools were built in the mid-1990s as part of the Boston University/Chelsea Partnership reconstruction effort and have been well maintained. Although the City of Chelsea addresses major capital expenses, a cadre of custodians working for the district perform routine maintenance daily and engage in yearly maintenance in the summer. Grounds maintenance happens throughout the year and includes trimming and maintaining fields, landscaping, and snow removal. According to a district leader, the district is “putting in the amount of money that is recommended from . . . professional organizations that do building management and building maintenance.” This respondent also explained that the good condition of the district’s facilities is due to the efforts of previous administrators who maintained the buildings and grounds budget, even during tough financial times.

A district administrator mentioned that some projects, such as major cafeteria renovations, roofing projects, and playground improvements, are put out to bid and that other projects are handled internally. Additionally, no respondents acknowledged or described a formal process for requesting and responding to maintenance services..

The assignment of students to Chelsea is primarily based on residency, with students assigned to schools based on their home addresses. However, if a particular school is at capacity, the district may assign students to another nearby school. Other factors for school assignment include requirements due to an IEP or 504 Plan for placements in special programs, sibling preference, and parental choice for specific programs or schools. When certain programs or schools are oversubscribed, respondents said the district may use a lottery to assign students.

District leaders reported that the district has an external contract to provide transportation for eligible students; the Finance Office manages this relationship. According to the [Chelsea website](https://www.chelseaschools.com/Page/1286), the district manages 18 yellow buses to transport more than 1,300 students to school and back home every day. To be approved for yellow bus transportation, students must be in Grades K-4, have a home address that makes them eligible, and complete an application. Also, the bus must have an available seat. The department also schedules and supervises specialized transportation (vans and small buses) that transport students door-to-door in accordance with their IEP or their 504 Plan.

Food Services, including all food staff, falls under the Finance Office. The district serves breakfast and lunch meals daily free of charge for all Chelsea students each school day. More than 70 percent of Chelsea students eat lunch at their school daily, and, as posted on the CPS website, “breakfast participation ranges from 20-30 percent and the middle and high schools to 40-45 percent at the elementary schools and 80+ percent of Chelsea’s Early Learning Centers. According to the district website, meals consist of healthy whole grains, milk, fruit, and vegetables. The district also offers a summer food program, with breakfast and/or lunch served at 12 sites across the city. Each of the school sites has on-site preparation and cooking facilities that allow the flexibility to develop unique recipes from scratch to reflect the taste preferences of the student community. Also, Chelsea provides alternative menu options for any student who needs meal modifications.

All students at Chelsea receive a Chromebook laptop to support their learning. According to elementary school teachers, their students have access to Chromebooks in school, but they do not take the computers home. However, middle school and high school students do have the flexibility to take their computers home. The IT Department at Chelsea is responsible for providing individual Chromebooks to all students. In addition to managing student computers, the IT Department equips each educational space with computers and classroom displays for teacher use, ensures access to Wi-Fi, and maintains the infrastructure and core network services for wired and wireless networks. The IT Department also “procures, installs and operates” the Student Information System for housing student records and security systems and provides training and technical support throughout the district.

Although few respondents discussed the district’s technology, a teacher representative shared that teachers could use more printers and copiers. This representative went on to say: “The district did a really good job using money over COVID to get everybody laptops and to get all the students Chromebooks, … I think the classroom tech, people are pretty solid, but [teachers] would really like more printing and copying opportunities.”

District staff manage contracts internally through the Business Office. Regarding procurement, the district solicits quotes, drafts requests for proposals and invitations for bids, and inputs requisitions and sends them to the city’s procurement office. A district leader explained, “They manage the contract template, the process of Docusign, all that sort of stuff, and then it gets reviewed by a series of people on the city side.” (See Leadership and Governance.)

The City of Chelsea has a four-person procurement office that does all procurement for city and school. The city manager spoke about the relationship between the district and the city: “That’s the intention, right? That we’re not working in silos, right? So a plumbing contract, for example, can be used by both, a plowing contract can be used by both. The idea is to work collaboratively.” The city manager also explained that, in addition to capital planning (discussed below), the city funds major improvements to buildings, facilities, and parks.

### Managing Capital Assets and Capital Planning

The district’s long-term capital plan, including projects, costs, and funding mechanisms, is part of the five-year [City of Chelsea’s Capital Improvement Plan](https://cms5.revize.com/revize/chelseama/Document_Center/Departments/Auditor/Financial%20Documents%20&%20Reports/Capital%20Improvement%20Plan%20Reports/0071_FY25CIP_Booklet.pdf), but the long-term capital plan includes no background information (e.g., future enrollment projections, facility assessments, input from district and community stakeholders) that explains how the district identified and prioritized projects. However, the district’s strategic plan does include a priority to “ensure efficient and Effective Systems, Operations, And State-Of-The-Art Technology to Support Instruction and Student Learning,” which includes engaging families and community partners in the budget processes.

District leaders explained that the district does not have a long-term capital plan of their own, saying “We’ve been biting off the big systems as opportunities have arisen.” District staff who oversee operations and capital regularly do presentations for the school committee on the state of capital projects, projected needs, and school committee input.

The district has regular meetings between the executive director of Administration and Finance and staff from Buildings and Grounds, IT, and the Business Office to discuss and plan for capital projects, and this communication is a strength of the district. The executive director of Administration and Finance meets weekly with staff from Buildings and Grounds, IT, and the Business Office. Most days, they discuss immediate needs, but in late fall they consider plans for summer capital projects. They strive to bid out summer projects by January or February.

### Recommendations

* *The district should continue working with its municipal partners to align on policies and procedures that increase business office efficiency.*
* *The district should work with the city to memorialize its practice of sharing services in a written agreement.*

## 

## Appendix A. Summary of Site Visit Activities

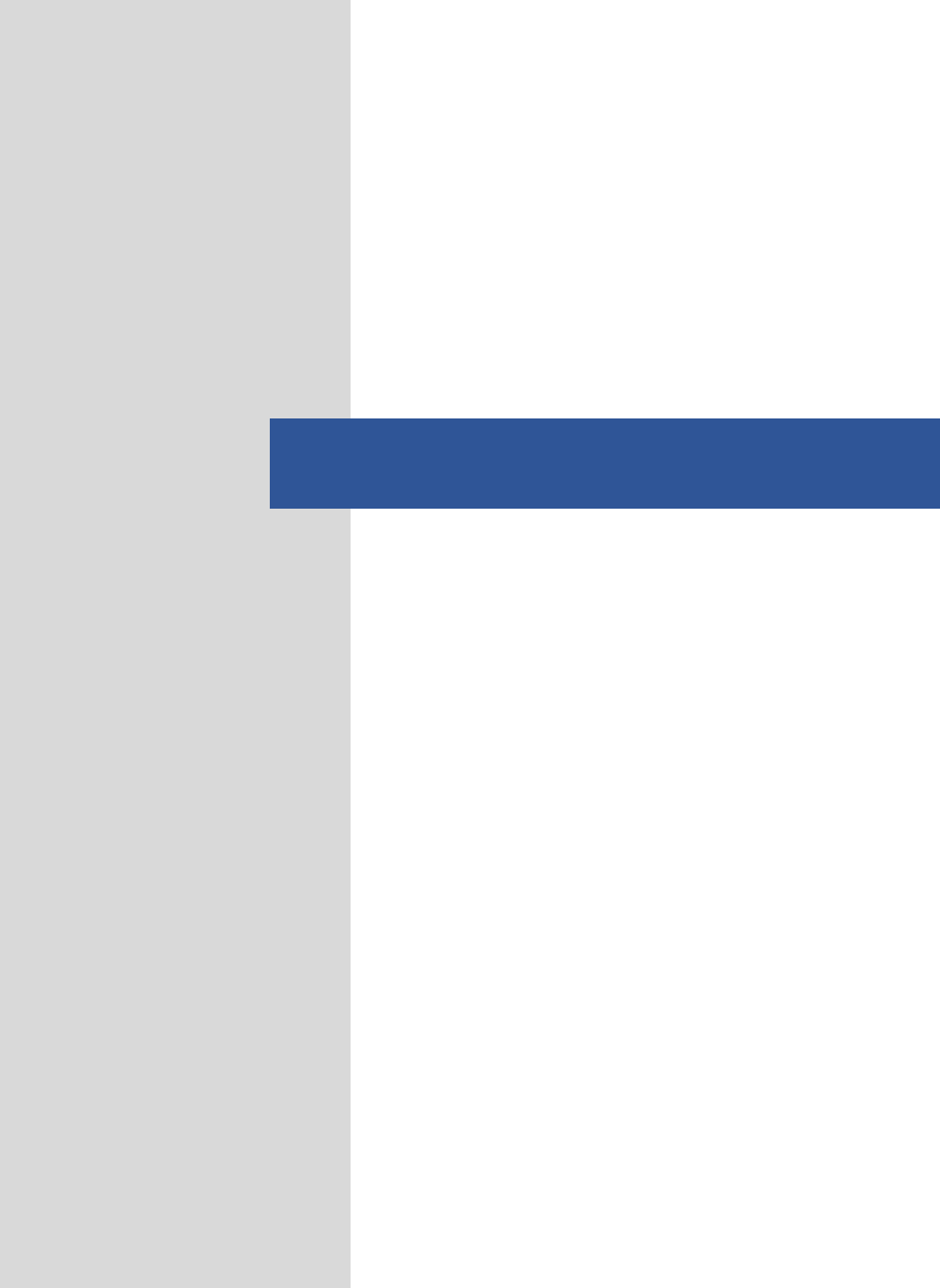
The AIR team completed the following activities as part of the district review activities in Chelsea Public Schools. The team conducted 83 classroom observations during the week of October 28, 2024, and held interviews and focus groups between October 25 and November 4, 2024. The site visit team conducted interviews and focus groups with the following representatives from the school and the district:

