District Review Report

Northampton Public Schools

Targeted Review conducted February 4–6, 2019

Office of District Reviews and Monitoring

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

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Executive Summary

The superintendent of the Northampton Public Schools, appointed in 2014, inherited the findings of a 2012 DESE district review and a 2012 NAESC report seeking improvements to curriculum, instruction, assessment, and school climate and support services. Subsequently, in 2015 the Department of Education conducted a comprehensive school review that identified several corrective action findings in the Special Education and English Language Education (formerly English Language Learner) program. The ELE findings addressed insufficient staffing patterns and assessment deficiencies.

The superintendent completed his entry findings and a root cause analysis of environmental and organizational causes of performance issues in May 2015. He then engaged representative stakeholders and completed a comprehensive five-year District Improvement Plan (DIP) in July 2015 that addressed many of the issues. The 2015–2020 five-year DIP built on legacy initiatives from the prior superintendent, and began to address the findings of the 2012 DESE district review, including the absence of a documented K–12 curriculum. As the DIP cycle approaches its end, several key initiatives continue in 2018–2019 including: completion of the K–12 curriculum documentation, the introduction of coaching and structures for collaboration at the elementary schools, and the development of a comprehensive tiered system of support K–5 and a Positive Behavior Intervention System in grades 6–8. The superintendent periodically informs the district about progress on DIP goals; however, the district does not have formal metrics by which it measures its growth or success.

The superintendent and school committee work collaboratively; data on student performance and the impact of some program changes, such as the introduction of full inclusion in one school, are shared with the committee. Interactions with the town are constructive, facilitated because the mayor is the chair of the school committee. The district and the city share human resources and business manager positions.

Effective assessment and student support practices are in place at the elementary level, although not uniformly so. While the middle school is beginning to use data to identify and support students, the high school does not have sufficient data to routinely monitor at risk students. In addition, the high school has not developed support structures to assist its struggling students. While collaboration and inclusion in decision-making are valued, there are gaps in communication exacerbated by differing approaches by teachers and leaders in each school, and by a website that stakeholders state is not informative and is difficult to navigate. At the time of the onsite in February 2019, disagreements between the Northampton Association of School Employees and the school committee interfered with productive problem-solving on issues such as participation on labor/management committees and carrying out a DIP goal of teacher participation in home visits. Teacher participation in professional development, except for two days each year, is voluntary, which is seen by many as an impediment to implementing practices leading to improved achievement for all students.

Broad-based, reciprocal collaborative relationships with all families are not well developed to promote effective home-school partnerships. A cross section of the diverse parents and students’ voices are not evident in partnering in decision-making and program design and evaluation processes. For example, parents interviewed reported feeling estranged from engaging in decision-making processes. Some parents who serve on school council reported not feeling welcome to discuss issues related to class size, staffing formulas, and the curriculum. In addition, goal #1 of the 2015 District Improvement Plan (DIP) states that relationships with families are designed to build and maintain trust between teachers and families. The plan does not have any processes to track feasibility, implementation and timeline, sustainability, and assessment of the efficacy of the goal.

**Instruction**

The team observed 68 classes throughout the district: 28 at the high school, 18 at the middle school, and 22 at the 4 elementary schools. The team observed 26 ELA classes, 18 mathematics classes, and 24 classes in other subject areas. Among the classes observed were four special education classes, and one ELL class. The observations were approximately 20 minutes in length. All review team members collected data using DESE’s Instructional Inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching. This data is presented in Appendix C.

In observed lessons, teachers more fully engaged students at the elementary and middle-school levels than at the high school, through participation in workshop models in ELA and math at the elementary level, and through a greater number of middle-school lessons that included small groups. At the high school, in classrooms where teacher-directed instruction prevailed, student engagement was lower than at the elementary and middle-school levels and there were marked differences in opportunities for student engagement in higher- versus lower-level classes. Throughout the district, students were not consistently engaged in higher-order thinking activities leading to analysis, synthesis, or evaluation. Teachers provided supports to students with varied learning needs nearly twice as often in the elementary schools as in the high school.

Most classroom observations across the district reflected a positive classroom environment. However, the district faces an ongoing challenge to ensure a common understanding of high-quality instructional practices districtwide. Of particular concern is the inconsistency of lessons to support students’ varied learning needs, and the inconsistency of lessons that provide students with robust opportunities to practice their critical thinking and communication skills.

**Strengths**

* The district has established an instructional coaching model K–5 in ELA and mathematics with structures and practices to support instructional coherence across the district’s elementary schools.
* The elementary and some middle school grades administer a range of formative assessments, common interim and benchmark assessments, and summative assessments. Teachers use the data from these assessments to make some adjustment in curriculum andinstruction, to monitor individual student progress, and to provide needed interventions.
* The district has strengthened its K–5 curriculum, instruction, and assessment systems and provided the resources for teachers to deliver an effective tiered system of support.

**Challenges and Areas for Growth**

* The district does not have a comprehensive written curriculum.
* In observed classrooms districtwide, student engagement was not consistent from level to level. At all levels, instruction did not consistently engage students in learning experiences that develop higher-order thinking skills and promote student discourse about content and ideas. Teachers did not consistently ensure that students engage in challenging tasks regardless of their learning needs.
* The middle school is in the beginning stages of implementing formative and common assessments and using them to improve instruction; the high school makes limited use of common assessments and data other than MCAS. The middle and high schools make limited use of assessment data to identify and remediate individual students’ academic needs.
* The district does not ensure that all students have equitable access to a range of rigorous coursework and high-quality learning, including advanced placement classes. Systemic structural and cultural barriers in recent years continue to interfere with the district’s ability to ensure access, equity, and engagement along the K–12 continuum.
* The district does not have a fully developed, comprehensive, consistent system of support to meet the needs of all its learners.
* The district and all schools have not developed culturally sensitive and responsive approaches in their work with a diverse community to build collaborative relationships with all families.

**Recommendations**

* The district should complete with urgency its K–12 curricula. It should ensure that curricula are high quality, comprehensive, aligned with appropriate standards, and implemented consistently across classrooms and schools.The district should develop and implement an ongoing process for reviewing and revising curricula.

The district should ensure that all teachers provide high-quality instruction that engages, challenges, and supports all students.

* The district should implement its elementary model of using formative and common assessments to identify students’ progress and assess their needs for interventions throughout the middle and high schools.
* The district should set priorities to examine the structural impediments that persist and limit equitable learning experiences for students who currently are not fully able to access and engage in the increasing opportunities in the district to develop college and career ready skills and dispositions.
* The district should examine its practices and should seek to broaden the role and voice of families/caretakers in the district to work as collaborators and partners.

Northampton Public Schools Targeted District Review Overview

Purpose

Conducted under Chapter 15, Section 55A of the Massachusetts General Laws, targeted district reviews support local school districts in establishing or strengthening a cycle of continuous improvement. Reviews consider carefully the effectiveness of systemwide functions, with reference to three district standards used by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Targeted reviews address one of the following sets of three standards: **Governance and Administrative Systems** (Leadership and Governance, Human Resources and Professional Development, and Financial and Asset Management standards) or **Student-Centered Systems** (Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment, and Student Support standards). All targeted reviews include finding(s) about instruction based on classroom observations. A targeted review identifies systems and practices that may be impeding improvement as well as those most likely to be contributing to positive results. In addition, the targeted district review is designed to promote district reflection on its own performance and potential next steps. In addition to providing information to each district reviewed, DESE uses review reports to identify resources and/or technical assistance to provide to the district.

This targeted review by the Office of District Reviews and Monitoring focused on the following standards: Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment, and Student Support.

Methodology

Reviews collect evidence for each of the three district standards identified as the focus of the targeted review. Team members also observe classroom instructional practice. A district review team consisting of independent consultants with expertise in the district standards reviews documentation, data, and reports for two days before conducting a three-day district visit that includes visits to individual schools. The team conducts interviews and focus group sessions with such stakeholders as school committee members, teachers’ association representatives, administrators, teachers, students, students’ families. Subsequent to the onsite review, the team meets for two days to develop findings and recommendations before submitting a draft report to DESE. DESE edits and fact-checks the draft report and sends it to the district for factual review before publishing it on the DESE website.

Site Visit

The site visit to the Northampton Public Schools was conducted from February 4–6, 2019. The site visit included 24 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 270 stakeholders, including school committee members, district administrators, school staff, students, students’ families, and teachers’ association representatives. The review team conducted 3 focus groups with 87 elementary-school teachers, 55 middle-school teachers, and 42 high-school teachers.

A list of review team members, information about review activities, and the site visit schedule are in Appendix A, and Appendix B provides information about enrollment, attendance, and expenditures. The team observed classroom instruction in 68 classrooms in 6 schools. The team collected data using DESE’s Instructional Inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching. This data is contained in Appendix C.

**District Profile**

Northampton has a mayor-council form of government and the chair of the school committee is the mayor. The nine members of the school committee meet monthly.

The superintendent has been in the position since 2014. The district leadership team includes the business manager, the director of curriculum, the director of special education, and the digital literacy and computer science coordinator. The district shares two positions with the city, the chief information officer and the director of human resources. Central office positions have been stable in number over the past five years; in 2018, the district hired a new business manager. The district has six principals leading six schools. There are 10 other school administrators, including 4 vice principals; the director of health, safety and equity programs; the elementary curriculum coordinator; the associate director of student services for special education; the associate director of student services early childhood; the supervisor of English language learners, and the athletic director. In 2017–2018, there were 231 teachers in the district.

In the 2017–2018 school year, 2,658 students were enrolled in the district’s 6 schools:

**Table 1: Northampton Public Schools**

**Schools, Type, Grades Served, and Enrollment\*, 2017–2018**

| **School** | **Type** | **Grades Served** | **Enrollment** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Bridge Street | ES | Pre-K–5 | 274 |
| Jackson Street | ES | K–5 | 358 |
| Leeds | ES | K–5 | 321 |
| R. K. Finn Ryan Road | ES | K–5 | 221 |
| John F. Kennedy Middle School | MS | 6–8 | 615 |
| Northampton High School | HS | 9–12 | 869 |
| **Totals** | **6 schools** | **Pre-K–12** | **2,658** |
| \*As of October 1, 2017 | | | |

Between 2014 and 2018 overall student enrollment decreased by 3 percent. Enrollment figures by race/ethnicity and high needs populations (i.e., students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, and English learners (ELs) and former ELs) as compared with the state are provided in Tables B1a and B1b in Appendix B.

The total in-district per-pupil expenditure was lower than the median in-district per-pupil expenditure- for 48 K–12 districts of similar size (2,000–2,999 students) in fiscal year 2017: $14,508 as compared with $14,595 (see [District Analysis and Review Tool: Staffing and Finance](http://www.doe.mass.edu/dart/)). Actual net school spending has been above what is required by the Chapter 70 state education aid program, as shown in Table B3 in Appendix B.

Student Performance

**Note:** The Next-Generation MCAS assessment is administered to grades 3–8 in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics; it was administered for the first time in 2017. (For more information, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/parents/results-faq.html>.) The MCAS is administered to grades 5 and 8 in science and to grade 10 in ELA, math, and science. Data from the two assessments are presented separately because the tests are different and cannot be compared.

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| **Table 2: Northampton Public Schools**  **Accountability Percentile, Criterion Reference Target (CRT) Percentage, Reason for Classification** | | | | |
| **School** | **Accountability Percentile** | **CRT Percentage** | **Overall Classification** | **Reason For Classification** |
| Bridge Street | 23 | 72% | Requiring assistance or intervention | In need of focused/targeted support: Low participation rate for White students, students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, and all students |
| Jackson Street | 69 | 94% | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Meeting targets |
| Leeds | 46 | 59% | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Partially meeting targets |
| Finn Ryan Road | 62 | 77% | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Meeting targets |
| Kennedy Middle School | 42 | 41% | Requiring assistance or intervention | In need of focused/targeted support: Low subgroup performance for El and former El students |
| Northampton High School | 50 | 21% | Requiring assistance or intervention | In need of focused/targeted support: Low participation for Hispanic/Latino students |
| District | -- | 46% | Not requiring assistance or intervention | Partially meeting targets |

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| **Table 3: Northampton Public Schools**  **Next-Generation MCAS ELA Scaled Scores grades 3–8, 2017–2018** | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **State (2018)** | **Above/Below** |
| African American/Black | 26 | 493.4 | 496.5 | 3.1 | 490.3 | 6.2 |
| Asian | 45 | 497.0 | 494.8 | -2.2 | 511.6 | -16.8 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 203 | 485.4 | 486.9 | 1.5 | 489.7 | -2.8 |
| Multi-Race, Non-Hisp./Lat. | 80 | 502.7 | 503.3 | 0.6 | 502.8 | 0.5 |
| White | 826 | 503.3 | 506.0 | 2.7 | 504.2 | 1.8 |
| High Needs | 514 | 486.9 | 488.1 | 1.2 | 490.1 | -2.0 |
| Econ. Dis. | 365 | 486.7 | 487.5 | 0.8 | 490.2 | -2.7 |
| SWD | 294 | 481.3 | 483.5 | 2.2 | 480.8 | 2.7 |
| EL | 68 | 474.1 | 478.4 | 4.3 | 488.4 | -10.0 |
| All | 1,184 | 499.6 | 501.9 | 2.3 | 500.5 | 1.4 |
| Next Generation MCAS Achievement Levels: 440–470 Not Meeting Expectations; 470–500 Partially Meeting Expectations; 500–530 Meeting Expectations; 530–560 Exceeding Expectations | | | | | | |

