

Superintendents, Charter Leaders, & Collaborative Leaders Spring Webinar

Acting Commissioner Russell D. Johnston

Wednesday, May 29, 2024

Agenda

- **DESE's Educational Vision**
- **Strategic Objective 1: Whole Student Supports**
 - Chronic Absenteeism
 - Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Standards
- **Strategic Objective 2: Deeper Learning**
 - Mass Literacy for Families and Communities
- **Strategic Objective 3: Diverse and Effective Workforce**
 - Regional Assistance Centers for Emergency Licensed Educators and Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program
- **DESE's Core Functions**
 - District Standards and Indicators
 - Timeline for Revising District and School Accountability System

DESE's Educational Vision

Theory of Action

If DESE...
Develops and promotes an Educational Vision and commits to providing coherent and aligned supports in service of that vision
Then Districts and Schools Will...
Strategically select and leverage DESE supports and resources
And Students Will...
Have equitable experiences and will thrive

Educational Vision



All students

- Are known and valued

Learning experiences

- Are relevant, real-world and interactive

Individualized supports

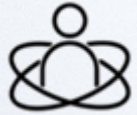
- Enable students to excel at grade level and beyond

DESE's Educational Vision

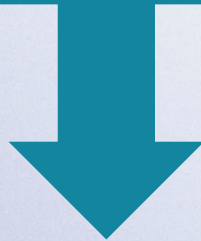
What outcomes do we envision as a result of our work?

Our vision is that as a result of their public education in Massachusetts, students will attain academic knowledge and skills, understand and value self and others, and engage with the world.

This will enable students to be curious and creative, shape their path, feel connected, and be empowered.



Cultivate Systems to Support the Whole Student



- *Physical and mental health and wellness*
- *Safe and supportive school environments*
- *Multi-tiered systems of support*
- *Authentic partnerships with students and families*



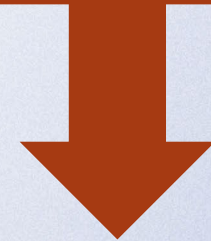
Promote Deeper Learning



- *High quality and engaging instructional materials*
- *Academic supports and interventions*
- *High quality career and college pathways and programs*
- *Holistic range of programming*



Expand and Sustain a Diverse and Effective Workforce



- *Robust pipeline of well-prepared educators*
- *Retention of diverse and effective staff*
- *Opportunities for all staff to engage in a cycle of continuous improvement*

DESE's Core Functions



Setting expectations including crafting regulations and guidance to implement and explain education laws; specifying what students should know and be able to do by the end of each school year; defining effective teaching and administrative practices; and, where appropriate, establishing criteria for program review and approval



Promoting and measuring quality and compliance including data collection and reporting; assessment; accountability; monitoring programs and their adherence to state and federal laws and regulations; complaint resolution; research and evaluation; fiscal auditing; and recognizing excellence.



Supporting implementation and catalyzing innovation through grants, aid, and other funding mechanisms; professional learning opportunities; technical and targeted assistance; partnerships and networks; resources, materials, tools, and technology; seeding innovative school and program models; direct service provision; and creating economies of scale.



Communicating and partnering with stakeholders including communications and information sharing; coordination with other state agencies; and engaging with statewide stakeholders.

Educational Vision: Impact on Districts and Schools

DESE's Educational Vision & Catalog of Aligned Supports

Russell D. Johnston
Acting Commissioner

June 2024



Strategic Objective 1: Cultivate systems to support the whole student and foster joyful, healthy, and supportive learning environments so that all students feel valued, connected, nourished, and ready to learn.



- Chronic Absenteeism
- Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Standards

Strategic Objective 2: Promote deeper learning so that all students engage in grade-level work that is real-world, relevant, and interactive.



Mass Literacy for Families and Communities

Strategic Objective 3: Develop and sustain a workforce that is diverse, culturally responsive, well-prepared, and committed to continuous improvement, so that all students have equitable access to effective educators.



- Regional Assistance Centers for Emergency Licensed Educators
- Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program

Core Function: Promoting and measuring quality and compliance including data collection and reporting; assessment; accountability; monitoring programs and their adherence to state and federal laws and regulations; complaint resolution; research and evaluation; fiscal auditing; and recognizing excellence.



