**Massachusetts**

**Consolidated State Plan**

**Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)**

**May 2024**

Original Plan Approved September 2017

Department of Education logo

**U.S. Department of Education**

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# Consolidated State Plan Crosswalk

The table below provides a crosswalk between the original plan template released by the U.S. Department of Education in November 2016 and the revised plan template released in March 2017. **The Massachusetts plan uses the original template**, modified to include requirements that were added to the revised template.

| **State Plan Requirements by Program** | **Statutory and Regulatory Requirements** | **Item(s) from Revised Template** | **Item(s) from** **Original Template** | **Page(s) within this document** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by Local Educational Agencies (LEAs)** | **Citation to ESEA, as amended by the ESSA, and Part 200 regulations** |  |  |  |
| Eighth Grade Math Exception | 1111(b)(2)(C); 34 CFR 200.5(b) | A.2.i-iii | 3.A |  |
| Native Language Assessment*s* | 1111(b)(2)(F); 34 CFR 200.6(f)(2)(ii) and (f)(4) | A.3.i-iv | 3.B |  |
| Statewide Accountability System and School Support and Improvement Activities (1111(c) and (d)) |  |  |  |  |
| Subgroups | 1111(c)(2) | A.4.i.a-d | 4.1.B |  |
| Minimum N-Size | 1111(c)(3) | A.4.ii.a-e | 4.1.C |  |
| Establishment of Long-Term Goals | 1111(c)(4)(A) | A.4.iii.a-c | 1.A-C |  |
| Indicators | 1111(c)(4)(B) | A.4.iv.a-e | 4.1.A |  |
| Annual Meaningful Differentiation | 1111(c)(4)(C) | A.4.v.a-c | 4.1.D; 4.1.G |  |
| Identification of Schools | 1111(c)(4)(C)(iii) and (D); 1111(d)(2)(C)-(D) | A.4.vi.a-g | 4.2.A-B |  |
| Annual Measurement of Achievement | 1111(c)(4)(E)(iii) | A.4.vii | 4.1.E |  |
| Continued Support for School and LEA Improvement | 1111(d)(3) | A.4.viii.a-f | 4.2.A.ii; 4.2.B.iii; 4.3.B-D |  |
| Disproportionate Rates of Access to Educators | 1111(g)(1) (B) | A.5 | 5.3.B-C |  |
| School Conditions | 1111(g)(1)(C) | A.6 | 6.1.C |  |
| School Transitions | 1111(g)(1)(D) | A.7 | 6.1.A-B |  |
| **Title I, Part C: Education of Migratory Children** |  |  |  |  |
| Supporting Needs of Migratory Children | 1304(b)(1) | B.1.i-iv | 6.2.B.ii –iii and vi |  |
| Promote Coordination of Services | 1304(b)(3) | B.2 | 6.2.B.iv |  |
| Use of Funds | 1304(b)(4) | B.3 | 6.2.B.viii |  |
| **Title I, Part D: Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk** |  |  |  |  |
| Transitions Between Correctional Facilities and Local Programs | 1414(a)(1)(B) | C.1 | 6.2.C.i |  |
| Program Objectives and Outcomes | 1414(a)(2)(A) | C.2 | 6.2.C.ii |  |
| **Title II, Part A: Supporting Effective Instruction** |  |  |  |  |
| Use of Funds | 2101(d)(2)(A) and (D) | D.1 | 5.2.A |  |
| Use of Funds to Improve Equitable Access to Teachers in Title I, Part A Schools | 2101(d)(2)(E) | D.2 | 5.2.A; 5.3.E |  |
| System of Certification and Licensing | 2101(d)(2)(B) | D.3 | 5.1.A |  |
| Improving Skills of Educators | 2101(d)(2)(J) | D.4 | 5.2.B |  |
| Data and Consultation | 2101(d)(2)(K) | D.5 | 2.C-D |  |
| Teacher Preparation | 2101(d)(2)(M) | D.6 | 5.1.B |  |
| **Title III, Part A, Subpart 1: English Language Acquisition and Language Enhancement** |  |  |  |  |
| Entrance and Exit Procedures | 3113(b)(2) | E.1 | 6.2.D.i |  |
| SEA Support for English Learner Progress | 3113(b)(6) | E.2.i-ii | -- |  |
| Monitoring and Technical Assistance | 3113(b)(8) | E.3.i-ii | 2.2.B and D |  |
| **Title IV, Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants** |  |  |  |  |
| Use of Funds | 4103(c)(2)(A) | F.1 | 6.1.A-E |  |
| Awarding Subgrants | 4103(c)(2)(B) | F.2 | -- |  |
| **Title IV, Part B: 21st Century Community Learning Centers** |  |  |  |  |
| Use of Funds | 4203(a)(2) | G.1 | 6.2.E.i |  |
| Awarding Subgrants | 4203(a)(4) | G.2 | 6.2.E.ii |  |
| **Title V, Part B, Subpart 2: Rural and Low-Income School Program** |  |  |  |  |
| Outcomes and Objectives | 5223(b)(1) | H.1 | 6.2.F.i |  |
| Technical Assistance | 5223(b)(3) | H.2 | 2.2.D |  |
| **Education for Homeless Children and Youth Program, McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, Title VII, Subtitle B** | **McKinney-Vento Citation** |  |  |  |
| Student Identification | 722(g)(1)(B) | I.1 | 6.2.G.i |  |
| Dispute Resolution | 722(g)(1)(C) | I.2 | 6.2.G.iii |  |
| Support for School Personnel | 722(g)(1)(D) | I.3 | 6.2.G.ii |  |
| Access to Services | 722(g)(1)(F)(i) | I.4 | 6.2.G.v.1 and 2; 6.2.G.iv |  |
| Strategies to Address Other Problems | 722(g)(1)(H) | I.5.i-v | 6.2.G.vi |  |
| Policies to Remove Barriers | 722(g)(1)(I) | I.6 | 6.2.G.vi |  |
| Assistance from Counselors | 722(g)(1)(K) | I.7 | -- |  |

# Introduction from U.S. Department of Education

Section 8302 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)[[1]](#footnote-2), permits the Secretary to establish procedures and criteria under which, after consultation with the Governor, a State educational agency (SEA) may submit a consolidated State plan designed to simplify the application requirements and reduce burden for SEAs. The Secretary must establish, for each covered program under section 8302 of the ESEA, and additional programs designated by the Secretary, the descriptions, information, assurances, and other material required to be included in a consolidated State plan.

The U.S. Department of Education (Department) encourages each State to think comprehensively about implementation of programs across the ESEA and to leverage funding to ensure a focus on equity and excellence for all students as it develops its consolidated State plan. Further, the Department aims to support collaboration and efficiency across multiple programs to help ensure that all children have significant opportunity to receive a fair, equitable, and high-quality education and that each SEA works to close achievement gaps.[[2]](#footnote-3)

The Department identified five overarching components and corresponding elements that integrate the included programs and that must be addressed by each SEA electing to submit a consolidated State plan. These components encourage each SEA to plan and implement included programs in a comprehensive way to support local educational agencies (LEAs), schools, and all subgroups of students.

The sections are as follows:

1. Long-Term Goals
2. Consultation and Performance Management
3. Academic Assessments
4. Accountability, Support, and Improvement for Schools
5. Supporting Excellent Educators
6. Supporting All Students

When developing its consolidated State plan, the Department encourages each SEA to reflect on its overall vision and how the different sections of the consolidated State plan work together to create one comprehensive approach to improving outcomes for all students. The Department encourages each SEA to consider: (1) what is the SEA’s vision with regard to its education system; (2) how does this plan help drive toward that vision; and (3) how will the SEA evaluate its effectiveness on an ongoing basis?

## Consultation

Under ESEA section 8540, each SEA must consult in a timely and meaningful manner with the Governor, or appropriate officials from the Governor’s office, including during the development and prior to submission of its consolidated State plan to the Department. A Governor shall have 30 days prior to the SEA submitting the consolidated State plan to the Secretary to sign the consolidated State plan. If the Governor has not signed the plan within 30 days of delivery by the SEA, the SEA shall submit the plan to the Department without such signature.

## Assurances

In order to receive fiscal year (FY) 2017 ESEA funds on July 1, 2017, for the programs that may be included in a consolidated State plan, and consistent with ESEA section 8302, each SEA must also submit a comprehensive set of assurances to the Department at a date and time established by the Secretary. In the near future, the Department will publish an information collection request that details these assurances.

# Cover Page

| **Contact Information and Signatures** |  |
| --- | --- |
| **SEA Contact** (Name and Position):  Matthew Deninger  Chief Research and Strategy Officer | Telephone:  781-338-3117 |
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| By signing this document, I assure that:  To the best of my knowledge and belief, all information and data included in this plan are true and correct.  The SEA will submit a comprehensive set of assurances at a date and time established by the Secretary, including the assurances in ESEA section 8304.  Consistent with ESEA section 8302(b)(3), the SEA will meet the requirements of ESEA sections 1117 and 8501 regarding the participation of private school children and teachers. | |
| **Authorized SEA Representative (Printed Name)**  Russell D. Johnston  Acting Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education | Telephone:  781-338-6500 |
| **Signature of Authorized SEA Representative** | Date: |

# Cover Page (Original)

| **Contact Information and Signatures** |  |
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| **SEA Contact** (Name and Position):  Matthew Pakos  Associate Commissioner  Resource Allocation Strategy & Planning | Telephone:  781-338-3507 |
| **Mailing Address:**  Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education  75 Pleasant Street  Malden, MA 02148 | Email Address:  essa@doe.mass.edu  mpakos@doe.mass.edu |
| By signing this document, I assure that:  To the best of my knowledge and belief, all information and data included in this plan are true and correct.  The SEA will submit a comprehensive set of assurances at a date and time established by the Secretary, including the assurances in ESEA section 8304.  Consistent with ESEA section 8302(b)(3), the SEA will meet the requirements of ESEA sections 1117 and 8501 regarding the participation of private school children and teachers. | |
| **Authorized SEA Representative (Printed Name)**  Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.  Commissioner of Elementary & Secondary Education | Telephone:  781-338-3100 |
| **Signature of Authorized SEA Representative** | Date: |
| **Governor (Printed Name)**  Charles D. Baker | Date SEA provided plan to the Governor under ESEA section 8540:  March 8, 2017 |
| **Signature of Governor** | Date: |

The SEA, through its authorized representative, agrees to the enclosed assurances.

# Programs Included in the Consolidated State Plan

*Instructions: Indicate below by checking the appropriate box(es) which programs the SEA included in its consolidated State plan. If an SEA elected not to include one or more of the programs below in its consolidated State plan, but is eligible and still wishes to receive funds under that program or programs, it must submit individual program plans that meet all statutory requirements with its consolidated State plan in a single submission.*

* Check this box if the SEA has included all of the following programs in its consolidated State plan.

**or**

If all programs are not included, check each program listed below for which the SEA is submitting an individual program State plan:

* Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by State and Local Educational Agencies
* Title I, Part C: Education of Migratory Children
* Title I, Part D: Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth Who Are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk
* Title II, Part A: Supporting Effective Instruction
* Title III, Part A: Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students
* Title IV, Part A: Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants
* Title IV, Part B: 21st Century Community Learning Centers
* Title V, Part B, Subpart 2: Rural and Low-Income School Program
* Title VII, Subpart B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (McKinney-Vento Act): Education for Homeless Children and Youths Program

# Alternative Template Option

☒ Check this box if the State has developed an alternative template, consistent with the March 13 letter from Secretary DeVos to chief state school officers.

☒ Check this box if the SEA has included a Cover Sheet with its Consolidated State Plan.

☒ Check this box if the SEA has included a table of contents or guide that indicates where the SEA addressed each requirement within the U.S. Department of Education’s Revised State Template for the Consolidated Plan, issued March 2017.

☒ Check this box if the SEA has worked through the Council of Chief State School Officers in developing its own template.

☒ Check this box if the SEA has included the required information regarding equitable access to, and participation in, the programs included in its consolidated State plan as required by section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act. See Appendix C.

# Massachusetts ESSA Plan: Executive Summary

## Introduction

With the passage of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Congress maintained the Elementary and Secondary Education Act’s original focus on advancing equity and excellence for all students, particularly disadvantaged and high need students. The Act's priority areas — academic standards that represent readiness for the expectations of post-secondary education and employers; accountability, support, and improvement for schools; ensuring effective educators; supporting all students; and academic assessments that form the backbone of accountability for results — align closely to the Commonwealth’s existing strategies.

Massachusetts has much to be proud of in K–12 public education. Our schools are recognized as best in class among the states, and our students perform at academic levels commensurate with the highest performing education systems in the world. Yet despite our overall success, substantial gaps in student outcomes persist in our state, and too often those gaps are correlated with students’ racial/ethnic identification, family economic background, disability status, and English language proficiency. And as we’ve seen across the world, the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated many of these persistent gaps.

The goal of the Massachusetts K-12 public education system is to prepare all students for success after high school. This means that all students will be prepared to successfully complete credit-bearing college courses or certificate or workplace training programs, enter economically viable career pathways, and engage as active and responsible citizens in our democracy. Our work is to broaden students’ opportunities and close gaps so that all students, regardless of background, are ready for the world that awaits them after high school.

Despite the many challenges associated with the pandemic, Massachusetts has remained committed to carrying out our ESSA plan, originally approved in 2017, to improve excellence and equity across the education system. Our ESSA plan is still designed to **strengthen the quality and depth of the instructional program students experience**, as that is our major lever for ensuring success after high school for all students. This focus includes special attention to two areas where state performance has been stagnant — **early grades literacy and middle grades mathematics** — to ensure our students are well prepared with strong literacy and mathematics skills. At the high school level, we continue to ensure that all students have **multiple high-quality pathways to educational and career opportunities** **after secondary school**. These pathways include enhanced early college opportunities, expanded access to career-technical education, and career development opportunities that link to workforce skill needs.

Massachusetts continues its commitment to **transforming the lowest performing schools and districts** through a strategy that includes state/local partnerships, empowering school and district innovation focused on student success, and intervention authority.

We continue to focus on providing **additional supports for students who have historically struggled to attain our proficiency standard** — including English learners, students receiving special education services, and students from low-income backgrounds—to ensure that we reach all students. Among the strategies that support this effort are leveraging technology to support instruction and attending to the physical and social-emotional development of students.

Connections among the early education, K-12, and higher education sectors will propel our progress toward these outcomes. The higher education community continues to be instrumental in defining the competencies needed for success after high school and has helped to develop our academic content standards and our state assessments. As well, the higher education community is working with the K-12 sector as part of a robust and rapidly expanding early college program. The early education sector is working with K-12 to realize a more effective early literacy agenda, as well as to strengthen the social-emotional development of young children.

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education employs five overarching strategies to advance the goal of success after high school for all students:

1. Strengthen standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessments
2. Promote educator development
3. Support social-emotional learning, health, and safety
4. Turn around the lowest performing districts and schools
5. Enhance resource allocation and data use to support student learning

Massachusetts will continue to use its ESSA implementation to refine, deepen, and accelerate our work on our five strategies and to promote coherence across our strategies through our focus on instructional quality. We will continue to strengthen the design of our system of accountability to better identify those districts and schools making the most and least progress toward improving student outcomes, and we will improve our assistance for those farthest behind. We will continue to also help districts reconsider how they use their people, time, and fiscal resources in support of these objectives.

We have great confidence in the ability of the Commonwealth’s excellent educators and education system to successfully tackle the gaps in performance that exist and will continue to highlight and share the incredible work being done in schools and districts, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our state’s success in turning around schools and districts convinces us that low achievement in high-poverty communities and neighborhoods is not pre-destined. We have used the opportunity that Congress provided us through ESSA to build on what is working in Massachusetts, to curtail what is not working, and to accelerate our progress, particularly in our lowest performing schools and districts.

## Our successes so far and the challenges that remain

By any measure, Massachusetts public school students are still among the strongest performing in the nation and the world. Our students have scored at the top of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (“the nation’s report card”) tests in grades 4 and 8 English language arts and mathematics for over a decade — a result unparalleled in any other state. Our four-year high school graduation rates have improved steadily since 2017 (89.8 percent in 2022), and our dropout rates have continued to plummet (approximately 3,400 dropouts in 2022).

While we have made strong strides in providing an excellent education in Massachusetts, we have still not attained our goal of preparing all students for success after high school. A few facts highlight the broader story:

* Although most economically viable career pathways today require at least some postsecondary education, about one-quarter of Massachusetts public high school graduates do not enroll in a college or university in the fall immediately after their high school graduation. And since the pandemic, matriculation in college has decreased.
* Student performance overall is strong compared to other states and nations, but some subjects and grade spans have not shown improvement. For example, proficiency in grade 3 reading and grade 6 mathematics has plateaued.
* Students who are absent from school are not experiencing the curriculum and instruction that will help prepare them for success. Due to the pandemic, student absenteeism and chronic absenteeism are at their highest rates in recent memory.
* Exposure to a broad curriculum is an important part of a student’s overall educational development. Yet at the high school level, 84 percent of students completed MassCore (up from 72 percent in 2017), the state’s recommended curriculum for college readiness.
* Exposure to college-level coursework while in high school has been demonstrated to increase the likelihood of success in college. Yet approximately 40 percent of Massachusetts public high school juniors and seniors took at least one Advanced Placement or International Baccalaureate (college-level) course in 2022 (up from 36 percent in 2016).
* Critically, the **students who are not experiencing these high quality opportunities are more likely to be our historically underserved student groups**: students who are English learners, those receiving special education services, students from low income families, and/or members of racial and ethnic minority groups. While we continue to make gains, performance for high needs students on the above indicators is still substantially worse. Proficiency rates for high needs students in both grade 3 reading and grade 6 math are lower than proficiency rates for all students, cohort graduation rates for disadvantaged students in Massachusetts are lower than our state averages, and these students are more likely to drop out of school.

Advancing and accelerating our state strategies while promoting greater coherence across strategies through our focus on instructional quality and deeper learning will help us close these gaps and move closer to our goal of success after high school for all Massachusetts public school students.

## Our state strategies and connections to ESSA

#### Strengthen standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessments

The foundations of any effective statewide school reform and improvement effort are world-class academic standards to establish consistently high expectations for curriculum development and academic achievement along with valid, reliable assessments that provide educators, students, families, and the wider public with the information they need to measure progress and make sound decisions about both policy and practice.

Following the completion of revisions to its English language arts (ELA), math, and science curriculum frameworks, Massachusetts developed and deployed a new assessment system aligned with those standards. The next-generation MCAS tests were phased in beginning with grades 3-8 ELA and mathematics in spring 2017 and – following some delays due to the pandemic – completed in spring 2022 with the first administration of high school science and technology/engineering tests.

#### Promote educator development

Our expectations for student learning, the instructional program that students experience, and student success depend on the effectiveness of our educators — both teachers and administrators. Thus, our first two strategies are fundamentally intertwined, and we benefit from their synergy when we tackle them together. Our aim is that all students meet ambitious academic content standards as outlined in the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks by participating in an instructional program that prepares them well for the transition after high school, provides support for them as individuals, and ensures access to great teachers and administrators. To accomplish this, we identified four immediate priorities:

* *Priority 1*: Increase the effectiveness of first-year teachers to have an impact on students on day one and accelerate teacher impact in years two and three.

We continue to advance this work under ESSA by:

* **Strengthening educator preparation programs**. We will continue to refine our educator preparation program review process to focus on outcomes rather than inputs, including implementing performance-based assessments for teacher and principal candidates. We will encourage educator preparation programs and school districts to deepen partnerships to improve pre-service and first-year induction programs, including consideration of teacher residencies.
* **Supporting implementation of an educator evaluation and development framework that provides educators with meaningful feedback.** The state will continue to work with districts to support strong implementation of the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework by providing guidance and resources, such as a calibration instrument that promotes shared understanding of expectations for strong instruction and conversations about effective feedback.
* **Directing greater attention to students’ learning experiences and their access to effective educators.** We will provide reports to districts that identify and compare rates at which student groups are taught by inexperienced, out-of-field, and ineffective teachers. We will continue to support districts in the use of this tool through technical assistance, comprehensive video tutorials, and other resources.
* *Priority 2:* Strengthen the quality of school leadership.

We will continue to advance this work under ESSA by:

* **Supporting the development of principals as instructional leaders.** The state will continue to support principals in deepening their understanding of the curriculum frameworks and the high expectations for all students that the frameworks embody and will promote principals’ role as instructional leaders by strengthening their skills in observing classroom practice, analyzing measures of student learning and teacher effectiveness, and providing timely and high-impact feedback to their faculty.
* **Expanding the pipeline of principals able to transform high-need schools.** We will work to build a cadre of experienced principals prepared to serve in turnaround schools to expand our capacity for effective intervention and sustainable improvement in our lowest performing schools and districts.
* *Priority 3*: Increase the quality of instruction by more strongly aligning instruction to the high expectations of the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks.

We will continue to advance this work under ESSA by:

* **Improving program and instructional quality in early learning.** In an effort to strengthen developmental and learning outcomes for our state’s youngest students, the state will continue to address program and instructional quality for public school programs in preschool through third grade. We will continue to work collaboratively with our colleagues at the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, as we know successful connections across state agencies are critical to achieving excellence within the K-12 system. This initiative aligns with the focus of our collaborative work with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health on our State Systemic Improvement Plan for students with disabilities: improved outcomes for preschool children with disabilities. Together, we will continue to build partnerships and alignment among state agencies, public schools, and community-based preschool, after-school, and out-of-school time programs.
* **Focusing statewide efforts on early grades literacy and middle grades mathematics: areas where student performance is relatively weak or stagnant.** The early literacy focus of our state plan will ensure that students reach upper elementary grades with strong literacy skills. The middle grades mathematics focus will ensure that greater numbers of students reach high school ready to succeed in higher level mathematics. The state will prioritize these areas for supports for and assistance to districts so that we can shift the trajectory for all students upward.
* **Increasing student access to an ambitious, engaging, well rounded curriculum.** We willcontinue tosupport educators in understanding the curriculum frameworks and employ high expectations for instruction. We will encourage districts to increase student access to high-quality curriculum and enrichment opportunities that include English language arts, mathematics, science, history and civics, the arts, foreign languages, computer science, physical education and health, career development education, dual-enrollment in postsecondary coursework, rigorous Early College and Innovation Pathways programs, and alternate pathways to preparation for success after high school. We will provide guidance, technical assistance, and professional learning networks to support implementation of these initiatives for both pre-service and in-service educators. This support will include targeted support for educators working with students with disabilities and English learners. Additionally, we continue to work to ensure that our curriculum standards are up-to-date and of the highest quality. Since 2017, Massachusetts updated the state’s frameworks in science and technology/engineering and in digital literacy and computer science; completed a review and revision of the English language arts and literacy curriculum frameworks, mathematics curriculum frameworks, history and social sciences curriculum frameworks, arts curriculum frameworks, and world languages curriculum frameworks.
* *Priority 4*: Increase student access to the supports they need to be successful in achieving the standards in the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks.

We will advance this work under ESSA by:

* **Implementing more effective programs to serve the students farthest behind.** The Every Student Succeeds Act has provided us with many opportunities to improve results for student groups that have historically struggled to meet proficiency standards, in particular, students from low income backgrounds, English learners, and students receiving special education services. Through grant funding, prioritized access to resources, and program initiatives at the state and local levels, we will accelerate the improvement of our lower performing students.
* **Implementing the next-generation Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) test and supporting districts as they develop common assessments.** The state upgraded the MCAS to better measure the critical thinking skills students need for success in the 21st century. The new test built upon the best aspects of the MCAS assessments that have served the Commonwealth well for the past two decades. All tests are now administered entirely via computer, following a transition to online testing that began in 2017.

#### Support social-emotional learning, health, and safety

Academic and social-emotional skills and competencies are mutually reinforcing. Thus, preparing all students for success must include attending to their social emotional and health development. We will accomplish this by promoting systems and strategies that foster safe, positive, healthy, culturally competent, and inclusive learning environments that address students’ varied needs in order to improve educational outcomes for all students.

We will continue to advance this work under ESSA by:

* **Promoting social and emotional learning (SEL).** DESE will continue to promote and help strengthen social-emotional competencies and wellness in students and adults across the state,with the goal of creating conditions that support statewide implementation of SEL programs and practices in preschool through high school so that all students can develop skills to thrive in and beyond school. Participation in the Collaborating States Initiative facilitated by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), helps inform DESE practices and supports for the field. Examples of current initiatives include an [SEL and Mental Health grant program](https://www.doe.mass.edu/grants/2023/311/); SEL, health & wellness focused [professional development](https://www.sel-mh-spotlight.org/); and an [SEL and Mental Health MTSS Academy](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfss/prof-dev/) to support school and district teams with learning and implementation efforts across the state. A [Social and Emotional Learning Indicator System (SELIS) pilot project](https://www.doe.mass.edu/research/selis/) is also underway. Many DESE guidance documents also help further SEL goals, for instance the revised versions of the [Educator Effectiveness Teacher and School Administrator Rubrics](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/rubrics/refinement/), [Culturally Responsive Social-Emotional Competency Development](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/sel/sel-all.docx), and [Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Grade 1–3 Resources](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/earlylearning/resources/sel1-3/resources-g1-3.docx).
* **Ensuring a positive school climate and providing safe, healthy, and supportive learning environments for all students**. We provide training, technical assistance, access to resources and guidance to schools and districts as they consider using Title IV, Part A and other sources of funds in this realm. We also continue to support initiatives and resources such as the Safe and Supportive Schools Framework and Self-Reflection Tool, Rethinking Discipline, Bullying Prevention and Intervention, and Substance Use and Abuse Prevention. In addition, we encourage districts to increase student access to a broad, well-rounded curriculum that includes physical education (as required by state law in each grade) and health. DESE also partners with districts to administer Views of Climate and Learning (VOCAL) student surveys. The surveys and accompanying guidance resources are designed to provide schools with local and statewide information on student perceptions of three dimensions of school climate (engagement, safety, and environment).
* **Promoting family engagement** as a key lever that contributes to positive outcomes for students. DESE continues to provide training, technical assistance, resources, and guidance to schools and partners on effective family engagement strategies that promote the development of strong working relationships with families and appropriate community organizations to support students’ success. Foundational resources that guide this work include the cross-agency [Family Engagement Framework](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/family-engagement-framework.pdf) and the [Family, School and Community Partnership Fundamentals Self-Assessment](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/fscp-fundamentals.docx). Examples of current initiatives include collaborating with the Federation for Children with Special Needs and other partners on the Massachusetts Statewide Family Engagement Center, hosting the first annual Summit “Better Together: Strengthening Family School Partnerships” with more than 400 participants in Fall 2022, hosting quarterly networking meetings for family and community engagement specialists from across the state.