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| **Table 4: Northampton Public Schools**  **Next-Generation MCAS Math Scaled Scores grades 3–8, 2017–2018** | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **State (2018)** | **Above/Below** |
| African American/Black | 27 | 486.9 | 492.1 | 5.2 | 486.9 | 5.2 |
| Asian | 45 | 496.2 | 493.2 | -3.0 | 514.3 | -21.1 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 203 | 481.7 | 483.0 | 1.3 | 487.4 | -4.4 |
| Multi-Race, Non-Hisp./Lat. | 80 | 501.6 | 501.2 | -0.4 | 499.7 | 1.5 |
| White | 822 | 499.7 | 501.2 | 1.5 | 501.8 | -0.6 |
| High Needs | 516 | 483.8 | 483.9 | 0.1 | 488.2 | -4.3 |
| Econ. Dis. | 367 | 483.7 | 483.2 | -0.5 | 487.7 | -4.5 |
| SWD | 297 | 478.2 | 478.1 | -0.1 | 479.2 | -1.1 |
| EL | 68 | 476.4 | 476.2 | -0.2 | 488.5 | -12.3 |
| All | 1,181 | 496.2 | 497.5 | 1.3 | 498.4 | -0.9 |
| Next Generation MCAS Achievement Levels: 440–470 Not Meeting Expectations; 470–500 Partially Meeting Expectations; 500–530 Meeting Expectations; 530–560 Exceeding Expectations | | | | | | |

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| **Table 5: Northampton Public Schools**  **Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations Grades 3–8, 2017–2018** | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **State (2018)** | **Above/Below** |
| African American/Black | 26 | 33% | 35% | 2 | 31% | 4 |
| Asian | 45 | 46% | 40% | -6 | 71% | -31 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 203 | 24% | 24% | 0 | 31% | -7 |
| Multi-Race, Non-Hisp./Lat. | 80 | 56% | 60% | 4 | 54% | 6 |
| White | 826 | 56% | 61% | 5 | 58% | 3 |
| High Needs | 514 | 23% | 23% | 0 | 31% | -8 |
| Econ. Dis. | 365 | 25% | 24% | -1 | 32% | -8 |
| SWD | 294 | 13% | 14% | 1 | 14% | 0 |
| EL | 68 | 7% | 13% | 6 | 30% | -17 |
| All | 1,184 | 50% | 53% | 3 | 51% | 2 |

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| **Table 6: Northampton Public Schools**  **Next-Generation MCAS Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations Grades 3–8, 2017–2018** | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **State (2018)** | **Above/Below** |
| African American/Black | 27 | 27% | 33% | 6 | 26% | 7 |
| Asian | 45 | 37% | 33% | -4 | 74% | -41 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 203 | 18% | 21% | 3 | 27% | -6 |
| Multi-Race, Non-Hisp./Lat. | 80 | 58% | 60% | 2 | 49% | 11 |
| White | 822 | 48% | 55% | 7 | 55% | 0 |
| High Needs | 516 | 18% | 22% | 4 | 28% | -6 |
| Econ. Dis. | 367 | 18% | 20% | 2 | 27% | -7 |
| SWD | 297 | 10% | 16% | 6 | 14% | 2 |
| EL | 68 | 11% | 13% | 2 | 30% | -17 |
| All | 1,181 | 42% | 48% | 6 | 48% | 0 |

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| **Table 7: Northampton Public Schools**  **MCAS ELA Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grade 10, 2017–2018** | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **State (2018)** | **Above/Below** |
| African American/Black | 7 | -- | -- | -- | 85% | -- |
| Asian | 7 | 100% | -- | -- | 95% | -- |
| Hispanic or Latino | 33 | 79% | 94% | 15 | 78% | 16 |
| Multi-Race, Non-Hisp./Lat. | 11 | -- | 82% | -- | 93% | -11 |
| White | 150 | 99% | 97% | -2 | 94% | 3 |
| High Needs | 70 | 87% | 83% | -4 | 79% | 4 |
| Econ. Dis. | 45 | 86% | 93% | 7 | 81% | 12 |
| SWD | 39 | 79% | 74% | -5 | 69% | 5 |
| EL | 7 | -- | -- | -- | 64% | -- |
| All | 208 | 96% | 94% | -2 | 91% | 3% |

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| **Table 8: Northampton Public Schools**  **MCAS Math Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grade 10, 2017–2018** | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **State (2018)** | **Above/Below** |
| African American/Black | 7 | -- | -- | -- | 60% | -- |
| Asian | 6 | 100% | -- | -- | 91% | -- |
| Hispanic or Latino | 34 | 52% | 59% | 7 | 56% | 3 |
| Multi-Race, Non-Hisp./Lat. | 11 | -- | 82% | -- | 79% | 3 |
| White | 150 | 93% | 85% | -8 | 85% | 0 |
| High Needs | 71 | 64% | 52% | -12 | 57% | -5 |
| Econ. Dis. | 47 | 63% | 62% | -1 | 59% | 3 |
| SWD | 40 | 50% | 35% | -15 | 40% | -5 |
| EL | 7 | -- | -- | -- | 44% | -- |
| All | 208 | 87% | 79% | -8 | 78% | 1 |

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| **Table 9: Northampton Public Schools**  **MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grades 5, 8, and 10, 2015–2018** | | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2018)** |
| African American/Black | 16 | 46% | 54% | 26% | 25% | -21 | 30% |
| Asian | 24 | 61% | 52% | 61% | 21% | -40 | 68% |
| Hispanic or Latino | 96 | 36% | 27% | 27% | 42% | 6 | 30% |
| Multi-Race, Non-Hisp./Lat. | 38 | 65% | 60% | 50% | 63% | -2 | 54% |
| White | 428 | 72% | 67% | 66% | 69% | -3 | 60% |
| High Needs | 230 | 43% | 33% | 30% | 35% | -8 | 31% |
| Econ. Dis. | 160 | 44% | 30% | 28% | 39% | -5 | 32% |
| SWD | 130 | 30% | 25% | 19% | 23% | -7 | 21% |
| EL | 23 | 0% | 8% | 4% | 22% | 22 | 20% |
| All | 603 | 65% | 58% | 57% | 61% | -4 | 53% |

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| **Table 10: Northampton Public Schools**  **Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grades 3–8, 2017–2018** | | | | | | |
| **Grade** | **N** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **State (2018)** | **Above/Below** |
| 3 | 191 | 43% | 50% | 7 | 52% | -2 |
| 4 | 188 | 48% | 47% | -1 | 53% | -6 |
| 5 | 197 | 45% | 56% | 11 | 54% | 2 |
| 6 | 176 | 55% | 49% | -6 | 51% | -2 |
| 7 | 216 | 63% | 48% | -15 | 46% | 2 |
| 8 | 216 | 41% | 65% | 24 | 51% | 14 |
| 3–8 | 1,184 | 50% | 53% | 3 | 51% | 2 |

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| **Table 11: Northampton Public Schools**  **Next-Generation MCAS Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grades 3–8, 2017-–2018** | | | | | | |
| **Grade** | **N** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **State (2018)** | **Above/Below** |
| 3 | 190 | 41% | 52% | 11 | 50% | 2 |
| 4 | 187 | 44% | 36% | -8 | 48% | -12 |
| 5 | 199 | 38% | 51% | 13 | 46% | 5 |
| 6 | 175 | 37% | 38% | 1 | 47% | -9 |
| 7 | 217 | 58% | 53% | -5 | 46% | 7 |
| 8 | 213 | 35% | 55% | 20 | 50% | 5 |
| 3–8 | 1,181 | 42% | 48% | 6 | 48% | 0 |

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| **Table 12: Northampton Public Schools**  **MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grades 5, 8, and 10, 2015–2018** | | | | | | | |
| **Grade** | **N (2018)** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **4-yr Change** | **State** |
| 5 | 199 | 57% | 50% | 42% | 53% | -4 | 47% |
| 8 | 212 | 49% | 38% | 39% | 50% | 1 | 35% |
| 10 | 192 | 89% | 87% | 88% | 83% | -6 | 74% |
| All | 603 | 65% | 58% | 57% | 61% | -4 | 52% |

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| **Table 13: Northampton Public Schools**  **English Language Arts and Math Mean Student Growth Percentile, 2018** | | | | | | |
|  | **ELA** | | | **Math** | | |
| **Grade** | **N (2018)** | **2018** | **State 2018** | **N (2018)** | **2018** | **State (2018)** |
| 3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| 4 | 173 | 48.9 | 50.0 | 171 | 49.9 | 50.1 |
| 5 | 185 | 51.2 | 50.1 | 187 | 57.5 | 50.0 |
| 6 | 158 | 44.3 | 50.1 | 156 | 35.2 | 50.0 |
| 7 | 192 | 47.9 | 50.0 | 191 | 64.8 | 50.0 |
| 8 | 204 | 53.8 | 50.0 | 203 | 44.7 | 50.0 |
| 10 | 167 | 45.2 | 49.9 | 168 | 57.2 | 49.9 |

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| **Table 14: Northampton Public Schools**  **Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations by School and Grade, 2018** | | | | | | | |
| **School** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **3–8** |
| Bridge Street | 31% | 37% | 48% | -- | -- | -- | 38% |
| Jackson Street | 50% | 53% | 64% | -- | -- | -- | 56% |
| Leeds | 43% | 50% | 50% | -- | -- | -- | 48% |
| Finn Ryan Road | 81% | 40% | 64% | -- | -- | -- | 61% |
| Kennedy Middle School | -- | -- | -- | 51% | 48% | 66% | 55% |
| District | 50% | 47% | 56% | 49% | 48% | 65% | 53% |
| State | 52% | 53% | 54% | 51% | 46% | 51% | 51% |

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| **Table 15: Northampton Public Schools**  **Next-Generation MCAS Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations by School and Grade, 2018** | | | | | | | |
| **School** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **3–8** |
| Bridge Street | 26% | 23% | 33% | -- | -- | -- | 27% |
| Jackson Street | 48% | 43% | 59% | -- | -- | -- | 50% |
| Leeds | 53% | 38% | 56% | -- | -- | -- | 49% |
| Finn Ryan Road | 88% | 31% | 55% | -- | -- | -- | 57% |
| Kennedy Middle School | -- | -- | -- | 39% | 54% | 56% | 50% |
| District | 52% | 36% | 51% | 38% | 53% | 55% | 48% |
| State | 50% | 48% | 46% | 47% | 46% | 50% | 48% |

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| **Table 16: Northampton Public Schools**  **MCAS ELA and Math Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grade 10, 2018** | | |
| **School** | **ELA** | **Math** |
| Northampton High School | 95% | 80% |
| State | 91% | 78% |

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| **Table 17: Northampton Public Schools**  **MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced by School and Grade, 2018** | | | | | | | | |
| **School** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** | **10** | **Total** |
| Bridge Street | -- | -- | 42% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 42% |
| Jackson Street | -- | -- | 57% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 57% |
| Leeds | -- | -- | 46% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 46% |
| Finn Ryan Road | -- | -- | 64% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 64% |
| Kennedy Middle School | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 51% | -- | 51% |
| Northampton High School | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 84% | 84% |
| State | -- | -- | 47% | -- | -- | 35% | 74% | 52% |

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| **Table 18: Northampton Public Schools**  **Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percent Meeting and Exceeding Expectations by School, 2018** | | | | | | | | | | |
| **School** | **All** | **High Needs** | **Econ. Dis.** | **SWD** | **EL** | **African American** | **Asian** | **Hispanic** | **Multi-race** | **White** |
| Bridge Street | 38% | 18% | 20% | 15% | 8% | -- | -- | 6% | -- | 44% |
| Jackson Street | 56% | 21% | 14% | 22% | 21% | 50% | 42% | 12% | 63% | 70% |
| Leeds | 48% | 19% | 20% | 10% | -- | -- | -- | 38% | 50% | 50% |
| Finn Ryan Road | 61% | 26% | 29% | 14% | -- | -- | -- | 22% | -- | 71% |
| Kennedy Middle School | 55% | 26% | 28% | 14% | 14% | 40% | 41% | 27% | 60% | 63% |
| District | 53% | 23% | 24% | 14% | 13% | 35% | 40% | 24% | 60% | 61% |
| State | 51% | 31% | 32% | 14% | 30% | 31% | 71% | 31% | 54% | 58% |

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| **Table 19: Northampton Public Schools**  **Next-Generation MCAS Math Percent Meeting and Exceeding Expectations by School, 2018** | | | | | | | | | | |
| **School** | **All** | **High Needs** | **Econ. Dis.** | **SWD** | **EL** | **African American** | **Asian** | **Hispanic** | **Multi-race** | **White** |
| Bridge Street | 27% | 12% | 12% | 7% | 0% | -- | -- | 0% | -- | 33% |
| Jackson Street | 50% | 20% | 14% | 25% | 14% | 60% | 42% | 18% | 56% | 59% |
| Leeds | 49% | 18% | 14% | 10% | -- | -- | -- | 29% | 57% | 52% |
| Finn Ryan Road | 57% | 33% | 26% | 32% | -- | -- | -- | 39% | -- | 61% |
| Kennedy Middle School | 50% | 24% | 25% | 16% | 11% | 10% | 35% | 22% | 65% | 58% |
| District | 48% | 22% | 20% | 16% | 13% | 33% | 33% | 21% | 60% | 55% |
| State | 48% | 28% | 27% | 14% | 30% | 26% | 74% | 27% | 49% | 55% |