* Superintendent
* Other district leaders
* School committee members
* Teachers’ association leadership
* Principals
* Teachers
* Support specialists
* Parents, in both English and Spanish
* Students
* City government representatives

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 human resources processes and plans and finances
* Curricular review process and timeline
* Chelsea HQIM (high-quality instructional material) adoption plan outline
* Published educational reports on the district by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 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 from the prior academic year

## Appendix B. Districtwide Instructional Observation Report



Chelsea Public Schools

Classroom Visits: Summary of Findings

Districtwide Instructional Observation Report

October 2024



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

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

Contents

**Page**

[Introduction B-4](#_Toc92194253)

[Positive Climate B-6](#_Toc92194254)

[Teacher Sensitivity B-7](#_Toc92194255)

[Regard for Student Perspectives B-8](#_Toc92194256)

[Negative Climate B-9](#_Toc92194257)

[Behavior Management B-10](#_Toc92194258)

[Productivity B-11](#_Toc92194259)

[Instructional Learning Formats B-12](#_Toc92194260)

[Concept Development B-13](#_Toc92194261)

[Content Understanding B-14](#_Toc92194262)

[Analysis and Inquiry B-15](#_Toc92194263)

[Quality of Feedback B-16](#_Toc92194264)

[Language Modeling B-17](#_Toc92194265)

[Instructional Dialogue B-18](#_Toc92194266)

[Student Engagement B-19](#_Toc92194267)

[Summary of Average Ratings: Grades K-5 B-20](#_Toc92194268)

[Summary of Average Ratings: Grades 6-8 B-21](#_Toc92194269)

[Summary of Average Ratings: Grades 9-12 B-22](#_Toc92194270)

[References B-23](#_Toc92194271)

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 Chelsea Public Schools during the week of October 25, 2024. Observers conducted 83 observations in a sample of classrooms across nine 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\*: 4.4

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 83 | 4.4 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 6 | 15 | 11 | 0 | 34 | 5.0 |
| Grades 6-8 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 17 | 3.9 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 6 | 7 | 6 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 32 | 4.0 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 3, the district average is computed as:   
([1 x 1] + [2 x 6] + [3 x 14] + [4 x 17] + [5 x 28] + [6 x 16] + [7 x 1]) ÷ 83 observations = 4.4

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\*: 4.8

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 83 | 4.8 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 10 | 14 | 4 | 34 | 5.4 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 8 | 0 | 2 | 17 | 4.6 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 1 | 10 | 9 | 6 | 5 | 1 | 32 | 4.2 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 4, the district average is computed as:   
([2 x 2] + [3 x 14] + [4 x 17] + [5 x 24] + [6 x 19] + [7 x 7]) ÷ 83 observations = 4.8

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\*: 3.0

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 83 | 3.0 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 9 | 8 | 9 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 34 | 3.5 |
| Grades 6-8 | 2 | 8 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 17 | 2.7 |
| Grades 9-12 | 9 | 10 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 32 | 2.5 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 5, the district average is computed as:   
([1 x 11] + [2 x 27] + [3 x 16] + [4 x 15] + [5 x 12] + [6 x 2]) ÷ 83 observations = 3.0

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.[[6]](#footnote-7)

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

Negative Climate District Average\*: 6.8

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 83 | 6.8 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 31 | 34 | 6.9 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 9 | 17 | 6.4 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 27 | 32 | 6.8 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 6, the district average is computed as:   
([4 x 1] + [5 x 1] + [6 x 14] + [7 x 67]) ÷ 83 observations = 6.8

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

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

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

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\*: 5.9

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 83 | 5.9 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 23 | 34 | 6.4 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 17 | 5.3 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 17 | 32 | 5.7 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 7, the district average is computed as:   
([2 x 3] + [3 x 5] + [4 x 6] + [5 x 12] + [6 x 13] + [7 x 44]) ÷ 83 observations = 5.9

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 | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 83 | 6.0 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 23 | 34 | 6.3 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 11 | 17 | 6.4 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 18 | 32 | 5.6 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 8, the district average is computed as:   
([2 x 3] + [3 x 6] + [4 x 7] + [5 x 6] + [6 x 9] + [7 x 52]) ÷ 83 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\*: 4.8

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 83 | 4.8 |
| Grades K-5 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 13 | 14 | 3 | 34 | 5.4 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 10 | 1 | 1 | 17 | 4.6 |
| Grades 9-12 | 0 | 2 | 10 | 7 | 9 | 3 | 1 | 32 | 4.1 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 9, the district average is computed as:   
([2 x 3] + [3 x 13] + [4 x 12] + [5 x 32] + [6 x 18] + [7 x 5]) ÷ 83 observations = 4.8

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\*: 2.9

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 22 | 2.9 |
| Grades K-3\*\* | 2 | 4 | 11 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 22 | 2.9 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 10, the district average is computed as:   
([1 x 2] + [2 x 4] + [3 x 11] + [4 x 5]) ÷ 22 observations = 2.9

\*\*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\*: 3.4

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 61 | 3.4 |
| Grades 4-5\*\* | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 12 | 4.5 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 17 | 3.8 |
| Grades 9-12 | 2 | 12 | 11 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 32 | 2.8 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 11, the district average is computed as:   
([1 x 2] + [2 x 16] + [3 x 19] + [4 x 9] + [5 x 12] + [6 x 1] + [7 x 2]) ÷ 61 observations = 3.4

\*\*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\*: 2.4

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 61 | 2.4 |
| Grades 4-5\*\* | 2 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 3.2 |
| Grades 6-8 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 17 | 2.8 |
| Grades 9-12 | 15 | 10 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 32 | 1.8 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 12, the district average is computed as:   
([1 x 22] + [2 x 16] + [3 x 11] + [4 x 6] + [5 x 4] + [6 x 1] + [7 x 1]) ÷ 61 observations = 2.4

\*\*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\*: 3.2

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 83 | 3.2 |
| Grades K-5 | 1 | 3 | 7 | 16 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 34 | 3.7 |
| Grades 6-8 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 17 | 3.1 |
| Grades 9-12 | 7 | 9 | 6 | 7 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 32 | 2.7 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 13, the district average is computed as:   
([1 x 11] + [2 x 15] + [3 x 17] + [4 x 28] + [5 x 11] + [7 x 1]) ÷ 83 observations = 3.2

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\*: 3.5

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 22 | 3.5 |
| Grades K-3\*\* | 1 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 22 | 3.5 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 14, the district average is computed as:   
([1 x 1] + [2 x 3] + [3 x 6] + [4 x 9] + [5 x 2] + [6 x 1]) ÷ 22 observations = 3.5

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

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

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

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

Instructional Dialogue

Instructional Support domain, Grades 4− 12

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

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

Instructional Dialogue District Average\*: 2.6

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 61 | 2.6 |
| Grades 4-5\*\* | 1 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 3.3 |
| Grades 6-8 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 17 | 2.6 |
| Grades 9-12 | 13 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 32 | 2.3 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 15, the district average is computed as:   
([1 x 18] + [2 x 13] + [3 x 12] + [4 x 15] + [5 x 2] + [6 x 1]) ÷ 61 observations = 2.6