#### Turn around the lowest performing districts and schools

The state’s lowest performing schools require evidence-based interventions and strong educators to support rapid improvement in the schools' ability to prepare their students for success. Since 2010, Massachusetts has used strong authorities codified in state law to implement a system of identification, support, and intervention in the state’s lowest performing schools and districts. The state law emphasizes sufficient autonomy and flexibility to empower school leadership to make key decisions regarding staffing, resources, and schedules within a context of accountability for results. Under ESSA, we will continue to support and partner with districts as they strive to improve underperforming schools. Where districts are unable to implement effective improvement initiatives, we will utilize our authority under state statute to intervene.

Since passage of [An Act Relative to the Achievement Gap](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2010/Chapter12) in 2010, the Department has evolved efforts over time to best serve students in the state’s highest need schools and districts--that is, those districts and schools determined by the state’s accountability system as focused/targeted and broad/comprehensive support. Since 2018, our accountability and assistance model has integrated state and federal requirements to ensure we are focusing assistance efforts on schools identified as comprehensive and targeted support, as well as the lowest performing 10 percent of schools and schools with low performing student groups.

The Department’s Center for School and District Partnership (CSDP) and Office of Strategic Transformation (OST) prioritize assistance for focused/targeted and broad/comprehensive support. Assistance efforts span a wide array of activities and levers, including direct technical assistance from Department staff and its approved partners, grant funding, toolkits and guidance, research-based resources, and professional development. These efforts are designed to enhance school and district capacity to effectively and proactively use proven instructional and supportive practices to boost and sustain rapid gains in student achievement. Direct technical assistance from DESE staff includes supporting districts to set equity-focused priorities aimed at gap-closing, supporting the development and sustenance of school- and district-level instructional leadership teams, and supporting schools and districts in the adoption and culturally sustaining implementation of high-quality instructional materials across all content areas.

To accomplish this important turnaround work, the Department strategically augments state allotted targeted assistance funding with federal ESSA resources to support school and district improvement. These targeted resources are designed to address significant challenges in closing achievement gaps, with a particular emphasis on meeting the needs of English learners, students with disabilities, students of color, and students living in poverty.

This investment in the students served by our lowest performing schools and districts has led to improvements across the Commonwealth in closing achievement gaps. While we acknowledge more room for growth and improvement, [research](http://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/howitworks/impact-study.pdf) has shown progress made by schools engaged in substantial turnaround efforts supported by Department assistance efforts. Under our accountability system, we will continue to track the progress for schools requiring assistance and intervention each year.

#### Enhance Resource Allocation and Data Use to Support Student Learning

We will continue to improve the state’s data infrastructure and promote a culture of effective data and technology use in districts and schools. We will continue to invest in efforts to increase access to technology, streamline reporting requirements, and provide resources and tools to improve effective data use, resource allocation decisions, and personalized learning.

We will continue to advance this work under ESSA by:

* **Shining a light on equity and access concerns through data reporting.** The Every Student Succeeds Act requires additional reporting on school-level expenditures and access to effective educators that will provide districts with valuable information and comparisons about how they allocate resources to their lowest performing students and schools.
* **Building technological capacity and infrastructure.** The Every Student Succeeds Act funds will supplement existing state efforts to bridge the digital divide that exists among schools across the Commonwealth and expand access to high-quality digital learning opportunities, particularly for students in rural, remote, and underserved areas. In particular, the Office of Educational Technology (OET) directly assisted districts in providing pandemic-related remote and hybrid instruction. OET was charged with ensuring all schools were equipped with 1:1 learning devices for students, sufficient internet access in and outside of school buildings, guidance on recommended and required practices, and professional development opportunities.
  + Following the transition from remote and hybrid learning, OET has since supported, and continues to support, schools and districts to transition from pandemic-related uses of technology to more strategic, sustainable, and equitable ways to integrate technology in service of students and school communities. The office issues grants, coordinates professional learning programming, publishes guidance and resources, and provides targeted assistance and support, all of which are prioritized for schools and districts identified as requiring assistance through the state’s accountability system.
* **Updating and improving our data reporting tools.** DESE continues to improve its data reporting systems to make them more dynamic and user-friendly. Edwin Analytics. We have updated Edwin Analytics, which is the secure system by which the state provides data reports to districts and schools, to report on data from the state’s next-generation MCAS test and will continue to add to the bank of reports available to help districts better understand their student-level data.

## Success after high school

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has a number of initiatives designed to support student access to multiple high-quality pathways to educational and career opportunities after high school. These programs improve the quality of students’ high school experiences by increasing graduation rates, exposing students to career and technical skills, and promoting postsecondary access.

We will continue to advance this work under ESSA by:

* **Supporting use of our Early Warning Indicator System.** The state produces reports that predict the likelihood of students successfully attaining their next academic milestone throughout their K–12 and postsecondary careers. The Every Student Succeeds Act allows us to continue to help districts identify students who are likely to be off track and provide resources to implement effective interventions.
* **Providing graduation supports for student groups.** The Department developed and continues to refine specific tools and supports to help schools and districts increase graduation rates for students with disabilities and English learners, whose graduation rates have historically lagged behind state averages.
* **Expanding postsecondary access.** The Department continues to promote the development of early college models and has made significant investments in a statewide Early College designation program. Massachusetts also supports dual-enrollment programs, and partners with organizations across the state to increase the number of graduates that enroll in postsecondary education or training. We will continue to collaborate with our state partners at the Department of Higher Education to ensure that expectations, experiences, and connections between our agencies are well-aligned.
* **Expanding access to career development education, high-quality career pathways, and computer science.** The Department provides funding and technical assistance to schools, districts, and workforce investment (MassHire) boards to increase the number of students who participate in meaningful work-based learning while in high school. DESE’s Innovation Pathways initiative places students in high quality workplace settings to give them experience and training in the workforce. In all of this work, DESE continues to build upon and expand the successes of our full-time vocational technical schools and expand access to career-technical education through cultivation of partnerships among these schools, comprehensive high schools, post-secondary institutions, and employers.

## School and district accountability

The state’s accountability system is our primary way of measuring each school’s and district’s progress toward attaining the state goal of success after high school for all students. The Every Student Succeeds Act provides us with an opportunity to align our accountability system with DESE’s goals and strategies. This allows us to broaden the dimensions of performance we consider, as well as improve our system for assisting those schools and districts farthest behind in attaining the state’s goals.

Our state’s accountability system rests primarily on student achievement, growth, and graduation data, with an emphasis on improving the performance of each school and districts’ lowest performing students. These data are fundamental to the educational enterprise. If students are not demonstrating mastery of grade-level material and are not graduating, then schools and districts are not doing their jobs. And if not all students are performing well, the accountability system should highlight those gaps.

Our accountability system includes measures through which we make distinctions in school and district performance. In addition, our system is complimented by parent-friendly school and district report cards and online profiles. We are committed to providing families and the public with a robust picture of each school and district. These online profiles and report cards include a wider range of indicators than are incorporated in the accountability system.

In selecting indicators to be part of the accountability system, several principles have guided our decisions:

* We will focus on academic performance (e.g., academic achievement and graduation rates) more so than on school inputs. Student learning is the core work of schools.
* We will balance robustness with simplicity and transparency. We want to be sure that the signal (academic performance) is not drowned out by noise. While more inputs may paint a broader picture of school performance, we do not want the accountability system to mask schools that are struggling with basic literacy, mathematics, and science instruction. We continue to publish a larger number of indicators in our school report cards and online profiles than will contribute to the accountability results.
* We will ensure the validity and reliability of our accountability measures so that they are technically defensible.
* We will set targets that require that each school and district stretch and continually improve.

We continue to ensure an appropriate balance between expanding the elements that contribute to the accountability system on the one hand and ease of interpreting the results on the other. A key purpose of an accountability system is to identify the schools and districts that need the most assistance to bring their students up to the state’s academic expectations. The system must focus attention on the schools and districts farthest behind in core academic subjects because we have a duty to address the needs of the students in those schools. Expanding the number of measures adds dimensionality to the system, but a system with too many measures runs the risk of providing a weak signal regarding the efficacy of the academic program. We need to balance robustness with simplicity and transparency.

The Commonwealth’s plan distinguishes what is reported as components of school and district profiles, both on the public website and in school and district report cards, versus elements that will comprise the accountability system. We have done so because of our concern that input measures essentially become prescriptions and/or mandates; because combining outcomes and inputs into a single system blurs its focus; and with little experience in measuring curricular opportunity (for example, quantity versus quality of access to a given subject) we have determined that it is premature to incorporate such elements in an accountability system. However, we are committed to reporting publicly on curricular opportunities, and we will continue to report them in the right way on our school and district profiles website and in our school and district report cards.

We heard strong support from stakeholders for the inclusion of certain input measures, specifically access to a well-rounded curriculum including the arts, physical education, advanced coursework, computer science, career development education, and other offerings. For now, such input measures remain better represented as metrics in a school or district report card so that the information is readily accessible to parents, policymakers, and the public, rather than as indicators in an accountability system.

In our accountability system, student achievement and growth and graduation data remain core measures of school and district results, and performance gaps for low performing students remain of paramount consideration. In addition, we include indicators that create a more comprehensive picture of student opportunity and outcomes and increase the value placed on improvement. By doing so, we can promote a more well-rounded view of school performance and to encourage schools and districts to focus on increasing equitable access to educational opportunities. These indicators also more strongly connect to our strategies.

In keeping with the focus on excellence and equity, our system prioritizes strong outcomes for all students and closing gaps for low performing students.

Among the core accountability indicators (core measures) to which we are committed are:

* Students’ scores on our statewide assessments
* A measure of student growth
* Gap closing by accelerating the gains of the lowest performing students
* High school graduation rates
* English learner progress and attainment of proficiency in English

Additional accountability indicators that we include are:

* Chronic absenteeism
* Dropout rates
* Extended engagement rates
* Completion of broad and challenging coursework

These indicators are aggregated into two overall components used to measure school performance: a normative component (percentile), indicating how the school performs across all indicators compared to other schools, and a criterion-referenced component, indicating how the school performs across all indicators relative to annual targets set by the state. Per the federal law, the core indicators outlined above are given much greater weight in the calculation than the additional indicators. Together, the normative and criterion-referenced components are used to classify schools and districts into accountability categories.

Per the requirements of the federal law, the lowest performing 5 percent of Title I schools and high schools with four-year graduation rates below 66.7 percent are identified as comprehensive support and improvement (CSI) schools. Schools above the bottom 5 percent overall but that have consistently low-performing student groups are identified as targeted support and improvement (TSI) schools. A subset of the TSI schools, those that have student groups demonstrating performance below that of the 5th percentile Title I school, are identified as additional targeted support and improvement (ATSI) schools. These schools must implement a plan to improve student performance and are eligible for a wide variety of supports and services aligned to our evidence-based practices for school improvement, as described above. Under our plan, a district’s accountability determination is determined by the overall performance of its students.

As noted above, we have enhanced our annual school and district report cards, making them more user-friendly and adding various measures of school and district performance beyond those included in the formal accountability system. Elements that we publish in school and district report cards and profiles include:

* Student attendance and discipline
* Access to arts coursework
* Access to digital literacy and computer science courses
* Grade nine course-passing
* MassCore completion
* College-going rates
* School-level financial allocations and expenditures

The report cards were designed based on feedback from a wide variety of stakeholders, including parents and families, and can be updated to include additional measures in the future, based on the priorities of Massachusetts stakeholders.

## Strategic resource use

In an era of increasing demands for public services as the state’s population ages, the education sector will be competing with other public services for financial resources. Districts must continue to find ways to get more out of the people, time, and fiscal resources they already have to help improve outcomes for students, including by reducing inequities in the allocation of resources to different types of students. To this end, the state has an Office of Resource Allocation Strategy and Planning to develop new tools and supports for districts to rethink how they use their resources.

We will continue to advance this work under ESSA by:

* **Improving upon a** **consolidated district application for federal education grants consistent with state and local priorities**. After having streamlined the ESSA grant application, DESE continues to improve upon it by creating a user-friendly cloud-based application.
* **Enhancing reports on school-level expenditures**. Massachusetts reports school-level per pupil data and will use ESSA as an opportunity to advance our work in this area. We have developed and currently maintain Resource Allocation and District Action Reports that use these data to provide comparisons and insights on how districts use their resources.
* **Requiring resource use reviews in the lowest performing schools.** The turnaround plan for schools identified for comprehensive or targeted support and intervention include an analysis of inequities in access to resources for students in those schools to inform the strategies included in the plan.

## Ongoing review and refinement

As we revised and updated the 2017 version of this plan, we were heartened by all that has been accomplished in Massachusetts. The steady stream of improvements we have made in our education system over time is the result of both investments of resources from the federal, state, and local levels, but also investment of the attention and thoughtful feedback we receive from our stakeholders. Whether it’s through our regular meetings with our many stakeholder groups, or through targeted stakeholder outreach exercises like the one we completed for the ARP ESSER grant, consistent and robust communication and feedback with our stakeholder groups has been and continues to be paramount to making progress.

While the revision of the ESSA plan in 2024 was a much different exercise than the initial writing of the plan in 2016-2017, we still worked with our many stakeholders and solicited official public comment. From May to June 7, 2024, we received feedback from over TBD people.

Our Office of Planning and Research continues to oversee the implementation of ESSA for DESE. We will continue to review and continuously improve our work and hold ourselves accountable for our ongoing efforts to improve student outcomes, particularly for historically disadvantaged student groups.

We will continue to promote continuous improvement in districts by taking advantage of new resources we have developed for district strategic planning, the consolidated federal grant application described above, and an enhanced focus on performance and outcomes in our program review and monitoring activities. Our Planning for Success model for district strategic planning involves three steps: creating a plan, aligning systems to the plan, and implementing the plan (including evaluating and monitoring progress). We continue to encourage districts to use this planning model as the structure underlying the plan we will require as part of their annual federal grant application, which will continue to help districts to establish local evaluation practices where they do not already exist. We have added more supports to help districts evaluate their progress, particularly in conducting formal evaluations where needed as part of the language throughout ESSA that requires evidence-based interventions. This is led by our Office of Resource Allocation Strategy and Planning within the Office of Planning and Research, which has responsibility for promoting strategic resource use and grant coordination in districts and reviewing each district’s proposed expenditures of federal funds under ESSA while consulting with content experts across the agency as necessary. Modifications to program review and monitoring activities continue to be implemented, led by our Office of Public School Monitoring.

As we refine our implementation of our plan beyond 2024, stakeholder voice and analysis of the strong work underway in Massachusetts districts and schools will continue to play a prominent role. We will continue to hold regular meetings with many of our stakeholder groups, including superintendents, principals, teachers, union leadership, school committee members, state board members, state legislators, parents, students, and so forth. We have established intentional processes that allow us to study the effectiveness of our initiatives, and we will continue to learn from local implementation efforts and make adjustments as necessary. We will continue these conversations and analyses, and offer additional opportunities for stakeholders to provide input, particularly at key junctures when we are considering significant changes to an element of the plan.

# Long-term Goals

*Instructions: Each SEA must provide baseline data (i.e., starting point data), measurements of interim progress, and long-term goals for academic achievement, graduation rates, and English language proficiency. For each goal, the SEA must describe how it established its long-term goals, including its State-determined timeline for attaining such goals, consistent with the requirements in* *section 1111(c)(2) of the ESEA* *and 34 C.F.R.* *§ 200.13. Each SEA must provide goals and measurements of interim progress for the all students group and separately for each subgroup of students, consistent with the State's minimum number of students.*

*In the tables below, identify the baseline (data and year) and long-term goal (data and year). If the tables do not accommodate this information, an SEA may create a new table or text box(es) within this template. Each SEA must include measurements of interim progress for academic achievement, graduation rates, and English language proficiency in Appendix A.*

1. **Academic Achievement**.
   1. **Description.**  Describe how the SEA established its ambitious long-term goals and measurements of interim progress for improved academic achievement, including how the SEA established its State-determined timeline for attaining such goals.

Massachusetts administers the Next Generation MCAS assessments in English Language Arts (ELA) and mathematics in grades 3-8 and 10, and in science in grades 5, 8, and 10, and uses these results to establish academic achievement targets. Massachusetts has aligned the ambitious long-term goals and measurements of interim progress that are required by ESSA with those required by Massachusetts state law (the Student Opportunity Act). Taking into consideration the disruptions to student learning and the related declines in student achievement caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Massachusetts has established a target-setting process that considers both the amount of achievement “lost” by each student group in the state and the time required to recover, using 2022 data as the baseline. Groups that have demonstrated the largest declines in student achievement from 2019 to 2022 are required to make the largest gains and will be given the most time (up to four years) to reach their goals. Groups that demonstrated minimal loss or continued to make gains will be assigned ambitious improvement targets and will be required to demonstrate annual improvement. Regardless of the amount of loss experienced or the timeframe given to reach their goals, Massachusetts expects all districts, schools, and groups to demonstrate improvement and ultimately return to or surpass their pre-pandemic levels of achievement.

* 1. Provide the baseline and long-term goals in the table below.

Baseline data, long-term goals, and measurements of interim progress for **non-high school grades** are included in the table below:

| Group | Subject | 2022  Achievement (Next Generation MCAS average scaled score) | 2023  Target | 2024-2027 Annual Improvement Increment |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| All Students | ELA | 494.1 | 496.9 | 2.8 |
| High needs | 484.9 | 487.9 | 3.0 |
| Low income | 484.5 | 487.6 | 3.1 |
| EL and Former EL | 481.1 | 484.4 | 3.3 |
| Students w/disabilities | 476.1 | 479.3 | 3.2 |
| Amer. Ind. or Alaska Nat. | 487.6 | 490.4 | 2.8 |
| Asian | 506.4 | 509.9 | 3.5 |
| Afr. Amer./Black | 485.5 | 489.2 | 3.7 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 482.8 | 486.4 | 3.6 |
| Multi-race, Non-Hisp./Lat. | 497.8 | 500.6 | 2.8 |
| Nat. Haw. or Pacif. Isl. | 494.4 | 497.2 | 2.8 |
| White | 498.3 | 501.1 | 2.8 |
| All Students | Math | 493.4 | 496.0 | 2.6 |
| High needs | 483.8 | 486.8 | 3.0 |
| Low income | 482.7 | 485.6 | 2.9 |
| EL and Former EL | 482.3 | 486.0 | 3.7 |
| Students w/disabilities | 476.1 | 479.4 | 3.3 |
| Amer. Ind. or Alaska Nat. | 487.4 | 490.0 | 2.6 |
| Asian | 512.1 | 516.5 | 4.4 |
| Afr. Amer./Black | 481.9 | 485.7 | 3.8 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 481.1 | 484.7 | 3.6 |
| Multi-race, Non-Hisp./Lat. | 496.4 | 499.0 | 2.6 |
| Nat. Haw. or Pacif. Isl. | 492.6 | 495.2 | 2.6 |
| White | 497.8 | 500.4 | 2.6 |
| All Students | Science | 494.5 | 498.4 | 3.9 |
| High needs | 484.6 | 489.3 | 4.7 |
| Low income | 483.6 | 488.4 | 4.8 |
| EL and Former EL | 479.6 | 484.5 | 4.9 |
| Students w/disabilities | 477.5 | 482.4 | 4.9 |
| Amer. Ind. or Alaska Nat. | 487.3 | 491.2 | 3.9 |
| Asian | 508.0 | 513.1 | 5.1 |
| Afr. Amer./Black | 482.3 | 487.4 | 5.1 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 481.6 | 486.3 | 4.7 |
| Multi-race, Non-Hisp./Lat. | 497.6 | 501.5 | 3.9 |
| Nat. Haw. or Pacif. Isl. | 493.5 | 497.4 | 3.9 |
| White | 499.9 | 503.6 | 3.7 |

Baseline data, long-term goals, and measurements of interim progress for **high school grades** are included in the table below:

| Group | Subject | 2022  Achievement (Next Generation MCAS average scaled score) | 2023  Target | 2024-2027 Annual Improvement Increment |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| All Students | ELA | 502.5 | 507.0 | 4.5 |
| High needs | 492.9 | 498.0 | 5.1 |
| Low income | 493.3 | 498.4 | 5.1 |
| EL and Former EL | 481.4 | 486.5 | 5.1 |
| Students w/disabilities | 485.1 | 489.9 | 4.8 |
| Amer. Ind. or Alaska Nat. | 499.9 | 504.4 | 4.5 |
| Asian | 513.4 | 518.5 | 5.1 |
| Afr. Amer./Black | 494.4 | 499.5 | 5.1 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 491.7 | 496.8 | 5.1 |
| Multi-race, Non-Hisp./Lat. | 505.5 | 510.0 | 4.5 |
| Nat. Haw. or Pacif. Isl. | 500.5 | 505.0 | 4.5 |
| White | 506.2 | 510.7 | 4.5 |
| All Students | Math | 501.0 | 505.0 | 4.0 |
| High needs | 489.7 | 494.8 | 5.1 |
| Low income | 489.7 | 494.8 | 5.1 |
| EL and Former EL | 481.8 | 486.9 | 5.1 |
| Students w/disabilities | 482.6 | 487.7 | 5.1 |
| Amer. Ind. or Alaska Nat. | 495.4 | 499.4 | 4.0 |
| Asian | 520.3 | 525.4 | 5.1 |
| Afr. Amer./Black | 488.3 | 493.4 | 5.1 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 487.8 | 492.9 | 5.1 |
| Multi-race, Non-Hisp./Lat. | 503.4 | 507.4 | 4.0 |
| Nat. Haw. or Pacif. Isl. | 500.2 | 504.2 | 4.0 |
| White | 505.3 | 509.6 | 4.3 |
| All Students | Science | 499.0 | 502.5 | 3.5 |
| High needs | 487.7 | 492.8 | 5.1 |
| Low income | 487.5 | 492.6 | 5.1 |
| EL and Former EL | 477.5 | 482.4 | 4.9 |
| Students w/disabilities | 481.6 | 486.4 | 4.8 |
| Amer. Ind. or Alaska Nat. | 495.1 | 498.6 | 3.5 |
| Asian | 513.1 | 518.1 | 5.0 |
| Afr. Amer./Black | 486.7 | 491.2 | 4.5 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 485.3 | 490.3 | 5.0 |
| Multi-race, Non-Hisp./Lat. | 501.6 | 505.1 | 3.5 |
| Nat. Haw. or Pacif. Isl. | 499.2 | 502.7 | 3.5 |
| White | 503.8 | 507.3 | 3.5 |

* 1. Provide the measurements of interim progress toward meeting the long-term goals for academic achievement.

Measurements of interim progress are included in the tables above.

* 1. Describe how the long-term goals and measurements of interim progress toward the long-term goals for academic achievement take into account the improvement necessary to make significant progress in closing statewide proficiency gaps.

The long-term goals and measurements of interim progress for academic achievement are consistent with those required by Massachusetts state law, which require the Commissioner to establish statewide targets for addressing persistent disparities in achievement among student groups. These annual and long-term targets require the groups that have demonstrated the most loss in academic achievement because of the COVID-19 pandemic to make the largest gains. In doing so, gaps in student group performance will narrow.

1. **Graduation Rate.**
   1. **Description.**  Describe how the SEA established its ambitious long-term goals and measurements of interim progress for improved four-year adjusted cohort graduation rates, including how the SEA established its State-determined timeline for attaining such goals.

Massachusetts began calculating a cohort graduation rate in 2006. At that time, 79.9 percent of the 2006 cohort graduated in four years. Since that initial calculation, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and the state’s school districts have implemented a number of programmatic initiatives to increase the four-year cohort rate to 89.8 percent for the 2021 cohort. The most significant reason behind this increase has been a reduction in the number of dropouts in grades 9-12. Since 2007, the number of dropouts has decreased by over 50 percent to 4,297 dropouts in 2015. This represents a dropout rate of 1.5 percent of all students in grades 9-12. Massachusetts expects this trend to continue as the state continues to support high schools developing multiple pathways for students to prepare for college and career.

As part of its ESSA state plan, Massachusetts sets ambitious goals based on the strong graduation rate improvement of recent years. Since 2010, the state’s four-year cohort graduation rate for the *all students* group has improved by more than 7 percentage points (from 82.1 percent for the 2010 cohort to 89.8 percent for the 2021 cohort). The long-term goals associated with this plan seek to achieve continuous improvement for all students and each student group and align with those targets set in accordance with the state’s Student Opportunity Act.

* 1. Provide the baseline and long-term goals for the four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate in the table below.

| Group | 2021 4-Yr Grad Rate Baseline (%) | 2022 4-Yr Grad Rate Target (%) | 2023-2026 4-Yr Grad Rate Annual Improvement Increment (%) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| All Students | 89.8 | 91.9 | 2.0 |
| High needs | 82.4 | 86.7 | 4.3 |
| Low income | 81.7 | 86.3 | 4.6 |
| EL and Former EL | 71.8 | 77.5 | 5.7 |
| Students w/disabilities | 76.6 | 82.7 | 6.1 |
| Amer. Ind. or Alaska Nat. | 82.3 | 84.3 | 2.0 |
| Asian | 96.1 | 95.0 | 3.1 |
| Afr. Amer./Black | 84.4 | 89.3 | 4.9 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 80.0 | 84.7 | 4.7 |
| Multi-race, Non-Hisp./Lat. | 88.8 | 90.8 | 2.0 |
| Nat. Haw. or Pacif. Isl. | 86.0 | 88.0 | 2.0 |
| White | 93.2 | 95.0 | 2.0 |

\* Annual targets for 2022-2026 are capped at 95%.