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| **Table 20: Northampton Public Schools**  **MCAS ELA and Math Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grade 10, 2015–2018** | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | **ELA** | | | | | **Math** | | | | |
| **School/Group** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **4-yr Change** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **4-yr Change** |
| Northampton High School | 96% | 95% | 97% | 95% | -1% | 89% | 82% | 87% | 80% | -9% |
| African American/Black | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Asian | 100% | 92% | 100% | -- | -- | 90% | 62% | 100% | -- | -- |
| Hispanic | 83% | 86% | 85% | 94% | 11% | 67% | 36% | 50% | 59% | -8% |
| Multi-race, Non-Hisp./Lat. | -- | -- | -- | 82% | -- | -- | -- | -- | 82% | -- |
| White | 97% | 96% | 99% | 98% | 1% | 92% | 90% | 93% | 86% | -6% |
| High Needs | 90% | 84% | 90% | 85% | -5% | 71% | 57% | 62% | 54% | -17% |
| Econ. Dis. | 94% | 90% | 87% | 95% | 1% | 78% | 65% | 59% | 64% | -14% |
| SWD | 83% | 77% | 86% | 78% | -5% | 56% | 43% | 46% | 37% | -19% |
| EL | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |

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| **Table 21: Northampton Public Schools**  **MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Science by School and Student Group, 2015–2018** | | | | | | |
| **School** | **N (2018)** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **4-yr Change** |
| Bridge Street | 33 | 48% | 45% | 11% | 42% | -6 |
| African American/Black | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Asian | 4 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Hispanic | 4 | -- | 40% | -- | -- | -- |
| Multi-race, Non-Hisp./Lat. | 3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| White | 21 | 53% | 50% | 15% | 48% | -5 |
| High Needs | 19 | 29% | 25% | 0% | 26% | -3 |
| Econ. Dis. | 13 | 33% | 36% | 0% | 38% | 5 |
| SWD | 10 | 23% | 9% | 0% | 0% | -23 |
| EL | 3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Jackson Street | 58 | 56% | 58% | 63% | 57% | 1 |
| African American/Black | 4 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Asian | 6 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Hispanic | 12 | -- | 15% | -- | 25% | -- |
| Multi-race, Non-Hisp./Lat. | 5 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| White | 31 | 71% | 75% | 80% | 77% | 6 |
| High Needs | 21 | 32% | 40% | 32% | 24% | -8 |
| Econ. Dis. | 19 | 27% | 37% | 23% | 21% | -6 |
| SWD | 7 | 27% | 36% | 36% | -- | -- |
| EL | 4 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Leeds | 52 | 74% | 62% | 46% | 46% | -28 |
| African American/Black | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Asian | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Hispanic | 10 | -- | 45% | 30% | 40% | -- |
| Multi-race, Non-Hisp./Lat. | 6 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| White | 34 | 71% | 65% | 57% | 53% | -18 |
| High Needs | 17 | 85% | 30% | 40% | 12% | -73 |
| Econ. Dis. | 12 | 92% | 19% | 38% | 17% | -75 |
| SWD | 12 | -- | -- | 27% | 0% | -- |
| EL | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Finn Ryan Road | 47 | 48% | 33% | 45% | 64% | 16 |
| African American/Black | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Asian | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Hispanic | 8 | -- | 27% | 8% | -- | -- |
| Multi-race, Non-Hisp./Lat. | 1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| White | 36 | 48% | 37% | 62% | 75% | 27 |
| High Needs | 16 | 33% | 20% | 22% | 31% | -2 |
| Econ. Dis. | 9 | -- | 8% | 20% | -- | -- |
| SWD | 8 | 17% | 20% | 13% | -- | -- |
| EL | 4 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Kennedy Middle School | 209 | 50% | 39% | 40% | 51% | 1 |
| African American/Black | 3 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Asian | 7 | 36% | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Hispanic | 25 | 21% | 14% | 14% | 24% | 3 |
| Multi-race, Non-Hisp./Lat. | 14 | -- | 30% | -- | 64% | -- |
| White | 159 | 61% | 48% | 47% | 57% | -4 |
| High Needs | 81 | 28% | 21% | 14% | 27% | -1 |
| Econ. Dis. | 57 | 25% | 23% | 14% | 30% | 5 |
| SWD | 47 | 20% | 12% | 6% | 17% | -3 |
| EL | 6 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Northampton High School | 190 | 89% | 88% | 89% | 84% | -5 |
| African American/Black | 5 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Asian | 5 | 90% | 62% | 100% | -- | -- |
| Hispanic | 32 | 73% | 61% | 61% | 69% | -4 |
| Multi-race, Non-Hisp./Lat. | 9 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| White | 139 | 92% | 93% | 95% | 90% | -2 |
| High Needs | 63 | 72% | 65% | 69% | 60% | -12 |
| Econ. Dis. | 41 | 76% | 62% | 63% | 68% | -8 |
| SWD | 36 | 58% | 52% | 50% | 44% | -14 |
| EL | 6 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |

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| **Table 22: Northampton Public Schools**  **Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates, 2014–2017** | | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N**  **(2017)** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2017)** |
| African American/Black | 6 | -- | 71.4 | 100.0 | 100.0 | -- | 80.0 |
| Asian | 11 | 90.9 | 91.7 | -- | 100.0 | 9.1 | 94.1 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 33 | 80.0 | 85.7 | 73.3 | 87.9 | 7.9 | 74.4 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hisp./Lat. | 8 | 83.3 | -- | 85.7 | 100.0 | 16.7 | 85.2 |
| White | 169 | 95.0 | 95.1 | 95.2 | 98.8 | 3.8 | 92.6 |
| High needs | 95 | 83.3 | 87.2 | 86.8 | 94.7 | 11.4 | 80.0 |
| Economically Disadvantaged\* | 66 | 84.6 | 90.1 | 87.8 | 93.9 | 9.3 | 79.0 |
| SWD | 50 | 75.6 | 81.0 | 81.0 | 94.0 | 18.4 | 72.8 |
| EL | 6 | -- | -- | 66.7 | 66.7 | -- | 63.4 |
| All | 228 | 92.3 | 93.4 | 92.4 | 96.9 | 4.6 | 88.3 |
| \* Four-year cohort graduation rate for students from low-income families used for 2014 and 2015 rates. | | | | | | | |

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| **Table 23: Northampton Public Schools**  **Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates, 2013–2016** | | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N**  **(2016)** | **2013** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2016)** |
| African American/Black | 8 | 90.9 | -- | 85.7 | 100.0 | 9.1 | 83.4 |
| Asian | -- | 100.0 | 90.9 | 100.0 | -- | -- | 94.8 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 30 | 85.2 | 85.0 | 90.5 | 76.7 | -8.5 | 76.8 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hisp./Lat. | 7 | -- | 83.3 | -- | 85.7 | -- | 87.4 |
| White | 186 | 95.6 | 96.1 | 96.7 | 95.2 | -0.4 | 93.5 |
| High needs | 106 | 87.3 | 85.6 | 91.5 | 87.7 | 0.4 | 82.9 |
| Economically Disadvantaged\* | 82 | 84.0 | 86.2 | 93.0 | 89.0 | 5.0 | 82.1 |
| SWD | 58 | 83.0 | 77.8 | 85.7 | 81.0 | -2.0 | 76.5 |
| EL | 9 | 75.0 | -- | -- | 66.7 | -8.3 | 70.9 |
| All | 237 | 94.2 | 93.7 | 96.1 | 92.8 | -1.4 | 89.8 |
| \* Five-year cohort graduation rate for students from low-income families used for 2014 rates. | | | | | | | |

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| **Table 24: Northampton Public Schools**  **In-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2015––2018** | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2018)** |
| African American/Black | 5.5 | -- | 8.4 | 10.5 | 5.0 | 3.4 |
| Asian | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 0.6 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 4.8 | 2.9 | 5.4 | 8.0 | 3.2 | 2.4 |
| Multi-Race, Non-Hisp./Lat. | 5.1 | 1.9 | -- | 3.6 | -1.5 | 2.3 |
| White | 1.8 | 1.5 | 1.7 | 2.3 | 0.5 | 1.4 |
| High Needs | 4.8 | 3.5 | 5.1 | 6.6 | 1.8 | 2.7 |
| Economically disadvantaged\* | 4.8 | 3.4 | 5.3 | 6.5 | 1.7 | 2.9 |
| SWD | 6.6 | 4.7 | 6.2 | 9.3 | 2.7 | 3.3 |
| EL | -- | 2.5 | -- | 5.4 | -- | 1.8 |
| All | 2.5 | 1.8 | 2.4 | 3.6 | 1.1 | 1.8 |

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| **Table 25: Northampton Public Schools**  **Out-of-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2015–2018** | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2018)** |
| African American/Black | 2.7 | -- | 4.8 | 7.9 | 5.2 | 6.0 |
| Asian | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | 0.7 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 4.4 | 2.9 | 4.0 | 5.1 | 0.7 | 5.1 |
| Multi-Race, Non-Hisp./Lat. | 1.5 | 2.5 | -- | 2.4 | 0.9 | 3.3 |
| White | 1.4 | 0.9 | 1.1 | 1.5 | 0.1 | 1.9 |
| High Needs | 3.3 | 2.6 | 3.6 | 4.3 | 1.0 | 4.6 |
| Economically disadvantaged\* | 4.1 | 2.5 | 3.5 | 4.8 | 0.7 | 5.4 |
| SWD | 3.9 | 3.7 | 4.4 | 5.6 | 1.7 | 5.8 |
| EL | -- | 1.2 | -- | 2.7 | -- | 3.7 |
| All | 1.9 | 1.3 | 1.7 | 2.3 | 0.4 | 2.9 |

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| **Table 26: Northampton Public Schools**  **Dropout Rates by Student Group, 2014–2017** | | | | | | |
| **Group** | **2014** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2017)** |
| African American/Black | 7.4 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | -7.4 | 2.9 |
| Asian | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.6 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 0.0 | 4.1 | 1.0 | 1.7 | 1.7 | 4.2 |
| Multi-Race, Non-Hisp./Lat. | 8.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | -8.0 | 1.7 |
| White | 0.4 | 0.3 | 0.9 | 0.9 | 0.5 | 1.1 |
| High Needs | 1.8 | 1.5 | 2.0 | 1.6 | -0.2 | 3.5 |
| Economically disadvantaged\* | 1.4 | 0.8 | 1.5 | 1.9 | 0.5 | 3.6 |
| SWD | 2.9 | 1.8 | 3.7 | 2.3 | -0.6 | 3.3 |
| EL | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 6.5 |
| All | 0.9 | 0.7 | 0.8 | 0.9 | 0.0 | 1.8 |
| \*Dropout rates for students from low-income families used for 2014 rates. | | | | | | |

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| **Table 27: Northampton Public Schools**  **Advanced Coursework Completion by Student Group, 2017–2018** | | | | | |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **Target** |
| African American/Black | 11 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Asian | 25 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Hispanic or Latino | 56 | 55.6 | 48.2 | -7.4 | 64.2 |
| Multi-Race, Non-Hisp./Lat. | 15 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| White | 323 | 88.4 | 87.6 | -0.8 | 93.5 |
| High Needs | 130 | 56.3 | 47.7 | -8.6 | 63.3 |
| Economically disadvantaged | 85 | 64.3 | 52.9 | -11.4 | 73.4 |
| SWD | 66 | 37.9 | 39.4 | 1.5 | 43.4 |
| EL | 15 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| All | 430 | 84.0 | 80.5 | -3.5 | 88.6 |

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| **Table 28: Northampton Public Schools**  **Progress toward Attaining English Language Proficiency, 2017–2018** | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | **Non-high school** | | | | | **High school** | | | | |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **Target** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **Target** |
| EL | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| All | 52 | 57.1 | 44.2 | -12.9 | 57.1 | -- | -- | -- | -- | -- |

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| **Table 29: Northampton Public Schools**  **Chronic Absence Rates by Student Group,\* 2017–2018** | | | | | | | | | | |
|  | **Non-high school** | | | | | **High school** | | | | |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **Target** | **N (2018)** | **2017** | **2018** | **Change** | **Target** |
| African American/Black | 41 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 29 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Asian | 62 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 39 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Hispanic or Latino | 289 | 21.6 | 21.5 | 0.1 | 18.8 | 125 | 32.1 | 31.2 | 0.9 | 29.3 |
| Multi-Race, non-Hisp./Lat. | 114 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 38 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| White | 1,084 | 7.2 | 6.5 | 0.7 | 6.2 | 668 | 10.2 | 12.1 | -1.9 | 9.2 |
| High needs | 713 | 17.0 | 16.7 | 0.3 | 15.1 | 298 | 28.1 | 27.9 | 0.2 | 26.2 |
| Economically Disadvantaged | 448 | 21.4 | 21.7 | -0.3 | 18.8 | 164 | 32.9 | 32.3 | 0.6 | 30.3 |
| SWD | 387 | 17.8 | 18.9 | -1.1 | 15.4 | 160 | 31.5 | 28.8 | 2.7 | 29.1 |
| EL | 124 | -- | -- | -- | -- | 34 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| All | 1,594 | 10.2 | 9.7 | 0.5 | 9.1 | 900 | 13.2 | 15.2 | -2.0 | 12.1 |
| \* The percentage of students absent 10 percent or more of their total number of student days of membership in a school | | | | | | | | | | |

Curriculum and Instruction

Contextual Background

In February 2015, the current superintendent’s entry findings noted that DESE’s 2012 district review found that Northampton did not have an updated, aligned curriculum, particularly at the elementary level. Subsequently, the district’s 2015–2020 District Improvement Plan (DIP) included a goal to: “provide teachers with written curriculum including differentiated instructional lessons and strategies.”