\*\*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\*: 4.2

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade Band | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 61 | 4.2 |
| Grades 4-5\*\* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 12 | 5.5 |
| Grades 6-8 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 17 | 4.5 |
| Grades 9-12 | 1 | 6 | 9 | 8 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 32 | 3.6 |

\*The district average is an average of the observation scores. In Table 16, the district average is computed as:   
([1 x 1] + [2 x 7] + [3 x 11] + [4 x 16] + [5 x 12] + [6 x 11] + [7 x 3]) ÷ 61 observations = 4.2

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

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

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

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

Summary of Average Ratings: Grades K–5

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

|  | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | n | Average Scores\* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |  |  |
| Emotional Support Domain | 0 | 9 | 12 | 19 | 32 | 29 | 35 | 136 | 5.2 |
| Positive Climate | 0 | 0 | 2 | 6 | 15 | 11 | 0 | 34 | 5.0 |
| Negative Climate\*\* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 31 | 34 | 6.9 |
| Teacher Sensitivity | 0 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 10 | 14 | 4 | 34 | 5.4 |
| Regard for Student Perspectives | 0 | 9 | 8 | 9 | 7 | 1 | 0 | 34 | 3.5 |
| Classroom Organization Domain | 0 | 0 | 4 | 7 | 18 | 24 | 49 | 102 | 6.0 |
| Behavior Management | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 23 | 34 | 6.4 |
| Productivity | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 23 | 34 | 6.3 |
| Instructional Learning Formats\*\*\* | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 13 | 14 | 3 | 34 | 5.4 |
| Instructional Support Domain | 7 | 14 | 33 | 39 | 18 | 2 | 1 | 114 | 3.5 |
| Concept Development (K-3 only) | 2 | 4 | 11 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 22 | 2.9 |
| Content Understanding (UE only) | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 12 | 4.5 |
| Analysis and Inquiry (UE only) | 2 | 2 | 4 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 3.2 |
| Quality of Feedback | 1 | 3 | 7 | 16 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 34 | 3.7 |
| Language Modeling (K-3 only) | 1 | 3 | 6 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 22 | 3.5 |
| Instructional Dialogue (UE only) | 1 | 2 | 2 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 12 | 3.3 |
| Student Engagement (UE only) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 12 | 5.5 |

\*The district average is an average of the scores. For example, for Positive Climate, the district average is computed as: ([3 x 2] + [4 x 6] + [5 x 15] + [6 x 11]) ÷ 34 observations = 5.0

\*\*Negative Climate is rated on an inverse scale. An original score of 1 is given a value of 7. The scoring in the table reflects the normalized adjustment: ([6 x 3] + [7 x 31]) ÷ 34 observations = 6.9. In addition, Negative Climate appears in the Classroom Organization Domain for the Upper Elementary Manual.

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

Summary of Average Ratings: Grades 6–8

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

|  | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High Range | N | Average Scores\* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |  |  |
| Emotional Support Domain | 3 | 9 | 11 | 9 | 15 | 2 | 2 | 51 | 3.7 |
| Positive Climate | 1 | 0 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 17 | 3.9 |
| Teacher Sensitivity | 0 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 8 | 0 | 2 | 17 | 4.6 |
| Regard for Student Perspectives | 2 | 8 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 17 | 2.7 |
| Classroom Organization Domain | 0 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 7 | 14 | 24 | 51 | 6.0 |
| Behavior Management | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 17 | 5.3 |
| Productivity | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 11 | 17 | 6.4 |
| Negative Climate\*\* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 6 | 9 | 17 | 6.4 |
| Instructional Support Domain | 12 | 16 | 18 | 16 | 17 | 2 | 4 | 85 | 3.4 |
| Instructional Learning Formats | 0 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 10 | 1 | 1 | 17 | 4.6 |
| Content Understanding | 0 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 0 | 1 | 17 | 3.8 |
| Analysis and Inquiry | 5 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 17 | 2.8 |
| Quality of Feedback | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 17 | 3.1 |
| Instructional Dialogue | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 17 | 2.6 |
| Student Engagement | 0 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 17 | 4.5 |

\*The district average is an average of the scores. For example, for Positive Climate, the district average is computed as: ([1 x 1] + [3 x 5] + [4 x 5] + [5 x 5] + [6 x 1]) ÷ 17 observations = 3.9

\*\*Negative Climate is rated on an inverse scale. An original score of 1 is given a value of 7. The scoring in the table reflects the normalized adjustment: ([4 x 1] + [5 x 1] + [6 x 6] + [7 x 9]) ÷ 17 observations = 6.4

Summary of Average Ratings: Grades 9–12

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

|  | Low Range | Low Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | Middle Range | High Range | High range | N | Average Scores\* |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |  |  |
| Emotional Support Domain | 9 | 17 | 21 | 21 | 17 | 9 | 2 | 96 | 3.6 |
| Positive Climate | 0 | 6 | 7 | 6 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 32 | 4.0 |
| Teacher Sensitivity | 0 | 1 | 10 | 9 | 6 | 5 | 1 | 32 | 4.2 |
| Regard for Student Perspectives | 9 | 10 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 32 | 2.5 |
| Classroom Organization Domain | 0 | 5 | 5 | 8 | 7 | 9 | 62 | 96 | 6.0 |
| Behavior Management | 0 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 17 | 32 | 5.7 |
| Productivity | 0 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 18 | 32 | 5.6 |
| Negative Climate\*\* | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 27 | 32 | 6.8 |
| Instructional Support Domain | 37 | 40 | 37 | 26 | 15 | 4 | 1 | 160 | 2.7 |
| Instructional Learning Formats | 0 | 2 | 10 | 7 | 9 | 3 | 1 | 32 | 4.1 |
| Content Understanding | 2 | 12 | 11 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 32 | 2.8 |
| Analysis and Inquiry | 15 | 10 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 32 | 1.8 |
| Quality of Feedback | 7 | 9 | 6 | 7 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 32 | 2.7 |
| Instructional Dialogue | 13 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 32 | 2.3 |
| Student Engagement | 1 | 6 | 9 | 8 | 4 | 4 | 0 | 32 | 3.6 |

\*The district average is an average of the scores. For example, for Positive Climate, the district average is computed as: ([2 x 6] + [3 x 7] + [4 x 6] + [5 x 8] + [6 x 4] + [7 x 1]) ÷ 32 observations = 4.0

\*\*Negative Climate is rated on an inverse scale. An original score of 1 is given a value of 7. The scoring in the table reflects the normalized adjustment: ([6 x 5] + [7 x 27]) ÷ 32 observations = 6.8

References

Center for Advanced Study of Teaching and Learning. (n.d.). *Measuring and improving teacher-student interactions in PK−12 settings to enhance students’ learning*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia. Retrieved from <http://www.teachstone.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/class-mtp-pk-12-brief.pdf>

MET Project. (2010). *The CLASS protocol for classroom observations*. Seattle, WA: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Retrieved from <http://metproject.org/resources/CLASS_10_29_10.pdf>

Pianta, R. C., Hamre, B. K., & Mintz, S. (2012). *Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Manual, Secondary.* Charlottesville, VA:Teachstone.

Pianta, R. C., Hamre, B. K., & Mintz, S. (2012). *Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Manual, Upper Elementary.* Charlottesville, VA:Teachstone.

Pianta, R. C., La Paro, K. M., & Hamre, B. K. (2008). *Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS) Manual, K–3.* Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.