* 1. If applicable, provide the baseline and long-term goals for each extended-year cohort graduation rate(s) and describe how the SEA established its ambitious long-term goals and measurements for such an extended-year rate or rates that are more rigorous as compared to the long-term goals and measurements of interim progress than the four-year adjusted cohort rate, including how the SEA established its State-determined timeline for attaining such goals.

Not applicable.

1. **English Language Proficiency.** 
   1. **Description.**  Describe the State’s uniform procedure, applied consistently to all English learners in the State, to establish research-based student-level targets on which the goals and measurements of interim progress are based. The description must include:
      1. How the State considers a student’s English language proficiency level at the time of identification and, if applicable, any other student characteristics that the State takes into account (*i.e.*, time in language instruction programs, grade level, age, Native language proficiency level, or limited or interrupted formal education, if any).

All students enrolling in Massachusetts schools are given a Home Language Survey. If a language other than English appears on the survey, it is reviewed by appropriate staff at the district, and if necessary, a WIDA screening assessment of English language proficiency is administered to determine whether the student is an English learner. Staff reviewing the information presented on the Home Language Survey, or by the parent, determine the extent to which another language is present in the home, in the environment the child finds themself, or whether they come from an English-speaking environment where another language is also spoken regularly. Student transcripts or school records are also reviewed to determine grade level and content level placement. If it is determined that the student has a language other than English that may impact their level of English proficiency, students are screened for English proficiency with the WIDA Screener or WIDA Screener for Kindergarten Students who score proficient on the screener are not identified as English learners, rather are considered fluent English speakers with other language background, and possibly bilingual.  
  
If a newly enrolled student transferred from another district within Massachusetts or from another WIDA state, it is possible that they participated in the annual language proficiency assessment (ACCESS for ELLs 2.0). If so, and if the district is able to obtain ACCESS results of the test that was administered within the last calendar year, instead of retesting the student, district staff can use ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 results in the student’s records to determine their English language proficiency. Students from non-WIDA states and students new to Massachusetts are screened with the WIDA Screener or WIDA Screener for Kindergarten.   
  
English language proficiency scores, grade level, and time in an English language development program are taken into consideration when placing students in language instruction programs at the district and making determinations about level and type of service. Some ELs may have experienced interrupted or limited formal education prior to enrolling in the district. State law requires that all English learners (ELs) receive instruction that is specifically designed to meet their academic and language development needs. When a new student enrolls in a school district, it is the district’s obligation to determine whether the student is an EL and to place that student in an appropriate instructional program. Similarly, districts should ensure that students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE) are properly identified so that placement and other important academic decisions can be properly informed. For more information about procedures for identifying SLIFE students and programming considerations, please see the Massachusetts Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education (SLIFE) Definition and Guidance document at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/SLIFE-Guidance.pdf>.

* + 1. The applicable timelines over which English learners sharing particular characteristics would be expected to attain ELP within a State-determined maximum number of years and a rationale for that State-determined maximum.

Massachusetts assigns progress to proficiency targets to each EL who takes the ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 assessment. These individual student-level targets are set with the goal of attaining proficiency within five years of growth. Individual targets are determined based on their current level of proficiency (as determined by ACCESS) and the number of years each student has been enrolled in a Massachusetts public school (which serves as a proxy for the number of years of English Language instruction).

The rationale for attaining proficiency within five years of growth is in line with decades of research indicating that it takes four to seven years to attain proficiency, and the Massachusetts’ own data indicating that ELs are proficient within approximately four to five years.

* + 1. How the student-level targets expect all English learners to make annual progress toward attaining English language proficiency within the applicable timelines.

Districts will continue to be held accountable for all enrolled EL students reaching proficiency within the established timeline, based on reaching their progress to proficiency targets. Massachusetts adopted an approach entitled “Pathways to Proficiency” that uses a student’s current year ACCESS score as the basis for determining a target for the following year. The target is the minimum score needed by the student the following year to remain on track to attain English proficiency. Students in kindergarten through grade 11 will receive a target for as long as they are classified as English learners. Progress targets are not provided for students in grade 12 since it is anticipated that they will no longer be enrolled in a K-12 program the following year.

Students who are not on track to attain the goal of proficiency within five years of growth will have a student success plan designed to target areas of challenge for the student and instructional strategies and/or supports to increase the student’s probability of getting back on track to attaining proficiency within five years of growth. To assist educators in selecting the type and intensity of instructional strategies and supports, we provide a “difficulty index” along with the next year’s target. The difficulty index is an indicator of how difficult it is likely to be for a student to achieve their target in the following year.

* 1. Describe how the SEA established ambitious State-designed long-term goals and measurements of interim progress for increases in the percentage of all English learners in the State making annual progress toward attaining English language proficiency based on 1.C.i. and provide the State-designed long-term goals and measurements of interim progress for English language proficiency.

Massachusetts uses a target-setting methodology that considers the improvement of like-performing schools in making progress toward English proficiency. Long-term goals and measurements of interim progress reflect an annual expectation of improvement that has been demonstrated by districts and schools in the past. Through this approach, Massachusetts can ensure that goals and targets remain ambitious and attainable.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Percent of Students Making Progress Toward English Proficiency** | | | |
| Year | 2022 % Making Progress Baseline | 2023 % Making Progress Target | 2024-2027 % Making Progress Annual Improvement Increment |
| % Making Progress  (Non-High School Grades) | 49.7 | 52.4 | 2.7 |
| % Making Progress  (High School Grades) | 22.5 | 23.8 | 1.3 |

\* Annual targets for 2023-2027 are capped at 95%.

For the purposes of setting this long-term goal and interim targets, Massachusetts calculates **progress** toward English language proficiency based on the individual results of students who participated in two successive administrations of the ACCESS tests (i.e., the current and most recent year of administration), according to the following steps:

1. Set progress to proficiency targets for Massachusetts students, based on their current level of proficiency (as determined by ACCESS) and the number of years each student has been enrolled in a Massachusetts public school.
2. If the student’s score on the next administration of the ACCESS assessment is equal to or higher than their individual progress to proficiency target, then the student is on track to attaining English language proficiency within the established number of years and is considered to be “making progress.”
3. Calculate the percentage of ELs in the state (and in each district and school) who are making progress toward attaining English proficiency in the established timeframe.
   1. Provide the measurements of interim progress toward the long-term goal for increases in the percentage of English learners making progress in achieving English language proficiency.

The measurements of interim progress for English language learners toward English language proficiency are detailed in the table above.

# Section 2: Consultation and Performance Management

## 2.1 Consultation.

*Instructions: Each SEA must engage in timely and meaningful consultation with stakeholders in developing its consolidated State plan. The stakeholders must include the following individuals and entities and reflect the geographic diversity of the State:*

* *The Governor or appropriate officials from the Governor’s office;*
* *Members of the State legislature;*
* *Members of the State board of education, if applicable;*
* *LEAs, including LEAs in rural areas;*
* *Representatives of Indian tribes located in the State;*
* *Teachers, principals, other school leaders, paraprofessionals, specialized instructional support personnel, and organizations representing such individuals;*
* *Charter school leaders, if applicable;*
* *Parents and families;*
* *Community-based organizations;*
* *Civil rights organizations, including those representing students with disabilities, English learners, and other historically underserved students;*
* *Institutions of higher education (IHEs);*
* *Employers;*
* *Representatives of private school students;*
* *Early childhood educators and leaders; and*
* *The public.*

*Each SEA must provide information that is:*

1. *Be in an understandable and uniform format;*
2. *Be, to the extent practicable, written in a language that parents can understand or, if it is not practicable to provide written translations to a parent with limited English proficiency, be orally translated for such parent; and*
3. *Be, upon request by a parent who is an individual with a disability as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act, 42 U.S.C. 12102, provided in an alternative format accessible to that parent.*
4. **Public Notice**. Provide evidence that the SEA has provided public notice of the SEA’s processes and procedures for developing and adopting its consolidated State plan.

In addition to the activities related to outreach and input detailed below, Massachusetts published a draft version of its consolidated state plan for public comment on February 7, 2017. The official public comment period was open for 30 days, until March 9, 2017. See https://www.doe.mass.edu/federalgrants/essa/.

For the updated 2024 ESSA plan, Massachusetts published a draft version of its plan for public comment on May 21, 2024. The official public comment period was open for 17 days, until June 7, 2024. See <https://www.doe.mass.edu/federalgrants/essa/stateplan/>.

1. **Outreach and Input**. For the components of the consolidated State plan including Challenging Academic Assessments; Accountability, Support, and Improvement for Schools; Supporting Excellent Educators; and Supporting All Students, describe how the SEA:
   1. Conducted outreach to and solicited input from the individuals and entities listed above, during the design and development of the SEA’s plans to implement the programs that the SEA has indicated it will include in its consolidated State plan; and following the completion of its initial consolidated State plan by making the plan available for public comment for a period of not less than 30 days prior to submitting the consolidated State plan to the Department for review and approval.  
        
      In preparing its 2017 ESSA plan, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) conducted an extensive outreach effort over the course of nearly a full year. From the beginning of the effort, it was our goal to hear from a broad range of stakeholders about Massachusetts’ state plan. ESSA provided us an opportunity to reconsider the strategies we use to improve student outcomes, the data we use to measure school and district progress, and the types of supports and assistance we make available. As such, we organized our work into four phases: Listening Phase 1 (April to June 2016): Where we asked broad questions of our stakeholder community about their thoughts on the purpose and design of the state’s accountability and assistance system, among other topics related to ESSA. Modeling (June to September 2016): Where we developed specific proposals based on the feedback we heard during the first listening phase. Listening Phase 2 (September 2016 to January 2017): Where we shared our draft proposals with stakeholders to further refine and improve them. Revising (January to March 2017): Where we incorporated a wide variety of feedback into a proposed state plan, put the plan out for public comment, and finalized the plan based on the feedback we received during public comment period.   
        
      Throughout the nearly 12-month process, we sought to gather feedback through a variety of mechanisms with the goal of maximizing stakeholder participation. We developed a master list and engaged nearly 200 stakeholder groups (advocacy organizations, civil rights organizations, affinity organizations, American Indian tribes, policy organizations, researchers, professional associations, special education organizations, community-based organizations, representatives from higher education, English Learner organizations, teachers unions, charter schools, governmental agencies, the business community, the Governor’s education secretariat, state legislators, our Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, and many more) along with hundreds of educators, parents, and students from our 409 school districts and nearly 2,000 schools.

We conducted several online surveys, which we and our contacts distributed widely, which allowed anyone in the public to submit their thoughts: as of January 2017, right before the state plan went out for public comment, we had well over 1,500 combined responses to our ESSA surveys. The Department held five public forums around the Commonwealth in the fall of 2016, where we gathered a variety of feedback using a process known as brain-swarming, where every piece of feedback is discussed and/or captured in some way. Over 250 people participated in these forums, and we were pleased by the wide variety of attendees (approximately 20% parents, 20% teachers, 20% administrators, 20% advocacy groups, 20% concerned citizens). The state also held a series of focus groups for representatives of stakeholder associations who wanted to provide more detailed feedback in a discussion format. Furthermore, the state participated in close to 100 different community meetings and presentations with associations and organizations who wanted to discuss the implications of ESSA with us.

We gathered formal input from others in the state’s education policy governance structure, such as the governor’s office, the legislature, the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, and many of the Board’s Advisory Councils, including the Accountability and Assistance Advisory Council, Gifted and Talented Advisory Council, Family and Community Engagement Advisory Council, State Student Advisory Council, and Arts Education Advisory Council.

During our official public comment period, from early February 2017 through early March 2017, we received 1,000 survey responses, along with scores of letters, postcards, emails, and other communications. A synthesis of the formal 2017 open comment period is included in Appendix B.

For the updated 2024 ESSA plan, Massachusetts published a draft version of its plan for public comment on May 21, 2024 and reached out to dozens of stakeholder groups as well as the general public inviting comment. The official public comment period was open for 17 days, until June 7, 2024. See https://www.doe.mass.edu/federalgrants/essa/.

* 1. Took into account the input obtained through consultation and public comment. The response must include both how the SEA addressed the concerns and issues raised through consultation and public comment and any changes the SEA made as a result of consultation and public comment for all components of the consolidated State plan.

The Department has relied on the feedback we received from our many stakeholders through the consultation we conducted starting in spring 2016. The overall design of the consultation period allowed us to maximize the feedback from our field. We looped back with our stakeholders on multiple occasions during the development of this plan, making them an integral part of the entire process. The voices of stakeholders are widely reflected on the pages of this plan.

1. **Governor’s consultation**. Describe how the SEA consulted in a timely and meaningful manner with the Governor consistent with section 8540 of the ESEA, including whether officials from the SEA and the Governor’s office met during the development of this plan and prior to the submission of this plan.

With respect to the 2017 ESSA plan, the Secretary of Education for the Commonwealth, James Peyser, appointed by Governor Baker, was an ex-officio member of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. Our agency reported to the Board on a frequent basis about the ESSA state plan development process. By virtue of his position on the Board, the Governor’s appointee was involved throughout the process, from the inception of the state planning, through the public comment period, and to the ultimate finalization of the plan. The Secretary and Commissioner met with Governor Baker on March 8, 2017, to discuss our consolidated state plan. Subsequent to that meeting, the Commissioner and Department staff continued to discuss details related to finalizing our state plan with the Secretary and his staff at the Executive Office of Education, who, in turn, continued consultation with the Governor and his staff. The final plan was presented to the Governor’s office on March 31, 2017 and the Governor signed the plan on April 3, 2017. Since submitting our plan on April 3, 2017 we have continued to consult with the Secretary and his staff at the Executive Office of Education.

With respect to the 2024 updated plan, both the Secretary, Patrick Tutwiler, and Governor Maura Healey’s office were briefed on the plan in February of 2023 and in June of 2024 and were given the opportunity to provide feedback.

Date SEA provided the plan to the Governor: 3/8/2017 and 6/TBD/2024.

Check one:

* The Governor signed this consolidated State plan.
* The Governor did not sign this consolidated State plan.

## 2.2 System of Performance Management.

*Instructions: In the text boxes below, each SEA must describe its system of performance management of SEA and LEA plans across all programs included in this consolidated State plan. The description of an SEA’s system of performance management must include information on the SEA’s review and approval of LEA plans, monitoring, continuous improvement, and technical assistance across the components of the consolidated State plan.*

1. **Review and Approval of LEA Plans.** Describe the SEA’s process for supporting the development, review, and approval of LEA plans in accordance with statutory and regulatory requirements. The description should include a discussion of how the SEA will determine if LEA activities align with: 1) the specific needs of the LEA, and 2) the SEA’s consolidated State plan.  
      
   The Department employs a team of skilled program specialists who have deep knowledge of federal programs. In recent years review and approval of LEA plans for Title I, Title IIA, and Title III has been conducted by Department staff working in individual program units (Title I, Title II, Title III). Beginning with review of SY17-18 LEA plans, the Department established a cross-unit team of staff responsible for conducting more cohesive reviews of LEA plans. Currently, the team serves as liaisons for all districts’ consolidated ESSA applications, as well as their IDEA, Perkins, and ESSER applications.
2. **Monitoring**. Describe the SEA’s plan to monitor SEA and LEA implementation of the included programs to ensure compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements. This description must include how the SEA will collect and use data and information which may include input from stakeholders and data collected and reported on State and LEA report cards (under section 1111(h) of the ESEA and applicable regulations), to assess the quality of SEA and LEA implementation of strategies and progress toward meeting the desired program outcomes.

The Department has robust monitoring procedures in place for federal programs. See [here](https://www.doe.mass.edu/psm/tfm/default.html) and [here](https://www.doe.mass.edu/federalgrants/resources/monitoring/) for documentation. Monitoring of Title III, Part A programs is further described in Section 6.2 of this plan. Massachusetts’ monitoring procedures include reviews of LEA compliance with sections 1117 and 8501 of the ESEA regarding the equitable participation of private school children and teachers.

1. **Continuous Improvement**. Describe the SEA’s plan to continuously improve SEA and LEA plans and implementation. This description must include how the SEA will collect and use data and information which may include input from stakeholders and data collected and reported on State and LEA report cards (under section 1111(h) of the ESEA and applicable regulations), to assess the quality of SEA and LEA implementation of strategies and progress toward meeting the desired program outcomes.  
     
     
   The Commissioner and other senior staff receive regular updates on all aspects of the ESSA plan. DESE also has a well-developed budget management system to oversee and control program unit spending. While the current system has allowed the agency to successfully manage and track its various ESEA activities, we continue to improve and consolidate the system to make it more efficient and effective for our schools and districts. We will continue to use these methods of review and continuous improvement to advance our work.

Our state’s strong data collection practices and analysis tools (including Edwin Analytics, District Action and Research Tools (DART), our Early Warning Indicator System (EWIS), and Resource Allocation and District Action Reports (RADAR)) will continue to help us promote continuous improvement in districts. Additionally, we will continue to take advantage of new resources we have developed for district strategic planning, along with district consolidated federal grant applications. At the LEA level, our Planning for Success model for district strategic planning involves three steps: creating a plan, aligning systems to the plan, and implementing the plan (including evaluating and monitoring progress). We will continue to encourage districts to use this planning model as the structure underlying the plan we will require as part of the annual federal grant application, which helps districts to establish local evaluation practices where they do not already exist. Over time we have added and will continue to add more supports to help districts evaluate their progress, particularly in conducting formal evaluations where needed and in alignment with ESSA requirements for evidence-based interventions. This work is driven by our Office of Resource Allocation Strategy and Planning within OPR, which has responsibility for promoting strategic resource use and grant coordination in districts.   
  
As we refine the implementation of our plan, stakeholder voice will continue to play a prominent role. We already hold regular meetings with many of our stakeholder groups, including superintendents, principals, teachers, union leadership, school committee members, state board members, state legislators, parents, students, and others. We will continue these conversations and also offer additional opportunities for stakeholders to provide input, particularly at key junctures when we are considering significant changes to an element of the plan.

1. **Differentiated Technical Assistance**. Describe the SEA’s plan to provide differentiated technical assistance to LEAs and schools to support effective implementation of SEA, LEA, and other subgrantee strategies.

The Center for School and District Partnership (CDSP) and the Office of Strategic Transformation (OST) partner together to support students in schools and district identified as requiring assistance or intervention through our state’s accountability system, including CSI, TSI, and ATSI schools. OST supports those schools and districts designated as chronically underperforming under state law, as well as schools managed through alternate governance structures, such as the Springfield Empowerment Zone (SEZP). CSDP differentiates support to all other schools identified requiring assistance or intervention through our state’s accountability system. OST and CSDP work together to ensure resources and supports to all targeted schools and districts are aligned, and to share promising practices.

**Office of Strategic Transformation**

In instances when all other avenues to implement ambitious and accelerated reforms have been exhausted in the turnaround of schools or districts, and when it is in the best interest of students, the state has the authority to designate a district or school as chronically underperforming. Under this designation, the district or school is placed under state receivership in accordance with state law. There are currently three districts and three schools under receivership across the state.

OST provides support to these districts through partnership with the named Receiver to overcome challenges in establishing sustainable district and school systems and instructional improvements. Support and initiatives are aligned to the advancement of equity and gap closing among student groups. OST also provides direct technical assistance through grant funding, professional development, and monitoring of school quality.

OST also supports districts that have established alternative governance structures which provide additional autonomy to advance rapid improvements in student achievement. These structures keep schools within a districts’ control but allow for flexibilities and innovation meant to promote school improvement.

Considering overall low performance in receivership and alternate governance districts, several of the state’s comprehensive support and intervention (CSI) and targeted support and intervention (TSI) schools are supported by OST.

**Center for School and District Partnership**

In 2021, a DESE-wide reorganization took place that brought several assistance-focused teams across the Department together. The Statewide System of Support, Kaleidoscope Collective for Learning, English Language Acquisition, Educational Technology, and Effective Partnerships and Impact offices form the Center for School and District Partnership (CSDP). CSDP has been charged with providing coordinated supports to the highest-need districts and schools in the state grounded in a vision for Deeper Learning, a key agency initiative since 2019. [Deeper Learning](https://www.doe.mass.edu/deeperlearning/) is a driving force of DESE’s racial equity agenda by setting the conditions where all students have consistent access to grade-level work that is relevant, real-world, and interactive, which fosters not only mastery but also identity development and creativity in students.

CSDP centers its assistance work on one foundational framework for use with schools and districts. In June 2022, the [Coherence Guidebook](https://www.doe.mass.edu/csdp/guidebook/coherence-guidebook.pdf) was launched as the product of a framework alignment effort, synthesizing the principles of the several DESE resources such as the [Turnaround Practices](https://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/howitworks/turnaround-practices-508.pdf), [Deeper Learning](https://www.doe.mass.edu/deeperlearning/), [MTSS Blueprint](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfss/mtss/blueprint.pdf), [EL Blueprint](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/blueprint/dashboard.html), and [Acceleration Roadmap](https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/roadmap/leader-edition.pdf). The Coherence Guidebook not only lays out our core, system-level drivers for school systems to achieve Deeper Learning, it also centers racial equity as a primary goal for all school and district improvement efforts, anchored in culturally and linguistically sustaining practices. DESE has been engaged in several years of intentional trainings, policy development, and implementation focused on advancing racial equity through fostering culturally responsive practices in classrooms, schools, and districts. In addition to the Coherence Guidebook, DESE is developing an educational vision toward culturally responsive teaching and Deeper Learning that is expected to launch in SY23-24.

Each CSDP office provides specific supports to schools identified as requiring assistance or intervention through the state’s accountability system. Considering schools and districts requiring assistance or intervention have varying needs and underlying conditions, a one-size-fits-all approach to assistance is often not effective. Districts and schools identified for assistance can access supports across each CSDP office and with varying levels of intensity to meet their specific context and needs. An overview of each office’s scope of work is described here.

**Statewide System of Support (SSoS)**

SSoS provides targeted assistance to districts with schools that are persistently identified as requiring assistance or intervention. SSoS is committed to assisting districts and schools across Massachusetts to implement systems and practices that advance equity and racial equity and result in positive outcomes and learning experiences for all students, particularly those who have been historically marginalized. The SSoS Model supports schools and districts to: a) identify clear priorities anchored in culturally and linguistically sustaining grade appropriate instruction and sense of belonging; b) target support in service of those priorities, with a particular focus on supporting school and district ILTs and HQIM adoption and implementation.

The work of SSoS is organized around the [Coherence Guidebook](https://www.doe.mass.edu/csdp/guidebook/default.html) and focuses on building capacity of schools and districts around the mindsets, knowledge and skillsets, and [strategic planning](https://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/level4/guidance.html) needed to create school systems where all students have equitable access to Deeper Learning experiences, including:

1. Establishing a shared instructional vision, grounded in deeper learning and high expectations for all students;
2. Identifying and implementing high-leverage instructional priorities that will move teaching and learning closer to that vision;
3. Aligning specific systems and structures to support the identified instructional priorities and tiered supports; and
4. Monitoring progress to ensure student outcomes evolve to match vision-aligned targets.

Building capacity can include a variety of activities and supports, depending on the unique need and context of a school system. However, SSoS leverages its core functions as part of a state agency to enable the school or district to do the following: diagnosing strengths and areas for improvement; identifying priorities for improvement; establishing or improving coherent systems; engaging in continuous learning with the Department and other school systems.

**The Kaleidoscope Collective for Learning (Kaleidoscope)**

The Kaleidoscope Collective for Learning (Kaleidoscope) provides Massachusetts’ schools with tools, resources, professional development, and system-level coaching to advance Deeper Learning—grade-level work that is real world, relevant, and interactive—and ensure equitable access to high-quality learning experiences for all students in the Commonwealth. Since 2019, Kaleidoscope directly partners with cohorts of schools, including schools identified as requiring targeted assistance through our state’s accountability system, to leverage Deeper Learning as a lens to implement high-quality instructional materials, foster [learning acceleration](https://www.doe.mass.edu/covid19/on-desktop/roadmap/) and encourage the use and implementation of grade-appropriate instruction and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices as a foundation for and pathway to equitable student outcomes.

Kaleidoscope’s work supports schools and districts in two ways: 1) offering direct support to assigned schools and/or 2) developing the tools and resources that contribute to other DESE team’s ability to support schools and districts. For example, through direct school partnership, Kaleidoscope provides monthly professional development sessions and coaching to educators and leaders, including conducting instructional rounds, learning walks, and facilitating collaborative teams to analyze effective implementation of high-quality instructional materials in service of deeper learning. In addition to direct school partnerships and professional learning, Kaleidoscope develops tools and resource that are used by other DESE teams (e.g., Center for Instructional Support, Statewide System of Support (SSOS), etc.) to support schools and districts with their improvement efforts. For example, Kaleidoscope has developed a Deeper Learning Guidance Tool, learning modules, a suite of implementation protocols, and is currently working on a shared library that will provide educators with opportunities to engage in self-paced, collaborative learning with resources designed to support implementation of deeper learning.

**Office of Effective Partnerships and Impact (OEPI)**

The OEPI is charged with ensuring integration and coherence across the CSDP offices through the management of core functions of DESE assistance work related to high-quality partners, professional learning, grants, monitoring and program evaluation, strategic budgeting, and accountability.

The OEPI team ensures assistance efforts across CSDP meet both state and federal requirements for schools and districts identified as requiring assistance or intervention and oversees the distribution of state and federal school improvement/targeted assistance grant funding to districts and schools. In addition, OEPI staff support the provision of assistance to districts and schools newly identified as requiring assistance or intervention by connecting them with high-quality partners, targeted assistance grant funding, and other resources to meet identified needs aligned to the Coherence Guidebook.

OEPI leads a system for progress monitoring and evaluation that provides qualitative and quantitative data to inform schools and districts on the effectiveness of their improvement efforts and leverages that data to track progress of CSDP assistance efforts and measure impact through evaluations and dissemination of best practices. In addition, the team oversees the state’s Multi-Tiered System of Support framework and Academies – professional development networks led by high-quality partners – and runs the vetting process for vendors seeking to support school and district improvement efforts throughout the Commonwealth.