At the time of the onsite review in February 2019, the district’s initiatives to develop a comprehensive written curriculum aligned with the Massachusetts Frameworks were continuing, with curriculum documentation and alignment most complete at the elementary level and ongoing in grades 6–12. As curricula are developed by curriculum teacher leaders (CTLs), they are brought back to grade and subject area teachers for review and further input. Differentiation and supports for students are contained in completed curricula at the elementary level, and are in development in other subject areas at the middle- and high-school levels.

At the elementary level, the district uses a number of research-based resources to provide and support its core instruction to students, including Reader’s and Writer’s Workshop, Math Investigations III, and Mystery Science. In addition, Lexia Reading and Math Recovery are used as support programs. At the middle-school level, Big Ideas is used for mathematics; We the People is used for social studies; Project Lead the Way is a STEM initiative; and a variety of resources are used for ELA and other subject areas.

At the high-school level, the district has restructured its pathways for entrance into advanced level subject offerings by shifting to semester courses in place of year-long courses. Within this structure, students are free to self-select the level and pace by which they can advance to higher-level courses within the school. The high school has also eliminated the requirement that all students enrolled in advanced placement (AP) courses take the AP exam. However, the district recognizes that some groups of students are under-represented in AP courses and the superintendent has directed that the guidance staff be more proactive in enrolling these groups of students. Additional opportunities available to all high-school students include dual high school/college enrollment at Smith College, Greenfield Community College, and other two- or four-year accredited colleges; an internship program; and a teacher assistant program. At the time of the review, the district was in its first year of participation in Innovations Pathways to prepare students for careers in high tech fields.

At the time of the review, the district had recently enhanced structures and resources across the district’s four elementary schools to provide stronger instructional alignment in literacy and mathematics. Enhanced structures and resources included monthly K–5 grade-level team meetings facilitated by the director of curriculum and assessment and grade-level department chairs (teacher leaders). These meetings cover topics related to the district’s instructional and curricular expectations and practices. Department chairs are a conduit for information back and forth from teachers in their grade levels. In addition, at the K–5 level, the district has implemented an instructional coaching model in literacy and mathematics. Instructional coaches provide the opportunity for aligning instructional experiences in literacy and mathematics across the district.

While common planning time is not formally built into the elementary schedule per se, elementary teachers have a monthly two-hour block of collaborative time for which substitute teachers are provided. Opportunities for middle-school teachers to share instructional practices take place during daily team time and monthly content department meetings. At the high school, formal time to discuss instruction is limited to monthly content department meetings. Although department chairs lead monthly content meetings at both the middle and high schools, they do not observe teachers or provide formative feedback on instruction. The district has a two-year mentoring program, which provides instructional support to new teachers. Overall, social-emotional competencies are addressed more consistently at the elementary level than at the secondary level; however, at the start of the 2018-2019 school year, the middle school introduced the Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) program.

Strength Finding

**1. The district has established an instructional coaching model K–5 in ELA and mathematics with structures and practices to support instructional coherence across the district’s elementary schools.**

**A.** Interviews and a document review indicated that the district developed an instructional coaching model K–5 in literacy in 2017–2018 and mathematics in 2018–2019 to provide aligned instructional practices in ELA and mathematics across the district’s four elementary schools. District leaders told the team that in literacy, the coaching model was introduced to increase the consistency of implementation of the district’s literacy program, Reader’s/Writer’s Workshop.

1. The district’s two instructional coaches, one in ELA and one in mathematics, are full-time coaches; both work in all four elementary schools.

2. The review team was told that coaches worked collaboratively with teachers and followed a coaching model. They work directly with teachers in classrooms where they co-plan and co-teach.

a. Before going into classrooms, coaches conduct pre-meetings with teachers where they review information including social-emotional learning (SEL) strategies and the needs of struggling students. Coaches co-plan activities to meet those students’ specific learning needs. Coaches also provide teachers with challenging resources and materials for students who have exceeded learning expectations.

b. Coaches observe and model lessons for teachers providing embedded professional development. The math coach provides math resources for Investigations III to teachers.

c. Coaches look at data with classroom teachers and help teachers to use formative assessment data and other assessment resources such as Level Literacy Intervention, aimsweb, and writing samples to provide effective instruction that challenges and supports their students. District staff stated that coaches’ work was heavily driven by assessment data.

d. Teachers and coaches conduct learning walks together.

3. Coaches review MCAS assessment data and areas of concern for each subject at each grade level. Teachers create action plans based on those concerns and coaches help them develop the lessons.

a. For example, coaches and district leaders said that as a result of data analysis in math in 2017, coaches and teachers focused on fractions across grades 3–5 during the 2018–2019 school year.

4. The literacy and math coaches said that they helped teachers to use the ELA and mathematics curriculum to plan instruction and monitored how the curriculum was implemented.

5. In 2018–2019, during the fall professional development day, coaches met with K–5 teachers to share the district’s goals for ELA and mathematics instruction.

**B.** Literacy and math coaches collaborate with the director of curriculum and assessment, principals, and K–5 grade-level department chairs to provide coherence to literacy and mathematics instruction in all K-–5 schools.

1. The director of curriculum and assessment and the literacy and math coaches co-chair monthly meetings with K–5 teacher-leaders, also known as grade-level department chairs, for ELA and mathematics. Grade-level department chairs then facilitate meetings with grade-level teams from across the district who meet together monthly.

a. During these meetings, the director and coaches help grade-level department chairs to plan their monthly K–5 grade-level team meetings.

b. The director and coaches also share information and review district goals and initiatives related to literacy and mathematics instruction.

2. Coaches attend grade-level department meetings where they provide workshops, share data, and follow-up on district plans for improvement in MCAS assessment results related to ELA and mathematics goals in each grade level.

3. At the start of the 2018–2019 school year, the district’s literacy and math coaches met with all K–12 principals to review guiding principles of ELA and mathematics instruction in Northampton. Principals then shared the information with teachers in their respective schools.

a. Coaches meet with K–5 principals, one on one, at the beginning and end of each month. For example, coaches may use this time to share information about providing effective instruction that challenges and supports all students and what principals might be seeing in classrooms.

**Impact:** By providing instructional coaches in literacy and math K–5, and structures and practices that support collaboration, the district ensures coherence of mathematics and literacy instructional practices across the district’s elementary schools; greater frequency of instructional decisions being informed by data; and effective instruction that challenges and supports all students. The district also ensures enhanced opportunities for embedded professional development and greater fidelity to the district’s literacy and mathematics curricula.

**Challenges and Areas for Growth**

**2. The district does not have a comprehensive written curriculum.**

**A.** Interviews and a review of the superintendent’s entry plan, and his root cause analysis indicated that the district did not have a uniform written curriculum in place in 2015. Leaders at all levels have targeted the development of a written curriculum as a priority.

1. The District Improvement Plan for the Northampton Public Schools 2015-–2020 targeted the development of a written curriculum as one of its strategic initiatives, with a goal of completion by 2020.

2. School committee members emphasized that curriculum to meet the needs of all students was an essential district function. Members noted that while the district has made great strides, “We still have a way to go.”

3. The district has implemented this initiative with the creation of a full-time director of curriculum and assessment; elementary level coaches for English language arts and mathematics; stipended positions for curriculum teacher leaders; grade-level and department chairs; and summer curriculum camps.

**B.** At the time of the onsite in February 2019, written curriculum documents at all levels were incomplete.

1. A review of district documents in Atlas Rubicon and the district’s self-evaluation indicated that substantial progress had been made in curriculum development in ELA at all levels and elementary mathematics, with additional curricula recently submitted to the director of curriculum and assessment for final review and approval.

2. Other subject and grade levels, including an English learners (EL) curriculum, and science curricula at all levels remain in progress.

3. With the release of new Massachusetts History and Social Studies Curriculum Frameworks, social studies curriculum development is scheduled to commence during a summer 2019 curriculum camp.

**Impact**: The absence of a common written curriculum based on the Massachusetts Frameworks and related student assessment data, impedes the delivery of a common, consistent, and sequential educational experience for students of the Northampton Public Schools.

**3. In observed classrooms districtwide, student engagement was not consistent among grade levels. At all levels, instruction did not consistently engage students in learning experiences that develop higher-order thinking skills and promote student discourse about content and ideas. Teachers did not consistently ensure that students engage in challenging tasks regardless of their learning needs.**

**A. Focus Area #2: Student Engagement & Higher-Order Thinking** Although school leaders identified student engagement as one of the key instructional goals in the district, in observed classrooms the review team found that elementary and middle-school students were more consistently engaged with lesson content than high-school students. Challenging learning experiences that help students develop their thinking skills were not consistently present at all levels.

1. The review team observed sufficient and compelling evidence of students assuming responsibility for their learning and being engaged in the lesson (characteristic #5) in 72 percent of observed elementary and middle-school classes, and in 61 percent of high-school lessons.
   1. The team noted that in most observed elementary classes, lessons were structured to encourage active participation through the workshop model observed in both ELA and most mathematics classes. Students took responsibility for their learning, independently, with partners, or in small groups. They read self-selected books, wrote stories, worked at math stations, or to actively participated in morning meetings.
   2. Similarly, the team noted examples of middle-school students taking responsibility for their learning in activities such as writing to pen pals in Africa, solving math problems, working on science challenges, or doing online research for reports.
   3. At the high school, the team noted strong examples of high levels of student engagement in the higher-level classes observed. The review team observed lower levels of student participation in teacher-directed lessons in the high school. In addition, the team noted that in a number of small classes designed to provide support for struggling students, expectations for student engagement were low, limiting those students’ opportunities to be active learners.
2. Observers found sufficient and compelling evidence of students engaged in higher-order thinking tasks such as analysis, synthesis, problem-solving, evaluation, or application of new knowledge (characteristic #6) in only 32 percent of elementary classes, in 44 percent of middle-school classes, and in 53 percent of high-school classes.

a. In most elementary classes, students were engaged in higher-order thinking for short periods. The review team observed elementary students acquiring knowledge and comprehension through word studies and in reading and writing stories, and by applying knowledge in solving math problems. The team noted some examples of sustained activities to support deeper thinking, such as students writing books for publication or elaborating their descriptions of what the number 100 meant to them.

b. In a majority of observed middle-school classrooms, students were engaged in higher-order thinking for short periods. In some classrooms, students were involved in sustained higher-order thinking activities, such as students in a grade 7 social studies class who were gathering and analyzing data to prepare a report and presentation. The team also observed teachers using lower-level recall questions that did not require student elaboration. For example, in a science class, most of the questions asked were “what” questions with just one question that required students to make an inference.

c. At the high school, the team noted that in higher-level classes, students had robust opportunities to practice thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis, or evaluation. However, in many observed classes, opportunities for students to hone these skills were limited. In these classes, teachers’ questioning techniques focused on factual answers and did not include random calling on students. For example, in a social studies class, the teacher asked factual questions and accepted one-word choral responses. In a science class, the teacher relied on the same group of students to answer all the questions.

3. The review team found sufficient and compelling evidence that students communicated their ideas and thinking with each other (characteristic #7) in 46 percent of observed elementary classes, in 56 percent of middle-school classes, and in 53 percent of high-school classes.

a. Although the review team observed elementary classes where students worked with partners or in small groups and exchanged ideas about content, the team also observed teacher-directed lessons with limited student opportunities to talk about content.

b. In a slight majority of observed middle-school classrooms, students had opportunities to exchange their thinking about content in small groups or with partners. However, the review team also observed classes where strategies to promote student communication about content were limited because of teacher-directed lessons. In these classes, teachers used few strategies to encourage student-to-student communication about content.

c. In a slight majority of high-school classes students communicated with each other about content. In observed higher-level classes, students had robust opportunities for meaningful exchanges about content. For example, in a mixed-grade English class, students collaborated in small groups to compare and analyze speeches in texts and films, and collaboratively produced a one page written summary, synthesizing their thinking. Students’ exchanges were deep, sustained, and deeply connected to content. In many classes, however, there were limited or no opportunities for students to communicate their ideas and thinking with each other. In these classes, teachers asked questions of the whole class and only a few students shared their thinking. For example, in an English learner class, only the teacher spoke during the 20-minute observation.