- District Standards and Indicators
- Timeline for Revising District and School Accountability System

Strategic Objective 1: Whole Student Supports Chronic Absenteeism



[Home](#) > [Statewide Reports](#) > [Student Attendance](#)

2023-24 (March) Attendance Report (District) - All Students



[Export](#) [Print](#)

This report includes several indicators that reflect attendance information collected on March 1st and at the end of the selected school year for students in grades PK-12. Click a district or school name to view its detailed report.

[More about the data.](#)

NOTE: This is a revised Attendance Report and now includes student group data. For attendance data reported in previous years, please see <http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/statereport/indicators.aspx>

Data was last updated on May 16, 2024.

Report Type:

District ▾

Year:

2023-24 (March) ▾

Student Group:

All Students ▾

[View Report](#)

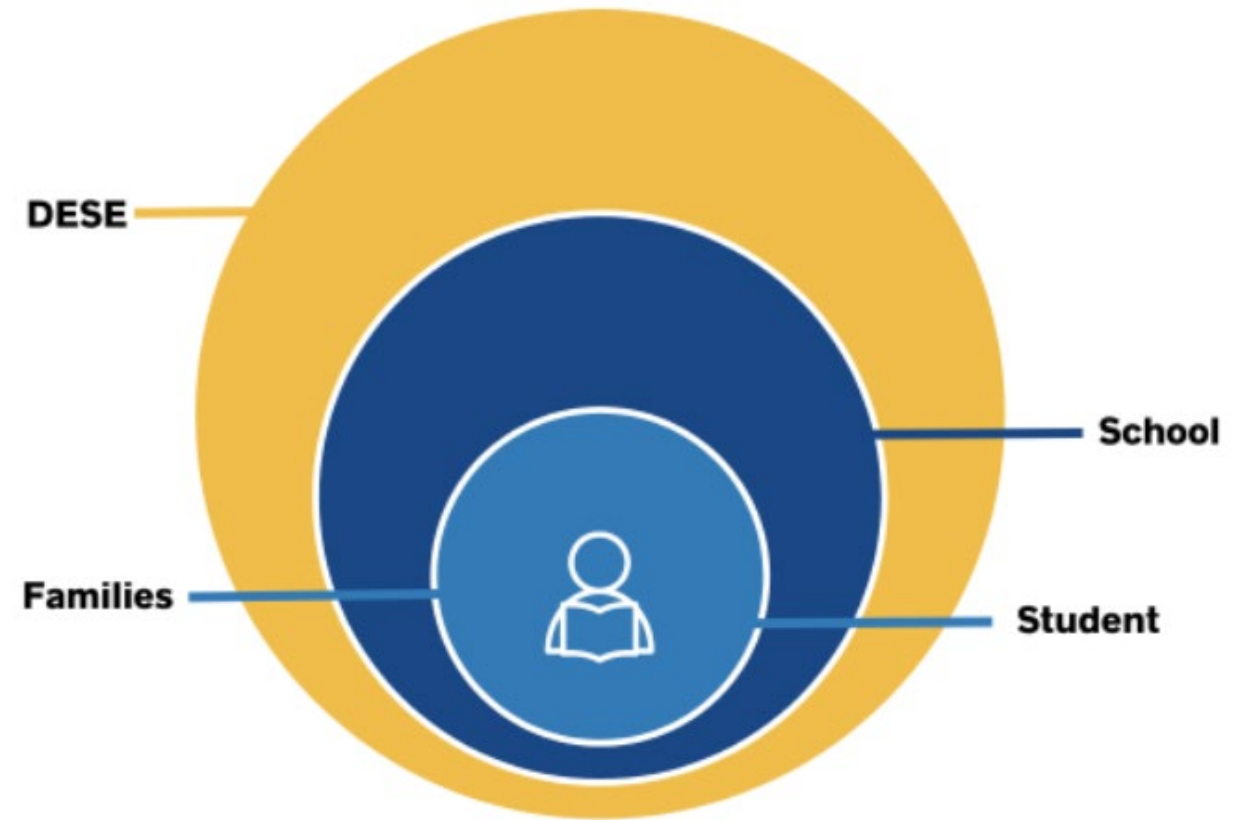
District Name	District Code	Attendance Rate	Average # of Absences	Absent 10 or more days	Chronically Absent (10% or more)	Chronically Absent (20% or more)	Unexcused > 9 days

Chronic Absenteeism Data Takeaways

- Chronic absenteeism rate **decreased by 4.9 percentage points** from 24.5% as of March 1, 2023 to 19.6% as of March 1, 2024.
- The decrease this year represents a **20% reduction** equaling almost 45,000 students considered to be chronically absent as compared to March 1st of the 2023 school year.
- Reduction from last year to this year **reduced the pre-pandemic gap by 42%.**

Chronic Absenteeism Data Takeaways Cont.