In addition, the OEPI team looks across the state to identify common areas of needs and then designs and delivers resources, professional development, partnerships, and direct targeted assistance to address those needs. These supports align with the State’s [Multi-Tiered System of Supports Blueprint](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfss/mtss/default.html). As one example, OEPI currently oversees seven [Multi-Tiered Systems of Support Academies](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfss/prof-dev/default.html), which offer three-years of professional development and coaching for school and district teams to build proactive and sustainable tiered systems of support for academics, behavior, and social emotional learning. The team also creates and disseminates resources related to MTSS, including the MTSS Blueprint, self-assessment tool, and other practical tools to support implementation.

Finally, OEPI oversees the recruitment, vetting and networking of [partner organizations](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfss/partnerships/default.html) that have a proven track record of supporting school, district, and/or state-level sustainable improvement efforts. Partner organizations apply on a rolling basis and undergo a review and vetting process that includes not only their services descriptions and evidence of effectiveness, but also their internal and external commitment to equity.

**Office of Language Acquisition (OLA)**

The Office of Language Acquisition (OLA) is charged with providing leadership and support designed to increase the capacity of educators in Massachusetts public schools to provide an excellent education to multilingual learners (MLs). OLA oversees English Learner education, as well as World Languages, and coordinates state initiatives, policy development, and compliance monitoring related to MLs. Supports and resources developed through OLA directly impact districts and schools identified as requiring assistance or intervention on our state’s accountability system.

OLA staff leverage several core strategies to ensure success for MLs across the Commonwealth. OLA provides [guidance](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/guidance/default.html) and [resources](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/resources/default.html) for the implementation and administration of English Learner Education programs (including Sheltered English Immersion, Dual Language Education, or Transitional Bilingual Education) in compliance with state and federal laws and regulations. OLA staff also provide English as a Second Language (ESL) [instructional support](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/default.html) and oversee effective [compliance](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/cpr/default.html) to improve outcomes for English Learners through Tiered Focused Monitoring (TFM).

In addition to supporting compliance and regulatory functions, the OLA team enhances the work of ML instruction in districts and schools by increasing public knowledge and [family engagement](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/families/default.html) regarding English Learners and English Learner Education, and by promoting [communication and collaboration](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/leader-network/default.html) among EL education leaders through network meetings and professional learning opportunities. The office also promotes shared responsibility, both internally at DESE and externally, for English Learner success and promotes multilingualism through high-quality world language and bilingual education programs and initiatives such as the Seal of Biliteracy.

**EdTech**

The Office of Educational Technology (OET) was established during the 2020-2021 school year to directly assist districts in providing pandemic-related remote and hybrid instruction. OET was charged with ensuring all schools were equipped with 1:1 learning devices for students, sufficient internet access in and outside of school buildings, guidance on recommended and required practices, and professional development opportunities.

Following the transition from remote and hybrid learning, OET has since supported, and continues to support, schools and districts to transition from pandemic-related uses of technology to more strategic, sustainable, and equitable ways to integrate technology in service of students and school communities. The office issues grants, coordinates professional learning programming, publishes guidance and resources, and provides targeted assistance and support, all of which are prioritized for schools and districts identified as requiring assistance through the state’s accountability system.

**CSDP Partnership with Other Agency Offices**

CSDP partners with offices across DESE to support cross-agency priorities, including, but not limited to culturally and linguistically sustaining, grade appropriate instruction, safe and supportive learning environments, and developing a diverse and culturally responsive workforce. For example, CSDP partners with the Center for Strategic Initiatives on the Equity in Action Initiative, an effort to build the capacity of a coalition of districts who will serve as a working group to tackle the real-time implementation of equity strategies and problem solving, grounded in their local context. CSDP partners on the design and implementation of this work, currently serving nine districts.

In addition, the Office of Language Acquisition partners with the Center for Instructional Support to deepen our understanding and supports around high-quality instructional materials and access for multi-lingual learners. This includes reviewing the state’s [CURATE resources](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate/) through the lens of supports for multi-lingual learners. Regarding early literacy, the Statewide System of Support Leadership Consultants work closely with the Center for Instructional Support through professional learning to deepen their content knowledge around early literacy focused on the [Mass Literacy Guide](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/). Furthermore, CSDP works closely with the Office of Student and Family Support across a number of initiatives, including shared professional learning for schools and districts around social-emotional learning.

# Section 3: Academic Assessments

*Instructions: As applicable, provide the information regarding a State’s academic assessments in the text boxes below.*

1. **Advanced Mathematics Coursework.** Does the State: 1) administer end-of-course mathematics assessments to high school students in order to meet the requirements under section 1111(b)(2)(B)(v)(I)(bb) of the ESEA; and 2) use the exception for students in eighth grade to take such assessments under section 1111(b)(2)(C) of the ESEA?

* Yes. If yes, describe the SEA’s strategies to provide all students in the State the opportunity to be prepared for and to take advanced mathematics coursework in middle school consistent with section 1111(b)(2)(C) and 34 C.F.R. § 200.5(b)(4).
* No.   
    
  Massachusetts does not administer end-of-course mathematics assessments to high school students, nor is an exception provided to assess students in grade 8 using end-of-course mathematics assessments.

1. **Languages other than English.** Describe how the SEA is complying with the requirements in section 1111(b)(2)(F) of the ESEA in languages other than English.
   1. Provide the SEA’s definition for “languages other than English that are present to a significant extent in the participating student population” and identify the specific languages that meet that definition.

Massachusetts defines the first language of ten percent or more of students eligible to take assessments in the State as “languages other than English that are present to a significant extent.” This includes only Spanish-speaking students in Massachusetts.

* 1. Identify any existing assessments in languages other than English, and specify for which grades and content areas those assessments are available.  
       
     Spanish/English MCAS tests and retests in mathematics and science and technology/engineering (STE) are made available to EL students who are literate in Spanish and have been in a U.S. school less than three years.
  2. Indicate the languages other than English identified in B.i. above for which yearly student academic assessments are not available and are needed.  
       
     Grade 10 Mathematics MCAS tests and retests and high school STE tests are available in Spanish/English. The state will conduct a review of the feasibility of developing Spanish translations of additional assessments in the future.
  3. Describe how the SEA will make every effort to develop assessments, at a minimum, in languages other than English that are present to a significant extent in the participating student population by providing:
     1. The State’s plan and timeline for developing such assessments;  
          
        The state will continue to administer the high school Spanish/English tests in mathematics and STE. Following an internal review, the state developed and implemented Spanish translations of the high school STE tests beginning in spring 2022. The state will conduct a review of the feasibility of developing translations of the mathematics and STE assessments in additional grades in the future.
     2. A description of the process the State used to gather meaningful input on the need for assessments in languages other than English, collect and respond to public comment, and consult with educators; parents and families of English learners; students, as appropriate; and other stakeholders; and   
          
        The state has consulted with its constituents and stakeholders periodically since 2002 on the topic of developing statewide other-language assessments. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is currently gathering input from educators, parents, and others—in advance of an upcoming procurement—regarding a number of aspects of the assessment program, including assessments in languages other than English.
     3. As applicable, an explanation of the reasons the State has not been able to complete the development of such assessments despite making every effort.

As of spring 2024, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is in the process of procuring a new assessment contract and is gathering stakeholder input regarding other-language assessments that may be included in it.

# Section 4: Accountability, Support, and Improvement for Schools

*Instructions: Each SEA must describe its accountability, support, and improvement system consistent with section 1111(c) and (d) of the ESEA. Each SEA may include documentation (e.g., technical reports or supporting evidence) that demonstrates compliance with applicable statutory and regulatory requirements.*

## **4.1 Accountability System**.

1. **Indicators**. Describe the measure(s) included in each of the Academic Achievement, Academic Progress, Graduation Rate, Achieving English Language Proficiency, and School Quality or Student Success indicators and how those measures meet the requirements described in section 1111(c)(4)(B) of the ESEA.
   * The description for each indicator should include how it is valid, reliable, and comparable across all LEAs in the State
   * for the measures included within the indicators of Academic Progress and School Quality or Student Success measures, the description must also address how each measure within the indicators is supported by research that high performance or improvement on such measure is likely to increase student learning (e.g., grade point average, credit accumulation, performance in advanced coursework).
   * For measures within indicators of School Quality or Student Success that are unique to high school, the description must address how research shows that high performance or improvement on the indicator is likely to increase graduation rates, postsecondary enrollment, persistence, completion, or career readiness.
   * the descriptions for the Academic Progress and School Quality or Student Success indicators must include a demonstration of how each measure aids in the meaningful differentiation of schools by demonstrating varied results across schools in the State.

| **Indicator** | **Measure(s)** | **Description** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Academic Achievement | * Grades 3-8 and 10 English language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics: Next Generation MCAS average scaled score | In full compliance with the requirements set forth in the academic achievement section of the accountability system requirements in ESSA, Massachusetts uses a school’s average scaled score as a measurement of “proficiency” within the achievement scale. The average scaled score better represents the range of scores at the district and school level. The average scaled score in a district or school indicates the degree to which all students in the school are meeting expectations. By signaling how all students in the district or school are performing, emphasis can be placed on improvement for all students, as opposed to the narrow focus on “proficient versus not” that results from just looking at the percentage of students that have reached a particular cut point on an achievement scale.  Massachusetts reports assessment results based on four achievement levels and associated scaled score ranges. For purposes of accountability reporting, the academic achievement indicators are based on a school’s average scaled score and are centered around the “meeting expectations” scaled score cut point.   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Next Generation MCAS Achievement Level** | **Next Generation MCAS Scaled Score Range** | | Exceeding Expectations | 530-560 | | Meeting Expectations | 500-529 | | Partially Meeting Expectations | 470-499 | | Not Meeting Expectations | 440-469 | |
| 1. Academic Progress/Other Academic Indicator | * ELA and Math mean student growth percentile (SGP) | Massachusetts uses the mean student growth percentile (SGP) as a measure of student growth. |
|  | * Grades 5 and 8 Science: Next Generation MCAS average scaled score | Consistent with ELA and mathematics achievement reporting (described above), Massachusetts uses the average scaled score as the reported achievement measure for science in grades 5 and 8. The average scaled score in a district or school indicates the degree to which all students in the school are meeting expectations in science. |
| 1. Graduation Rate | * Four-year cohort graduation rate | Massachusetts uses the four-year graduation rate in its district and school accountability system. This rate has been calculated since 2006 and continues to be a main driver of accountability at the high school level. |
| 1. Achieving English Language Proficiency |  |  |
|  | * Progress made by students towards attaining English language proficiency as measured by growth on the ACCESS for English language learners | Massachusetts uses the percentage of students making progress towards attaining English language proficiency the measure of English language attainment for English learners (ELs). ELs enter schooling at very different points in their English language development and these differences are evident across districts. As a result, it is important to measure the progress of ELs towards English language proficiency. |
| 1. School Quality or Student Success | * Chronic absenteeism (all grades) | Massachusetts uses chronic absenteeism as a measure of School Quality or Student Success because the district and school accountability system should incentivize a minimal loss of classroom instruction time. Chronic absenteeism is defined as the percentage of students missing at least 10 percent of their days in membership in a school (18 days or more in a typical 180-day school calendar). This measure is applied to all grades, with minimal exceptions granted for lost instruction time. While some absences are understandable and perhaps might be excused, ultimately the student has lost instruction time regardless of the reason. There has been significant research on the impact of absenteeism. Two examples can be found [here](http://cep.lse.ac.uk/pubs/download/dp1302.pdf) and [here](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2112677?seq=1#page_scan_tab_contents). |
|  | * Grade 10 Science: Next Generation MCAS average scaled score | Consistent with ELA and mathematics achievement reporting (described above), Massachusetts uses the average scaled score as the reported achievement measure for science in grade 10. The average scaled score in a district or school indicates the degree to which all students in the school are meeting expectations in science. |
|  | * Extended engagement rate (high school) | In addition to the four-year graduation rate, Massachusetts also uses an extended engagement rate in its district and school accountability system. A traditional five-year graduation rate includes only students that have received a diploma within five years of entering the assigned cohort. Massachusetts uses a rate that is equal to the sum of the percentage of students that have graduated within five years plus the percentage of students that are still enrolled in school after five years.  The district and school accountability system should incentivize welcoming students back into the school environment regardless of whether they are on track to graduate in four or five years. Many high schools now have alternative programming designed for off-track students and an accountability system should reward these types of programs rather than negatively impacting schools with a traditional five-year graduation rate calculation. |
|  | * Annual dropout rate (high school) | The graduation rate of a high school is certainly a key indicator of success. However, in a district and school accountability system that makes annual determinations, it is often difficult to make large gains in a graduation rate calculation in one year because much of the rate has been determined in grades 9-11. The number of high school dropouts on an annual basis is a significant component of the graduation rate calculation. The inclusion of the annual dropout rate in a high school accountability determination allows for a more actionable indicator for high schools on an annual basis. |
|  | * Successful completion of broad and challenging coursework (high school) | Massachusetts uses advanced coursework completion as a measure of School Quality or Student Success at the high school level. This indicator measures the percentage of all students enrolled in 11th and 12th grade that complete at least one state-defined advanced course, including but not limited to Advanced Placement, International Baccalaureate, honors, dual enrollment, and other state-identified rigorous courses in a school year. The accountability system incentivizes student participation in these types of courses.  In Massachusetts, there are varying levels of participation in and completion of advanced coursework across the state and within school districts there are equity gaps in participation across student groups. In addition, Massachusetts PSAT, SAT and course grade data indicate that additional students are prepared for advanced coursework but are not enrolling in those courses. |

1. **Subgroups.**
   1. List the subgroups of students from each major and racial ethnic group in the State and, as applicable, describe any additional subgroups of students used in the accountability system.

Massachusetts will continue to use the same racial/ethnic student groups it has used for many years in its district and school accountability system: African-American/Black, Asian, Hispanic/Latino, Multi-race/non-Hispanic/Latino, American Indian or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, and White. In addition, Massachusetts also includes four student groups of selected populations in its accountability system: students from low-income families, former or current English learners (ELs - see below for details about the inclusion of former ELs), students with disabilities and high needs students (an unduplicated count of students that appear in any one of the three selected population student groups).

* 1. If applicable, describe the statewide uniform procedure for including former children with disabilities in the children with disabilities subgroup for purposes of calculating any indicator that uses data based on State assessment results under section 1111(b)(2)(B)(v)(I) of the ESEA and as described in 34 C.F.R. § 200.16(b), including the number of years the State includes the results of former children with disabilities.

Not applicable.

* 1. If applicable, describe the statewide uniform procedure for including former English learners in the English learner subgroup for purposes of calculating any indicator that uses data based on State assessment results under section 1111(b)(2)(B)(v)(I) of the ESEA, including the number of years the State includes the results of former English learners.

EL students must participate in all state assessments scheduled for their grades regardless of the language program and services they are receiving or the amount of time they have been in the United States. The one exception applies to first-year ELs. Schools have the option to administer ELA tests to first-year ELs, provided they have also participated in ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 testing. First-year ELs must participate in MCAS Mathematics and STE tests although results will be reported only for diagnostic purposes and will not be included in school and district summary results, or in state and federal accountability reporting. Massachusetts includes the results of former ELs in its accountability results for four school years after a student transitions out of EL status based on flexibility afforded under ESSA.

* 1. If applicable, chooseone of the following options for recently arrived English learners in the State:

**X** Applying the exception under ESEA section 1111(b)(3)(A)(i); or  
☐ Applying the exception under ESEA section 1111(b)(3)(A)(ii); or  
☐ Applying the exception under ESEA section 1111(b)(3)(A)(i) or under ESEA section 1111(b)(3)(A)(ii). If this option is selected, describe how the State will choose which exception applies to a recently arrived English learner.

1. **Minimum Number of Students**.
   1. Provide the minimum number of students for purposes of accountability that the State determines are necessary to be included in each of the subgroups of students.

Massachusetts intends to continue its practice from recent years and implement a minimum number of students of 20 for the purposes of student group accountability determinations. A minimum of 20 students allows for maximum accountability while still making valid and reliable accountability determinations at the student group level.

* 1. If the State’s minimum number of students for purposes of reporting is lower than the minimum number of students for purposes of accountability, provide that number.

Massachusetts reports enrollment, dropout, and graduation rate data for any group with at least six students and reports assessment results for any group with at least ten students.

* 1. Describe how other components of the statewide accountability system, such as the State’s uniform procedure for averaging data, interact with the minimum number of students to affect the statistical reliability and soundness of accountability data and to ensure the maximum inclusion of all students and each subgroup of students;

Requiring a minimum of 20 students and multiple years to make an accountability determination has an impact on the number of school and student group classifications that can be made. However, this loss is outweighed by the need to make valid and reliable determinations based on at least 20 students and be as comprehensive as possible by looking at multiple years of data.

* 1. Describe the strategies the State uses to protect the privacy of individual students for each purpose for which disaggregated data is required, including reporting under section 1111(h) of the ESEA and the statewide accountability system under section 1111(c) of the ESEA;

Massachusetts has a long history of reporting vast amounts of data to the general public while at the same time protecting the identity and privacy of its students. Massachusetts does not report any enrollment data for a group with less than six students, does not report assessment results for any group with less than ten students, and does not include any group with less than 20 students in its accountability system.

* 1. Provide information regarding the number and percentage of all students and students in each subgroup described in 4.B.i above for whose results schools would not be held accountable under the State’s system for annual meaningful differentiation of schools;

The accountability system we developed includes over 99 percent of all students from assessed grades in the aggregate. In addition, the use of the High Needs group (any student in the low income, students with disabilities or current and former English learner student groups) allows additional schools to be held accountable as opposed to inclusion based on the three discreet groups comprising the High Needs group. The individual race/ethnic and selected population subgroups percentages of students included in the accountability system assuming an N size of 20 are included below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Group | Number of Student Enrolled in Assessed Grades | % of Students in Accountability System in Individual Student Groups |
| All Students | 470,605 | 99.8% |
| African American/Black | 44,008 | 82.8% |
| Asian | 34,424 | 80.0% |
| Hispanic/Latino | 106,967 | 93.2% |
| Multi-race/Non-Hispanic/Latino | 20,365 | 47.7% |
| Native American | 1,033 | 2.7% |
| Native Hawaiian | 400 | 0.0% |
| White | 263,234 | 99.0% |
| Low income | 215,108 | 98.8% |
| English Learner | 80,689 | 92.2% |
| High Needs | 270,179 | 99.5% |
| Students with Disabilities | 98,555 | 96.3% |

1. **Annual Meaningful Differentiation**. Describe the State’s system for annual meaningful differentiation of all public schools in the State, including public charter schools, consistent with the requirements of section 1111(c)(4)(C) of the ESEA.

See below.  
  
*Describe the following information with respect to the State’s system of annual meaningful differentiation:*

* 1. The distinct and discrete levels of school performance, and how they are calculated, on each indicator in the statewide accountability system;

The state’s accountability system is our primary way of measuring each school’s and district’s progress on attaining the state goal of success after high school for all students. ESSA provides us with an opportunity to refine our accountability system to better align it with the agency’s goals and strategies. This allows us to broaden the dimensions of performance we consider, as well as to improve our system for assisting those schools and districts farthest behind in attaining the state’s goals.

Our state’s accountability system rests primarily on student achievement and growth and graduation data, with an emphasis on closing gaps for all students, including those that are low performing. These data are fundamental to the educational enterprise. If students are not proficient on grade-level material and are not graduating, then schools and districts are not doing their jobs. And if not all students are performing well, the accountability system should highlight those gaps.

To meet the requirements identified in ESSA, we have expanded the measures included in the system to create a more comprehensive picture of student opportunity and outcomes and have increased the value placed on improvement. By doing so, we intend to promote a more well-rounded view of school performance and to encourage schools and districts to focus on increasing equitable access to educational opportunities. These measures also more strongly connect to our agency strategies.

Accountability determinations consist of a normative component and a criterion-referenced component, which are used to classify schools.

The normative component, or accountability percentile, measures the performance of all students in a school compared to other schools in the state. This measure is reported as a percentile, from 1 to 99, which is calculated using multiple years of data for all available accountability indicators for a school. Schools are grouped together based on the grades they serve: *non-high schools*, serving a combination of grades 3 through 8; *middle-high and K-12 schools*, serving one or more grades 3 through 8 and grade 10; and *high schools*, where the only tested grade is grade 10. Within each grouping, each school’s performance on each indicator is ranked and weighted according to the weighting rules described below. The resulting accountability percentile provides information about how a school is doing compared to other schools serving similar grades.

The criterion-referenced component measures a school’s progress towards improvement targets. In the accountability system, we use data from all students in the school and the lowest performing students in the school to determine overall progress towards targets.

For each school as a whole and for the lowest performing students group, improvement targets are set for each of the accountability indicators as shown in the table below.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicator** | **Non-high schools** | | **High schools & middle/high/K-12 schools** | |
| **All**  **students** | **Lowest performing students** | **All**  **students** | **Lowest performing students** |
| ELA achievement | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| Math achievement | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| Science achievement | ✔ | - | ✔ | ✔ |
| ELA SGP | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| Math SGP | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| Four-year cohort graduation rate | - | - | ✔ | - |
| Extended engagement rate | - | - | ✔ | - |
| Annual dropout rate | - | - | ✔ | - |
| EL progress | ✔ | - | ✔ | - |
| Chronic absenteeism | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ | ✔ |
| Advanced coursework completion | - | - | ✔ | - |

Based on each target and actual performance, Massachusetts assigns points for each indicator as shown in the table below:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Declined** | **No**  **change** | **Improved below target** | **Met**  **target** | **Exceeded target** |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

For the school as a whole, the actual points earned and the total possible points are reported for each indicator. The points earned are combined, weighted according to the weightings described below, and calculated into a percentage of possible points for the *all students* group. The same is done for the lowest performing students group. The two percentages of possible points values are then averaged, resulting in the school’s annual criterion-referenced target percentage. The goal is to earn 75 percent or higher, which represents meeting targets.

For overall reporting, the calculation of the criterion-referenced component includes multiple years of data. By combining multiple annual criterion-referenced target percentages (which measure performance from one year to the next), Massachusetts can produce a single, final percentage that represents overall progress towards targets over multiple years. Within this calculation, the annual percentages are weighted, giving more weight to the most recent year.

While a school’s accountability determination is primarily based on the performance of the district or school as a whole and its lowest performing students, Massachusetts also reports accountability results for the following 11 student groups: American Indian or Alaska Native; Asian; African American or Black; Hispanic or Latino; Multi-race, non-Hispanic or Latino; Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander; White; low income students; students with disabilities; current and former English learners (ELs); and high needs students (an unduplicated count of students who are low income, students with disabilities, and/or ELs and former ELs). In order to report data for a group, there must be results for at least 20 students.

For each student group in a school, performance against improvement targets is reported using the criterion-referenced component described above. The overall accountability determination for a group is reported as the degree to which targets have been met.

In addition to the criterion-referenced component, each group also receives a student group percentile. The student group percentile measures the group’s relative standing compared to like groups in the same grade span grouping statewide (e.g., by comparing results from the students with disabilities group in one high school to all other students with disabilities groups in high schools statewide). The student group percentile is calculated using the same process as the normative accountability percentile described above: by ranking data from all available accountability indicators for each student group and combining them into a single, final percentile value, from 1 to 99. This allows Massachusetts to identify schools in which the performance of the school as a whole may be masking the performance of one or more low performing student groups.

The criterion-referenced component (progress towards improvement targets) and the normative component (accountability percentile) are the two primary measures used to classify schools within the accountability system. Adjustments may be made for schools with low graduation rates, low performing student groups, or low assessment participation.

At the district level, Massachusetts reports results based on district-level data (i.e., by treating the district like one large school). Districts and their student groups receive criterion-referenced target percentages based on their overall progress toward improvement targets, and these are used as the primary measure for classifying districts within the accountability system. Districts do not receive district-level or student group-level percentiles.

* 1. The weighting of each indicator, including how certain indicators receive substantial weight individually and much greater weight in the aggregate.

The tables below outline Massachusetts’ weighting of indicators in the accountability system.

It is important to note that Massachusetts intends to review, and if necessary, adjust the weights as needed to ensure that the system continues to provide valuable, actionable results.

**Non-high schools**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicator** | **Measures** | **Weight** | |
| **With EL group** | **No EL group** |
| Academic Achievement | Grades 3-8 ELA and mathematics MCAS average scaled scores | 40.0% | 45.0% |
| Academic Progress | ELA and mathematics mean student growth percentiles | 20.0% | 22.5% |
| English Language Proficiency | Progress made by students towards attaining English language proficiency | 10.0% | -- |
| School Quality or Student Success | Grades 5 and 8 science MCAS average scaled score | 30.0% | 32.5% |
| Chronic absenteeism |

**High schools**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Indicator** | **Measures** | **Weight** | |
| **With EL group** | **No EL group** |
| Academic Achievement | Grade 10 ELA and mathematics MCAS average scaled scores | 26.66% | 31.66% |
| Academic Progress | ELA and mathematics mean student growth percentiles | 20.0% | 22.5% |
| Graduation Rate | Four-year cohort graduation rate | 6.67% | 6.67% |
| English Language Proficiency | Progress made by students towards attaining English language proficiency | 10.0% | -- |
| School Quality or Student Success | Grade 10 science achievement | 36.67% | 39.17% |
| Annual dropout rate |
| Extended engagement rate |
| Chronic absenteeism |
| Advanced coursework completion |

* 1. The summative determinations, including how they are calculated, that are provided to schools.

Overall school results are reported in two categories: schools requiring assistance or intervention, and schools not requiring assistance or intervention.

*Schools requiring assistance or intervention* are identified as:

* + - In need of broad/comprehensive support, if they are designated underperforming or chronically underperforming, at the discretion of the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education,[[3]](#footnote-4) or
    - In need of focused/targeted support, if they have not been identified as in need of broad/comprehensive support, and:
      * Are among the lowest 10 percent of schools statewide, as measured by the accountability percentile,
      * Have one or more low performing student groups, as measured by the student group percentile,
      * Have low graduation rates (below 66.7 percent), and/or
      * Have low assessment participation (below 95 percent) in the aggregate or for one or more student groups.

It is important to note that schools given a designation of *focused/targeted support or broad/comprehensive support* are identified as such based on the state’s system of annual meaningful differentiation described above. The process for determining which schools meet the federal Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) and Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) definitions are described later in this document.