**B. Focus Area #3: Inclusive Practice** **& Classroom Culture** In observed classrooms, inclusive practices to ensure that students engage in challenging tasks regardless of learning needs were not consistent districtwide. The review team saw the greatest range in the use of effective instructional practices in this area. Although differentiation was identified as an instructional expectation in the district and has been addressed in professional development, it was consistently observed only in elementary classrooms. In observed classrooms, the team found sufficient and compelling evidence that lessons were designed to support and challenge students with varied learning needs (characteristic #9) in 82 percent of elementary classes, in 50 percent of middle-school classes, and in 43 percent of high-school classes.

1. In observed classrooms at the elementary level, the team found that nearly all ELA and mathematics lessons were designed to support and challenge all students. Lessons observed throughout the district’s elementary schools reflected the workshop model, which by design allows for consistent support for students’ varied learning needs. In observed elementary classrooms, students worked independently, with partners, in differentiated math stations, in small reading and math groups with classroom teachers and/or educational support personnel (ESPs). The small groups were flexible groupings based on data. The review team observed multiple inclusion classes, classes with support for English learners, and classes with ESPs to help all students access lesson content. In these classes, general education support staff helped with Tier 1 and 2 interventions.

In observed classrooms at the middle school, the review team found that half the lessons were minimally designed to support students’ varied learning needs. The team observed inclusion classes and classes with ESPs to help students with the lesson content. Students in these classrooms did the same tasks and followed the same lesson with ESPs helping students to stay on task rather than addressing students’ varied learning needs.

In observed high-school classes, most lessons were not designed to support and challenge students with varied learning needs. As in the middle school, support personnel were observed in classes with the primary function of helping students to stay on task.

**Impact:** Without consistently providing effective student-centered instruction that promotes higher-order thinking, challenges and supports all students, and promotes student discussion about content and their thinking, the district cannot optimize students’ learning opportunities and adequately prepare them for college, careers, and civic participation.

**Recommendations**

**The district should complete with urgency its K–12 curricula. It should ensure that curricula are high quality, comprehensive, aligned with appropriate standards, and implemented consistently across classrooms and schools. The district should develop and implement an ongoing process for reviewing and revising curricula.**

1. The district should complete its K–12 curricula as soon as possible.

1. The district should ensure that K–12 curricula include curriculum units, objectives, resources, instructional strategies to reach all learners, timelines, and formative and summative assessments.

**B.** The district should develop a process and timeline for regular review and revision of curricula.

**Benefits:** Implementing this recommendation will help to ensure that teachers and students have access to an updated, comprehensive, and clearly articulated curriculum that is aligned to the content and rigor of the appropriate Massachusetts curriculum frameworks and that prepares students for careers, college, and civic involvement.

**Recommended resources:**

* + - CURATE reports (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate/>) are the result a DESE-led, teacher-driven process to rate curricula on standards alignment and usability for teachers. If a product of interest has not been reviewed by CURATE, visit EdReports.org (<http://www.edreports.org/>), which provides free, independent reviews of K–12 education materials. The reviews focus on alignment to college- and career-ready standards and other indicators of high quality as recommended by educators.
    - EdReports.org (<http://www.edreports.org/>) provides free, independent reviews of K–12 education materials. The reviews focus on alignment to college and career ready standards and other indicators of high quality as recommended by educators.
    - DESE’s Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks web page [(http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/)](http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/) provides information about the 2017 ELA/Literacy and Mathematics Frameworks, including grade-by-grade comparisons between the 2010 and 2017 Frameworks and a slide deck supporting implementation of the 2017 Frameworks.
* DESE’s *Instructional Materials and Professional Development* page ([www.doe.mass.edu/candi/impd/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/impd/)) provides resources for improving and collaborating on curriculum, including quick reference guides and maps designed to facilitate cross-district communication about curriculum.
  + - *Quick Reference Guide: Aligning Curriculum to Massachusetts Standards* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/impd/qrg-aligning-curriculum.pdf>) is designed to support teachers, coaches, administrators, and curriculum developers in the work of considering the ways in which curricular materials may diverge from the Massachusetts standards.
* *Quick Reference Guide: Assessing Your Curriculum Landscape* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/impd/qrg-assessing-curriculum.pdf>) is designed to support districts assess their curriculum landscape by asking three questions: (1) Do teachers have ready access to high-quality, standards-aligned curricular materials? (2) Do sustained and collaborative professional learning structures empower teachers to use those materials in ways responsive to their students’ needs? (3) Are curriculum review processes regular, rigorous, and responsive to stakeholder input and needs?

**The district should ensure that all teachers provide high-quality instruction that engages, challenges, and supports all students.**

* + 1. The district should convene a representative cross-section of teachers and instructional leaders to identify the district’s instructional strengths and challenges.

1. Particular attention should be paid to engaging students in higher-order thinking, providing all students with greater opportunities to communicate their ideas and thinking with one another, and supporting and challenging students regardless of learning needs.

2. Professional development should focus on instructional areas that need strengthening as applied to the specific curricula that students and teachers work with every day.

a. The district should consider the ways in which PD on instructional strategies has or has not been effective, based on evidence from classroom observations, and should consider redesigning its approach to PD as needed.

**B.** The district is encouraged to provide opportunities for educators to discuss ideas and strategies for improvement of instruction.

1. These opportunities might include grade-level, department meetings, common planning time, faculty meetings, and professional days.

2. Equitable opportunities should be provided by level for teachers to share best practices, with a particular emphasis on opportunities for middle- and high-school educators to observe exemplary peers.

**C.** The district should consider expanding the K–5 instructional coaching model in ELA and mathematics to the secondary level to build coherence in instructional practices, and ensure that all teachers receive appropriate guidance and high-quality feedback[[1]](#footnote-1) so that their instruction challenges and supports all students.

**Benefits:** Implementing this recommendation will mean a deeper understanding of instructional strengths and challenges districtwide, a stronger culture of professional growth and improvement, and instruction that is more clearly aligned with district goals. At all levels, all students will be consistently and deeply engaged in higher-order thinking. All students will have meaningful opportunities to share their thinking about content in lessons designed to fully support and challenge all students.

**Recommended resources:**

* DESE’s *"What to Look For" Observation Guides* (Updated August 2017) (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/observation/>) describe what observers should expect to see in a classroom at a particular grade level in a specific subject area. This includes the knowledge and skills students should be learning and using (as reflected in state learning standards) and best practices related to classroom curriculum, instruction, and assessment for each subject area. The guides are not designed to replace any evaluation system or tools districts currently use, but are a resource to help classroom observers efficiently identify what teachers and students should be experiencing in specific subjects and grade levels.
* DESE’s *OPTIC: Online Platform for Teaching and Informed Calibration Tool (*[*http://www.ma-optic.com/*](http://www.ma-optic.com/)*)*  uses videos of classroom instruction to simulate brief, unannounced observations. Groups of educators, such as a district leadership team, watch a video together and then individually assess the educator’s practice related to specific elements from the Model Classroom Teacher Rubric and provide the educator with written feedback. Through real-time data displays, the group members can then see how their conclusions compare to each other, as well educators throughout the state.

**•** DESE’s Learning Walkthrough Implementation Guide (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/educators/title-iia/ImplementationGuide2016.docx>)is a resource to support instructional leaders in establishing a Learning Walkthrough process in a school or district. It is designed to provide guidance to those working in an established culture of collaboration as well as those who are just beginning to observe classrooms and discuss teaching and learning in a focused and actionable manner. (The link above includes a presentation to introduce Learning Walkthroughs.)

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

Assessment

Contextual Background

The district has made a priority of collecting and using achievement data to make curricular and instructional decisions. Its district and most school improvement plans (DIP and SIPs) include goals to use assessment data to monitor student progress and ensure that instruction supports and challenges all students. Nevertheless, the DIP and the SIPs do not use metrics to measure progress toward attainment of the goals. The superintendent regularly issues a narrative report, entitled “The District Improvement Insider,” to communicate to all stakeholders about progress on initiatives.

The district has established a data team in each school, which analyzes assessment and behavioral data and reports to administrators and the faculty; their analyses typically reflect progress and achievement data for student groups. A system of collecting achievement data and using it to monitor individual student progress and to provide needed interventions is well established in the elementary schools. District leaders reported that the next step was to expand these practices into the middle school.

In grades 3–10, all district schools analyze MCAS assessment data, especially conducting grade-level achievement and item analyses. Analyses have identified areas needing improvement such as constructed (short essay) responses and fractions and have resulted in instructional changes such as a new elementary ELA program and more emphasis on fractions. At the elementary level and for some middle-school students, several assessments are in widespread use to monitor student progress and to identify areas needing strengthening, including the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System (BAS), aimsweb, and additional benchmark assessments (see the Strength finding below).

The middle and high schools have few common assessments and depend primarily on unit tests, midterms, and finals developed by teachers; formative assessments and pre-tests are not commonly in use. This affects teachers’ ability to provide consistent content experiences from class to class, to monitor individual student progress, and to identify students’ specific learning needs in a timely way.

The director of curriculum and assessment oversees assessment practices and systems in the district. At the elementary level, literacy and math coaches and interventionists consult with groups of teachers as well as individual teachers to review assessment results and identify needed interventions for students. Interventionists also work directly with students. The middle school has literacy interventionists, but does not have math interventionists. Teachers at the middle- and high-school levels mainly identify students’ needs for academic remediation and intervention through unit tests.

Each school has a student support team (SST), which monitors progress for individual students who are performing below expectations. Teams review behavioral and emotional needs at all levels; at the elementary level, the teams also review academic assessment results and academic progress. SSTs include input from the school psychologists, literacy and math interventionists, and counselors in their work.

Assessment data from MCAS and other assessments are shared with teachers in formats that are clear, understandable, and actionable. The reports prepared by data teams on grades 3–10 MCAS assessment data for staff at each school highlight item analyses and student group performance as well as comparisons with previous years and with state averages. Elementary formative, pre-test, and post-test data for each student are summarized on an Aspen dashboard, on color coded reports, and on spreadsheets to clarify remediation and intervention needs such as reading comprehension and number comparison fluency. Assessment data is discussed in parent conferences, and is available to families on the online Aspen Student Information System. MCAS assessment reports are presented at least once annually to the public and the school committee, and they include comparisons to the state and similar communities, AP performance, attendance and dropout data, and student group data. Other district reports to stakeholders include “takeaways” such as recent improvements in elementary performance, problems with chronic absence, and concerns about equity of access to advanced coursework.

The patterns of parent teacher contact, report cards, and the content and sources of communications from the schools are specific to the school in most cases. Some attendees at the family focus group reported having one face-to-face contact with elementary teachers for reporting purposes; others noted one school provides two during the fall and spring. In the middle and high schools, Aspen is seen as a useful tool to support family/child communications and family/teacher communication, if used consistently by teachers. High-school teachers also reported use of Schoology and Google classroom as online tools to communicate with their students.

Strength Findings

**1. The elementary and some middle school grades administer a range of formative assessments, common interim and benchmark assessments, and summative assessments. Teachers use the data from these assessments to make some adjustment in curriculum and instruction, to monitor individual student progress, and to provide needed interventions.**

**A.** The District and K–8 School Improvement Plans (DIP and SIPs) include goals and initiatives to use assessment data to scaffold instruction and to provide for individual student needs.

1. The DIP includes goals to create a database of student data, to support teachers’ collaboration on instruction, to implement an effective Response to Intervention (RtI) system, and to differentiate instruction.

a. The superintendent’s 2015 entry findings included district progress in developing data teams, differentiating instruction, and using data to identify the needs of student groups.

2. The elementary SIPs emphasize goals to differentiate instruction using assessment data and to use data teams to develop teaching strategies and provide interventions to support student learning.

3. The middle school SIP includes a goal to strengthen the practice of using data to inform instruction, including differentiated learning strategies.

**B.** Elementary and some middle-school teachers administer a variety of common formative, benchmark, and summative assessments.

1. In addition to MCAS assessment data, elementary teachers collect data from aimsweb literacy and math diagnostic assessments (K–5 and some students in grades 6–8) and Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment Systems (BAS) diagnostics (K–5 and some students in grades 6–8). Elementary teachers also collect data from on-demand reading (K–5) and writing (grades 3–5); spelling inventories (grades 2–5) and Add-Vantage Math Recovery (AVMR) diagnostics (K–5). Most assessments are used formatively and summatively and are administered 3–10 times per year as needed.

a. Some of the formative assessments listed above are also used for students with disabilities and other students in middle-school grades as well as the Gates Reading Assessment in grade 6.

b. Administrators reported that they have made accommodations to many of the assessments to help ensure equity and access, such as providing Spanish versions, using finger tracing for a selective mute student, and one-on-one assistance for some students with autism.

2. Common benchmark, unit, and MCAS assessments are also used K–5 for ELA and math. Common assessments are being developed in elementary science and in the middle school. Some common assessments are given as pre-tests for formative purposes as well as summative assessments.

3. Social-emotional assessments and data include Social, Academic, Emotional, Behavior Risk Screeners (SAEBRS).

4. The district administers WIDA[[2]](#footnote-2) screeners to English learners.

**C.** The elementary schools and some middle-school teachers have developed systems for analyzing assessment data.

1. Each elementary school and some teachers at the middle school have a schoolwide data team, which, in elementary schools, typically includes literacy and math coaches and the school psychologist. The data teams analyze assessment and behavioral data, such as attendance and discipline data, by grade level and student group and report their findings to the faculty.