## 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. |
| [New Superintendent Induction Program (NSIP)](https://www.massupt.org/professional-development/annual-programs/new-superintendent-induction-program/) | In partnership with the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, the New Superintendent Induction Program (NSIP) is a three-year professional development program for superintendents in their first 3 years of their position in a Massachusetts school district. The curriculum is aligned to DESE’s Educational Vision and supports new superintendents with developing the skills and competencies to be effective leaders of their school districts. |
| [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/) | Planning for Success (PfS) is an inclusive, hands-on planning process designed to build district and school capacity and coherence while also building community understanding and support. |

\*The Coherence Guidebook may be useful across multiple standard areas including Leadership and Governance, Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment, and Student Support

Table C2. Resources to Support Curriculum and Instruction

| Resource | Description |
| --- | --- |
| Curriculum Frameworks and Resources   * [Curriculum Matters Webpage](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/impd/default.html) * [Curriculum Frameworks Resources](https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html) * [IMplement MA](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/impd/implement-ma.html) * [CURATE](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate/default.html) * [Supporting Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/culturally-sustaining/default.html) | DESE offers a suite of resources to support the use of high-quality curriculum that is culturally and linguistically sustaining. These resources include the curriculum frameworks and IMplement MA, our recommended four-phase process to prepare for, select, launch, and implement new high-quality instructional materials with key tasks and action steps. Additionally, CURATE convenes panels of Massachusetts teachers to review and rate curriculum. These ratings are posted publicly to support schools and districts in selected high-quality instructional materials. Finally, the Supporting Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices webpage provides DESE’s definition of these practices and highlights their importance in our schools and classrooms. |
| [Mass Literacy Guide](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/) | Mass Literacy is a statewide effort to empower educators with the evidence-based practices for literacy that all students need. Evidence-based instruction, provided within schools and classrooms that are culturally and linguistically sustaining, will put our youngest students on a path toward literacy for life. |
| [Foundations for Inclusive Practices](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/guidebook/) | This Guidebook includes tools for districts, schools, and educators that are aligned to the MA Educator Evaluation Framework and promote evidence-based best practices for inclusion. |
| [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) | The purpose of this resource is to promote 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. |
| [Massachusetts Blueprint for English Learner Success](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/blueprint/default.html) | Framework for English learner education in MA, with embedded Quick Reference Guides (QRGs) 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. |
| [Massachusetts Dyslexia Guidelines](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sped/dyslexia-guidelines.pdf) | Clear and practical guidelines for early screening, instruction, and intervention for students with reading difficulties and neurological learning disabilities, including dyslexia. |
| [Next Generation ESL Toolkit](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/esl-toolkit/default.html) | The ESL Toolkit provides a common entry point for educators to learn about Next Generation ESL (NGESL) instruction in Massachusetts. |
| [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 instructional leadership teams (ILTs). |

Table C3. Resources to Support Assessment

| Resource | Description |
| --- | --- |
| [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. |
| [Curriculum-Embedded Performance Assessments](https://www.doe.mass.edu/stem/ste/assess-resources.html) | Pending funding, this program will provide resources and professional learning for classroom-based, curriculum-embedded performance tasks in K-8 science with implementation and instructional supports aligned to the Innovative Assessment (STE). |
| [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 Screening](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/screening-assessments/default.html) | Guidance and support for schools and districts to select and use an approved early literacy universal screening assessment. |
| [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 Tools](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) * [Induction and Mentoring Annual Report](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeffectiveness/mentor/default.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 exams, 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 PD providers to support the launch or implementation of high-quality instructional materials. |
| [Promising Recruitment, Selection and Retention Strategies for a Diverse Massachusetts Teacher Workforce](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.doe.mass.edu%2Fcsi%2Fdiverse-workforce%2Fteacher-diversification.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) | This guidebook provides a framework to help district and school leaders design and implement a teacher diversification strategy to improve student achievement and create equitable learning experiences. |
| [“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) | WIDA professional development 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 |
| --- | --- |
| Dropout Prevention and Reengagement   * [Dropout Prevention and Reengagement (DPR) Resources](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ccte/sec-supports/massgrad/default.html) * [Early Warning Indicator System (EWIS)](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ccte/sec-supports/ewis/default.html) | DPR efforts are designed to support students at-risk of not graduating or reengage students who have left school with opportunities to gain the academic, personal/social, and work readiness skills necessary to graduate and lead productive lives. EWIS includes tools for districts to identify students who are at risk and help get them back on track. |
| Educational Stability Resources   * [Educational Stability for Highly Mobile Students](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/edstability.html) * [SLIFE Guidance and Toolkit](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/slife/default.html) * [Resources for Supporting Immigrant and Refugee Students](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/resources/immigrant-refugee.html) | The linked resources provide guidance, technical assistance, professional learning opportunities, grants, and other supports to ensure that students experiencing homelessness, those in foster care, migrant and refugee students, those with limited or interrupted formal education, and students in military families have access to a consistent and high-quality public education. |
| Emergency Management Guidance ([Federal](https://rems.ed.gov/?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1) and [State](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/emergencyplan/default.html)) | Guidance and Technical Assistance for districts/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) | Resources for authentically engaging families in their child’s education and centering families voices in school and district decision-making. |
| 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 school districts can build the necessary systems to ensure that every student receives a high-quality educational experience. |
| Safe and Supportive Schools:   * [Safe and Supportive Schools Framework and Self-Reflection Tool](https://www.sassma.org/) * [Safe Schools Program for LGBTQ Students](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/lgbtq/) * [Bullying Prevention and Intervention](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/bullying/default.html) * [Rethinking Discipline Initiative](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/discipline/) | These resources can help guide school- and district-based teams to create safer and more supportive school climates and cultures that allow all students to thrive. |
| [School Wellness Initiative for Thriving Community Health (SWITCH)](https://massschoolwellness.org/) | SWITCH provides resources that support and advance wellness efforts for Massachusetts students, schools, and communities. |
| Social Emotional Learning:   * [SEL/APL Standards (Pk/K)](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.doe.mass.edu%2Fsfs%2Fearlylearning%2Fresources%2FSEL-APL-Standards.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) * [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. |

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. |
| [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, USDA Foods storage and distribution vendors, food banks, and anti-hunger organizations across the Commonwealth. |
| [Planning for Success (PfS)](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. |
| [School Breakfast: Breakfast After the Bell Resources](https://www.projectbread.org/resource-directory/breakfast-after-the-bell-resources) | The Breakfast After the Bell Toolkit Series is designed to help with the launch and implementation of alternative breakfast models. |
| [School Meals Newsletter](https://us14.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=d8f37d1a90dacd97f207f0b4a&id=d29c4bc847) | Short articles summarizing current events including: changes in federal/ state requirements; current grant opportunities; and notable dates. |
| [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. |

## Appendix D. Enrollment, Attendance, Expenditures

Table D1. Chelsea Public Schools: Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity, 2024-2025

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | District | Percentage of District | State | Percentage of State |
| All Students | 6,094 | 100.0% | 915,932 | 100.0% |
| American Indian or Alaska Native | 6 | 0.1% | 2,272 | 0.2% |
| Asian | 36 | 0.6% | 68,608 | 7.5% |
| Black or African American | 278 | 4.6% | 93,245 | 10.2% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 5,421 | 89.0% | 236,839 | 25.9% |
| Multi-Race, Not Hispanic or Latino | 26 | 0.4% | 42,303 | 4.6% |
| Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander | 0 | 0.0% | 800 | 0.1% |
| White | 327 | 5.4% | 471,865 | 51.5% |

*Note*. As of October 1, 2024.

Table D2. Chelsea Public Schools: 2024-2025 Student Enrollment by High Needs Populations

| Group | *N*  (District) | Percentage of High Needs (District) | Percentage of District | *N*  (State) | Percentage of High Needs (State) | Percentage of State |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| High Needs | 5,647 | 100.0% | 90.2% | 517,093 | 100.0% | 55.8% |
| English Learners | 2,876 | 50.9% | 47.2% | 127,673 | 24.7% | 13.9% |
| Low Income | 4,807 | 85.1% | 78.9% | 385,161 | 74.5% | 42.1% |
| Students with Disabilities | 1,329 | 23.5% | 21.2% | 190,967 | 36.9% | 20.6% |

*Note*. As of October 1, 2024. 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 6,259; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 926,057.