A school that does not meet the criteria listed above is identified as *not requiring assistance or intervention*. Massachusetts reports results for these schools based on their overall performance against improvement targets, using the criterion-referenced component of the system. Schools are reported as either *meeting or exceeding targets*, s*ubstantial progress towards targets*, *moderate progress towards targets*, or *limited or no progress towards targets*.

A subset of schools, called *schools of recognition*, are recognized for their academic accomplishments. Schools of recognition are identified for demonstrating success or improvement in achievement, growth, and other areas, based on criteria established by the state.

The table below shows how schools are placed into accountability categories.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Schools not requiring assistance or**  **intervention** | | | | | **Schools requiring assistance or intervention** | |
| **Schools of recognition**      (Schools demonstrating high achievement, significant improvement, or high growth) | **Meeting or exceeding**  **targets**      (Criterion-referenced  target percentage  75-100) | **Substantial progress toward**  **targets**    (Criterion-referenced  target percentage  50-74) | **Moderate progress**  **toward**  **targets**    (Criterion-referenced target percentage  25-49) | **Limited or no progress toward**  **targets**    (Criterion-referenced  target percentage  0-24) | **Focused/**  **targeted**  **support**  (Schools with percentiles 1-10 not already identified for broad/ comprehensive support;  Schools with low graduation rate;  Schools with low performing student groups;  Schools with low participation) | **Broad/**  **comprehensive support**  (Underperforming schools;    Chronically underperforming schools) |

Each district is classified based on the results of the district as a whole and its lowest performing students, essentially treating the district like one large school. Overall district results are reported in two categories: districts requiring assistance or intervention, and districts not requiring assistance or intervention.

A district *requiring assistance or intervention* is identified as:

* + - In need of broad/comprehensive support, if it is designated underperforming or chronically underperforming, at the discretion of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education,[[4]](#footnote-5) or
    - In need of focused/targeted support, if it has not been identified as in need of broad/comprehensive support, and has:
      * Low graduation rates (below 66.7 percent), and/or
      * Low assessment participation (below 95 percent) in the aggregate or for one or more student groups.

A district that does not meet the criteria listed above is identified as *not requiring assistance or intervention*. Massachusetts reports results for these districts based on their overall performance against improvement targets, using the criterion-referenced component of the system. Districts are reported as either *meeting or exceeding targets*, s*ubstantial progress towards targets*, *moderate progress towards targets*, or *limited or no progress towards targets*.

The table below shows how districts are placed into accountability categories.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Districts without required assistance or**  **intervention** | | | | **Districts requiring assistance or intervention** | |
| **Meeting or exceeding**  **targets**      (Criterion-referenced  target percentage  75-100) | **Substantial progress**  **towards**  **targets**    (Criterion-  referenced  target  percentage  50-74) | **Moderate progress**  **towards**  **targets**    (Criterion-referenced  target  percentage  25-49) | **Limited or no progress towards**  **targets**    (Criterion-referenced  target percentage  0-24) | **Focused/**  **targeted**  **support**  (Districts with low graduation rate;  Districts with low participation) | **Broad/**  **comprehensive support**  (Underperforming districts;  Chronically underperforming districts) |

* 1. How the system for meaningful differentiation and the methodology for identifying schools under 34 C.F.R. § 200.19 will ensure that schools with low performance on substantially weighted indicators are more likely to be identified for comprehensive support and improvement or targeted support and improvement, consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.18(c)(3) and (d)(1)(ii).

Massachusetts has established weightings that place more value on the core indicators than the indicators of school quality or student success. Given those weights and the nature of our accountability calculations, schools with low performance on more heavily weighted indicators are more likely to be identified as requiring assistance.

1. **Participation Rate**. Describe how the State is factoring the requirement for 95 percent student participation in assessments into its system of annual meaningful differentiation of schools.

A school is classified as *requiring assistance or intervention* if it has an assessment participation rate below 95 percent in the aggregate or for one or more student groups.

1. **Data Procedures**. Describe the State’s uniform procedure for averaging data, including combining data across school years, combining data across grades, or both, in a school, if applicable.

As in past years, Massachusetts will leverage multiple years of data to categorize schools. At present, the system uses two years of data in the calculation of district and school accountability results. Due to the multi-year transition to the Next-Generation MCAS assessments and the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, Massachusetts continues to build up to a system that includes multiple years of data, with the most recent year weighted most.

1. **Including All Public Schools in a State’s Accountability System**. If the States uses a different methodology for annual meaningful differentiation than the one described in D above for any of the following specific types of schools, describe how they are included:  
   1. Schools in which no grade level is assessed under the State's academic assessment system (e.g., P-2 schools), although the State is not required to administer a standardized assessment to meet this requirement;

Massachusetts currently assigns a summative classification of “Insufficient data” to schools that do not administer the statewide assessment to any students in the school. Massachusetts will assign a summative rating based on measures other than Next-Generation MCAS results in the future and commits to assigning an annual meaningful differentiation within the state accountability system for schools that have the requisite number of students (minimum N = 20).

* 1. Schools with variant grade configurations (e.g., P-12 schools);

Massachusetts treats schools with any tested grades in the same manner. The construct of the Next-Generation MCAS will allow us to compare achievement across non-high school grades (3-8) using the scaled score. Grade 10 achievement is measured on the same assessment scale but based on different standards. As a result, districts and schools that serve a combination of grades 3-8 and 10 are issued a single overall determination based on their performance on each of the non-high school and high school indicators, measured separately within each grade span.

* 1. Small schools in which the total number of students who can be included in any indicator is less than the minimum number of students established by the State, consistent with a State’s uniform procedures for averaging data, if applicable;

Accountability results are based on valid, reliable data. Therefore, Massachusetts will assign a summative classification of “Insufficient data” to schools that do not meet the minimum number of students required for accountability reporting (20 students). For small schools that do not meet the minimum group size for reporting in the aggregate in a given year, we will combine student-level data starting in 2017 and in subsequent school years for each indicator until the minimum group size is met.

* 1. Schools that are designed to serve special populations (e.g., students receiving alternative programming in alternative educational settings; students living in local institutions for neglected or delinquent children, including juvenile justice facilities; students enrolled in State public schools for the deaf or blind; and recently arrived English learners enrolled in public schools for newcomer students); and

Massachusetts does not currently differentiate between schools whose mission is to serve alternative populations but plans to explore a protocol to do so in the future.

* 1. Newly opened schools that do not have multiple years of data, consistent with a State’s uniform procedure for averaging data, if applicable, for at least one indicator (e.g., a newly opened high school that has not yet graduated its first cohort for students).

Massachusetts plans to include all schools into the accountability as soon as we are able to make a valid and reliable summative determination. In most cases, this will be after two years so we can measure improvement.

## 4.2 Identification of Schools.

1. **Comprehensive Support and Improvement Schools**. Describe:
   1. The methodologies, including the timeline, by which the State identifies schools for comprehensive support and improvement under section 1111(c)(4)(D)(i) of the ESEA and (d), including: 1) lowest-performing schools; 2) schools with low high school graduation rates; and 3) schools with chronically low-performing subgroups.

Massachusetts identifies schools for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) every three years. There are three types of CSI schools:

1. The lowest performing 5 percent of Title I schools, which are identified using the normative percentile methodology described above.
2. Comprehensive high schools with a four-year graduation rate for the most recent year that is lower than 66.7 percent.
3. Any Title I school identified for Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI) that does not demonstrate improvement for the identified student group(s) after a period of three years.
   1. The uniform statewide exit criteria for schools identified for comprehensive support and improvement established by the State, including the number of years over which schools are expected to meet such criteria, under section 1111(d)(3)(A)(i) of the ESEA.

Identified CSI schools are eligible to exit that status after a period of three years, according to the following criteria:

* + CSI schools identified due to low graduation rate: These schools may exit CSI status if their most recent four-year cohort graduation rate is 66.7 percent or higher;
  + CSI schools identified due to low performance (i.e., the lowest performing 5 percent of Title I schools): These schools may exit CSI status if they meet the following criteria:
    - * They demonstrate improvement in overall performance such that they are no longer among the lowest performing 5 percent of Title I schools statewide, and demonstrate improvement in academic achievement or student growth in the time since they were initially identified;
      * Systems are in place to sustain progress in academic outcomes for students, as measured by the state’s monitoring site visit process (where such data are available); and
      * They maintain a 95 percent participation rate on the MCAS assessments.

1. **Targeted Support and Improvement Schools**. Describe:
   1. The State’s methodology for identifying any school with a “consistently underperforming” subgroup of students, including the definition and time period used by the State to determine consistent underperformance.

Massachusetts identifies Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) schools using the same normative methodology that it uses to identify low performing student groups. A school is identified if it has one or more of the same student groups performing among the lowest performing 5 percent of like student groups in the state for two consecutive years. In accordance with the statute, identification occurs annually.

* 1. The State’s methodology, including the timeline, for identifying schools with low-performing subgroups of students that must receive additional targeted support in accordance with section 1111(d)(2)(C) of the ESEA.

In accordance with the statute, Massachusetts notifies districts that have one or more Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) schools that demonstrate performance below that of the 5th percentile Title I school. These Additional Targeted Support and Improvement (ATSI) schools are identified using a normative approach that is similar to the one used to identify low performing schools and student groups. These schools are identified every three years.

* 1. The uniform exit criteria, established by the SEA, for schools participating under Title I, Part A with low-performing subgroups of students, including the number of years over which schools are expected to meet such criteria.

Identified ATSI schools are eligible to exit that status after a period of three years if they meet the following criteria:

* + - * They demonstrate improvement in student group performance such that the identified group is no longer among the lowest performing 5 percent of student groups statewide, and demonstrate improvement in academic achievement or student growth in the time since they were initially identified;
      * The identified group no longer demonstrates performance below that of the 5th percentile Title I school;
      * Systems are in place to sustain progress in academic outcomes for students, as measured by the state’s monitoring site visit process (where such data are available); and
      * The school maintains a 95 percent participation rate on the MCAS assessments.

## 4.3 State Support and Improvement for Low-performing Schools.

**Overview**

Massachusetts has a well-established and robust process for identifying and intervening in the lowest performing schools and districts across the state. This Consolidated State Plan under ESSA allows the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) to integrate its state system with federal accountability and assistance requirements and enhance supports and services to comprehensive and targeted support and improvement schools.

1. **School Improvement Resources**. Describe how the SEA will meet its responsibilities under section 1003 of the ESEA, including the process to award school improvement funds to LEAs and monitoring and evaluating the use of funds by LEAs.

The Department combines state and federal resources to support districts and schools identified by state’s accountability system as requiring assistance or intervention. The Department allocates school improvement funds through both allocation/formulaic and competitive grant opportunities. All school improvement grant awards, whether competitive or formulaic, are made in alignment with evidence-based practices and consider district and school capacity to effectively, sustainably, and proactively implement the practices.

**Allocation/Formulaic Grants:**

Districts with schools identified as requiring assistance or intervention are eligible to apply annually for Targeted Assistance Grant (TAG) or Strategic Transformation Grant funds to support school and district improvement efforts aligned to delivering grade-appropriate instruction through high-quality curriculum materials, fostering a sense of belonging, and embedding culturally and linguistically sustaining instructional practices. Districts are encouraged to leverage these grant funds with other resources (local funding, other federal Title funds, ESSER, Expanded Learning Time, etc.) to ensure they are building sustainable practices aligned to evidence and focused on a narrow set of priorities. One of DESE’s goals as an agency is to guide school and district leaders to think more strategically about how best to maximize the various grants they receive, either through entitlement or competitive opportunities; ensure that grant resources are used in ways that directly contribute to attainment of agency goals; and create new practices within the agency itself to improve DESE’s practices around grant development, assessment, and award determination.

**Competitive grants:**

Comprehensive and targeted support and improvement schools are eligible to apply for school improvement funds through a competitive process called the School Redesign Grant (SRG). Eligibility is prioritized for schools that have persistently ranked in the lowest percentiles on our state accountability system year-over-year.

A 2016 quasi-experimental study conducted by the American Institutes for Research (AIR) showed statistically significant gains in student achievement for Massachusetts turnaround schools receiving and implementing federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) funding between 2011 and 2015.[[5]](#footnote-6) This research gives Massachusetts strong evidence to continue to support its lowest-performing schools as was done under its former SIG program

Under ESSA, Massachusetts will structure the competitive school improvement grant process around critical elements of its former SRG competitive process;

* three years of substantial school-based funding to support high-intensity redesign efforts;
* a rigorous set of expectations aligned to the Coherence Guidebook, required of applicant schools;
* applications and interviews scored on a rubric with a high bar that ensures funding is only allocated to schools that demonstrate strong capacity to implement a strategic and actionable approach based on a robust data analysis and with community involvement to implement the turnaround plan;
* alignment to state statute and regulations for low performing schools; and
* supplemented with district assistance and support by our statewide system of support aligned to the Coherence Guidebook.

DESE leverages several systems to ensure districts and schools leveraging state and federal resources to drive improved outcomes for students. As noted in earlier sections of this plan, DESE commissions school site visits conducted by external vendors, supports school and district improvement planning efforts and engages in progress monitoring cycles with districts and schools through direct assistance efforts, and maintains a robust grant management system that establishes high standards from application, to amendments, to grant close out. Quantitative and qualitative data collection efforts through our multi-pronged approach are driven by DESE’s objective to evaluate, measure impact, and document best practice. DESE staff regularly tracks monitoring data to adjust it assistance delivery model to best meet the needs of our district and school partners.

1. **Technical Assistance Regarding Evidence-Based Interventions**. Describe the technical assistance the SEA will provide to each LEA in the State serving a significant number or percentage of schools identified for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement, including how it will provide technical assistance to LEAs to ensure the effective implementation of evidence-based interventions, and, if applicable, the list of State-approved, evidence-based interventions for use in schools implementing comprehensive or targeted support and improvement plans.

Please refer to section 2.2.D. above for a detailed description of DESE’s differentiated technical assistance model for LEAs with significant number of schools identified as CSI, TSI, or ATSI.

**Evidence-Based Criteria:** Massachusetts has strong research to support meeting the evidence-based criteria under ESSA. Years of high-quality research studies have shown that Massachusetts schools that engage in DESE’s turnaround model are more likely to see rapid improvements in student achievement results. A quasi-experimental study in 2016 showed statistically significant gains in student achievement for Massachusetts turnaround schools receiving and implementing federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) funding. In 2020, another [study](https://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/howitworks/impact-analysis.pdf) found statistically significant results in student improvement outcomes, and particularly for students of color, for schools engage in DESE-sponsored turnaround efforts. These findings give Massachusetts great confidence in its approach for supporting and monitoring comprehensive and targeted intervention. The Department continues to commission further turnaround research to deepen and enhance our statewide system of support for low performing schools based on research, and actively disseminates evidence of best practice to comprehensive and targeted support schools.

In 2019, the Department developed the [“How Do We Know” Initiative](https://www.doe.mass.edu/research/howdoweknow/default.html) as a resource for districts and schools to understand and implement the evidence-based interventions criteria under ESSA. This website, maintained by DESE’s Office of Planning and Research, explains the criteria, builds district and school capacity to select evidence-based strategies and interventions, and offers guidance for districts and schools to measure impact of evidence-based strategies on their own. While some research articles are provided, the “How Do We Know” Initiative also links to other research repositories such as What Works Clearinghouse, IES REL Networks, and other state clearinghouses. Schools that are identified as CSI, TSI, and ATSI are directed to this website through the [Sustainable Improvement Planning process](https://www.doe.mass.edu/turnaround/level4/guidance.html) for school improvement plans. CSDP staff are trained in leveraging the “How Do We Know” Initiative resources to support districts and schools identified as CSI, TSI, and ATSI in selecting and implementing evidence-based strategies in the school improvement efforts.

In addition, DESE also supports district implementation of evidence-based practices by vetting vendors interested in supporting comprehensive and/or targeted support and intervention schools. This initiative is aimed at qualifying organizations from a pre-approved list of vendors to support district and school turnaround. To be approved to work with Massachusetts comprehensive and targeted support and improvement schools, vendors must provide evidence of a demonstrated track record of effectiveness in accelerating school improvement. The partner vetting process is fully integrated into the state procurement process that requires frequent renewal periods to ensure vendors continue to meet the standards we require for vendors engaging in turnaround work with schools and districts.

1. **More Rigorous Interventions.** Describe the more rigorous interventions required for schools identified for comprehensive support and improvement that fail to meet the State’s exit criteria within a State-determined number of years consistent with section 1111(d)(3)(A)(i) of the ESEA.

**School Redesign Grant**

As described in section 4.3.A., CSI, TSI, and ATSI schools are eligible to apply for school improvement funds through a competitive process called the School Redesign Grant (SRG). Eligibility is prioritized for schools that have persistently ranked in the lowest percentiles on our state accountability system year-over-year. To receive substantial funding to drive school-based rapid improvement efforts, cohorts of SRG schools are held to a high standard for application, must implement evidenced-based interventions, and are required to commit to receiving intensive support from SSoS staff for three years.

**State Receivership and Alternate Governance Models**

Massachusetts has developed several approaches to intervening in persistently low-performing schools and districts; full state take-over through receivership, vetted educational management organizations to fully manage a school on behalf of districts or the Department, and support to districts in establishing alternative governance structures for specific schools or clusters of schools (such as Innovation Partnership Zones). In each instance of a persistently low-performing school or district, we use the approach that best meets their context and unique needs. Each district and school engaged in receivership or alternative governance structures receives prioritized assistance, support and monitoring from the Commissioner and other staff from the Department, all aligned to research-based practices.

In instances when all other avenues to implement ambitious and accelerated reforms have been exhausted in underperforming schools and districts and when it is in the best interest of students, the state has intervened, using legal authorities, and has placed persistently low-performing districts and schools under state receivership into “chronically underperforming” status. At present, three school districts and three schools are under state receivership. The Department has exercised a few different models of receivership, including appointing an individual as Receiver, an education management organization, and a board of directors which hired a superintendent.

The Department actively recruits educational management organizations that have a demonstrated track record in successfully managing and operating low-performing schools and can demonstrate success in achieving improved outcomes for students. School Turnaround Operators are responsible for implementing well-developed models that encompass school governance and management, instructional design, staff planning, community engagement strategies, and student supports. These pre-qualified School Turnaround Operators may be selected by districts or DESE to manage or serve as receiver for persistently low-performing schools.

The Department also supports districts in establishing alternative governance structures for one or a set of schools that continue to struggle in making rapid improvements in student achievement. Alternative governance structures keep the schools within the district’s control, but allow for additional autonomies, flexibilities, and compensation systems necessary for persistently low-performing schools.

1. **Periodic Resource Review**. Describe how the SEA will periodically review, identify, and, to the extent practicable, address any identified inequities in resources to ensure sufficient support for school improvement in each LEA in the State serving a significant number or percentage of schools identified for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement consistent with the requirements in section 1111(d)(3)(A)(ii) of the ESEA.

DESE engages in equitable resource allocation reviews through an existing structure of district reviews, which are conducted by DESE’s Office of District Reviews and Monitoring. Resource allocation is reviewed as a part of the regular protocol for all districts that receive reviews, based on DESE’s District Standards and Indicators. Resource allocation is touched upon specifically in at least four of the six indicators: *Leadership and Governance*, *Curriculum and Instruction*, *Human Resources and Professional Development*, and *Financial and Asset Management*. In addition, an analysis of inequities in students’ access to resources is a required component of improvement plans for Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) schools, with the expectation that the review will inform the strategies included in the plan. CSDP staff review plans for this requirement and provide feedback to districts and schools. The U.S. Department of Education conducted a review of DESE’s resource allocation review process in 2022 and found no areas of noncompliance.

# Section 5: Supporting Excellent Educators

## 5.1 Educator Development, Retention, and Advancement.

*Instructions: Consistent with sections 2101 and 2102 of the ESEA, if an SEA intends to use funds under one or more of the included programs for any of the following purposes, provide a description with the necessary information.*

1. **Certification and Licensure Systems.** Does the SEA intend to use Title II, Part A funds or funds from other included programs for certifying and licensing teachers and principals or other school leaders?

* Yes. If yes, provide a description of the systems for certification and licensure below.
* No.

Massachusetts has been licensing educators since 1951. Our licensure system requires that educators – including teachers, support personnel, and administrators – hold a Massachusetts license for their specific role. Teachers [demonstrate subject matter knowledge and skills](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeffectiveness/default.html), usually via the [Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL)](http://www.mass.gov/edu/government/departments-and-boards/ese/programs/educator-effectiveness/licensure/academic-prek-12/massachusetts-tests-for-educator-licensure-mtel.html). Educators must also continue to complete professional development on an ongoing basis to maintain licensure. Additional information on Massachusetts Licensure may be found on our [Educator Licensure website](https://www.doe.mass.edu/licensure/) .

In support of setting a high bar for licensure, and therefore ensuring that novice teachers in their first year of teaching are ready to make an impact with students on their first day in the classroom, Massachusetts will continue to effectively implement the Massachusetts Tests for Educator Licensure (MTEL). The Department manages the contract with a vendor and develops and revises tests to align with the subject matter knowledge requirements for educators. The Department has also approved and begun implementation of [alternative licensure assessments](https://www.doe.mass.edu/mtel/alt-assess/default.html) as part of a pilot that began in October 2020. These MTEL alternative assessments are designed to create comparable options for licensure candidates to demonstrate their content knowledge and communication and literacy skills.

The Department has continuously sought to evolve our licensure system. As a result, the agency will continue to refine the regulation that governs the requirements for educator licensure to promote effective teachers. Massachusetts will develop and solicit feedback on licensure policies and seek approval of revised licensure regulations from the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. These regulations directly impact novice and veteran teachers, as well as educator preparation programs.

We intend to use Title IIA administrative funds to support staff deployment within the agency to work on licensure policy, including design and implementation. Our theory of action is that if we effectively support the administration of the teacher tests and build out licensure policies that set a high bar for educators, then educators will be better positioned to affect students on day one.

1. **Educator Preparation Program Strategies**. Does the SEA intend to use Title II, Part A funds or funds from other included programs to support theState’s strategies to improve educator preparation programs consistent with section 2101(d)(2)(M) of the ESEA, particularly for educators of low-income and minority students?

* Yes. If yes, provide a description of the strategies to improve educator preparation programs below.
* No.

Educator Preparation provides the foothold for beginning educators to maximize their impact on student learning from the very moment they enter the classroom as novice teachers.

The four strategies the Department has used and will continue to use include:

* Continue to require the use of performance assessments for prospective teachers and administrators
* Implement an educator preparation program review process  **t**hat builds a foundation of anti-racist practice and deepens instruction and program level-expectations
* Use data to promote continuous improvement and transparency, including stakeholder survey data
* Foster strong partnerships between educator preparation programs and districts

First, the Department requires performance assessments for teacher and school leader candidates. All educator preparation programs are required to include a performance aligned with state expectations as a requirement for successful completion. For prospective teachers, a statewide [Candidate Assessment of Performance (CAP)](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/cap/2020-21guidelines.docx) serves as the performance assessment during educator preparation. The CAP assesses a teacher candidate’s readiness in relation to the state’s ﷟[Professional Standards for Teaching](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/guidelines-advisories/teachers-guide.docx), and parallels the [Massachusetts Educator Evaluation system](http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/) in order to better prepare teacher candidates and ensure that they are ready to be effective on day one. It measures teacher candidates' practice across a range of key indicators and their demonstration of the subject matter and the pedagogy it requires by consistently engaging students in learning experiences that enable them to acquire complex knowledge and subject-specific skills and vocabulary and supports prospective teachers in improving their practice based on assessment results. Additionally, all school leader candidates must complete the Performance Assessment for Leaders (PAL) for Principal licensure. The assessments hold educator preparation program providers accountable for educator performance while emphasizing the importance of preparing educators to work with students with diverse needs, backgrounds, and family income levels.

Second, the Department will continue to prioritize implementing the [[Educator Preparation Program Approval Process](http://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/pr.html)](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/review/). After a transformative and effective overhaul of Massachusetts’ accountability system in 2012, in accordance with which all educator preparation providers were subsequently reviewed, DESE is now working to further deepen and evolve these expectations and procedures in the coming years. DESE has set the course for a muti-year update to the review process. We are revising the program approval process to ensure that it is increasingly effective, efficient, consistent, and equity-driven. We define effective educators as those who nurture and cultivate academic achievement, cultural and linguistic competence, sociopolitical awareness, and emotional intelligence. We believe that if we are consistent over time in adhering to this mission, we can work together to contribute to disrupting systemic inequities, in particular for Black, Latinx, Asian, Indigenous, and Multiracial students and educators who have been most harmed through existing and historical policies and practices. Updates to program approval will include a more explicit review of instructional programming with a specific emphasis on the development of curriculum literacy, evidence-based practices (e.g., evidence-based early literacy, and administrator preparation.

Third, the Department will continue to release online [Educator Preparation Profiles](http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/search/search.aspx?leftNavId=11238), which include public reports linking data from educator preparation to educator evaluation, employment in Massachusetts public schools, and other outcomes of program completers. Educator Preparation Profiles hold program providers accountable for educator performance and emphasize the importance of preparing educators to work with students with diverse needs. The profiles help prospective educators to compare programs. School and district leaders can also learn about the outcomes of the programs generating applicants for local positions, so that leaders can recruit well-prepared teachers.

Additionally, the Department implements a suite of surveys to provide additional data to the educator preparation programs. The Department administers, analyzes, and publicly reports data from the four surveys that contribute to an overall picture of educator preparation programs’ and new teachers’ effectiveness: Candidates Survey, Supervising Practitioners Survey, Hiring Employer Survey (one year out), and Program Completer Survey (one year out).

The fourth strategy includes providing resources and support in building close formal [partnerships](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/domains/partnerships/) between educator preparation programs and school districts that mutually benefit the preparation program, the school district, and the first-year teacher.

The Department plans to use Title IIA funds, non-federal funds, and other sources to continue the above work.

1. **Educator Growth and Development Systems.** Does the SEA intend to use Title II, Part A funds or funds from other included programs to support the State's systems of professional growth and improvement for educators that addresses: 1) induction; 2) development, consistent with the definition of professional development in section 8002(42) of the ESEA; 3) compensation; and 4) advancement for teachers, principals, and other school leaders. This may also include how the SEA will work with LEAs in the State to develop or implement systems of professional growth and improvement, consistent with section 2102(b)(2)(B) of the ESEA; or State or local educator evaluation and support systems consistent with section 2101(c)(4)(B)(ii) of the ESEA?