2. Administrators told the team that teachers could access assessment data for their students on the aimsweb and Aspen platforms, and they have been trained to use the Aspen dashboard.

3. The staff who lead and support teachers in analyzing and reporting on assessment data include the K–5 literacy and math coaches, school psychologists, K–8 reading interventionists, and K–5 math interventionists.

4. Administrators reported that many elementary teachers have been trained in the elementary Math Recovery program and the Fundations literacy program, including those programs’ assessments, noting that coaches assisted and trained elementary teachers to analyze and use the data.

5. Elementary teachers collaborate in grade-level meetings to review assessment and behavioral data for their classes and individual students, with input from literacy and math interventionists and school psychologists.

* + - 1. Administrators said that elementary teachers collaborated on reviewing MCAS assessment data and on scoring writing samples.

6. Middle-school teachers use department meetings to collaborate on reviewing assessment data and differentiation strategies.

7. Each elementary school and the middle school also have a student support team (SST) which reviews and monitors individual student progress on academic assessments and behavioral data. Some SSTs try to review the progress of every student at least once annually.

* 1. The district has used assessment data to improve instruction and student achievement and outcomes by making needed adjustments in the curriculum and designing instruction to meet individual students’ needs.

1. Administrators and coaches reported that the district used assessment data, especially MCAS assessment data, to make curriculum decisions such as an increased emphasis on fractions and the adoption of Fundations as its new ELA curriculum.
   * + 1. In its self-assessment submitted before the onsite, district leaders reported that low assessment scores, particularly for student groups, led to increased resources for the Bridge Street School and a substantial redesign of its inclusion practices.

2. Analysis of discipline and attendance data at the middle school led to the institution of Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) practices in the 2018–2019 school year.

* + 1. Teachers and specialists at the K–5 level described several interventions and differentiation strategies based on the data for individual students, including consultations with teachers about strategies, push-in and pull-out support from literacy and math interventionists, grouping, Lexia, Symphony Math, and enrichment classes.
    2. Interviews with administrators and a review of data team documents indicated that there have been school- and individual-level performance improvements, such as reductions in special education referrals and behavioral issues at the Bridge Street School, improved academic performance for individual students, and higher test scores.
       1. The superintendent reported that over the past few years Tier 1 and 2 interventions based on classroom assessment data have resulted in a reduction of referrals for special education services.
       2. In 2018, MCAS scores showed an improvement for grades 3 and 5 where the use of data to analyze and improve performance has been emphasized.

**Impact**: The analysis of assessments and other data have helped elementary and some middle-school teachers make informed improvements to the curriculum and provide appropriate Tier I and II interventions. The analysis of assessment data and related interventions in the elementary and some middle- school classes have helped improve student achievement and outcomes, and decreased reliance on special education.

**Challenges and Areas for Growth**

**2. The middle school is in the beginning stages of implementing formative and common assessments and using them to improve instruction; the high school makes limited use of common assessments and data other than MCAS. The middle and high schools make limited use of assessment data to identify and remediate individual students’ academic needs.**

**A.** At the middle school, teachers in some grades have not completed the development of common assessments; teachers do not collaborate effectively on using assessment data to improve instruction or individual student performance.

1. The middle school’s improvement plan includes goals and objectives to identify, analyze, and use relevant data to inform instruction and to develop effective instruction that challenges and supports all students.

* 1. Administrators reported that the middle school had offered professional development in differentiating instruction for the four years before the onsite in January 2019. Participation in professional development is voluntary.

2. The middle school’s data team prepares MCAS item analyses and data about student groups and presents curriculum needs to individual teachers and departments.

1. Interviews with administrators and a review of the district’s self-assessment submitted in advance of the onsite indicated that the middle-school teachers have not completed the development of common assessments. For example, teachers have not completed unit assessments in grade 6 ELA and in grade 7 science.
   1. Some middle-school teachers reported that they used formative assessments such as pre-tests and tickets to leave.
2. Administrators told the team that the district’s next challenge was to extend the elementary systems of data analysis and tiered supports to the middle-school level, where instruction did not consistently challenge and support all students.
   1. In observed classrooms at the middle- and high-school levels, review team members found that many lessons were not designed to support and challenge students with varied learning needs.
   2. While the middle school has a well-established student support team (SST) process to address the social-emotional needs of students and uses the newly introduced Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) data, the middle school does not have an equivalent process for identifying students for academic interventions. Administrators stated that it planned to extend the use of data to inform academic interventions to the middle school.
   3. The middle school has reading interventionists to identify students who are performing below expectations and to assess their needs and help deliver interventions. The middle school plans to add math interventionists, as well.

**B.** Interviews with administrators and teachers indicated that the high school relied on MCAS and Advanced Placement (AP) assessments to make adjustments in curriculum and instruction, and did not use other common assessments.

1. In recent years, the high school has analyzed writing s and disaggregated performance data.

a. Some teachers reported that they analyzed AP participation and performance data, including how students performed on particular questions and topics.

High-school administrators said that the high school needed to do more with formative and common benchmark assessments.

Among the recommendations of the 2012 NEASC review of the high school were recommendations to prepare and use common and formative assessments, to use data to respond to inequities in achievement, and to collaborate on assessment practices. The 2017–2019 high school improvement plan (SIP) includes goals to use assessment and grading data to make decisions about course offerings and to support collaboration on grading practices, but does not include the development of formative and common assessments.

The SIP stresses the importance of supporting high-needs students but does not include data such as attendance, suspension, and graduation rates to identify students in need of interventions or to measure success.

Some high-school teachers said that they have developed their own assessments, including midterms and finals; they noted that they could access Atlas to see what assessments other teachers are using.

Some high-school teachers said that the school did not have a system to use formative assessments to identify remediation needs or related Tier II instructional supports. They told the team that teachers relied on after-school help, peer tutoring, English learners supports, and special education services for struggling students.

In 2018, MCAS scores for grade 10 declined, and for ELA and math were only 1–3 points higher than the state average.

**Impact**: Without well-developed assessments and analysis it is difficult to analyze why academic achievement scores for the middle and high schools are stagnant. Without sufficient, consistent formative assessments along with item analyses and the identification of individual students’ learning needs the district will struggle to identify interventions to improve student performance. In addition, without common assessments the school is less able to ensure consistent learning experiences for students in different sections of the same course.

**Recommendation**

**1. The district should implement its elementary model of using formative and common assessments to identify students’ progress and assess their needs for interventions throughout the middle and high schools.**

**A.** The middle and the high schools should continue their practice of analyzing MCAS and other common assessment data, including item analyses, to identify needed curriculum adjustments to improve student performance.

**B.** The elementary model of using formative assessments and pre-tests to analyze student progress and needs, teacher collaboration on data analysis, and differentiated instruction has been implemented in pockets at the middle school. The district should provide sufficient support to implement the elementary model consistently in the middle school.

Teachers should continue their work of developing common pre- and post-tests for each unit along with other formative assessments.

**C.** The high school should develop an appropriate model for using common and formative assessments to standardize course expectations and implement interventions to improve learning for all students.

1. The development of common midterms, finals, and unit assessments for each course would help set consistent academic expectations across several sections of the same course.

2. A system of formative assessments along with appropriate remediation and Tier II interventions would be helpful in identifying and remediating students who are falling behind before they fail a midterm or final exam or other course benchmarks.

**Benefits:** Implementing this recommendation will identify students who are struggling or falling behind early in the year and provide supports to improve student outcomes. It will also help set or maintain high standards for instruction and ensure a more consistent learning experience for students across several sections of the same course.

**Recommended resources:**

* + - DESE’s *Assessment Literacy Self-Assessment and Gap Analysis Tool* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/ddm/webinar/PartI-GapAnalysis.pdf>) is intended to support districts in understanding where their educators fit overall on a continuum of assessment literacy. After determining where the district as a whole generally falls on the continuum, districts can determine potential next steps.
    - DESE’s *District Data Team Toolkit* ([http://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/toolkit/](http://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/toolkit/district-data-toolkit.pdf)) is a set of resources to help a district establish, grow, and maintain a culture of inquiry and data use through a District Data Team.

Student Support

**Contextual Background**

The superintendent’s 2015 entry plan pointed to a widening economic spread among families and caregivers in the Northampton Public Schools. The superintendent recognized the need to prepare for structural and programmatic shifts within the district and schools in response to families affected by violence and drugs and other addictions, trauma, or economic hardship. Many Northampton students come to school each day with unique academic and support needs. In 2017–2018, 39.1 percent of students were part of the high needs student group because they are in one or more of the following groups: economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and English learners (ELs) or former ELs. Students with disabilities make up 21.4 percent of the total student population, compared with 17.7 percent of the state; ELs make up 3.6 percent of enrollment, compared with 10.2 percent across the state; and 26 percent of the district’s students experience economic challenge, compared with 32 percent across the state. In recent years, the district’s racial and ethnic demographics have remained stable. According to DESE data, in 2017–2018, of the total student population, 70.8 percent are White, 16.0 percent are Hispanic/Latino, and 13.4 percent represent other racial/ethnic groups.

All schools use a range of approaches to support students’ social- emotional development including accessing resources and supports for their students, families, and caregivers. School adjustment counselors, psychologist, general education staff who help with Tier 1 and 2 interventions, and support staff provide academic and social-emotional services, as structured by school site.

In recent years, the district has made significant inroads in building goals- and values-driven systems of support. At the time of the onsite in February 2019, two associate directors for student support, K–5 and 6–12, had been recently appointed. These directors work with the director of student services to ensure the depth and breadth of student services programming and related services.

The district has set up a comprehensive tiered system of support for the elementary schools but has not designed or implemented a system of supports in grades 6 through 12. At the elementary level, the district has hired many new staff members to support Tier 1 and 2 instruction and interventions. Because there are more sources of data for teachers to monitor the progress of all students K–5 than at the secondary level, teams of teachers, coaches, and interventionists are able to intervene when student performance data identifies students at risk. Elementary teachers and staff analyze data frequently in order to adjust their instructional practice to meet the needs of individual students.

The superintendent introduced an inclusion model K–5 to support more students within the general education classroom rather than relying on a self-contained, sub-separate model. Efforts are underway to place teams of highly qualified general and special educator teacher teams in classrooms, supported by interventionists including behavioral specialists in K–5 classrooms, as warranted. In addition, differentiated models of instruction are being introduced intentionally at the elementary level. At the middle school, new career pathways models with hands-on, workplace based opportunities to learn, some leading to industry certifications, were implemented in 2018–2019. These pathways expand previous options that include dual enrollment at Smith College and Holyoke and Greenfield Community Colleges, allowing for students to access and engage in learning in higher education settings.

The district’s director of health, safety and equity works to oversee an ever-expanding network of community resources by developing collaborative relationships and partnerships that bring together social, mental, and health service providers and other outreach organizations from across the region.

In 2016, with the support of families and caregivers, the district implemented anti-bias training to address implicit bias identified by teachers. The Northampton Education Foundation funded early efforts including study groups for teachers. The district invited renowned anti-bias and identity development researchers and practitioners to address voluntary gatherings of teachers and community members. Middle-school teachers reported an emphasis in the 2017–2018 school year that has not been sustained. Parents and teachers reported uneven attention to this initiative.

Strength Finding

1. **The district has strengthened its K–5 curriculum, instruction, and assessment systems and provided the resources for teachers to deliver an effective tiered system of support.**

**A.** As detailed in the Curriculum and Instruction, and Assessment findings above, the district has developed practices, procedures, and structures necessary to support elementary teachers in identifying students who are not performing according to standards. The district’s system of tiered interventions at the elementary level supports student learning by embedding professional development and providing coaching to increase teachers’ skills in providing effective instruction that challenges and supports all students.

**B.** The district’s K–5 instructional coaches in literacy and mathematics work directly with teachers in analyzing data, structuring lessons, monitoring progress, and developing skills for delivering Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction.

1. Coaches develop action plans with teachers following data analyses.

2. Coaches provide resources and materials for students who have exceeded learning expectations.

3. Coaches work with principals on many curriculum and instruction-related topics, including strategies that account for differences in students’ learning needs, competencies, interests, and levels of readiness.

**C.** District leaders described the elementary approach as a “building-wide approach to tiered instruction.” Teachers meet regularly in teams. District leaders and teachers stated that weekly grade-level meetings were instituted in every elementary school in order to check curriculum, discuss changes in practice, and analyze student data.

**D.** Elementary teachers and principals stated that some schools have instituted a 35 to 40 minute block in grades 1 and 2 for Tier 1 and Tier 2 instruction where students across a grade level move to appropriate groups with intervention specialists and teachers for a six-week block.

**E.** The district has hired additional staff to meet the social-emotional needs of students including counselors and psychologists.

**F.** The elementary schools progress monitor every student to assess academic and social-emotional progress.

1. Directors and school leaders stated that psychologists were assigned to each school. Psychologists gather data from pre- and post-testing and formative and summative assessments to bring to meetings for analysis and goal setting with the teachers. They monitor aimweb’s math and literacy assessments, Benchmark Assessment System (BAS) data, Title I assessments, and Social, Academic, Emotional, Behavior Risk Screeners (SAEBRS), three times per year.