- There is **still work to do** to reach pre-pandemic levels of 12.9%.
- We know that districts, families, and students have been working together to improve attendance, and we're **pleased to see these numbers moving in the right direction.**



Federal Resources for Improving Attendance

- White House recently hosted “Every Day Counts” Summit
- Culture of Attendance
- Announced several resources and toolkits



Dr. Erin Hashimoto-Martell

Associate Commissioner

Strategic Objective 1: Whole Student Supports

Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Standards

COMPREHENSIVE HEALTH AND PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Massachusetts
Curriculum
Framework –
2023

Grades Pre-Kindergarten to 12

- ✓ LGBTQ+ inclusive
- ✓ Medically accurate
- ✓ Developmentally and age-appropriate



“All of our students benefit when they learn from up-to-date, evidence-based material grounded in science. These new guidelines will empower students with the skills they need to build healthy lives in school and beyond.”

-Governor Maura Healey

Comprehensive Health & Physical Education (CHPE) Curriculum Framework

- MASS Summer Executive Institute Panel (July)
- CHPE District Leader Network (Launches in Sept.)
- Overview Sessions
- Professional Development

Strategic Objective 2: Deeper Learning Mass Literacy for Families and Communities

Mass Literacy for Families & Communities

Mass Literacy Guide

English



Components of the Core Literacy Block



Skills for Early Reading



Students Experiencing Reading Difficulties



Leading a Multi-tiered System of Support



Pathway to Equity in Early Literacy



Mass Literacy for Families and Communities

Mass Literacy for Families & Communities Cont.

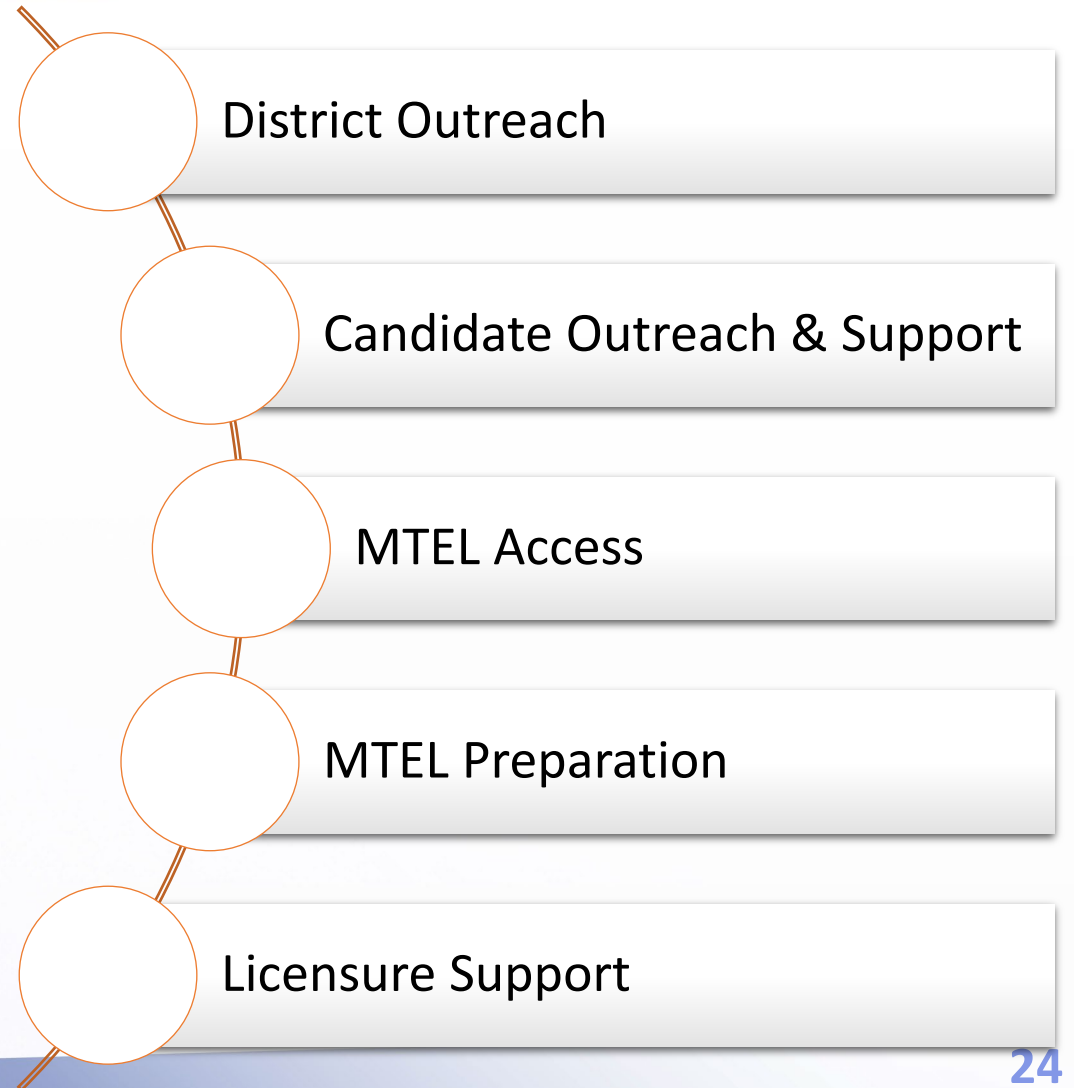
- **Family friendly, concise, accessible** information about early literacy for families
- **Affirming** and acknowledging **culturally and linguistically sustaining** practices
- **Empower families** with **evidence-based information and practices** that will **support their students** to be strong readers.
- Supportive of **all families**