* Yes. If yes, provide a description of the educator growth and development systems below.
* No.

Massachusetts intends to support the continued development and implementation of systems of professional growth and improvement for educators, including:

* Induction
* Professional growth and development system
* Support for principals and other school leaders

**Induction:** To support the state’s system of professional growth and improvement, in 2015 the Department revised the longstanding induction and mentoring guidelines. The existing regulations link beginning educator support programs, called “induction programs,” to licensure by making participation in such a program one of the requirements for teachers and administrators to attain Professional License ([603 CMR 7.04 (2)(c)(b](http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr7.html?section=04)). The regulations outline basic program standards or components that are required of district induction programs ([603 CMR 7.12](http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr7.html?section=12), [603 CMR 7.13](http://www.doe.mass.edu/lawsregs/603cmr7.html?section=13)).

The revised [MA Induction and Mentoring Guidelines](http://www.doe.mass.edu/educators/mentor/guidelines.pdf) have been developed to:

* assist districts in the creation and administration of their induction programs; and
* align with educator effectiveness reform initiatives.

Districts are encouraged to develop programs that meet the spirit of the standards included in the regulations while taking into account their own district needs and characteristics. The intention of this guidance is not to prescribe a specific course of action or program design, but to provide a resource to districts as they develop and refine their programs.

Since the revisions of the guidelines, the Department annually collects data from districts on their induction programs and periodically produces a statewide report on induction in order to describe district programs, share best practices, and understand areas of challenge. Furthermore, the report shows a snapshot of the common characteristics of statewide mentoring and induction programs, and provides information, resources and solutions that can aid districts as they continue the work of improving their mentoring and induction programs.

Specifically, the goals of the statewide annual report are to:

* + Encourage district reflection on current induction and mentoring practices so districts may identify strengths and areas for further development; and
  + Provide DESE with data so the agency can identify promising induction and mentoring practices to share across districts and understand areas where the agency can provide additional supports and resources to districts.

In 2021, the Department released a model Handbook for Principal Induction & Mentoring to further support strong practices for leaders in alignment with the Standards for Effective Leadership and antiracist leadership competencies, available [here](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeffectiveness/mentor/principal.html).

In 2022, the Department began collecting mentor/mentee assignment data as part of its annual data collection via EPIMS. This data is integral to ensuring that all novice educators are receiving robust and consistent induction supports and will inform future policy and technical assistance on behalf of the Department.

**Educator Evaluation System:** The Department continues to support districts in implementing their educator evaluation systems, which are aligned to the statewide Educator Evaluation Framework. The Educator Evaluation Framework applies to principals and other administrators, central office staff, superintendents, and teachers, and is designed to provide educators with meaningful feedback on their practice and impact on students. The four stated objectives of the statewide educator evaluation system include:

* + promote growth and development among leaders and teachers;
  + place student learning at the center, using multiple measures of student learning, growth, and achievement;
  + recognize excellence in teaching and leading;
  + set a high bar for professional teaching status; and
  + shorten timelines for educator improvement.

The Department continues to work with districts to support high quality educator evaluation implementation; to collect and analyze evaluation data from districts; and to solicit and use feedback to improve the design of the Framework and supporting resources. Recent updates to the state’s [model system](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/model/default.html) have included:

* In 2018, the Department released updated model rubrics for teachers, principals and other school-level administrators that streamlined content, clarified language, and strengthened alignment to the important day-to-day work of teaching and leading.
* In 2019, the Department updated the Model System guidance and resources to align to regulatory amendments that removed the Student Impact Rating and added the Student Learning Indicator. Also in 2019, DESE updated the model rubric, guidance and resources to support the evaluation of superintendents.
* The current phase of updates to the model rubrics for classroom teachers and school level administrators is to more explicitly integrate equitable, inclusive, and culturally responsive practice throughout the Standards and Indicators.

Since 2020, the Department has developed and regularly updates a suite of [Educator Evaluation Implementation Resources](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/implementation/default.html) to support meaningful and culturally responsive implementation of the Framework. These resources include Focus Indicators, a subset of Indicators from the Classroom Teacher and School Level Administrator Rubrics that represent high-priority practices for each school year. In addition, the Department will continue to promote the use of the Online Platform for Teaching and Informed Calibration (OPTIC), a resource to support evaluators and educators to come to a shared understanding of expectations for instructional practices and alignment to grade-level standards, and to strengthen the feedback provided to educators.

**Support for principals and other school leaders**. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) is actively working to strengthen anti-racist school leadership in Massachusetts by focusing on the standards and expectations that govern the design and execution of principal preparation programs and strengthening the alignment and partnership between pre-service principal preparation and in-service PK-12 development and advancement for school leaders.

DESE recently updated the Guidelines for the Preparation of Administrative Leaders, which govern the design and execution of administrator preparation programs in Massachusetts. The updated Guidelines incorporate feedback from educators and educator preparation leaders from across the state to ensure they reflect recent research on evidence-based instructional practices, work to disrupt historical patterns of racial inequity, and promote success for students by:

* Preparing program completers to become anti-racist leaders who understand and embody anti-racist leadership competencies, strategies, and mindsets so that each and every student can thrive in rigorous and culturally responsive learning environments supported by high-quality curricular materials and evidence-based instructional practices.
* Strengthening alignment between administrator preparation and PreK-12 schools and district leadership.
* Differentiating the expected level of practice for each Indicator to allow preparation programs to have a deeper focus on those that will have the most impact on students when completers enter the workforce.
* Creating role-specific expectations to better reflect the differentiated skills, knowledge, and competencies required for each administrative licensure role.

Starting in the 2024-2025 academic year, Sponsoring Organizations will be held accountable for implementation of the updated Guidelines through a revised program approval process. As an alternative to going through an educator preparation program, administrative leadership licensure candidates can pursue an apprenticeship/internship or a panel review to demonstrate their readiness for the licensure role. The [**Guidelines for the Administrative Apprenticeship/Internship and Panel Review Routes**](https://www.doe.mass.edu/licensure/academic-prek12/panel-review-administrator-routes.docx) specify expectations for candidates in these routes, and will be updated in alignment with the revised Guidelines for the Preparation of Administrative Leaders over the next two years.

To support in-service school leaders, DESE has developed two resources to reinforce anti-racist, culturally responsive leadership for in-service principals: the updated [School-Level Administrator Evaluation Rubric](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/rubrics/updates/) and the [Principal Induction and Mentoring Handbook](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeffectiveness/mentor/). After a pilot year in 2022-23, the updated rubric for school-level administrators will be integrated into the model system for educator evaluation.

## 5.2 Support for Educators.

*Instructions: Consistent with sections 2101 and 2102 of the ESEA, if the SEA intends to use funds under one or more of the included programs for any of the following purposes, provide a description with the necessary information.*

1. **Resources to Support State-level Strategies**. Describe how the SEA will use Title II, Part A funds and funds from other included programs, consistent with allowable uses of funds provided under those programs, to support State-level strategies designed to:
   1. Increase student achievement consistent with the challenging State academic standards;
   2. Improve the quality and effectiveness of teachers, principals, and other school leaders;
   3. Increase the number of teachers, principals, and other school leaders who are effective in improving student academic achievement in schools; and
   4. Provide low-income and minority students greater access to effective teachers, principals, and other school leaders.

The Department continues to support implementation of the standards as described in the [Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks](https://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html). A primary strategy is through the identifying and supporting implementation of high-quality curricular materials that are aligned to our state academic standards and instructional vision. DESE continues to work with Massachusetts educators to evaluate the evidence of high-quality curricular materials through the [CURATE process](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate/default.html) to identify high-quality programs. Through professional learning networks and opportunities, DESE provides opportunities for educators to learn about how to evaluate and eventually select and implement high-quality curricular materials along with the necessary professional learning.

**Early Literacy**

The Department released revised English Language Arts and literacy (ELA/literacy) and mathematics learning standards in spring 2017. The implementation of the ELA/Literacy Curriculum Framework provided an opportunity for the Department to redouble our support for districts in designing effective literacy programs for students in grades Pre-K through 2 in close coordination with our partners at the state Department of Early Education and Care. To best meet the needs of districts and schools to promote early literacy success, the Department conducted a needs assessment of the field through targeted interviews with practitioners and working with experts and stakeholders to identify research-informed approaches to early literacy instruction. This work resulted in [Mass Literacy](https://www.doe.mass.edu/massliteracy/), a statewide effort to empower educators with the evidence-based practices for literacy that all students need. DESE developed a program of supports, including competitive grant opportunities, teacher leadership opportunities, regional professional learning networks for teachers and administrators, statewide convenings of educators for professional learning, and web-based tools and resources. Efforts began with the goal of all early literacy educators in Massachusetts developing a deep understanding of the revised ELA/literacy standards to support students to attain them, including pre-service educators in Early Childhood, Elementary, and Moderate Disabilities licensure programs. This foundational knowledge of the expectations for what students should know and be able to do on the part of teachers, coupled with supports from school and district administrators will result in engaging, developmentally appropriate learning experiences that prepare all students for later academic success.

**STEM**

The state academic standards in STEM are defined in the Science and Technology/Engineering Curriculum Framework (2016), Mathematics Curriculum Framework (2017), and Digital Literacy and Computer Science Curriculum Framework (2017). To well support students in meeting these academic standards, DESE has focused on identifying well-aligned curricular materials in these content areas and working to increase the access of educators to these materials and the professional learning to support them in skillfully implementing in their classrooms to support all their students in achieving academic success. DESE has provided professional networking opportunities to support district leaders in this process. Additionally, DESE has partnered with organizations that can support educators directly in the field with high-quality curriculum implementation support through professional development, coaching, and professional learning communities.

The Department has been consistently focused on the equity implications and possibilities for Title IIA. Nationally, the bulk of Title IIA funding – up to 75 percent – is spent on professional development and class-size reduction, with little data as to how impactful these activities are in improving educator effectiveness.[[6]](#footnote-7) We see this trend in Massachusetts, documented in an analysis of Title IIA applications facilitated by SRI International. The state FY17 Title IIA application required districts to indicate what student and/or educator outcome data they intended to use to measure the effectiveness of grant expenditures. The Department conducts Title IIA monitoring and places a focus on equity. For example, in addition to existing indicators addressing equitable distribution of in-field and effective teachers, Massachusetts added indicators to ensure that districts are implementing quality induction and mentoring and educator evaluation systems, and to identify exemplary districts or those needing technical assistance. In the technical assistance sessions, Department staff reinforces the connection between Title IIA and equity, such as how Title IIA funds can support the access of students with disabilities to effective educators under ESSA. Massachusetts’s Title IIA district application includes an assurance for all districts to confirm that they have reviewed their Student Learning Experience data and have begun to address any equity gaps. In addition, districts are monitored based on the Public School Monitoring six-year cycle. As part of this monitoring, districts are required to identify and address any disparities that result in low-income students, students of color, English learners, and students with disabilities being taught at higher rates than other students by lower rated, inexperienced, or out-of-field teachers. ESEA § 1111(g)(1)(B). Districts must address: 1) How it is closing any inequities in the rates at which low-income students, students of color, English learners, and students with disabilities are taught by lower rated, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers? 2) To what extent are the district’s plans to address inequities based on data?

Furthermore, Massachusetts intends to leverage the ESSA provision allowing SEAs to allocate up to three percent of Title IIA funds toward a state initiative for principals and teacher leaders. DESE is supporting principal and teacher ambassador fellowships, designed to strengthen the principal pipeline and build principals’ effectiveness in supporting implementation of curriculum standards and supporting administrators’ efficacy in the educator evaluation [standards of effective administrative leadership](http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/model/PartIII_AppxB.pdf).

Finally, Title IIA resources support the continued development of the Student Learning Experience Report (SLE), a student-level report available to districts to analyze and understand patterns of individual students’ assignment to teachers with various characteristics and proxies of effectiveness (e.g., experience, certification, ratings on educator evaluation). The SLE report is a critical mechanism for districts to analyze student access to effective educators and assists districts in being strategic about student assignment.

**School Leadership Preparation and Support.** The Department has been working to strengthen anti-racist school leadership preparation and support in Massachusetts by focusing on the standards and expectations that govern the design and execution of principal preparation programs, and strengthening the alignment and partnership between pre-service principal preparation and in-service PK-12. In 2021, DESE updated the [Guidelines for the Preparation of Administrative Leaders](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edprep/resources/guidelines-advisories/leadership-guide.pdf), which govern the design and execution of administrator preparation programs in Massachusetts, to ensure they reflect recent research on evidence-based instructional practices, work to disrupt historical patterns of racial inequity, and promote success for students. The Department also developed a released a [model handbook for principal induction and mentoring](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeffectiveness/mentor/principal.html), which is aligned to the standards and indicators of effective administrative leadership, and purposefully designed to extend and deepen antiracist leadership skills from preparation into employment.

Starting in 2022, the Department is developing role-specific model performance assessments that are aligned to the anti-racist leadership competencies and updated expectations in the Guidelines. These performance assessments are intended to provide administrator candidates with feedback that supports them to improve their practice, and to be specific to their preparation route. The Department is also supporting preparation programs to implement the updated Guidelines through program standards and review. Starting in the 2024-2025 academic year, Sponsoring Organizations will be held accountable for implementation of the updated Guidelines through a revised program approval process.

1. **Skills to Address Specific Learning Needs**. Describe how the SEA will improve the skills of teachers, principals, or other school leaders in identifying students with specific learning needs and providing instruction based on the needs of such students, consistent with section 2101(d)(2)(J) of the ESEA.

Many units across the Department have developed resources and guidance to improve the skills of educators in addressing specific learning needs of students, including social and emotional learning, special education, and English Learners. The Department will continue to work with districts to support the use of these resources:

* [Educator Guidebook for Inclusive Practice](http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/guidebook/): This Guidebook was created in conjunction with educators and includes tools for districts, schools, and educators that are aligned to the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework, and that 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.
* Foundations for Inclusive Practice Online Courses: These courses are one option for Massachusetts educators to meet the [license renewal requirement](http://www.mass.gov/edu/government/departments-and-boards/ese/programs/educator-effectiveness/licensure/academic-prek-12/advancing-or-renewing-a-license.html) related to training in strategies for effective schooling of students with disabilities and instruction of students with diverse learning styles. The courses are available at no cost to educators.
* [Inclusive Practice and the Teacher Candidate:](http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/guidebook/edprep/) In collaboration with higher education faculty, the Department offers a three-hour sample lesson sharing evidence-based best practices for inclusion, designed to meet the needs of teacher candidates in all licensure areas.
* English Learners: The Department will continue to provide technical assistance and professional development opportunities to increase the capacity of educators to serve English Learners. We will also further the support to educators on the use of [Guidance and resources on programming for English Learners](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/). Guidance and resources include:
  + MA Vision and Blueprint for English Learner Success (https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/blueprint/default.html)Guidance on English Learner Education Services and Programming (https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/guidance/services-programming.docx) Students with Limited or Interrupted Formal Education Definition and Guidance (<https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/slife/default.html>)
  + [Guidance for Implementing Two Way Immersion and Transitional Bilingual Education Programs](https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/programs/twi-tbe-guidance.docx) (currently being updated)Guidance for Sheltered English Immersion SEI Programs (<https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/programs/sei.html>) Guidance on English Learners with Disabilities (https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/disability.html) Next Generation ESL Project (<https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/default.html>)Next Generation ESL Toolkit (<https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/esl-toolkit/default.html>) Next Generation ESL Model Curriculum Units (<https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/instruction/mcu/default.html>)A wide range of professional learning opportunities provided free-of-cost to MA educators, ranging from ongoing leadership networks and communities of practice to trainings made available through the WIDA Consortium (https://www.doe.mass.edu/ele/prof-learning/default.html)The RETELL initiative [(Rethinking Equity in the Teaching of English Language Learners)](http://www.doe.mass.edu/retell/) represents a commitment to address the persistent gap in academic proficiency experienced by English Learners. At the heart of this initiative are training and licensure requirements for the Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) Endorsement, which core academic teachers of English Learners and principals/assistant principals and supervisors/directors who supervise or evaluate such teachers must obtain.
* [Social-emotional learning, health and safety](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/sel/heart-strategy.pdf) is one of the [Department’s five core strategies](https://www.doe.mass.edu/research/StrategicPlan-Summary.pdf). Massachusetts is participating in the [Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning](http://www.casel.org/) (CASEL's) [Collaborating States Initiative](http://www.casel.org/collaborative-state-initiative/) (CSI). The CSI is an inter-state partnership on the development of policies, guidelines, learning standards or goals to support statewide implementation of social and emotional learning (SEL).

While the needs and approaches of supporting social and emotional outcomes vary from district to district, the Department partners with stakeholders to help further the development of positive social and emotional competencies for all students. Ongoing Department work in this realm includes:

* Engaging with our stakeholders, especially our teachers, administrators, and specialized instructional support personnel (SISP);
* Integrating SEL principles with existing policies, resources, and initiatives; and
* Building useful, well-aligned resources.

In addition, the Department strongly recommends sustained professional development and collaborative learning around culturally responsive teaching and leading and SEL. Developing students’ social emotional competencies can provide an opportunity to develop a sense of positive self-worth and greater awareness of others in connection to a student’s race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, and sexual orientation.

DESE has released a set of guidance to administrators and school leaders that can support the integration of SEL into school-wide initiative. Examples of resources include:

* [Pre-K-K Standards](http://www.doe.mass.edu/kindergarten/resources.html#Standards)  
  These standards were developed as a collaborative initiative with the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC) and the University of Massachusetts/Boston with funding from the Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge Grant. The standards bring attention to critical areas of development and learning that positively impact student outcomes and can be used to guide efforts to strengthen curriculum, instruction, assessment, professional development, and family engagement.
* [Guidelines on Implementing SEL](http://www.doe.mass.edu/bullying/SELguide.pdf)  
  This document contains guidelines for schools and districts on how to effectively implement social and emotional learning curricula for students in grades K-12. The information provided relates to leadership, professional development, resource coordination, instructional approaches, policies and protocols, and collaboration with families.
* [Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) Grade 1–3 Resources](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/earlylearning/resources/sel1-3/resources-g1-3.docx)  
  These resources provide evidenced based and developmentally appropriate performance indicators for 1st through 3rd grade students, as well as suggested activities and supportive practices aligned with all twelve Massachusetts PreK–K Standards for Social Emotional Learning, and (currently) one of the standards for Approaches to Play and Learning (APL).
* [Educator Guidebook for Inclusive Practice](http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/guidebook/)   
  Created by Massachusetts educators, this Guidebook includes tools for districts, schools, and educators that are aligned to the Massachusetts 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 SEL.
* **SEL Guiding Principles in Curriculum Frameworks**  
  Between 2017-2021, DESE included SEL related guiding principles in the following updated Frameworks: *Mathematics; English Language Arts/Literacy; History and Social Sciences; Arts;* and *Word Languages*. Examples include Guiding Principle 8 in [Math](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/sel/math-resources.html), and Guiding Principle 10 in [ELA/Literacy](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/sel/ela-resources.html).
* The Department also developed two licensure endorsements for educators that promote skills to address specific learning needs. An endorsement is defined as a supplementary credential issued to an Educator licensed under 603 CMR 7.00, or a credential issued to an individual otherwise required by law or regulation to obtain such credential, indicating satisfactory knowledge and skills to perform services in the area(s) specified.
* The Department has developed a Bilingual Education Endorsement, which can provide school districts with more flexibility as to the language acquisition program they choose to meet the needs of English Learners (ELs), while maintaining accountability for timely and effective English language acquisition (for example, Two-Way Immersion Programs in order to improve the teaching and learning of ELs). The Bilingual Education Endorsement is offered in 23 different languages.

Finally, DESE engaged in a lengthy process to review and revise the state’s curriculum framework for comprehensive health education (including physical education), which was last updated in 1999. The review goals included an increased focus on developing students’ social and emotional competencies and developing the skills needed to navigate ever-changing influences on their health and wellbeing. The new frameworks were approved in September of 2023.

## 5.3 Educator Equity.

1. **Definitions.** Provide the SEA’s different definitions, using distinct criteria, for the following key terms:

| **Key Term** | **Statewide Definition (or Statewide Guidelines)** |
| --- | --- |
| Out-of-field teacher | A core academic teacher[[7]](#footnote-8) who has not demonstrated an understanding of the content, and is therefore not Highly Qualified for the subject/s he or she teaches for more than 20 percent of his or her schedule[[8]](#footnote-9)[[9]](#footnote-10) |
| Low-income student | Prior to the 2014-2015 school year, termed “low income students”: enrolled students who are eligible for free or reduced price lunch   * From the 2015-2016 school year through 2020-2021, the term “economically disadvantaged students” was used to measure low income status, defined as students participating in one or more of the following state-administered programs: the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP); the Transitional Assistance for Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC); the Department of Children and Families’ (DCF) foster care program; and eligible Mass Health programs (Medicaid) up to 133% of poverty. * From 2021-2022 and beyond, the state has gone back to the “low income” descriptor, but still uses the state-administered programs listed above up to the 185% of poverty threshold. |
| Minority student | Students who are American Indian/Alaska Native, Asian, Black, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic, or two or more races. The term “students of color” is used interchangeably. |

1. **Rates and Differences in Rates.** In Appendix A, calculate and provide the statewide rates at which low-income and minority students enrolled in schools receiving funds under Title I, Part A are taught by ineffective, out-of-field, and inexperienced teachers compared to non-low-income and non-minority students enrolled in schools not receiving funds under Title I, Part A using the definitions provided in section 5.3.A. The SEA must calculate the statewide rates using student-level data.

Massachusetts’ educator equity initiative applies to all schools in the state. As such, we have provided data in Appendix B for the entire state over the past five years. Appendix B also contains data specifically for schools receiving assistance under Title I, Part A.

1. **Public Reporting.** Provide the Web address or URL of, or a direct link to, where the SEA will publish and annually update:
   1. The rates and differences in rates calculated in 5.3.B;
   2. The percentage of teachers categorized in each LEA at each effectiveness level established as part of the definition of “ineffective teacher,” consistent with applicable State privacy policies;
   3. The percentage of teachers categorized as out-of-field teachers consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.37; and
   4. The percentage of teachers categorized as inexperienced teachers consistent with 34 C.F.R. § 200.37.

The Department publishes annual reports on our website, see link [here](https://profiles.doe.mass.edu/).

In addition, we have a [licensure mapping tool](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeffectiveness/equitableaccess/resources/mapping.html) to support districts with the determinations for in-field teachers.

1. **Likely Causes of Most Significant Differences.** If there is one or more difference in rates in 5.3.B, describe the likely causes (*e.g.*, teacher shortages, working conditions, school leadership, compensation, or other causes), which may vary across districts or schools, of the most significant statewide differences in rates in 5.3.B. The description must include whether those differences in rates reflect gaps between districts, within districts, and within schools.

Previous analysis of the Massachusetts teacher workforce, published in December 2013, provides data on how much differences in rates of access to educators reflect gaps between districts, within districts, and within schools. The analyses indicated that inequities in access to experienced teachers, based on levels of student achievement, are most strongly attributable to differences across districts in the state. The gap in lower-achieving students’ access to experienced teachers is only slightly more attributable to differences across schools in a district than to differences within schools. The experiences of subsets of districts, where the Department has analyzed district data, suggest a similar pattern. Most of these districts include several elementary schools and a single high school, with a large portion of local equity gaps attributable to differences across elementary schools in the district – thus, the differences in rates reflect gaps *within* districts. Why do these inequities exist? We have identified root causes for the three areas of equity gaps: the experience gap, the preparation gap, and the effectiveness gap.

**Root Cause Analysis**

* **Experience Gap:** 1) Hiring Practices – When and how schools and districts hire is critical, especially for high-need urban schools, as great teacher candidates don’t wait around long.[[10]](#footnote-11) In Massachusetts, 60 percent of preparation program completers are employed in a public school (and 47 percent employed as teachers) within one year of program completion – on average, to a school only 21 miles away from the Educator Preparation Program.[[11]](#footnote-12) 2) Scheduling decisions-- In Massachusetts, first year teachers are more likely to be assigned students with lower scores on the previous year’s statewide standardized test, when compared with students assigned to more-experienced teachers. Statewide, first-year teachers in grades four and five are assigned to students who are an average of 3.2 months behind in math and 5.5 months behind in ELA, compared to the test scores of students assigned to teachers with more than three years of experience. This difference in test scores increases in grades six to eight, to an eight-month difference in math scores and 9.2-month difference in ELA scores.[[12]](#footnote-13) Research has also found that schools disproportionately assign low income students in Massachusetts to new teachers,[[13]](#footnote-14) as well as students with challenging behavior.[[14]](#footnote-15)

This data supports the assumption that one of the root causes of the experience gap – indeed, a root cause of inequitable access– is that first-year teachers are routinely assigned to teach students who are at greater risk. 3) Retention Strategies/Turnover Patterns – High poverty and high minority schools in Massachusetts experience higher educator turnover rates (see tables in section (F) below). When high-need schools experience high turnover rates, even more teachers are hired under ineffective hiring practices, yielding a greater gap in access to experienced teachers.

**Root Cause Analysis: Preparation Gap**

1) Inadequate Preparation – When Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs) adequately prepare students for the realities of 21st century classrooms, educators are less likely to leave a school or district. This is why DESE is focused on supporting preparation programs to prepare program completers to make impact on the first day they are in the classroom (see above – reference section re: Educator Preparation). 2) Inadequate Pipeline – Educator Preparation Programs must look strategically at the issue of supply and demand. We heard repeatedly from school and district stakeholders about persistently hard-to-fill teaching positions, such as special education, ESL, and STEM.