**Impact:** An effective system of early identification and tiered support and interventions enables the district to provide for students’ academic and social-emotional wellbeing, which promotes improved performance and outcomes.

**Challenges and Areas for Growth**

**2. The district does not ensure that all students have equitable access to a range of rigorous coursework and high-quality learning, including advanced placement classes. Systemic structural and cultural barriers in recent years continue to interfere with the district’s ability to ensure access, equity, and engagement along the K–12 continuum.**

**A.** Interviews with students and families indicated a perception of uneven expectations and services for students in the district.

1.High-school students noticed a difference in the intensity of courses offered at the school.

2. Parents and students told the team that students did not experience diversity in their AP and higher-level classes. Interviewees from both groups noted an absence of resources, including supports for English learners, that would enable more students to enroll in those courses.

a. DESE’s 2012 district review report noted that a MMSI grant, which paid for professional development for teachers and for Saturday courses for students and the practice of paying for all grade 10 students to take the PSAT “increased the participation of students of color and students from low-income families in AP and honors classes.” At the time of the onsite in February 2019, school committee members told the review team that now that those grant funds were gone, “students in subgroups were not taking AP classes,” noting that the district needed to keep working to increase participation in AP and honors classes. According to DESE’s 2018 Official Accountability Report for Northampton, between 2017 and 2018 advanced coursework completion declined for all students, high needs students, and economically disadvantaged students.[[3]](#footnote-3)

3. The District Improvement Plan lists anti-bias training as one of its goals. Some teachers said that a book study was the impetus for launching this initiative. A committee of families, community members, and teachers took responsibility for this initiative. Middle-school teachers reported that an emphasis in the 2017–2018 school year has not been sustained. Parents and teachers reported uneven attention to this initiative.

a. District leaders including the superintendent stated that this initiative was needed. There is consideration of adding a position dedicated solely to equity to the 2019–2020 budget. A position in the district at the time of the onsite in January 2019 included oversight for equity.

4.In observed classrooms, inclusive practices to ensure that students engage in challenging tasks regardless of learning needs were not consistent districtwide (see the Curriculum and Instruction Challenge finding about observed instruction above), indicating that students experienced inconsistent access to rigorous learning experiences and equitable supports.

a. The 2015 CPR review­­­­­­­­­­­ cited non-compliance findings in special education and the absence of a comprehensive English learner education (ELE) program development and of an articulated service delivery model.

i. At the time of the onsite, the associate director of student services reported that the ELE Program was undergoing a comprehensive, internal programmatic review and restructuring to meet state regulations to address staffing, identification protocols, assessments and screeners, and programmatic structures. This included a sequence of high-school courses to respond to students’ needs and to provide students greater access and engagement in a range of learning experiences.

b. The superintendent told the team that he fast-tracked the introduction of an inclusion model of support in response to disproportionate representation of African American/black males in a sub-separate program.

c. According to DESE data, between 2014 and 2018 Hispanic/Latino students making up 16 percent of district enrollment, experienced 100 out-of-school suspensions compared with White students representing 70.8 percent of the district’s enrollment, experienced 136 suspensions. (See Table 25 of this report for disaggregated suspension data.)

d. “Strategies,” a four-year course sequence at the high school, is required for students on Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Because of the structure of the 83-minute/4 x 4 block schedule at the high school, students on IEPs have limited access to electives and other courses.

e. Students and parents described a need for better transitioning between middle school and high school in general and in mathematics courses specifically.

i. Students described a need for smoother transition between the instructional practices in mathematics in middle school and high school. The instructional approach to integrated math was seen as self-directed. Students spoke about the high demand for students to self-regulate their pace of learning and their experience of varying degrees of teacher intervention and support.

**Impact:** Without providing equitable access for all students to a range of rigorous academic coursework, the district does not adequately prepare all students for college, careers, and civic participation.

**3. The district does not have a fully developed, comprehensive, consistent system of support to meet the needs of all its learners.**

**A.** The District and School Improvement Plans (DIP and SIPs) do not include evidence of a shared, coherent plan to design a multi-tiered system of support with specific timelines and measurable and attainable, incremental outcomes.

**B.** The superintendent noted the absence of formal structures for academic support in grades 6–12. Teachers and student support staff shared similar concerns with the review team.

**C.** The systems for clear, schoolwide positive behavioral systems and expectations are not sufficiently robust or comprehensively articulated K–12.

1. The K–5 schools use elements of Responsive Classroom, Restorative Justice, and Acting with Purpose; one K–5 school is making early efforts with PBIS. The K–8 psychologist reported the use of Zones of Regulation K–5. All K–5 schools use Second Step. Interviews and a document review indicated that the district had various evidenced-based, positive behavioral approaches in use with the middle school focusing in 2018–2019 on Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS).

1. The high school does not have a positive behavioral program. High-school students and teachers reported the use a self-referral system to the school adjustment counselor. Teachers and students described the student support room with the adjustment counselor as helpful but not sufficiently accessible, noting that it was “flooded all day long.”
2. The district’s two K–12 professional days in fall 2018 included a speaker on social-emotional learning (SEL) and “Teaching SEL through Academics.”

**Impact:** Without a coherent, robust, and comprehensive system of supports, the district cannot ensure that it is equitably challenging and supporting all students to develop social-emotional and academic knowledge, skills, and competencies to prepare for college, careers, transitional pathways, and life.

**Recommendation**

**1. The district should set priorities to examine the structural impediments that persist and limit equitable learning experiences for students who currently are not fully able to access and engage in the increasing opportunities in the district to develop college and career ready skills and dispositions.**

**A.** The superintendent, school committee, and principals should construct a series of expedited listening sessions with Northampton students. The listening sessions, attracting a broad base of students, should be structured to enlist their views on their educational experience in the district. Particular attention should be given to the culture of the school environment, diversity and inclusion, curriculum, instruction, assessment, and support services. Data should be collected and used to frame an internal review of the systems and practices identified as posing barriers.

1. Student selection criteria should include critical stakeholders who may be marginalized from decision-making opportunities. Students who represent areas where the district has been found out of compliance should be included and could be guided to understand the importance and value of their perspectives. Students should know their voices would inform decisions about structures and practices to increase access and engagement.

a. The district should routinize listening sessions with students as part of the ongoing, review and assessments of programming for the purposes of mid-course correction or calibration.

2. The district should determine if any quick wins, resulting in reductions to structural barriers and increasing access and engagement, are acted upon and put in place.

3. Other more deeply systemic barriers to equitable access to rigorous coursework and learning experiences should be assigned to a responsibility area to outline a process to conduct a more systemic review and identify an action plan developed with SMART goals to take specific steps to reduce or eliminate structural and cultural barriers to student access and engagement.

4. The district should continue to invest time to develop and design meaningful college and career pathways options designed to attract all students, while remaining focused on students who have been historically marginalized in the district.

**B.** The district should take immediate action to conduct a thorough review of the literature on multi-tiered systems of behavioral support to broaden and complement the current response to intervention (RtI).

* + - 1. The district should set a timeline with clear benchmarks and expectations for fidelity of implementation, to coherently articulate systems for positive behavioral supports that are vertically and horizontally aligned across all school sites, K–5, 6–8, and 9–12 for a more robust balanced behavioral tiered system.
      2. Given the accelerated shift from segregated service delivery models, this review should be done with a view to reshaping inclusive learning environments that support all learners, and limit the likelihood of students being designated as at risk. The district should place a greater emphasis on understanding behavior and responding to the underlying causes of behavior.
      3. Given the student populations that make up the school district, deliberate, conscious effort should be made to link the anti-bias initiative to ensure systems of positive behavioral support are culturally relevant and responsive, affirming of students’ identity, including culture, race and/or ethnicity, linguistic style, social condition, gender classification, and family/caregiver configurations.

4. The district should continue to improve the system of tiered supports within the elementary schools and ensure that educators have access to a complete and aligned curriculum that supports teachers to engage and challenge all students.

5. The district should build teachers’ capacity to analyze and use data to support and challenge all learners. (See the Assessment recommendation above.)

6. The district should continue its efforts in providing staff with focused professional development (PD) in effectively using differentiation and interventions in lesson planning and daily instruction. The district should consider extending to the secondary level the coaching model established at the elementary level to embed and ensure ongoing PD.

7. The district should identify common assessments at the secondary level that would guide all staff in the early identification of students’ needs.

8. The district should assess the effectiveness of current interventions at the secondary level and determine the types of interventions needed to ensure that all students have access to, and can succeed in, challenging content.

**Benefits:** Students benefit from a predictable, culturally relevant system that maintains their dignity regardless of their cognitive, physical, social-emotional, and behavioral manifestations. The district and schools benefit as they advance students along the academic continuum with increasing guarantees for engagement in high-quality learning experiences.

**Recommended resources:**

* The *Massachusetts Systems for Student Success (SfSS)* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfss/>) is a blueprint for school improvement that focuses on systems, structures and supports across the district, school, and classroom to meet the academic and non-academic needs of all students. The SfSS website includes links to a self-assessment and a variety of helpful resources.
* The *Educator Effectiveness Guidebook for Inclusive Practice* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/guidebook/>) includes tools for districts, schools, and educators that are aligned to the MA Educator Evaluation Framework and promote evidence-based best practices for inclusion following the principles of Universal Design for Learning, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and Social and Emotional Learning.

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

Review Team Members

The review was conducted from February 4–6, 2019, by the following team of independent DESE consultants.

1. Milt Burnett, Curriculum and Instruction
2. Sue Kelly, Curriculum and Instruction
3. George Gearhart, Assessment
4. Marilynne Smith Quarcoo, Student Support
5. Tom LaValley, Student Support
6. Christine Brandt, *review team coordinator*

District Review Activities

The following activities were conducted during the review:

The team conducted interviews with the following members of the school committee: the chair and seven members.

The review team conducted interviews with the following representatives of the Northampton Association of School Employees: the president, the vice president, the professional rights and responsibilities chair, and the Unit A chapter coordinator representing teachers.

The team conducted interviews/focus groups with the following central office administrators: the superintendent, the director of curriculum, and the director of student services.

The team visited the following schools: Bridge Street (Pre-K–5), Jackson Street (K–5), Leeds (K–5), Finn Ryan Road (K-–5), J. F. Kennedy Middle School (grades 6–8), and Northampton High School (grades 9–12).

During the onsite review, the team conducted interviews with students, students’ families, and 6 principals, and focus groups with 87 elementary-school teachers, 55 middle-school teachers, and 42 high-school teachers.

The team observed 68 classes in the district: 28 at the high school, 18 at the middle school, and 22 at the 4 elementary schools.

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

* + Student and school performance data, including achievement and growth, enrollment, graduation, dropout, retention, suspension, and attendance rates.
  + Data on the district’s staffing and finances.
  + Published educational reports on the district by DESE, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), and the former Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA).
  + 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, Tiered Focused Monitoring and/or Coordinated Program Review reports, and the district’s end-of-year financial reports.

Site Visit Schedule

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Monday**  02/04/2019 | **Tuesday**  02/05/2019 | **Wednesday**  02/06/2019 |
| Orientation with district leaders; interviews with teacher curriculum leaders; document reviews; teacher focus groups; interview with teachers’ association; and visits to J.F. Kennedy Middle School for classroom observations. | Interviews with district staff and principals; teacher focus group; students’ families’ focus group; interviews with school committee members, and visits to the Bridge, Jackson, Leeds, and Ryan Road elementary schools, and Northampton High School for classroom observations. | Interviews with school leaders; student focus group; visits to Jackson, Leeds, and Finn Ryan elementary schools, and J.F. Kennedy Middle School for classroom observations. |

Appendix B: Enrollment, Attendance, Expenditures

**Table B1a: Northampton Public Schools**

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

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **District** | **Percent**  **of Total** | **State** | **Percent of**  **Total** |
| African-American | 70 | 2.6% | 86,305 | 9.0% |
| Asian | 113 | 4.3% | 65,667 | 6.9% |
| Hispanic | 424 | 16.0% | 191,201 | 20.0% |
| Native American | 5 | 0.2% | 2,103 | 0.2% |
| White | 1,882 | 70.8% | 573,335 | 60.1% |
| Native Hawaiian | -- | -- | 818 | 0.1% |
| Multi-Race, Non-Hisp./Lat. | 164 | 6.2% | 34,605 | 3.6% |
| All | 2,658 | 100.0% | 954,034 | 100.0% |
| Note: As of October 1, 2017 | | | | |

**Table B1b: Northampton Public Schools**

**2017–2018 Student Enrollment by High Needs Populations**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **District** | | | **State** | | |
| **N** | **Percent of High Needs** | **Percent of District** | **N** | **Percent of High Needs** | **Percent of State** |
| Students w/ disabilities | 576 | 54.6% | 21.4% | 171,061 | 38.0% | 17.7% |
| Econ. Dis. | 697 | 66.1% | 26.2% | 305,203 | 67.9% | 32.0% |
| EL | 95 | 9.0% | 3.6% | 97,334 | 21.6% | 10.2% |
| All high needs students | 1,055 | 100.0% | 39.1% | 449,584 | 100.0% | 46.6% |
| Notes: As of October 1, 2017. District and state numbers and percentages for students with disabilities and high needs students are calculated including students in out-of-district placements. Total district enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 2,696; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 964,806. | | | | | | |