Strategic Objective 3: Diverse and Effective Workforce

Regional Assistance Centers for
Emergency Licensed Educators

Regional License Assistance Centers

- Region 1 – Western MA: **Westfield State University / Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts**
- Region 2 – Central MA: **Stonehill College**
- Region 3 – Southeast MA: **Bridgewater State University**
- Region 4 – Boston: **Class Measures**
- Region 5 – Metro North: **Salem State**



Strategic Objective 3: Diverse and Effective Workforce

Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program

Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program

What is a Registered Apprenticeship?



Apprentice completes a **degree program** from an EPP



Apprentice gains **hands-on experience** in a K-12 classroom, under the guidance of a **mentor teacher**



Apprentice can **“earn-and-learn”** as a full-time employee

Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program

- **Fall 2024:** Grant Opportunity Opens to Become a Registered Teacher Apprenticeship (RTA) site (information sessions and webinars will be provided)
- **Early 2025:** SY2025-26 RTA Cohort 1 sites selected
- **Spring/Summer 2025:** RTA mentor training, apprentice recruitment
- **Fall 2025:** RTA Cohort 1 launches

Rob Curtin

Chief Officer for Data, Assessment, and
Accountability

DESE's Core Functions

District Standards and Indicators

District Standards and Indicators

- DESE's evidence-based definition of strong district systems, policy, and practice
- Foundation of District Review Reports
 - Inform the documents collected, questions asked, report findings, and recommendations issued
- Last updated in 2018
- The six standards, as identified in state regulations, remain unchanged



District Standards and Indicators

Organization of This Document

The first page introduces the *District Standards and Indicators*, as well as the statutory and regulatory context. On the next page, each standard and its related indicators are listed. The following pages are dedicated to describing each standard and indicator in greater detail, along with connected "look-fors" that stakeholders can use to evaluate district effectiveness. Finally, the last page includes a glossary of terms commonly used in this document.

Introduction

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE's) *District Standards and Indicators* are the agency's definition of effective school district policy and practice. The 6 standards and their 21 related indicators were developed based on research and on input from school-, district-, and state-level stakeholders about policies, systems, and practices, which, if implemented well, are likely to lead to improved student performance, opportunities, and outcomes. In particular, the document describes the focus on equity that all school districts must embrace to ensure they are effectively serving all students.

Statutory and Regulatory Context

As required by M.G.L. Ch. 15 § 55A, district reviews in Massachusetts provide an objective assessment of district success and performance relative to the *District Standards and Indicators*. The *District Standards and Indicators* fulfill the statutory requirement described under M.G.L. Ch. 69 § 1B: "The board shall establish the process and standards for school and district audits and reviews conducted by the office of school and district accountability established by section 55A of chapter 15."

The *District Standards and Indicators* are also described in regulations 603 CMR 2.03 (6), as follows:

"(a) District reviews, improvement planning, and other forms of accountability and assistance shall be based on standards of effective policy and practice in:

- Leadership and governance;
- Curriculum and instruction;
- Assessment;
- Human resources and professional development;
- Student support; and
- Financial and asset management.