Table D3. Chelsea Public Schools: Chronic Absencea Rates by Student Group, 2022-2024

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | *N* (2024) | 2022 (%) | 2023 (%) | 2024 (%) | State 2024 (%) |
| All Students | 6,833 | 39.8 | 38.8 | 35.4 | 19.7 |
| African American/Black | 315 | 28.0 | 33.7 | 29.8 | 22.5 |
| Asian | 46 | 25.9 | 22.4 | 21.7 | 11.8 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 6,033 | 40.4 | 39.3 | 35.9 | 31.3 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 27 | 28.6 | 35.3 | 33.3 | 20.6 |
| Native American | 11 | 64.3 | 50.0 | 27.3 | 28.5 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | -- | -- | -- | -- | 24.3 |
| White | 401 | 41.2 | 38.1 | 34.4 | 14.4 |
| High Needs | 6,339 | 40.5 | 39.6 | 36.3 | 27.2 |
| Low Income | 5,816 | 41.1 | 40.2 | 36.9 | 30.3 |
| English Learners | 3,221 | 40.4 | 40.3 | 36.9 | 29.9 |
| Students with Disabilities | 1,329 | 49.9 | 43.1 | 40.6 | 27.5 |

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

Table D4. Chelsea Public Schools: Total Expenditures, Fiscal Years, 2021-2023

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Expenditures** | **FY 2021** | **FY 2022** | **FY 2023** |
| By school committee | $98,658,343 | $107,729,117 | $116,780,652 |
| By municipality | $15,711,700 | $17,327,358 | $17,899,927 |
| Total from local appropriations | $114,370,043 | $125,056,475 | $134,680,578 |
| From revolving funds and grants | $20,738,291 | $20,363,161 | $23,937,224 |
| Total expenditures | $135,108,334 | $145,419,636 | $158,617,802 |

*Note*. Expenditures from the School Finance Dashboard sourced from [Spending Comparisons - School Finance](https://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/statistics/default.html) last updated October 2024.

Table D5. Chelsea Public Schools: Chapter 70 State Aid, and Net School Spending Fiscal Years, 2021-2023

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Chapter 70 aid to education program** | **FY 2021** | **FY 2022** | **FY 2023** |
| Chapter 70 state aida | $85,769,782 | $95,092,112 | $104,609,095 |
| Required local contribution | $19,903,086 | $19,018,231 | $20,484,593 |
| Required net school spendingb | $105,672,868 | $114,110,343 | $125,093,688 |
| Actual net school spending | $110,205,588 | $117,038,446 | $125,948,103 |
| Over/under required ($) | $4,532,720 | $2,928,103 | $854,415 |
| Over/under required (%) | 4.3% | 2.6% | 0.7% |

*Note*. Chapter 70 aid to education from Chapter 70 District Profiles sourced from [Chapter 70 Program - School Finance](https://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/chapter70/default.html) last updated August 8, 2024.

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 D6. Chelsea Public Schools: Expenditures Per In-District Pupil, Fiscal Years 2021-2023

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Expenditure category | FY 2021 | FY 2022 | FY 2023 |
| Administration | $655 | $709 | $848 |
| Instructional leadership (district and school) | $1,364 | $1,413 | $1,544 |
| Teachers | $5,518 | $6,015 | $6,423 |
| Other teaching services | $1,028 | $1,192 | $1,263 |
| Professional development | $689 | $802 | $868 |
| Instructional materials, equipment, and technology | $1,002 | $548 | $684 |
| Guidance, counseling, and testing services | $527 | $663 | $681 |
| Pupil services | $1,511 | $2,027 | $2,366 |
| Operations and maintenance | $2,344 | $1,868 | $2,172 |
| Insurance, retirement, and other fixed costs | $2,939 | $3,053 | $3,165 |
| Total expenditures per in-district pupil | $17,576 | $18,290 | $20,013 |

*Note*. Any discrepancy between expenditures and total is because of rounding. Data are from the School Finance Dashboard sourced from [Spending Comparisons - School Finance](https://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/statistics/default.html) last updated October 2024.

.

## 

## Appendix E. Student Performance Data[[7]](#footnote-8)

[Table E1. MCAS ELA Achievement by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2024 E-2](#_Toc191990183)

[Table E2. MCAS ELA Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2024 E-2](#_Toc191990184)

[Table E3. MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2024 E-3](#_Toc191990185)

[Table E4. MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2024 E-3](#_Toc191990186)

[Table E5. MCAS Science Achievement by Student Group, Grades 5 and 8, 2022-2024 E-4](#_Toc191990187)

[Table E6. MCAS Science Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2024 E-4](#_Toc191990188)

[Table E7. MCAS ELA Achievement by Grade, 2022-2024 E-5](#_Toc191990189)

[Table E8. MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Grade, 2022-2024 E-5](#_Toc191990190)

[Table E9. MCAS Science Achievement by Grade, 2022-2024 E-6](#_Toc191990191)

[Table E10. MCAS ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2024 E-7](#_Toc191990192)

[Table E11. MCAS ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2024 E-7](#_Toc191990193)

[Table E12. MCAS Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2024 E-8](#_Toc191990194)

[Table E13. MCAS Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2024 E-8](#_Toc191990195)

[Table E14. MCAS ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile by Grade, 2022-2024 E-9](#_Toc191990196)

[Table E15. MCAS Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile by Grade, 2022-2024 E-9](#_Toc191990197)

[Table E16. Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023 E-9](#_Toc191990198)

[Table E17. Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Student Group, 2020-2022 E-10](#_Toc191990199)

[Table E18. Annual Dropout Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023 E-10](#_Toc191990200)

[Table E19. In-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2022-2024 E-11](#_Toc191990201)

[Table E20. Out-of-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2022-2024 E-11](#_Toc191990202)

[Table E21. Advanced Coursework Completion Rates by Student Group, 2022-2024 E-12](#_Toc191990203)

[Table E22. Accountability Results, 2024 E-12](#_Toc191990204)

Table E1. MCAS ELA Achievement by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2024

| Group | # Included (2024) | % M/E 2022 | % M/E 2023 | % M/E 2024 | % M/E 2024 State | % PME 2022 | % PME 2023 | % PME 2024 | % PME 2024 State | % NM 2022 | % NM 2023 | % NM 2024 | % NM 2024 State |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| All | 2,558 | 18 | 17 | 14 | 39 | 47 | 44 | 43 | 40 | 35 | 39 | 43 | 21 |
| African American/Black | 127 | 20 | 27 | 23 | 24 | 48 | 37 | 44 | 46 | 31 | 37 | 33 | 31 |
| Asian | 9 | 50 | 59 | -- | 62 | 11 | 6 | -- | 29 | 39 | 35 | -- | 10 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 2,249 | 17 | 15 | 12 | 20 | 47 | 45 | 43 | 44 | 36 | 40 | 45 | 36 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 12 | 17 | 24 | 25 | 46 | 35 | 41 | 33 | 37 | 48 | 35 | 42 | 17 |
| Native American | 3 | -- | -- | -- | 25 | -- | -- | -- | 43 | -- | -- | -- | 32 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | -- | -- | -- | -- | 39 | -- | -- | -- | 39 | -- | -- | -- | 21 |
| White | 158 | 29 | 28 | 27 | 47 | 47 | 40 | 44 | 40 | 24 | 33 | 30 | 13 |
| High needs | 2,378 | 17 | 16 | 13 | 22 | 47 | 43 | 42 | 45 | 37 | 41 | 45 | 33 |
| Low income | 2,174 | 17 | 16 | 13 | 21 | 47 | 43 | 42 | 45 | 36 | 41 | 45 | 34 |
| ELs and former ELs | 1,570 | 12 | 12 | 9 | 17 | 45 | 41 | 40 | 43 | 43 | 47 | 51 | 41 |
| Students w/disabilities | 597 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 11 | 32 | 29 | 27 | 40 | 66 | 70 | 71 | 50 |

Table E2. MCAS ELA Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2024

| Group | # Included (2024) | % M/E 2022 | % M/E 2023 | % M/E 2024 | % M/E 2024 State | % PME 2022 | % PME 2023 | % PME 2024 | % PME 2024 State | % NM 2022 | % NM 2023 | % NM 2024 | % NM 2024 State |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| All | 407 | 28 | 24 | 28 | 57 | 51 | 35 | 36 | 31 | 22 | 41 | 36 | 12 |
| African American/Black | 19 | 21 | 20 | 26 | 42 | 64 | 53 | 68 | 40 | 14 | 27 | 5 | 18 |
| Asian | 3 | -- | -- | -- | 78 | -- | -- | -- | 16 | -- | -- | -- | 5 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 363 | 27 | 22 | 28 | 36 | 50 | 34 | 34 | 38 | 23 | 44 | 38 | 26 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 3 | -- | -- | -- | 61 | -- | -- | -- | 30 | -- | -- | -- | 9 |
| Native American | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 48 | -- | -- | -- | 37 | -- | -- | -- | 14 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | -- | -- | -- | -- | 58 | -- | -- | -- | 34 | -- | -- | -- | 8 |
| White | 18 | 40 | 46 | 28 | 65 | 50 | 35 | 44 | 28 | 10 | 19 | 28 | 7 |
| High needs | 369 | 26 | 21 | 24 | 37 | 49 | 34 | 37 | 41 | 25 | 45 | 38 | 23 |
| Low income | 345 | 27 | 22 | 25 | 38 | 50 | 35 | 36 | 40 | 23 | 43 | 39 | 23 |
| ELs and former ELs | 155 | 10 | 6 | 5 | 14 | 44 | 23 | 29 | 38 | 46 | 71 | 66 | 48 |
| Students w/disabilities | 80 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 21 | 39 | 38 | 40 | 45 | 59 | 59 | 58 | 34 |