In 2013-2014, almost 70 percent of licensure waivers granted to districts were to teach students with moderate/severe disabilities. For this reason, the Department has included criteria for Educator Preparation Programs to meet local district supply needs as part of the program review and approval process. In 2022-2023, DESE issued 1,044 waivers to 174 districts. These waivers allowed the districts to hire unlicensed candidates for teaching and administrative positions. Thus, more than one-third of all districts employed educators who were not licensed for their specific role. The educator pipeline also continues to yield teachers who are not demographically representative of Massachusetts students. Statewide, only 9.7 percent of teachers are people of color, compared to 44 percent of students, although the diversity of newly hired teachers in Massachusetts has steadily increased over the past five years.[[15]](#footnote-16) For schools to be able to hire a diverse staff, Educator Preparation programs must attract a more representative pool of teacher candidates. Here again, for this reason, the Department has included recruiting a diverse cohort of educators as one of the criteria for program review.

**Root Cause Analysis: Effectiveness Gap**

Stakeholders and national research both noted the relationship between leader effectiveness gaps and teacher effectiveness gaps. There are several practices that contribute to the effectiveness gap: 1) Hiring Practices – Poor hiring practices lead to gaps in teacher effectiveness. School leaders note that by the time high-need urban districts are hiring, the most effective teacher candidates have been hired elsewhere. 2) Scheduling Decisions – Stakeholders explained that in scheduling decisions, educators’ interests are often given higher preference than student considerations. Scheduling decisions can support teacher retention (e.g., creating an environment which is stimulating and supportive for an educator). When determining staff and student schedules, the priority must be providing equitable access for students to impactful educators. 3) Inadequate Training for Diverse Student Needs – Teachers who are not adequately trained to meet the needs of ELs, SWDs, students with social-emotional disabilities, and students who are academically behind, are less effective at teaching and managing behavior. This leads to an adverse school climate, and often to higher teacher turnover. This also puts added stress on specialists such as ESL and special education teachers, and on school leaders who are attempting to support unprepared teachers. 4) Climate and Culture – Effective organizations, including schools, should make building a productive culture part of a planned strategic effort.[[16]](#footnote-17) This helps to retain and attract effective teachers, and to create an environment more conducive to teaching and learning.[[17]](#footnote-18) Stakeholders consistently stressed the importance of schools’ and districts’ climate and culture. Behavior management, student needs, and leadership quality can all influence school climate.

Effective teachers make a real difference for student learning. However, in Massachusetts, academically struggling students and those from historically low performing student groups are less likely to be assigned the teachers who generate the strongest results. Students assigned a teacher earning an exemplary evaluation accrue about nine to ten additional weeks of student learning per year relative to those assigned a proficient teacher. The difference between an exemplary teacher and an unsatisfactory one is even greater, equivalent to about 18 to 24 additional weeks of learning. In addition, the average low-income student is assigned to a teacher who generates two fewer weeks of learning in mathematics and four weeks fewer in English language arts per year than the teachers assigned to non-low-income students. In fact, low-income students in Massachusetts are 31 percent more likely to be assigned to teachers with less than three years of experience and more than twice as likely to be assigned to a teacher who earns an evaluation of unsatisfactory or needs improvement, as compared to non-low-income students. Inequitable access to effective teachers for low-income students increases achievement gaps by up to three weeks of learning in mathematics and six weeks in English language arts between fourth and eighth grade. Three-quarters of the teacher equity gap for low-income students is explained by the fact that low income students are disproportionately enrolled in districts with lower average teacher effectiveness.[[18]](#footnote-19)

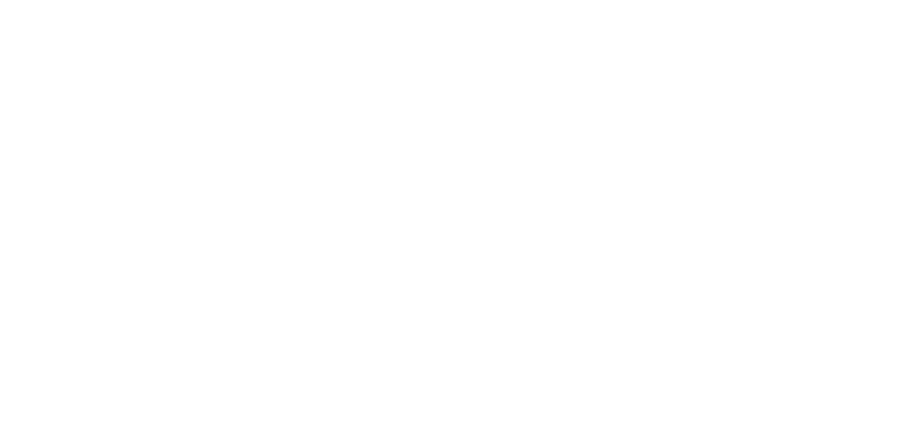
1. **Identification of Strategies.** If there is one or more difference in rates in 5.3.B, provide the SEA’s strategies, including timelines and Federal or non-Federal funding sources, that are:
   1. Designed to address the likely causes of the most significant differences identified in 5.3.D and
   2. Prioritized to address the most significant differences in the rates provided in 5.3.B, including by prioritizing strategies to support any schools identified for comprehensive or targeted support and improvement under 34 C.F.R. § 200.19 that are contributing to those differences in rates.

See timelines and strategies below from Massachusetts’ approved 2015 Equity Plan.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Strategy: Enhance Educator Preparation | Metrics |
| SY2022-2024 | Revise and launch updated program approval process for all educator preparation providers in Massachusetts | New formal reviews launch in Fall 2023. |
| SY2020-SY2024 | Revise and release updated licensure exams aligned to MA curriculum frameworks | Ongoing roll-out of updated licensure tests |
| SY2023-SY2025 | Revise and release updated Performance Assessment for Leaders in alignment with new Guidelines for Effective Administrator Preparation | Participation and pass rates |
| Staff involved | Center for Instructional Support | |
| Funding Source: | Title IIA; Special Education Funding; grant funding (Barr Association) | |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Strategy: Enhance Educator Development | Metrics |
| SY2020-ongoing | Support implementation of high quality educator evaluation | Alignment, consistency, and differentiation of ed eval ratings |
| SY2023-SY2025 | Revise and release updated model evaluation rubrics | % of districts adopting model rubrics |
| SY2016 – ongoing | Develop and release Guidebook for Inclusive Practice and Foundations of Inclusive Practice courses | Participation and pass rates |
| SY2020 – ongoing | Support implementation of Induction & mentoring programming and model Handbook for Principal Induction and Mentoring, including partnerships with state leadership associations | Annual induction and mentoring report data, alignment with state guidelines, novice teacher retention |
| Staff involved: | Center for Instructional Support; Special Education Planning and Policy Office | |
| Funding Source: | Title IIA; Special Education Funding | |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Strategy: Enhance Educator Recruitment & Hiring | Metrics |
| SY2022 | Release Educator Data Dashboard | Establish dynamic landing page for educator diversity data related to preparation and hiring |
| SY2020 | Release and maintain [Talent Guide](https://www.doe.mass.edu/edeffectiveness/talent-guide/) (dynamic module-based webpage for best practices and state guidance in effective hiring and retention practices | Page visits |
| SY2023 | Support alternative pathways to licensure for emergency licensed educators | # of emergency licensed educators converting to permanent licensure |
| Staff Involved: | Center for Instructional Support; Center for Strategic Initiatives | |
| Funding Source: | Title IIA; ESSR funds | |

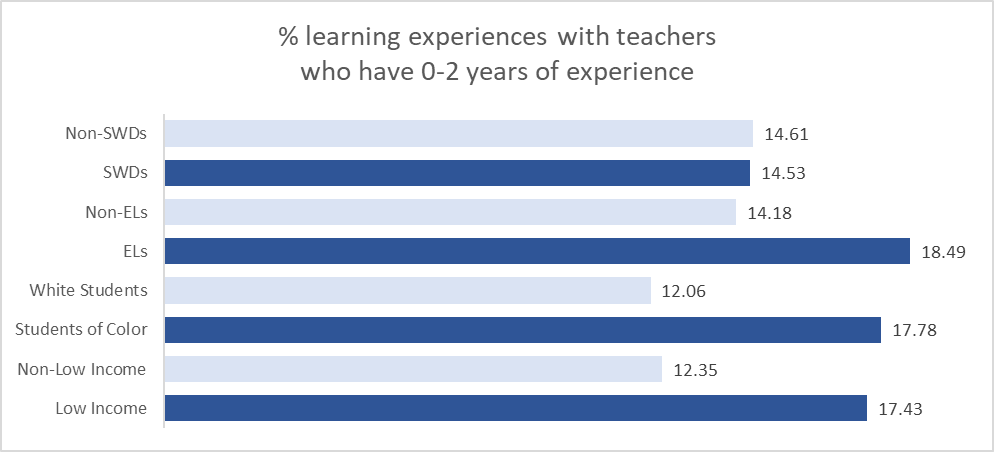


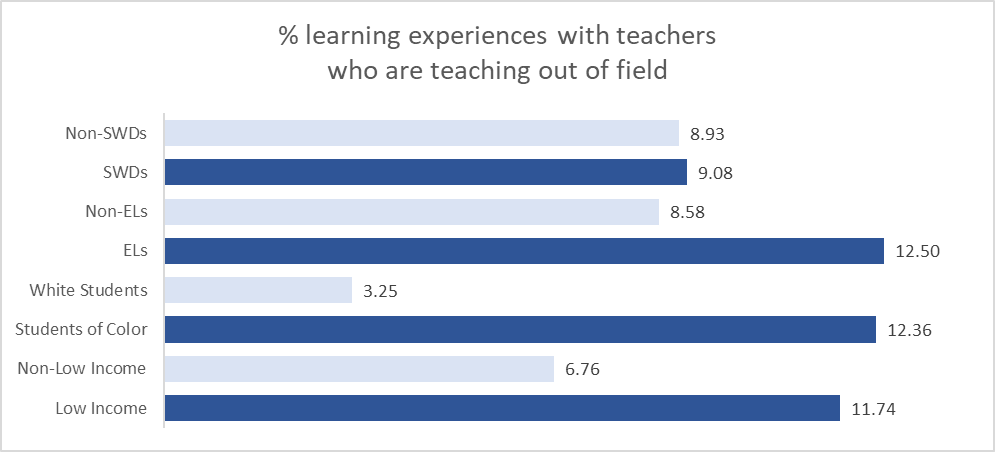
Under ESSA, Massachusetts’s Title II-A application and review process will further promote equity and development of more effective educators. Title IIA application approval is tied to a district’s submission of an approvable equity plan, where applicable. Massachusetts’s Title IIA district application includes an assurance for all districts to confirm that they have reviewed their Student Learning Experience data and have begun to address any equity gaps. In addition, districts are monitored based on the Public-School Monitoring six-year cycle. As part of this monitoring, districts are required to identify and address any disparities that result in low-income students, students of color, English learners, and students with disabilities being taught at higher rates than other students by lower rated, inexperienced, or out-of-field teachers. ESEA § 1111(g)(1)(B). Districts must address:

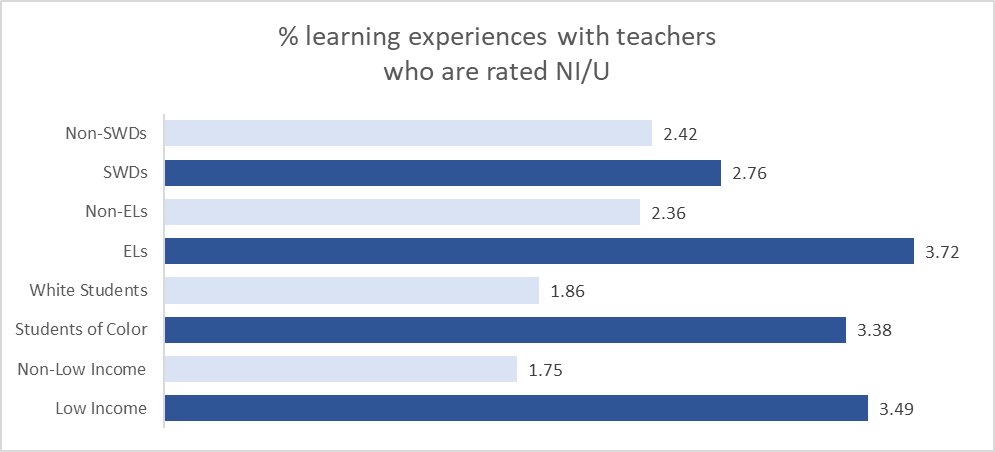
* How it is closing any inequities in the rates at which low-income students, students of color, English learners, and students with disabilities are taught by lower rated, out-of-field, or inexperienced teachers?
* To what extent are the district’s plans to address inequities based on data?

1. **Timelines and Interim Targets.** If there is one or more difference in rates in 5.3.B, describe the SEA’s timelines and interim targets for eliminating **all** differences in rates.

The following baseline data comes from the SLE report, using statewide data on student groups with three years of history in SY2022.







The following table shows the sizes of gaps (in percentage-point differences) between comparison groups.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | 0-2 years of experience | Out of Field | Rated NI/U |
| Low Income | 5.08 | 4.98 | 1.74 |
| Students of color | 5.72 | 9.11 | 1.52 |
| ELs | 4.31 | 3.92 | 1.36 |
| SWDs | -0.08 | 0.15 | 0.34 |

The following tables show **interim targets** for eliminating the gaps shown above.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| YEAR 1 (2022-23) | | | |
|  | 0-2 years of experience | Out of Field | Rated NI/U |
| Low income | 4.06 | 3.98 | 1.39 |
| Students of color | 4.58 | 7.29 | 1.22 |
| ELLs | 3.45 | 3.14 | 1.09 |
| SWDs | N/A | 0.12 | 0.27 |
| YEAR 2 (2023-24) | | | |
|  | 0-2 years of experience | Out of Field | Rated NI/U |
| Low income | 3.05 | 2.99 | 1.04 |
| Students of color | 3.43 | 5.47 | 0.91 |
| ELLs | 2.59 | 2.35 | 0.82 |
| SWDs | N/A | 0.09 | 0.20 |
| YEAR 3 (2024-25) | | | |
|  | 0-2 years of experience | Out of Field | Rated NI/U |
| Low income | 2.03 | 1.99 | 0.70 |
| Students of color | 2.29 | 3.64 | 0.61 |
| ELLs | 1.72 | 1.57 | 0.54 |
| SWDs | N/A | 0.06 | 0.14 |
| YEAR 4 (2025-26) | | | |
|  | 0-2years of experience | Out of Field | Rated NI/U |
| Low income | 1.02 | 1.00 | 0.35 |
| Students of color | 1.14 | 1.82 | 0.30 |
| ELLs | 0.86 | 0.78 | 0.27 |
| SWDs | N/A | 0.03 | 0.07 |
| YEAR 5 (2026-27) | | | |
|  | 0-2 years of experience | Out of Field | Rated NI/U |
| Low income | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Students of color | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| ELLs | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| SWDs | N/A | 0 | 0 |

# Section 6: Supporting All Students

## 6.1 Well-Rounded and Supportive Education for Students.

*Instructions: When addressing the State’s strategies below, each SEA must describe how it will use Title IV, Part A funds and funds from other included programs, consistent with allowable uses of fund provided under those programs, to support State-level strategies and LEA use of funds. The strategies and uses of funds must be designed to ensure that all children have a significant opportunity to meet challenging State academic standards and career and technical standards, as applicable, and attain, at a minimum, a regular high school diploma.*

*The descriptions that an SEA provides must include how, when developing its State strategies, the SEA considered the academic and non-academic needs of the following specific subgroups of students:*

* *Low-income students;*
* *Lowest-achieving students;*
* *English learners;*
* *Children with disabilities;*
* *Children and youth in foster care;*
* *Migratory children, including preschool migratory children and migratory children who have dropped out of school;*
* *Homeless children and youths;*
* *Neglected, delinquent, and at-risk students identified under Title I, Part D of the ESEA, including students in juvenile justice facilities;*
* *Immigrant children and youth;*
* *Students in LEAs eligible for grants under the Rural and Low-Income School program under section 5221 of the ESEA; and*
* *American Indian and Alaska Native students.*

1. The State’s strategies and how it will support LEAs to support the continuum of a student’s education from preschool through grade 12, including transitions from early childhood education to elementary school, elementary school to middle school, middle school to high school, and high school to post-secondary education and careers, in order to support appropriate promotion practices and decrease the risk of students dropping out; and

Massachusetts has engaged in a number of initiatives in recent years to ensure that all students successfully transition from pre-kindergarten (pre-K) through grade 12 and beyond to enjoy success after high school. We recognize the importance of providing supports and interventions across the grade spans to minimize proficiency gaps and build a foundation for future success. A number of examples of DESE’s ongoing work in this realm are described below and provide a basis for our plans to support successful transitions. This work is supported with a combination of state and federal funding.

In 2022-2023, Massachusetts is piloting a *Playful Learning Institute, Preschool through 3rd grade (PK-3).* The institute will be designed for district and school administrators, pre-kindergarten through grade 3 classroom educators, and community-based early childhood and out-of-school time program staff and administrators. The goal will be to provide participants with the tools and strategies needed to embed playful learning that supports deep dives into content, creates equitable access to learning, and creates varied opportunities for assessment across content areas. This work builds off of a partnership with the Massachusetts School Administrators Association (MSAA) to provide professional development for elementary principals on play as an anti-racist learning strategy. As part of its work to ensure that learning environments are playful and developmentally responsive to the needs of our youngest learners, Massachusetts has developed Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) resources for 1st through 3rd grade educators and is working to develop Approaches to Play and Learning (APL) resources for educators in this same grade span. Both of these resources are aligned with our state’s Preschool and Kindergarten SEL and APL standards. Additionally, state agencies closely collaborate on work in the early learning realm, including, but not limited to: early childhood special education, including supporting preschool children with disabilities in community-based settings; high quality early literacy practices; collaboration between community-based early childhood and out-of-school time providers with public schools, including transitions between preschool and kindergarten; and the roll-out of our state’s *Commonwealth Preschool Planning Initiative (CPPI)*.

As we build and strengthen early learning supports to prevent students from falling behind, we also continue to support all students, including our most at-risk students, in the later grades. A number of DESE initiatives focus on supporting schools and districts to lower dropout rates and improve graduation rates of all students. For example, the Massachusetts’ Dropout Prevention and Re-Engagement Work Group is a statewide network of schools and districts working together to learn from each other, along with experts, to develop/refine action plans to help students transition in and through high school. Additionally, a grant intended to support at-risk students has provided schools with resources to implement research-based strategies to retain at-risk students and earn a diploma.

DESE continues to implement its early warning indicator system (EWIS). The EWIS tool is designed to improve response time to students at-risk, determine success of interventions in all tiers, and develop predictive analytics for schools and districts based on specific educational milestones, including state-level assessment scores, passing all 9th grade classes, graduation from high school, and college enrollment and persistence. We provide ongoing professional development and support to schools and districts in effectively employing EWIS.

DESE’s Educational Stability team works to ensure that students who are homeless, in foster care, migratory and/or in active military duty families have full access to a consistent education. We work with a variety of partners, including schools, districts, and families, to help ensure that these students have transportation and other supports needed to successfully transition through school.

DESE provides guidance and technical assistance for schools and districts to support children and adolescents who are absent from school on a regular basis due to chronic and life-threatening illness, family illness/death, truancy, head injury, discipline removal, or coping with a family related crisis. DESE will identify and/or develop additional supports for schools and districts to effectively use technology and other means to minimize the loss of instructional time and help to keep these students engaged and on track with their education while they are unable to come to the school building. Schools are also encouraged to create and employ plans for safe and supportive transitions for students returning to school.

DESE collaborates with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health’s (DPH’s) [Office of School Health Services](https://www.mass.gov/orgs/school-health-services) to support students who have chronic and life-threatening illness, head injury, and other issues. Resources and materials such as the School Health Manual, Resources for Nurses and Health Care Providers and School Health Resources for Parents are available on their website. For students who miss school days due to discipline removal, DESE makes information available on the [Rethinking Discipline](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/discipline/?section=view-all) webpage. Districts are offered professional development training and resources to assist them in developing plans for safe and supportive return to school.

DESE provides support for family literacy programs, which provide parents and family members with foundational skills that boost their knowledge and confidence to support the educational development of, and to become educational advocates for their children. Parents and family members are able to improve their skills to achieve readiness for postsecondary education or training, job advancement, and economic self-sufficiency. Programs are designed to make sustainable improvements in the economic prospects for a family and to better enable the family to support their children’s learning needs.

DESE will support and encourage LEAs to consider the importance of successful transitions when performing their needs assessment, as well as in developing their action plans for utilizing their Title IV, Part A and other allocations under ESSA.

1. The State’s strategies and how it will support LEAs to provide equitable access to a well-rounded education and rigorous coursework in subjects in which female students, minority students, English learners, children with disabilities, or low-income students are underrepresented. Such subjects could include English, reading/language arts, writing, science, technology, engineering, mathematics, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, arts, history, geography, computer science, music, career and technical education, health, or physical education.

Massachusetts has developed a comprehensive set of rigorous curriculum frameworks and standards across the content areas, which provide schools and districts in the Commonwealth a blueprint for developing a rigorous, well-rounded curriculum for all students pre-K through grade 12.

Recently updated frameworks adopted by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) include: World Languages (2021), WIDA English Language Development Standards (2020), Arts (2019), History and Social Science (2018), English Language Arts and Literacy (2017), Mathematics (2017), Digital Literacy and Computer Science (2016), Science and Technology Engineering (2016). These frameworks, along with Comprehensive Health and Physical Education (review/revision in progress), establish the expectations for a well-rounded education and rigorous coursework to support readiness for college, careers, and informed and engaged citizenship.

DESE provides support and resources for teachers to implement the MA Curriculum Frameworks and improve the quality of teaching and learning to ensure a well-rounded education for all students in the Commonwealth, especially for student groups who have been historically marginalized and systematically underserved. We are providing supports through resources, grants, and professional learning opportunities for schools and districts to be implementing [high-quality curricular materials](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/impd/default.html), which are reviewed and reported for standards-alignment and teacher usability, including how well the materials are supporting specific student groups such as Multilingual Learners. Evidence of existing high-quality curricular materials are reviewed by panels of MA educators and posted through our [CURATE](https://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate/default.html) work. We continue to support resources including the [Educator Guidebook for Inclusive Practice](http://www.doe.mass.edu/edeval/guidebook/), which promotes evidence-based best practices for inclusion following the principles of Universal Design for Learning, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports, and Social and Emotional Learning. DESE offers professional development on implementing standards-aligned, engaging, student-centered instruction. This work, along with the other efforts outlined in Section 5 of this plan, ensures that students’ well-rounded education is provided by high-quality educators.

Since 2007, Massachusetts has recommended that all high schools require students to complete [MassCore](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ccr/masscore/), a minimum program of academic studies, before graduation. MassCore recommends course-taking requirements across the disciplines (including foreign languages, the arts, health, including physical education, civics, and technology) to ensure that students are prepared for success after high school. MassCore encourages that all students have access to AP and dual-enrollment opportunities, as well as the integration of work-based and service-learning opportunities throughout a course of study. During school year 2021-22, approximately 84% of all Massachusetts high school graduates completed MassCore, compared with 76% of students who are from low-income households. We recognize the continued need to support schools and districts to close the gap in accessing a well-rounded education for many groups of students.

In addition to the above work, Massachusetts will build upon ongoing efforts in this area that may include but are not limited to the following:

* DESE’s **Mass Literacy** initiative strives to create equitable access to evidence-based early literacy curriculum and instruction, especially for historically underserved students including those with disabilities, multilingual learners, and students of color. DESE will continue **implementation support for the Mass Literacy Guide**, including educator learning networks and an online course that any Massachusetts educator can take for free, and other resources. In addition, DESE will continue grant programs with significant investments in early literacy, including Growing Literacy Across Massachusetts (GLEAM), fended through CLSD. Finally, DESE will support implementation of a new Early Literacy Screening regulation, coordinate statewide early literacy tutoring, and institute new requirements and supports for educator preparation programs to align the preparation of teacher candidates with the principles of evidence-based early literacy instruction outlined in the Mass Literacy Guide.
* While the state released an updated Curriculum Framework for **History and Civics** in 2018, recent research revealed that many students were not receiving grade-level History instruction nor access to student-led civics projects, which are required by MA statute. Students with disabilities and multilingual learners were most impacted by access gaps. In response, DESE is developing standards-aligned curricular materials for openly available use, as well as professional learning support targeted to districts identified as needing support. In addition, DESE will begin offering statewide Civics professional learning programming with a focus on completing civics projects with student with disabilities, students of color, and multilingual students
* STEM programming in school year 2022-23 includes grants, high quality curriculum resources and tools, and professional learning that supports educators and schools to implement the Math, Science and Technology/Engineering, and Digital Literacy and Computer Science Curriculum Frameworks. Programs and grants prioritized access to schools and districts with students who have been historically marginalized and underrepresented. This includes providing districts with funds to adopt high-quality curriculum materials and professional development.
* DESE supports students, particularly among underserved populations, for college and career success in science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and English through a performance-based integrated program to increase participation and performance in advanced placement (AP) courses. This program includes targeted recruiting of historically underserved students in AP courses and exams, and recruitment and retention of AP teachers of color. In addition, through state and federal funding DESE is providing AP and IB exam fee subsidies for all low-income public-school students in the 2022-23 school year. MA is also coordinating a federally grant funded opportunity that is supporting STEM AP access and expansion through virtual course offerings.
* Comprehensive health education (including physical education) is a critical element of a well-rounded education that helps students develop the knowledge, skills and habits needed to be successful academically and to foster lifelong health. DESE is reviewing and revising the Comprehensive Health and Physical Education Curriculum Framework, and continues to provide schools and districts with technical assistance and resources for developing and maintaining comprehensive health and wellness programming, and is supporting districts to ensure that physical education is being offered and meets the requirements of the [state law](https://malegislature.gov/Laws/GeneralLaws/PartI/TitleXII/Chapter71/Section3).
* In cooperation with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), DESE collects data on youth and school health policies and practices through the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) and School Health Profiles (Profiles) to help inform school health policies and practices, including health education offerings.
* DESE will continue to increase investment in the Arts with several new resources and support offerings for districts. DESE will support schools and districts to use the Arts and Cultural Vitality Index, a self-assessment tool that supports districts to identify areas of inequitable access for historically underserved populations, including students with disabilities, students of color, and multilingual students. This self-assessment will lead to planning actions to reduce inequitable access. In addition, DESE has identified Dance education as an artistic discipline with low access statewide and will be focusing on enhancing the Dance teacher pipeline and placement into historically underserved schools.
* DESE’s College, Career and Technical Education unit provides schools with support and resources to increase the enrollment, retention, and completion of students in career and technical education programs that are nontraditional for their gender.
* Early college programming incorporates credit-bearing college coursework and academic supports into the high school experience to support increased numbers of students, particularly those who are traditionally underrepresented in postsecondary education, to graduate from high school and go on to complete a postsecondary credential with currency in the labor market. DESE provides support for schools and districts to consider and develop early college offerings. DESE’s partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education (DHE) as of June 2022 has designated Early College programming totaling 51 high schools (48 Designated high schools and 3 sender schools) and 24 higher education partners. Over 25 new partnerships in MA have submitted letters of intent to apply for MA Early College Designation for school year 2023-24
* The After-School and Out-of-School Time (ASOST) grant is a state-funded initiative that leverages out-of-school time (OST) to improve the academic, physical, social, and emotional wellness of students in the Commonwealth with grant funding specifically for quality enhancements and increased access for students most in need. Through this program, the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program (see below), and additional state and federally funded after school and summer programs, DESE encourages grantees to use funds to provide academic enrichment that enhances school-day/year offerings. In addition, these grant programs provide technical assistance, professional development, and networking statewide to build the capacity of the OST field to contribute to efforts to provide a well-rounded education.