(b) The Department shall publish a detailed version of the standards and associated indicators, which shall be informed by research-based practices identified as characteristic of schools that have experienced rapid improvements in student outcomes."

Current Version: 6 Standards, 21 Indicators

Leadership and Governance

- School Committee Governance
- District and School Leadership
- District and School Improvement Planning
- Budget Development

Curriculum and Instruction

- Curriculum Selection and Use
- Classroom Instruction
- Student Access to Coursework

Assessment

- Data and Assessment Systems
- Data Use
- Sharing Results

Human Resources and Professional Development

- Infrastructure
- Recruitment, Hiring, and Assignment
- Supervision, Evaluation, and Educator Development
- Recognition, Leadership Development, and Advancement

Student Support

- Safe and Supportive School Climate and Culture
- Tiered Systems of Support
- Family, Student, and Community Engagement and Partnerships

Financial and Asset Management

- Budget Documentation and Reporting
- Adequate Budget
- Financial Tracking, Forecasting, Controls, and Audits
- Capital Planning and Facility Maintenance

Organization

Standard



Indicator



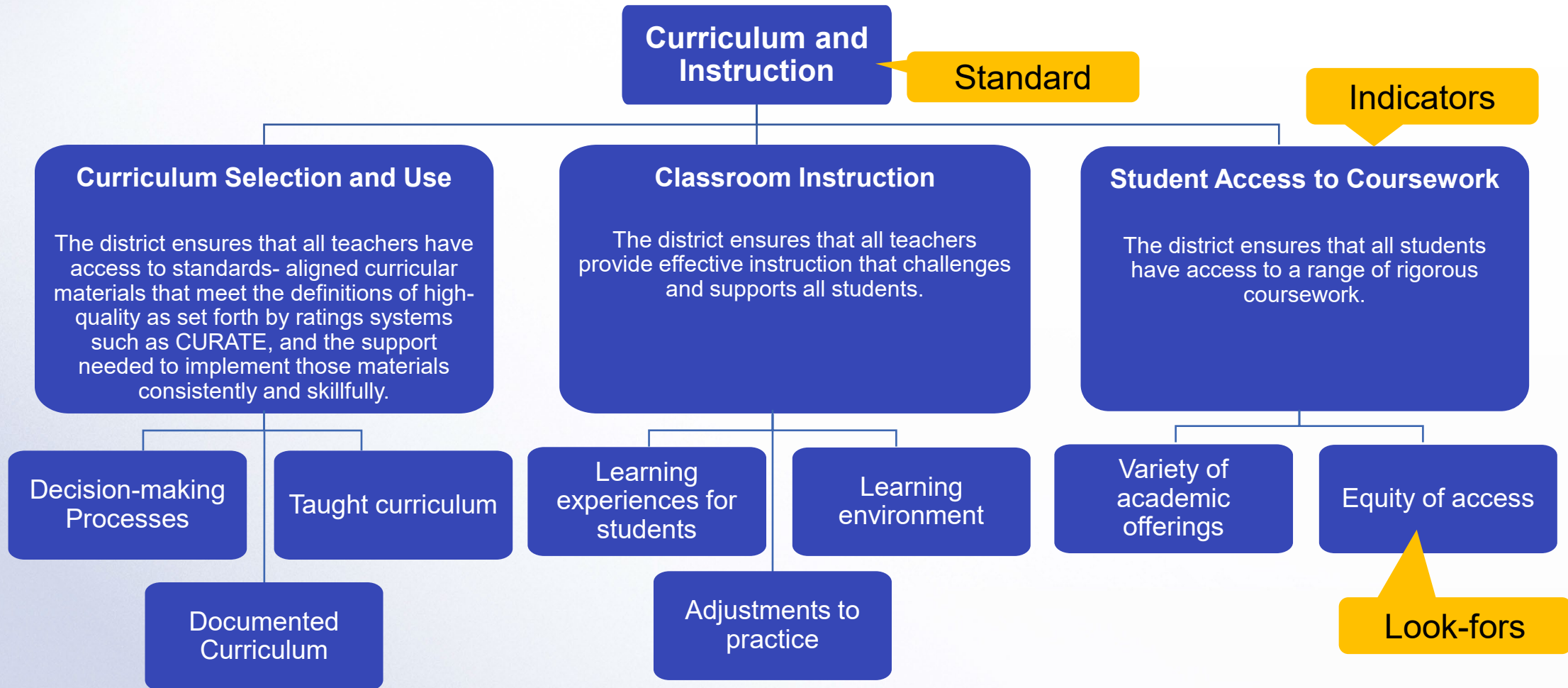
Look-For

Standards are the high-level categories of district functions

Indicators are supporting components of the standard

Look-fors are specific practices related to the indicator

Example: Curriculum and Instruction Standard



The Use of *District Standards and Indicators*: District Reviews

- DESE's Office of District Reviews and Monitoring (ODRM) reviews approximately 20 districts each year
- In-depth look into the systems, structures, and practices of a school district and the ways they affect student experiences and outcomes
- The process includes:
 - Document collection and review
 - Focus groups and interviews with district leadership, school committee members, municipal leaders, teachers, families, and students
 - Classroom observations
 - Final report

Project Objectives

Using DESE's Racial Equity Decision-Making Tool (REDT) as our guide, ODRM is updating the **indicators** and **look-fors** within each standard to:

1. Reflect the most recent and highest-quality research around best practices in education
2. Take an explicit equity lens
3. Communicate a cohesive vision for effective district systems that is aligned to DESE's [Educational Vision](#) and can inform work throughout the Department

Project Timeline

Summer 2023

Fall/Winter 2023/24

Spring 2024 & Beyond

REDT Step 1:
Define the Initiative

REDT Step 2:
Analyze Data and Historical Context

REDT Step 3:
Engage Stakeholders

REDT Step 4:
Identify Racial Equity Strategies and Impact

REDT Step 5:
Assess Implementation and Viability

REDT Step 6:
Ensure Accountability

Progress

- Reviewed similar practices in other states/localities
- Conducted a content analysis of all reports issued in 2022/23
- Gathered feedback from district leaders who recently underwent reviews
- Convened 6 standard-specific committees of DESE staff (over 30 content-area experts across offices)
- Developed a first draft of the updated *District Standards and Indicators* and applied feedback from internal DESE staff