Table E3. MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2024

| Group | # Included (2024) | % M/E 2022 | % M/E 2023 | % M/E 2024 | % M/E 2024 State | % PME 2022 | % PME 2023 | % PME 2024 | % PME 2024 State | % NM 2022 | % NM 2023 | % NM 2024 | % NM 2024 State |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| All | 2,557 | 16 | 17 | 19 | 41 | 49 | 45 | 44 | 42 | 35 | 37 | 37 | 18 |
| African American/Black | 127 | 19 | 22 | 22 | 22 | 47 | 45 | 43 | 49 | 34 | 33 | 35 | 30 |
| Asian | 9 | 39 | 53 | -- | 71 | 39 | 18 | -- | 23 | 22 | 29 | -- | 6 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 2,248 | 15 | 16 | 18 | 20 | 49 | 46 | 45 | 48 | 36 | 38 | 37 | 32 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 12 | 9 | 18 | 25 | 47 | 48 | 35 | 25 | 37 | 43 | 47 | 50 | 16 |
| Native American | 4 | -- | -- | -- | 27 | -- | -- | -- | 46 | -- | -- | -- | 27 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | -- | -- | -- | -- | 39 | -- | -- | -- | 41 | -- | -- | -- | 20 |
| White | 157 | 26 | 27 | 31 | 49 | 50 | 43 | 40 | 40 | 24 | 30 | 29 | 11 |
| High needs | 2,376 | 15 | 16 | 18 | 23 | 48 | 45 | 44 | 48 | 37 | 39 | 38 | 28 |
| Low income | 2,171 | 15 | 16 | 18 | 21 | 48 | 45 | 43 | 49 | 37 | 39 | 38 | 30 |
| ELs and former ELs | 1,568 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 21 | 46 | 44 | 43 | 46 | 41 | 42 | 41 | 33 |
| Students w/disabilities | 591 | 4 | 4 | 8 | 13 | 28 | 27 | 26 | 43 | 68 | 69 | 67 | 44 |

Table E4. MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2024

| Group | # Included (2024) | % M/E 2022 | % M/E 2023 | % M/E 2024 | % M/E 2024 State | % PME 2022 | % PME 2023 | % PME 2024 | % PME 2024 State | % NM 2022 | % NM 2023 | % NM 2024 | % NM 2024 State |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| All | 401 | 27 | 18 | 17 | 48 | 49 | 55 | 48 | 39 | 24 | 27 | 35 | 13 |
| African American/Black | 19 | 7 | 13 | 16 | 27 | 79 | 69 | 42 | 52 | 14 | 19 | 42 | 21 |
| Asian | 3 | -- | -- | -- | 79 | -- | -- | -- | 17 | -- | -- | -- | 4 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 357 | 26 | 16 | 16 | 25 | 49 | 56 | 50 | 50 | 25 | 28 | 34 | 25 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 3 | -- | -- | -- | 51 | -- | -- | -- | 39 | -- | -- | -- | 10 |
| Native American | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 33 | -- | -- | -- | 54 | -- | -- | -- | 13 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | -- | -- | -- | -- | 52 | -- | -- | -- | 39 | -- | -- | -- | 10 |
| White | 18 | 45 | 39 | 28 | 58 | 35 | 39 | 33 | 35 | 20 | 22 | 39 | 7 |
| High needs | 366 | 24 | 15 | 15 | 27 | 49 | 56 | 47 | 51 | 27 | 29 | 37 | 23 |
| Low income | 340 | 25 | 16 | 15 | 27 | 51 | 56 | 48 | 50 | 24 | 28 | 37 | 23 |
| ELs and former ELs | 155 | 9 | 8 | 6 | 14 | 45 | 54 | 38 | 46 | 45 | 38 | 55 | 40 |
| Students w/disabilities | 78 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 14 | 38 | 45 | 33 | 51 | 62 | 53 | 63 | 35 |

Table E5. MCAS Science Achievement by Student Group, Grades 5 and 8, 2022-2024

| Group | # Included (2024) | % M/E 2022 | % M/E 2023 | % M/E 2024 | % M/E 2024 State | % PME 2022 | % PME 2023 | % PME 2024 | % PME 2024 State | % NM 2022 | % NM 2023 | % NM 2024 | % NM 2024 State |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| All | 829 | 15 | 17 | 15 | 42 | 45 | 45 | 44 | 38 | 40 | 38 | 40 | 20 |
| African American/Black | 43 | 11 | 23 | 21 | 21 | 42 | 33 | 53 | 46 | 47 | 44 | 26 | 33 |
| Asian | 1 | -- | 42 | -- | 64 | -- | 33 | -- | 26 | -- | 25 | -- | 9 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 725 | 15 | 15 | 14 | 21 | 45 | 46 | 44 | 43 | 40 | 38 | 42 | 36 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 6 | -- | -- | -- | 49 | -- | -- | -- | 34 | -- | -- | -- | 17 |
| Native American | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 26 | -- | -- | -- | 43 | -- | -- | -- | 32 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | -- | -- | -- | -- | 43 | -- | -- | -- | 34 | -- | -- | -- | 23 |
| White | 53 | 17 | 22 | 26 | 51 | 52 | 40 | 47 | 36 | 31 | 38 | 26 | 12 |
| High needs | 764 | 13 | 15 | 13 | 24 | 45 | 44 | 44 | 44 | 41 | 41 | 43 | 32 |
| Low income | 696 | 14 | 16 | 12 | 22 | 44 | 44 | 44 | 44 | 42 | 40 | 44 | 34 |
| ELs and former ELs | 500 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 17 | 42 | 43 | 42 | 41 | 50 | 48 | 49 | 42 |
| Students w/disabilities | 186 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 15 | 27 | 26 | 27 | 38 | 70 | 72 | 69 | 46 |

Table E6. MCAS Science Achievement by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2024

| Group | # Included (2024) | % M/E 2022 | % M/E 2023 | % M/E 2024 | % M/E 2024 State | % PME 2022 | % PME 2023 | % PME 2024 | % PME 2024 State | % NM 2022 | % NM 2023 | % NM 2024 | % NM 2024 State |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| All | 373 | 26 | 18 | 20 | 49 | 44 | 42 | 49 | 40 | 30 | 40 | 31 | 11 |
| African American/Black | 19 | 20 | 17 | 21 | 28 | 70 | 42 | 53 | 53 | 10 | 42 | 26 | 19 |
| Asian | 3 | -- | -- | -- | 77 | -- | -- | -- | 19 | -- | -- | -- | 5 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 331 | 24 | 15 | 19 | 26 | 44 | 43 | 50 | 52 | 32 | 42 | 31 | 22 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 2 | -- | -- | -- | 53 | -- | -- | -- | 37 | -- | -- | -- | 10 |
| Native American | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 38 | -- | -- | -- | 53 | -- | -- | -- | 10 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | -- | -- | -- | -- | 47 | -- | -- | -- | 45 | -- | -- | -- | 8 |
| White | 17 | 44 | 47 | 29 | 58 | 39 | 37 | 41 | 36 | 17 | 16 | 29 | 6 |
| High needs | 339 | 24 | 15 | 17 | 28 | 42 | 42 | 49 | 52 | 34 | 43 | 33 | 20 |
| Low income | 315 | 25 | 15 | 18 | 28 | 43 | 44 | 49 | 51 | 33 | 41 | 33 | 20 |
| ELs and former ELs | 135 | 15 | 5 | 2 | 13 | 31 | 29 | 43 | 48 | 53 | 65 | 55 | 39 |
| Students w/disabilities | 81 | 2 | 0 | 5 | 18 | 21 | 31 | 35 | 52 | 77 | 69 | 60 | 31 |