**Table B2a: Northampton Public Schools**

**Attendance Rates by Student Group, 2015–2018**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2018)** |
| African American/Black | 77 | 95.8 | 95.8 | 95.2 | 95.4 | -0.4 | 94.1 |
| Asian | 117 | 94.9 | 95.0 | 95.9 | 95.4 | 0.5 | 96.2 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 482 | 93.1 | 93.2 | 92.6 | 92.9 | -0.2 | 92.7 |
| Multi-Race, Non-Hisp./Lat. | 170 | 95.3 | 95.4 | 95.1 | 95.3 | 0.0 | 94.4 |
| White | 1,946 | 95.3 | 95.5 | 95.2 | 95.2 | -0.1 | 95.1 |
| High Needs | 1,179 | 93.3 | 93.5 | 93.0 | 93.3 | 0.0 | 93.2 |
| Econ. Dis. | 844 | 92.8 | 92.7 | 92.4 | 92.8 | 0.0 | 92.5 |
| SWD | 627 | 93.3 | 93.7 | 92.7 | 92.9 | -0.4 | 92.9 |
| EL | 110 | 93.2 | 94.1 | 92.4 | 93.1 | -0.1 | 93.3 |
| All | 2,797 | 94.9 | 95.1 | 94.8 | 94.9 | 0.0 | 94.5 |
| Notes: The attendance rate is calculated by dividing the total number of days students attended school by the total number of days students were enrolled in a particular school year. A student’s attendance rate is counted toward any district the student attended. In addition, district attendance rates included students who were out placed in public collaborative or private alternative schools/programs at public expense. Attendance rates have been rounded; percent change is based on unrounded numbers. | | | | | | | |

**Table B2b: Northampton Public Schools**

**Chronic Absence Rates by Student Group,\* 2015–2018**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Group** | **N (2018)** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** | **2018** | **4-yr Change** | **State (2018)** |
| African American/Black | 77 | 14.1 | 10.8 | 9.3 | 11.7 | -2.4 | 16.4 |
| Asian | 117 | 13.7 | 13.0 | 10.7 | 9.4 | -4.3 | 7.6 |
| Hispanic or Latino | 482 | 21.7 | 21.2 | 25.3 | 24.9 | 3.2 | 22.5 |
| Multi-Race, Non-Hisp./Lat. | 170 | 9.9 | 11.7 | 11.1 | 13.5 | 3.6 | 14.2 |
| White | 1,946 | 9.4 | 8.7 | 8.2 | 9.0 | -0.4 | 10.0 |
| High Needs | 1,179 | 20.4 | 19.9 | 20.2 | 20.4 | 0.0 | 20.1 |
| Econ. Dis. | 844 | 23.4 | 24.0 | 24.0 | 23.8 | 0.4 | 22.9 |
| SWD | 627 | 20.3 | 19.0 | 21.0 | 21.4 | 1.1 | 20.7 |
| EL | 110 | 23.0 | 18.8 | 26.6 | 21.8 | -1.2 | 20.4 |
| All | 2,797 | 11.8 | 11.4 | 11.5 | 12.2 | 0.4 | 13.2 |
| \* The percentage of students absent 10 percent or more of their total number of student days of membership in a school | | | | | | | |

**Table B3: Northampton Public Schools**

**Expenditures, Chapter 70 State Aid, and Net School Spending Fiscal Years 2016–2018**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **FY16** | | | **FY17** | | | **FY18** | | |
|  | **Estimated** | | **Actual** | **Estimated** | **Actual** | | **Estimated** | | **Actual** |
| Expenditures | | | | | | | | | |
| From local appropriations for schools: |  | | | | | | | | |
| By school committee | $28,102,228 | $28,813,208 | | $28,323,186 | | $28,316,854 | | $29,732,907 | $29,633,854 |
| By municipality | $12,839,574 | $11,499,435 | | $12,827,591 | | $12,493,186 | | $12,751,559 | $13,622,624 |
| Total from local appropriations | $40,941,802 | $40,312,643 | | $41,150,777 | | $40,810,040 | | $42,484,466 | $43,256,478 |
| From revolving funds and grants | -- | $5,175,816 | | -- | | $5,423,524 | | -- | $5,048,502 |
| Total expenditures | -- | $45,488,459 | | -- | | $46,233,564 | | -- | $48,304,980 |
| Chapter 70 aid to education program | | | | | | | | | |
| Chapter 70 state aid\* | -- | $7,162,729 | | -- | | $7,313,539 | | -- | $7,395,919 |
| Required local contribution | -- | $22,846,792 | | -- | | $22,747,409 | | -- | $23,143,930 |
| Required net school spending\*\* | -- | $30,009,521 | | -- | | $30,060,948 | | -- | $30,539,849 |
| Actual net school spending | -- | $34,749,734 | | -- | | $36,695,964 | | -- | $38,061,131 |
| Over/under required ($) | -- | $4,740,213 | | -- | | $6,635,016 | | -- | $7,521,282 |
| Over/under required (%) | -- | 15.8% | | -- | | 22.1% | | -- | 24.6% |
| \*Chapter 70 state aid funds are deposited in the local general fund and spent as local appropriations.  \*\*Required net school spending is the total of Chapter 70 aid and required local contribution. Net school spending includes only expenditures from local appropriations, not revolving funds and grants. It includes expenditures for most administration, instruction, operations, and out-of-district tuitions. It does not include transportation, school lunches, debt, or capital.  Sources: FY16, FY17, and FY18 District End-of-Year Reports, Chapter 70 Program information on DESE website  Data retrieved 11/13/18 and 7/11/19 | | | | | | | | | |

**Table B4: Northampton Public Schools**

**Expenditures Per In-District Pupil**

**Fiscal Years 2015–2017**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Expenditure Category** | **2015** | **2016** | **2017** |
| Administration | $581 | $587 | $611 |
| Instructional leadership (district and school) | $751 | $787 | $804 |
| Teachers | $4,740 | $4,965 | $5,202 |
| Other teaching services | $1,408 | $1,457 | $1,470 |
| Professional development | $329 | $339 | $134 |
| Instructional materials, equipment and technology | $387 | $361 | $400 |
| Guidance, counseling and testing services | $438 | $504 | $544 |
| Pupil services | $1,178 | $1,102 | $1,141 |
| Operations and maintenance | $1,200 | $1,324 | $1,377 |
| Insurance, retirement and other fixed costs | $2,550 | $2,260 | $2,826 |
| Total expenditures per in-district pupil | $13,563 | $13,686 | $14,508 |
| Sources: [Per-pupil expenditure reports on DESE website](http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/statistics/ppx.html)  Note: Any discrepancy between expenditures and total is because of rounding. | | | |

Appendix C: Instructional Inventory

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Focus Area #1: Learning Objectives & Expectations** |  | Insufficient Evidence | Limited Evidence | Sufficient Evidence | Compelling Evidence | Avg Number of points |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (1 to 4) |
| 1. The teacher demonstrates knowledge of the subject matter. | **ES** | 0% | 27% | 59% | 14% | 2.9 |
| **MS** | 6% | 11% | 72% | 11% | 2.9 |
| **HS** | 4% | 21% | 46% | 29% | 3.0 |
| **Total #** | 2 | 14 | 39 | 13 |  |
| **Total %** | 3% | 21% | 57% | 19% | 2.9 |
| 2. The teacher ensures that students understand what they should be learning in the lesson and why. | **ES** | 5% | 27% | 50% | 18% | 2.8 |
| **MS** | 6% | 28% | 56% | 11% | 2.7 |
| **HS** | 11% | 25% | 46% | 18% | 2.7 |
| **Total #** | 5 | 18 | 34 | 11 |  |
| **Total %** | 7% | 26% | 50% | 16% | 2.8 |
| 3. The teacher uses appropriate classroom activities well matched to the learning objective(s). | **ES** | 9% | 14% | 55% | 23% | 2.9 |
| **MS** | 0% | 22% | 44% | 33% | 3.1 |
| **HS** | 7% | 25% | 32% | 36% | 3.0 |
| **Total #** | 4 | 14 | 29 | 21 |  |
| **Total %** | 6% | 21% | 43% | 31% | 3.0 |
| 4. The teacher conducts frequent checks for student understanding, provides feedback, and adjusts instruction. | **ES** | 5% | 18% | 55% | 23% | 3.0 |
| **MS** | 11% | 17% | 61% | 11% | 2.7 |
| **HS** | 7% | 25% | 54% | 14% | 2.8 |
| **Total #** | 5 | 14 | 38 | 11 |  |
| **Total %** | 7% | 21% | 56% | 16% | 2.8 |
| **Total Score For Focus Area #1** | **ES** |  |  |  |  | 11.5 |
| **MS** |  |  |  |  | 11.4 |
| **HS** |  |  |  |  | 11.4 |
| **Total** |  |  |  |  | 11.5 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Focus Area #2: Student Engagement & Higher-Order Thinking** |  | Insufficient Evidence | Limited Evidence | Sufficient Evidence | Compelling Evidence | Avg Number of points |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (1 to 4) |
| 5. Students assume responsibility to learn and are engaged in the lesson. | **ES** | 5% | 23% | 45% | 27% | 2.9 |
| **MS** | 6% | 22% | 50% | 22% | 2.9 |
| **HS** | 7% | 32% | 32% | 29% | 3.0 |
| **Total #** | 4 | 18 | 28 | 18 |  |
| **Total %** | 6% | 26% | 41% | 26% | 2.9 |
| 6. Students engage in higher-order thinking. | **ES** | 18% | 50% | 18% | 14% | 2.8 |
| **MS** | 0% | 56% | 33% | 11% | 2.7 |
| **HS** | 18% | 29% | 39% | 14% | 2.7 |
| **Total #** | 9 | 29 | 21 | 9 |  |
| **Total %** | 13% | 43% | 31% | 13% | 2.8 |
| 7. Students communicate their ideas and thinking with each other. | **ES** | 9% | 45% | 41% | 5% | 2.9 |
| **MS** | 6% | 39% | 50% | 6% | 3.1 |
| **HS** | 25% | 21% | 39% | 14% | 3.0 |
| **Total #** | 10 | 23 | 29 | 6 |  |
| **Total %** | 15% | 34% | 43% | 9% | 3.0 |
| 8. Students engage with meaningful, real-world tasks. | **ES** | 5% | 27% | 50% | 18% | 3.0 |
| **MS** | 11% | 28% | 33% | 28% | 2.7 |
| **HS** | 14% | 21% | 46% | 18% | 2.8 |
| **Total #** | 7 | 17 | 30 | 14 |  |
| **Total %** | 10% | 25% | 44% | 21% | 2.8 |
| **Total Score For Focus Area #2** | **ES** |  |  |  |  | 11.5 |
| **MS** |  |  |  |  | 11.4 |
| **HS** |  |  |  |  | 11.4 |
| **Total** |  |  |  |  | 11.5 |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Focus Area #3: Inclusive Practice & Classroom Culture** |  | Insufficient Evidence | Limited Evidence | Sufficient Evidence | Compelling Evidence | Avg Number of points |
|  | (1) | (2) | (3) | (4) | (1 to 4) |
| 9. The teacher ensures that students are engaging in challenging tasks regardless of learning needs. | **ES** | 5% | 14% | 73% | 9% | 2.9 |
| **MS** | 11% | 39% | 44% | 6% | 2.4 |
| **HS** | 18% | 39% | 29% | 14% | 2.4 |
| **Total #** | 8 | 21 | 32 | 7 |  |
| **Total %** | 12% | 31% | 47% | 10% | 2.6 |
| 10. The teacher uses a variety of instructional strategies. | **ES** | 14% | 41% | 41% | 5% | 2.4 |
| **MS** | 17% | 50% | 22% | 11% | 2.3 |
| **HS** | 18% | 43% | 36% | 4% | 2.3 |
| **Total #** | 11 | 30 | 23 | 4 |  |
| **Total %** | 16% | 44% | 34% | 6% | 2.3 |
| 11. Classroom routines and positive supports are in place to ensure that students behave appropriately. | **ES** | 5% | 18% | 27% | 50% | 3.2 |
| **MS** | 6% | 17% | 44% | 33% | 3.1 |
| **HS** | 4% | 4% | 29% | 64% | 3.5 |
| **Total #** | 3 | 8 | 22 | 35 |  |
| **Total %** | 4% | 12% | 32% | 51% | 3.3 |
| 12. The classroom climate is conducive to teaching and learning. | **ES** | 5% | 14% | 32% | 50% | 3.3 |
| **MS** | 6% | 17% | 50% | 28% | 3.0 |
| **HS** | 4% | 7% | 32% | 57% | 3.4 |
| **Total #** | 3 | 8 | 25 | 32 |  |
| **Total %** | 4% | 12% | 37% | 47% | 3.3 |
| **Total Score For Focus Area #3** | **ES** |  |  |  |  | 11.7 |
| **MS** |  |  |  |  | 10.8 |
| **HS** |  |  |  |  | 11.6 |
| **Total** |  |  |  |  | 11.4 |

1. High-quality feedback is specific, timely, and actionable. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. WIDA stands for World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. At the time of the 2012 district review, DESE used the low-income variable. In 2015, DESE introduced a different variable called “economically disadvantaged,” which typically is a lower percentage. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)