- Gathered feedback from BESE advisory councils and external experts and community members

Key Learnings and Changes

Previous Version

- Inconsistency in evaluating equity (particularly racial equity) across indicators and look-fors
- Inconsistencies in the level of detail in each standard and indicator
- Indicators and look-fors were not connected to their impacts on students
- Outdated language that did not align with the Educational Vision and core DESE guidance
- Missing pieces (ex: mental health systems, district operations, instructional leadership, etc.)

Revised Draft

Emphasizes ALL students, including and especially those who have been historically underserved

Increased level of detail throughout for additional clarity

Intentionally centers students

Updated language that aligns with the Educational Vision, Coherence Guidebook, and DESE guidance

Added new indicators and look-fors

Next Steps

- Consider BESE and other feedback in the production of a final draft
- Implement the updated *District Standards and Indicators* in district reviews taking place in the 2024-25 school year
- Disseminate the *District Standards and Indicators* to support work across DESE, as well as in districts and schools
- Assess the effectiveness of revised *District Standards and Indicators* by monitoring implementation, collecting feedback from district staff, and conducting an analysis that compares final reports from the 2024-25 school year and earlier

DESE's Core Functions

Timeline for Revising District and School Accountability System

Accountability System Review Advisory Committee

- External stakeholder group tasked with reviewing the existing district and school accountability system
- Responsible for providing insights on the strengths and weaknesses of the current district and school accountability system
- Will produce a report that includes recommendations for change for the Commissioner's consideration

Accountability System Review Advisory Committee Cont.

- Student Advisory Council (SAC)
- Massachusetts Parent-Teacher Association (MPTA)
- National Parents Union - Massachusetts (NPU-MA)
- American Federation of Teachers (AFT)
- Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA)
- District staff with specific accountability expertise
- Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC)
- Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS)
- Massachusetts Association of Vocational Administrators (MAVA)
- Urban Superintendent Network (USN)
- Massachusetts School Administrators Association (MSAA)
- Democrats for Education Reform (DFER)
- Latinos for Education
- Massachusetts Advocates for Children (MAC)
- Massachusetts Charter Public School Association (MCPSA)
- Massachusetts Consortium for Innovative Education Assessment (MCIEA)
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)
- Massachusetts Business Alliance for Education (MBAE)

Timeline for work

December 2023 through June 2024 – 7 advisory committee meetings to develop recommendations

Summer 2024 – Report from committee to DESE

Fall 2024 – stakeholder input on recommendations

Winter 2024 – Board and USED approval (if necessary)

September 2025 - implementation of any possible changes

Looking Ahead

Q&A