Table E7. MCAS ELA Achievement by Grade, 2022-2024

| Grade | # Included (2024) | % M/E 2022 | % M/E 2023 | % M/E 2024 | % M/E 2024 State | % PME 2022 | % PME 2023 | % PME 2024 | % PME 2024 State | % NM 2022 | % NM 2023 | % NM 2024 | % NM 2024 State |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 3 | 461 | 21 | 18 | 21 | 42 | 51 | 52 | 49 | 40 | 28 | 30 | 30 | 18 |
| 4 | 454 | 13 | 14 | 16 | 37 | 58 | 56 | 53 | 45 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 19 |
| 5 | 413 | 13 | 20 | 14 | 38 | 55 | 40 | 53 | 46 | 32 | 39 | 33 | 16 |
| 6 | 415 | 19 | 12 | 11 | 40 | 36 | 34 | 31 | 35 | 45 | 54 | 58 | 25 |
| 7 | 403 | 19 | 15 | 7 | 36 | 43 | 41 | 36 | 42 | 39 | 44 | 57 | 22 |
| 8 | 412 | 22 | 22 | 15 | 43 | 39 | 36 | 33 | 34 | 39 | 42 | 52 | 24 |
| 3-8 | 2,558 | 18 | 17 | 14 | 39 | 47 | 44 | 43 | 40 | 35 | 39 | 43 | 21 |
| 10 | 407 | 28 | 24 | 28 | 57 | 51 | 35 | 36 | 31 | 22 | 41 | 36 | 12 |

Table E8. MCAS Mathematics Achievement by Grade, 2022-2024

| Grade | # Included (2024) | % M/E 2022 | % M/E 2023 | % M/E 2024 | % M/E 2024 State | % PME 2022 | % PME 2023 | % PME 2024 | % PME 2024 State | % NM 2022 | % NM 2023 | % NM 2024 | % NM 2024 State |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 3 | 462 | 24 | 23 | 35 | 44 | 50 | 50 | 40 | 35 | 26 | 27 | 25 | 20 |
| 4 | 454 | 28 | 30 | 39 | 46 | 48 | 44 | 42 | 38 | 25 | 26 | 19 | 16 |
| 5 | 412 | 4 | 14 | 8 | 40 | 45 | 51 | 54 | 46 | 51 | 35 | 38 | 14 |
| 6 | 415 | 15 | 8 | 11 | 40 | 47 | 42 | 46 | 43 | 38 | 50 | 42 | 17 |
| 7 | 400 | 11 | 9 | 6 | 37 | 51 | 40 | 45 | 44 | 39 | 51 | 49 | 19 |
| 8 | 414 | 14 | 15 | 11 | 38 | 51 | 44 | 39 | 42 | 35 | 41 | 50 | 19 |
| 3-8 | 2,557 | 16 | 17 | 19 | 41 | 49 | 45 | 44 | 42 | 35 | 37 | 37 | 18 |
| 10 | 401 | 27 | 18 | 17 | 48 | 49 | 55 | 48 | 39 | 24 | 27 | 35 | 13 |

Table E9. MCAS Science Achievement by Grade, 2022-2024

| Grade | # Included (2024) | % M/E 2022 | % M/E 2023 | % M/E 2024 | % M/E 2024 State | % PME 2022 | % PME 2023 | % PME 2024 | % PME 2024 State | % NM 2022 | % NM 2023 | % NM 2024 | % NM 2024 State |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 5 | 414 | 11 | 15 | 17 | 45 | 42 | 42 | 43 | 36 | 47 | 43 | 40 | 20 |
| 8 | 415 | 19 | 18 | 14 | 39 | 48 | 48 | 45 | 41 | 34 | 34 | 41 | 20 |
| 5 and 8 | 829 | 15 | 17 | 15 | 42 | 45 | 45 | 44 | 38 | 40 | 38 | 40 | 20 |
| 10 | 373 | 26 | 18 | 20 | 49 | 44 | 42 | 49 | 40 | 30 | 40 | 31 | 11 |

Table E10. MCAS ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2024

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # Included (2024) | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | State (2024) |
| All students | 1,879 | 42 | 45 | 44 | 50 |
| African American/Black | 90 | 47 | 44 | 51 | 49 |
| Asian | 7 | -- | -- | -- | 57 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 1,658 | 42 | 45 | 43 | 48 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 11 | -- | -- | -- | 51 |
| Native American | 2 | -- | -- | -- | 48 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | -- | -- | -- | -- | 51 |
| White | 111 | 43 | 46 | 45 | 50 |
| High needs | 1,737 | 42 | 45 | 44 | 48 |
| Low income | 1,572 | 42 | 45 | 43 | 47 |
| ELs and former ELs | 1,126 | 41 | 46 | 43 | 50 |
| Students w/disabilities | 426 | 35 | 35 | 40 | 45 |

Table E11. MCAS ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2024

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # Included (2024) | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | State (2024) |
| All students | 299 | 46 | 40 | 41 | 50 |
| African American/Black | 18 | -- | -- | -- | 48 |
| Asian | 2 | -- | -- | -- | 55 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 260 | 46 | 38 | 40 | 47 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 3 | -- | -- | -- | 50 |
| Native American | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 51 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | -- | -- | -- | -- | 49 |
| White | 15 | -- | -- | -- | 51 |
| High needs | 265 | 46 | 39 | 40 | 47 |
| Low income | 247 | 47 | 40 | 40 | 47 |
| ELs and former ELs | 75 | 44 | 34 | 38 | 48 |
| Students w/disabilities | 59 | 43 | 26 | 32 | 44 |

Table E12. MCAS Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile by Student Group, Grades 3-8, 2022-2024

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # Included (2024) | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | State (2024) |
| All students | 1,895 | 42 | 44 | 43 | 50 |
| African American/Black | 89 | 45 | 42 | 43 | 49 |
| Asian | 7 | -- | -- | -- | 58 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 1,674 | 42 | 44 | 43 | 48 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 10 | -- | -- | -- | 50 |
| Native American | 3 | -- | -- | -- | 48 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | -- | -- | -- | -- | 52 |
| White | 112 | 48 | 46 | 43 | 50 |
| High needs | 1,749 | 42 | 44 | 43 | 48 |
| Low income | 1,583 | 42 | 44 | 43 | 47 |
| ELs and former ELs | 1,140 | 40 | 43 | 43 | 50 |
| Students w/disabilities | 416 | 37 | 37 | 38 | 46 |

Table E13. MCAS Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile by Student Group, Grade 10, 2022-2024

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # Included (2024) | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | State (2024) |
| All students | 302 | 54 | 37 | 38 | 50 |
| African American/Black | 19 | -- | -- | -- | 47 |
| Asian | 2 | -- | -- | -- | 55 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 262 | 53 | 37 | 38 | 45 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 3 | -- | -- | -- | 49 |
| Native American | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 50 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | -- | -- | -- | -- | 50 |
| White | 15 | -- | -- | -- | 52 |
| High needs | 270 | 53 | 37 | 37 | 47 |
| Low income | 250 | 54 | 38 | 36 | 46 |
| ELs and former ELs | 77 | 54 | 35 | 35 | 46 |
| Students w/disabilities | 61 | 48 | 26 | 33 | 47 |

Table E14. MCAS ELA Mean Student Growth Percentile by Grade, 2022-2024

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade | # Included (2024) | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | State (2024) |
| 3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 4 | 420 | 42 | 44 | 52 | 50 |
| 5 | 376 | 38 | 46 | 45 | 50 |
| 6 | 377 | 47 | 40 | 34 | 50 |
| 7 | 356 | 40 | 47 | 41 | 50 |
| 8 | 350 | 44 | 48 | 46 | 50 |
| 3-8 | 1,879 | 42 | 45 | 44 | 50 |
| 10 | 299 | 46 | 40 | 41 | 50 |

Table E15. MCAS Mathematics Mean Student Growth Percentile by Grade, 2022-2024

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade | # Included (2024) | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | State (2024) |
| 3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 4 | 427 | 54 | 49 | 57 | 50 |
| 5 | 379 | 26 | 30 | 25 | 50 |
| 6 | 381 | 42 | 42 | 37 | 50 |
| 7 | 356 | 34 | 47 | 49 | 50 |
| 8 | 352 | 53 | 52 | 45 | 50 |
| 3-8 | 1,895 | 42 | 44 | 43 | 50 |
| 10 | 302 | 54 | 37 | 38 | 50 |

Table E16. Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # Included (2023) | 2021 (%) | 2022 (%) | 2023 (%) | State 2023 (%) |
| All | 434 | 66.6 | 66.2 | 64.1 | 89.2 |
| African American/Black | 17 | 80.0 | 64.3 | 76.5 | 85.6 |
| Asian | 1 |  | -- | -- | 95.2 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 386 | 65.1 | 66.8 | 63.2 | 78.9 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 4 | 66.7 | 71.4 | -- | 89.3 |
| Native American | 1 | -- | -- | -- | 82.5 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | -- | -- | -- | -- | 89.9 |
| White | 25 | 70.6 | 52.6 | 68.0 | 93.0 |
| High needs | 408 | 64.4 | 64.5 | 62.7 | 82.8 |
| Low income | 394 | 65.7 | 65.1 | 63.7 | 82.2 |
| English learners | 168 | 40.9 | 46.9 | 47.0 | 67.3 |
| Students w/disabilities | 51 | 57.4 | 45.0 | 52.9 | 76.4 |

Table E17. Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates by Student Group, 2020-2022

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # Included (2022) | 2020 (%) | 2021 (%) | 2022 (%) | State 2022 (%) |
| All | 367 | 71.6 | 75.7 | 72.5 | 91.9 |
| African American/Black | 14 | 63.6 | 80.0 | 71.4 | 90.1 |
| Asian | -- | -- |  | -- | 96.9 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 325 | 71.3 | 75.7 | 72.6 | 84.4 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 7 | 85.7 | 66.7 | 85.7 | 90.8 |
| Native American | 2 | -- | -- | -- | 87.1 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | -- | -- | -- | -- | 81.3 |
| White | 19 | 78.9 | 70.6 | 63.2 | 94.4 |
| High needs | 344 | 69.1 | 74.2 | 70.9 | 86.8 |
| Low income | 327 | 70.6 | 75.6 | 70.9 | 86.3 |
| English learners | 143 | 57.6 | 57.5 | 55.9 | 78.0 |
| Students w/disabilities | 60 | 46.5 | 67.2 | 56.7 | 81.8 |

Table E18. Annual Dropout Rates by Student Group, 2021-2023

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # Included (2023) | 2021 (%) | 2022 (%) | 2023 (%) | State 2023 (%) |
| All | 1,758 | 4.9 | 6.5 | 5.5 | 2.1 |
| African American/Black | 64 | 3.2 | 3.7 | 3.1 | 2.8 |
| Asian | 16 | -- | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.6 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 1,574 | 5.0 | 6.9 | 5.7 | 4.4 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 12 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 1.9 |
| Native American | 4 | -- | -- | -- | 4.1 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | -- | -- | -- | -- | 3.9 |
| White | 88 | 5.6 | 3.9 | 5.7 | 1.1 |
| High needs | 1,529 | 5.3 | 6.9 | 5.6 | 3.5 |
| Low income | 1,387 | -- | 6.5 | 4.9 | 3.8 |
| English learners | 600 | 9.2 | 12.5 | 10.2 | 8.0 |
| Students w/disabilities | 232 | 5.5 | 4.2 | 4.7 | 3.0 |

Table E19. In-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2022-2024

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # Included (2024) | 2022 (%) | 2023 (%) | 2024 (%) | State 2024 (%) |
| All | 6,756 | 3.2 | 1.2 | 2.9 | 1.4 |
| African American/Black | 305 | 4.2 | 1.7 | 5.2 | 2.1 |
| Asian | 48 | -- | -- | -- | 0.3 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 5,977 | 3.3 | 1.2 | 2.8 | 1.9 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 24 | -- | -- | -- | 1.6 |
| Native American | 11 | -- | -- | -- | 1.8 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 0 | -- | -- | -- | 1.9 |
| White | 391 | 2.1 | 1.0 | 1.8 | 1.1 |
| High needs | 6,269 | 3.3 | 1.2 | 2.9 | 1.9 |
| Low income | 5,745 | 3.3 | 1.2 | 2.9 | 2.1 |
| English learners | 3,276 | 3.0 | 1.0 | 2.1 | 1.4 |
| Students w/disabilities | 1,288 | 4.5 | 2.0 | 4.7 | 2.4 |

Table E20. Out-of-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2022-2024

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # Included (2024) | 2022 (%) | 2023 (%) | 2024 (%) | State 2024 (%) |
| All | 6,756 | 1.9 | 2.0 | 2.9 | 2.4 |
| African American/Black | 305 | 2.8 | 4.7 | 3.9 | 4.6 |
| Asian | 48 | -- | -- | -- | 0.6 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 5,977 | 2.0 | 1.9 | 2.9 | 3.8 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 24 | -- | -- | -- | 2.6 |
| Native American | 11 | -- | -- | -- | 3.5 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | 0 | -- | -- | -- | 2.5 |
| White | 391 | 1.6 | 1.7 | 3.3 | 1.5 |
| High needs | 6,269 | 2.0 | 2.1 | 2.9 | 3.6 |
| Low income | 5,745 | 2.1 | 2.0 | 3.0 | 4.0 |
| English learners | 3,276 | 1.5 | 1.4 | 2.6 | 2.6 |
| Students w/disabilities | 1,288 | 4.0 | 4.1 | 4.3 | 4.5 |

Table E21. Advanced Coursework Completion Rates by Student Group, 2022-2024

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Group | # Included (2024) | 2022 (%) | 2023 (%) | 2024 (%) | State 2024 (%) |
| All | 806 | 59.4 | 56.8 | 58.1 | 67.2 |
| African American/Black | 36 | 67.9 | 61.1 | 63.9 | 58.2 |
| Asian | 9 | 100.0 | 50.0 | 88.9 | 86.4 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 709 | 58.3 | 56.1 | 56.7 | 53.7 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino | 4 | -- | -- | -- | 68.4 |
| Native American | 2 | -- | -- | -- | 57.1 |
| Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander | -- | -- | -- | -- | 59.8 |
| White | 46 | 64.7 | 60.5 | 65.2 | 71.9 |
| High needs | 696 | 57.8 | 53.1 | 54.7 | 52.0 |
| Low income | 649 | 58.8 | 54.2 | 55.5 | 53.1 |
| English learners | 270 | 43.3 | 32.2 | 37.0 | 31.8 |
| Students w/disabilities | 102 | 43.8 | 29.6 | 18.6 | 38.5 |

Table E22. Accountability Results, 2024

| School | Cumulative Progress Toward Improvement Targets (%) | Percentile | Overall Classification | Reason for Classification |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| District | 39 | -- | Requiring assistance or intervention | Low graduation rate |
| Shurtleff Early Childhood | -- | -- | Insufficient data | Insufficient data |
| Edgar F. Hooks Elementary | 55 | 38 | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Substantial progress toward targets |
| Frank M. Sokolowski | 55 | 15 | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Substantial progress toward targets |
| George F. Kelley Elementary | 45 | 10 | Requiring assistance or intervention | Among the lowest performing 10% of schools |
| William A. Berkowitz Elementary | 81 | 51 | Not requiring assistance or intervention | School of Recognition |
| Clark Avenue School | 37 | 1 | Requiring assistance or intervention | Among the lowest performing 10% of schools.  Low student group performance: White, Students with Disabilities, Low income, Hispanic/Latino, EL and former EL, and High needs |
| Eugene Wright Science and Technology Academy | 37 | 9 | Requiring assistance or intervention | Among the lowest performing 10% of schools  Low student group performance: Students with Disabilities |
| Joseph A. Browne School | 36 | 3 | Requiring assistance or intervention | Among the lowest performing 10% of schools  Low student group performance: White, and Students with Disabilities |
| Chelsea High | 23 | 4 | Requiring assistance or intervention | Among the lowest performing 10% of schools  Low student group performance: Students with Disabilities |
| Chelsea Opportunity Academy | -- | -- | Insufficient data | Insufficient data |
| Chelsea Virtual Learning Academy | -- | -- | Requiring assistance or intervention | Low participation rate: All students |

1. For more information about the Teachstone CLASS protocol, visit <https://teachstone.com/class/>. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. DESE’s District Standards and Indicators are available at <https://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/district-review/district-standards-indicators.docx>. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. 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-4)
4. CURATE: CUrriculum RAtings by TEachers. See <https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. ARC Core is used at George F. Kelly Elementary School because it is a dual-language school. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. 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-7)
7. Column labels for Tables E1-E9: M/E=Percent meeting or exceeding expectations, PME=Partially meeting expectations, NM= Not meeting expectations [↑](#footnote-ref-8)