DESE will support and encourage LEAs as they consider how they are ensuring a well-rounded education for all students when performing their needs assessment, as well as in developing their action plans for utilizing their Title IV, Part A and other allocations under ESSA. We will continue to invite districts to take advantage of the state-level initiatives noted above to support their work. Additionally, we will encourage districts to consult the guidance issued by USED on use of Title IV, Part A funds.

As described in the Executive Summary and elsewhere in this plan, our ESSA plan is designed to strengthen the quality and breadth of the instructional program students experience, as that is our major lever for ensuring success after high school for all students. This focus includes special attention to two areas where state performance has been stagnant — early grades literacy and middle grades mathematics — to ensure our students are well prepared with strong literacy and mathematics skills. Accordingly, we intend to prioritize existing state and federal funding sources to support this effort and, should we encounter future fiscal constraints, may consider redirecting existing expenditures and/or foregoing certain initiatives.

*If an SEA intends to use Title IV, Part A funds or funds from other included programs for the activities that follow, the description must address how the State strategies below support the State-level strategies in 6.1.A and B.*

1. Does the SEA intend to use funds from Title IV, Part A or other included programs to supportstrategies to support LEAs to improve school conditions for student learning, including activities that create safe, healthy, and affirming school environments inclusive of all students to reduce:
   1. Incidents of bullying and harassment;
   2. The overuse of discipline practices that remove students from the classroom; and
   3. The use of aversive behavioral interventions that compromise student health and safety?

* Yes. If yes, provide a description below.
* No.

In DESE’s strategic plan one of the core strategies is to support social-emotional learning, health, and safety. Key levers in this work include safe and supportive school climate and culture, and effective family engagement. DESE is committed to building out supports and policies in partnership with practitioners in the field and other state agencies to advance this work in the Commonwealth, both in and out of school. It is our goal to promote systems and strategies that foster safe, positive, healthy, culturally competent, and inclusive learning environments and address students’ varied needs in order to improve educational outcomes for all students.

Massachusetts uses Title IV, Part A state-level funds for staff time devoted to supporting supplemental efforts to advance DESE’s strategic priority of supporting social and emotional learning, health, and safety. This work will build upon ongoing efforts in this area that include but are not limited to the following:

* As previously described in Section 5.2 of this plan, DESE participates in the Collaborating States Initiative (CSI) led by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL). This work involves receiving technical assistance from CASEL, as well as other states across the country, to help the state promote social and emotional learning (SEL) with the goal of creating conditions that support statewide implementation of SEL in pre-K through high school.
* In collaboration with the state-legislated Safe and Supportive Schools Commission, DESE updated and refined the safe and supportive schools framework and self-reflection tool. These resources provide guidance to schools on the creation of safe and supportive schools that foster positive, equity-focused school climates, and that integrate and align related initiatives, in order to improve educational outcomes for all students. Additionally, the work includes, but is not limited to, considering and recommending ways that the state and communities can better align, integrate, and streamline initiatives. The Commission submits annual reports to the legislature, outlining recommendations related to helping schools become more safe and supportive.
* DESE’s Rethinking Discipline initiative has engaged with over three dozen schools and districts in a professional learning network since 2016. This initiative is geared towards reducing the inappropriate and excessive use of long-term suspensions and expulsions, including disproportional rates of suspensions and expulsions for students with disabilities and students of color. The network functions as a forum in which educators and administrators can learn with and from each other as they discuss their ongoing efforts, reflect on the challenges they face, and draw up plans to continue effective efforts and adjust practices as necessary. Lessons learned (by districts and DESE) help inform other districts in the state that are grappling with these same challenges. More information can be found on DESE’s [Rethinking Discipline webpage](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/discipline/).
* DESE has created guidance on school policies regarding substance use and effective substance use prevention education (policies that are required by state law to be posted on districts’ websites and submitted to DESE). Additionally, DESE has established guidance and regulations related to Recovery High Schools where students can earn a high school diploma and are supported in their recovery for alcohol and drug abuse addiction and disorders.
* State law requires that all school districts have bullying prevention and intervention plans. DESE provides ongoing technical assistance to support efforts in this area. In partnership with other agencies, DESE also helps districts strengthen emergency management planning and threat assessment practices.
* DESE provides [extensive professional development](https://www.sel-mh-spotlight.org/) and other supports to schools and districts to build internal capacity to meet the social emotional and behavioral and mental health needs of their students, families and staff as well as develop their capacity to build partnerships with community-based providers.
* DESE has established several programs and networks (Academies) to support schools and districts with the development of multi-tiered systems of social emotional, behavioral, and mental health support. Aligned with the state’s [Multi-Tiered System of Support blueprint](https://www.doe.mass.edu/sfss/mtss/), these Academies provide participating teams with three years of professional development, coaching, data support, and technical assistance in order to effectively implement positive behavioral intervention systems, social emotional learning, and mental health supports. In addition, DESE sponsored two learning networks focused on cultivating systems and practices that foster a strong sense of belonging for students and adults.

DESE will support and encourage LEAs to consider how they are ensuring a safe and supportive learning environment for all students when performing their needs assessment, as well as in developing their action plans for utilizing their Title IV, Part A and other allocations under ESSA. We will also continue to invite districts to take advantage of related state-level initiatives to support their work. In addition, DESE has encouraged schools and districts to consider using Title II, Part A funds as it relates to educator professional development, to holistically address students’ social, emotional and academic learning needs.

1. Does the SEA intend to use funds from Title IV, Part A or other included programs to supportstrategies to support LEAs to effectively use technology to improve the academic achievement and digital literacy of all students?

* Yes. If yes, provide a description below.
* No.

DESE’s strategic plan also includes a core strategy to enhance resource use, technology, and data to support teaching and learning. Our initiatives seek to improve data infrastructure and promote a culture of effective data and technology use in districts and schools. The following core beliefs guide our work: technology represents a powerful tool for facilitating student engagement and higher-level learning at scale; technological savvy has become increasingly essential for students as they enter college and the workforce; empowering educators and leadership teams with data and instructional tools will enhance targeted decision-making and improve student outcomes (from DESE’s Strategic Plan Summary, November 2016.)

DESE will continue to support and encourage LEAs to consider how they are effectively using technology to support all students when performing their needs assessment, as well as in developing their action plans for utilizing their Title IV, Part A and other allocations under ESSA.

The Office of Educational Technology (OET) was established during the 2020-2021 school year to directly assist districts in providing pandemic-related remote and hybrid instruction. OET was charged with ensuring all schools were equipped with 1:1 learning devices for students, sufficient internet access in and outside of school buildings, guidance on recommended and required practices, and professional development opportunities.

Following the transition from remote and hybrid learning, OET has since supported schools and districts to transition from pandemic-related uses of technology to more strategic, sustainable, and equitable ways to integrate technology in service of students and school communities. The office issues grants, coordinates professional learning programming, publishes guidance and resources, and provides targeted assistance and support, all of which are prioritized for schools and districts identified as requiring assistance through the state’s accountability system.

We will also continue to encourage districts to use their allocations to leverage state-level initiatives to support their work, which may include but are not limited to the following:

* Leveraging technology to expand current efforts to develop Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) for students as a facet of postsecondary planning to include true personalized learning.
* Providing high-quality professional development to educators in schools supported by the Digital Connections Initiative, an effort that seeks to bridge the digital divide that exists among some schools across the Commonwealth and expand access to high-quality digital learning opportunities, particularly for students in rural, remote, and underserved areas.
* Providing student access to high-quality blended and online courses based on students’ individual interests, needs, and preferences, such as those offered by the Virtual High School and institutions of higher education.
* Providing high-quality professional development in using DESE-supported digital tools, including leveraging Edwin Analytics (such as the Student Learning Experiences and Early Warning Indicator System Reports) and reusable learning objects (RLOs), self-contained E-learning modules that present content, provide learning activities and assessments of learning, and engage educators in simulations and scenarios.
* Providing educator access to online and blended Massachusetts Focus Academies (MFA) & Tiered Systems Academies, intensive professional development academies designed to support school and district teams in the development and implementation of school and district-wide systems of instruction and support in the academic and non-academic domains.

1. Does the SEA intend to use funds from Title IV, Part A or other included programs to supportstrategies to support LEAs to engage parents, families, and communities?

* Yes. If yes, provide a description below.
* No.

Recognizing that family engagement is essential to student success, DESE collaborates with internal and external groups to inform and support work in this area and develop culturally responsive strategies for engaging with parents and community organizations as partners in support of students’ education and success. The Office of Student and Family Support, and a family engagement specialist within that team, works with other offices and agencies to provide professional development, guidance, and assistance to help families understand and access available educational options for their children, and to help districts and partners effectively engage families in supporting student success. A [family portal](https://www.doe.mass.edu/families/) webpage also provides families and districts with links to information and resources on DESE’s website about topics that may be of interest to families and those supporting family engagement in education.

DESE continues to support and encourage LEAs to consider how they are engaging families when performing their needs assessment, as well as in developing their action plans for utilizing their Title IV, Part A and other allocations under ESSA. We also continue to invite districts to take advantage of related state-level initiatives to support their work. In addition, as noted above, we will encourage districts to consult the guidance issued by USED on use of Title IV, Part A funds.

1. Awarding Subgrants *(ESEA section 4103(c)(2)(B))*: Describe how the SEA will ensure that awards made to LEAs under Title IV, Part A, Subpart 1 are in amounts that are consistent with ESEA section 4105(a)(2).  
     
   In accordance with ESEA section 4105(a)(2), DESE will reserve 95 percent of its available Title IV, Part A funds for subgrants to LEAs. Funds will be allocated by formula reflecting the same proportion of the total reservation as was the proportion of that LEA’s prior year Title I, Part A allocation. Pending sufficient funding appropriation, DESE will continue to make awards of no less than $10,000 per LEA. However, if sufficient funds are not available, allocations will be reduced proportionally to ensure that all eligible LEAs may receive funds under this program.

DESE continues to offer a competitive grant opportunity to LEAs using any Title IVA formula funds that remain unclaimed following the formula grant application period, and supplemented, as needed, with Title IV-A state activities funds. When issuing competitive grants, DESE gives priority to LEAs or consortia of LEAs that have the greatest need based on chronically underperforming status, considers geographic diversity among subgrant recipients representing rural, suburban, and urban areas. Competitive subgrants are issued for a term of one year with an option for a one-year continuation grant, supplemented with Title IV-A state activities funds. These grants support holistically all three priorities of Title IVA, including support for well-rounded educational opportunities, safe and healthy students, and effective use of technology.

## 6.2 Program-Specific Requirements.

1. **Title I, Part A: Improving Basic Programs Operated by State and Local Educational Agencies**
   1. Describe the process and criteria that the SEA will use to waive the 40 percent schoolwide poverty threshold under section 1114(a)(1)(B) of the ESEA that an LEA submits on behalf of a school, including how the SEA will ensure that the schoolwide program will best serve the needs of the lowest-achieving students in the school.

Massachusetts was conferred with Ed-Flex Authority on January 19, 2001 under the Education Flexibility Act of 1999 and reapplied for this authority in September 2019 and was granted approval through 2023-24. Waivers provided to LEAs under Ed-Flex Authority have included waiving the 40 percent schoolwide poverty threshold. To continue to encourage improvement of basic programs operated by LEAs and to maximize available flexibilities for their intended purposes, Massachusetts proposes the following process and criteria for approving schoolwide poverty threshold waivers:

* Notify LEAs of the schoolwide waiver opportunity.
* Post waiver application form on DESE’s website.
* Successful applicants will submit a request describing how a schoolwide approach would be more beneficial than a targeted assistance approach in meeting the needs of all students, particularly those furthest from meeting dictates of the state accountability framework.
* Successful applicants will explain how the waiver’s intent fits into school and district improvement plans.
* Successful applicants will explain how the effect of the waiver on student learning will be annually monitored and provide major indicators of educational performance that will be used.
* LEA leaders will sign assurances that school improvement plans will be reviewed and approved at the LEA level to ensure that required components of a schoolwide plan are addressed.
* DESE staff will review waiver applications and suggest approval for those that meet the above criteria.
* DESE’s Director of Federal Grant Programs will review all suggested approvals and consult with other senior staff as necessary.
* The Department will notify the district in writing of approval or non-approval of the waiver request within four weeks of receiving the request.

1. **Title I, Part C: Education of Migratory Children.**
   1. Describe how the SEA and its local operating agencies, which may include LEAs, will establish and implement a system for the proper identification and recruitment of eligible migratory children on a statewide basis, including the identification and recruitment of preschool migratory children and migratory children who have dropped out of school, and how the SEA will verify and document the number of eligible migratory children aged 3 through 21 residing in the State on an annual basis.

Identification and Recruitment System

One of the top priorities of the Massachusetts Migrant Education Program (MMEP) is to ensure that all potential migratory students are identified and recruited throughout the state by implementing strategic MMEP activities and procedures. These strategies include the following and will evolve as needed for effective implementation:

* Employing a fully dedicated staff to the identification and recruitment (ID&R) of migratory students.
* Cross-training additional staff in the ID&R processes and assist the ID&R staff in meeting the ID&R goals and activities as outlined in a MMEP ID&R plan, which is updated annually and shared with all MMEP staff at the beginning of the program year.
* Development of aligned regional ID&R plans and individual work plans to meet regional goals based on the MMEP ID&R plan. (Note: The MMEP is divided into two regions within the state.)
* Monitoring and reviewing regional goals on a bi-monthly basis.
* Utilizing various MMEP databases that are used to not only document activity but conduct data analysis to ensure that time and effort are being directed in the most effective manner. All ID&R plans are data driven.
* Analyzing data from the state to identify trends in the agricultural/fishing industries, as well as population demographics.
* Continuing to focus recruitment on five main audiences:

1. Schools/school districts.
2. Eligible migratory families and Out of School Youth (OSY).
3. Community groups.
4. Employers (new and current).
5. Other government agencies.

* Distribution of school and agency screeners will continue to assist with ID&R.
* Conducting mandatory bi-annual statewide trainings for all staff that address ID&R topics, as well as other programmatic procedures and protocols. Training needs/content are determined by the following factors:

1. Accuracy in completion of mandated forms.
2. Outcomes of previous competency test.
3. Observations by MMEP staff.
4. Changes /clarifications with Non-Regulatory Guidance (NRGs), Office of Migrant Education (OME) Q&As, ID&R Policy.
5. Procedures, especially in light of the changes from ESSA.
6. Requests by MMEP staff, especially MMEP ID&R staff.

* Conducting extensive trainings for all new ID&R staff over a 4-5 week period.
* Requiring new ID&R staff to pass a competency exam, in addition to being monitored and mentored in the first three months of employment.
* Assessing veteran staff annually via a competency exam, in addition to receiving formal monitoring and observation visits on an annual basis.
* Issuing an electronic version of the MMEP ID&R manual that has been developed and maintained by the MMEP to all staff.
* Providing training to all MMEP staff in the severity and consequences of falsifying information on Certificates of Eligibility (COE). A policy and protocol for reporting potential fraud is in place. It is the responsibility of all MMEP staff to find and correct mistakes as soon as possible.
* Meeting bi-monthly of all MMEP ID&R staff to receive further support, and to plan and work on group initiatives, such as cross-regional partnering to ensure that staff experience the ranges of recruiting situations that occur throughout the state, emerging qualifying work activities in the state, and conduct ID&R sweeps in geographic areas.

Verification and Documentation of Eligibility Process

The MMEP implements a rigorous quality control system including multiple staff reviews for the eligibility process. Outlined below are the different stages of ID&R and the various roles of staff involved in the process. If during this process, a staff person needs an eligibility clarification, the MMEP ID&R/Program Director may provide support and/or consult with the MMEP Leadership Team or other ID&R coordinators from other states along with referencing the NRGs and the federal register to ensure responses are in accordance with federal regulations. When warranted, a MMEP advisory will be issued detailing the question/topic, the response, supporting information (i.e., reference to NRGs or federal register) and action to be taken. Advisories that clarify policy will be incorporated into the MMEP ID&R manual on a rolling basis. Quality control processes and roles will be reviewed, as well as assessed on an ongoing basis. Changes in policy, best practices, Office of Migrant Education Guidance or areas that need clarification will be reflected on a rolling basis as needed.

INITIAL SCREENING
Screen worker/family to see if there is a possibilty of qualifying

THE INTERVIEW
Information is collected and documented on a COE during a face-to-face interview.
Preliminary eligibility determination made.
Checks employer database and initials COE for "Existing/New Employer."
COE is signed by MMEP staff and parent/youth.
COE and supporting documents are submitted to MMEP Regional Office within 3 days of interview.

THE CHECKER
Reviews the COE and supporting documents, ensuring accuracy and completeness.
Conducts a search on the Migrant Student Information Exchange (MSIX) to establish/verify prior migratory history in Massachusetts or another state.
Verifies school enrollment for all K-12 students.
Initials and dates COE, documents receipt, and submits to MMEP Regional Verifier for Final Check.



THE VERIFIER
Reviews the COE using the COE Tracker Form to confirm validity and signs it.
Initials the dates the COE for any changes.
Searches MSIX and MMEP Databases for potential student/family matches.
Forwards COE packet, including School Enrollment Verification form and permission slip copies to MMEP office within 5 days of initial submission by the interviewer.

DATA MANAGER
Receives completed COEs and tracks all forms.
Conducts  family/student search within databases and MSIX for matches.
Checks COE for accuracy. 
Initials and dates COE, then forwards packet for validation.


ID&R Director is both the 

VALIDATOR - Reviews the COE for completion, accuracy and supporting documentation. 
Determines if eligible or ineligible.
If the COE requires additional information or clarification for validation, the COE  is returned with a MMEP Returned/Incomplete form for needed information or changes,

AND

AUDITOR - Confirms employer information, physical location contact, eligible activities and operating status via database.
Conducts face-to-face or phone audit, recording information on COE Audit Form. 
Initials and dates COE with attached Audit Form.


DETERMINATION:
Ineligible - 
A copy of the COE and supporting documentation will be returned to the MMEP staff with a "Failure to Validate" form explaining the decision. 
The original COE and supporting documents will be kept on file with the ID&R Director. 
Staff may appeal a "Failure to Validate" form with the ID&R Director.

If conclusion cannot be met with staff and ID&R  Director, then the MMEP Leadership Team will discuss eligibilty issue with all involved, may follow up with family/student, and then make an decision based on findings.

Eligible - 
COE is validated and returned with supporting documentation to the Data Manager.
MMEP Data Manager assigns  unique family/student numbers, inputs family/student information into databases, and files COE and documentation.



Currently, the MMEP ID&R/Program Director conducts audits on 100% of all COE submissions. If the number of required audits exceeds what can realistically be completed, a system will be implemented for internal re-interviewing. Individuals who were not associated with the original eligibility determination will re-interview or re-verify the eligibility of randomly selected COEs.

The MMEP conducted an independent re-interview study in 2017 continued this practice of quality control with a 2019-2020 study as well. In order to implement the required independent re-interview process, the MMEP joined a consortium of MEPs to integrate human and financial resources, deliver the re-interviewing protocol, and access the findings, if any, from each state. On-site face-to-face and virtual/phone (2019-2020) re-were conducted on a systematic random sample of 50 COEs. The “Re-interview Questionnaire,” field tested by eight states for accuracy, was used to re-interview families. Two qualified independent re-interviewers conducted the interviews in Massachusetts. The interviewers were given one-day training on conducting the re-interview using the “Re-interview Questionnaire.”

Interviewers:

1. Communicated with families in their native language.
2. Used a re-interview protocol that contained all data items used in making the original eligibility determination.
3. Had a strong background in Migrant identification and recruitment.
4. Used non-threatening tactics to obtain information.
5. Were trained in regard to the re-interview questionnaire.
6. Were assigned geographical areas where they had neither recruited nor re-interviewed.
   1. Describe how the SEA and its local operating agencies, which may include LEAs, will identify the unique educational needs of migratory children, including preschool migratory children and migratory children who have dropped out of school, and other needs that must be met in order for migratory children to participate effectively in school.

**Joint Planning**

The most current Service Delivery Plan (SDP) was developed and approved in February 2022 with input from committees of stakeholders that include MMEP staff, educators, community agencies, current migratory parents and youth; as well as State and Federal education programs. The plan will be implemented in performance periods 2022-23 through 2024-25.

Included in this joint planning of the SDP are the following programs, which can provide important perspectives, particularly about the unique needs of students in preschool and who have dropped out (out-of-school youth), to inform planning, implementation, and evaluation of MMEP:

* New England High School Equivalency Program (HEP)
* Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care: Head Start
* Collaborative for Educational Services
* DESE Programs:
* Title III
* Adult and Community Learning Services
* Early Learning
* Drop-Out Prevention and Re-Engagement
* 21st Century Community Learning Centers
* Early Warning Implementation
* McKinney Vento Homeless Education Program

The committees reviewed the results of the comprehensive needs assessment (CNA) and developed the activities outlined in the SDP to address the issues raised in the CNA. A menu of services is provided during school year and summer sessions and the delivery models differ based on regional structures and needs.

The MMEP uses a rigorous process to ensure that every eligible student is identified, recruited, and provided with comprehensive services ensuring success. Objectives are formally developed for service delivery for both the school year and summer sessions in each of the regions by using current and projected data and budget. Each regional leadership team has regularly scheduled meetings to discuss student count and enrollment data, as well as support efforts to meet the regional objectives. The MMEP continues to use the Student Services database was created in 2016 to provide MMEP staff with a more efficient and effective way of tracking how students are served. Each eligible child/youth has a file that tracks service needs, available services, and what services that individual student participated in during the school year and summer sessions. This process will continue with adjustments as needed.

In order to achieve cohesiveness across the regions, a statewide curriculum for Pre-K, K-12, and OSY students began to be implemented in the 2012-2013 summer program year and has continued to present day. There are a variety of curricula selected based on the needs of the different types of student groups. Curricula will continue to be researched and will continue to evolve to ensure alignment with federal and state standards.

Preschoolers attending summer site-based programs are also given a pre- and post-assessment that is recorded in a standardized rubric. This rubric was developed by selected MMEP educators based on kindergarten readiness standards in mathematics and language arts. This assessment data is gathered on a regional and state level and is used in the annual evaluation report and comprehensive needs assessment.

The math curriculum, Math Matters, utilized for both the on-site and home-based summer programs for all K-8 students, has a pre- and post-assessment that is given to the students at the start and end of the program. The curriculum and assessments are available in English and Spanish, therefore allowing the program to remove the language barrier and focus on a student’s math skills. This assessment data is gathered on a regional and state level and is used in the annual evaluation report and comprehensive needs assessment.

The OSY curriculum will be used throughout the program year and as there are unit tests integrated into the curriculum, they will be used for future assessment and evaluation reports. Further, this curriculum has short lessons that have pre and post-tests as part of the lesson plan. There is also a placement test used to ensure appropriate instruction and programmatic planning.

A complete listing of the types of assessments to identify services needed is included in a chart in section iii.

* 1. Describe how the SEA and its local operating agencies, which may include LEAs, will ensure that the unique educational needs of migratory children, including preschool migratory children and migratory children who have dropped out of school, and other needs that must be met in order for migratory children to participate effectively in school, are addressed through the full range of services that are available for migratory children from appropriate local, State, and Federal educational programs.

Formal and informal monitoring is conducted to ensure compliance with federal law and regulations. Monitoring ensures the following purposes are met for the funding:

1. Ensure that migrant children receive full and appropriate opportunities to meet the same challenging state academic content and student academic achievement standards that all children are expected to meet.
2. Ensure that migrant children who move among the states are not penalized by disparities among states in curriculum, graduation requirements, and state academic content and student academic achievement standards.
3. Support high quality and comprehensive educational programs for migrant children to help reduce the educational disruptions and other problems that results from repeated moves.
4. Ensure that migrant children are provided with appropriate educational services (including support services) that address their special needs in a coordinated and efficient manner.
5. Design programs to help migrant children overcome educational disruption, caused by cultural and language barriers, social isolation, various health-related problems, and other factors that inhibit the ability of the children to do well in school and to prepare migrant children to make a successful transition to post-secondary education or employment.

The MMEP staff ensure that every eligible student is offered supplemental educational services, whether directly by the MMEP hired educators or through registration in local school and community agency offerings. The new Student Services database allows MMEP staff to document and track service delivery, therefore ensuring that all students are served throughout the state. Services vary depending on the age, grade, and needs of the student and due diligence is paid to ensure that the MMEP is not supplanting services available through local school districts.

The MMEP has and will continue to provide supplemental services and supports based on the most current Service Delivery Plan (SDP).

As a result of the CNA and SDP, the menu of program services to be implemented and evaluated are listed on the chart that follows. Services will be provided directly or indirectly in collaboration with other local, State, and Federal education programs. For example, Preschool Migrant children will be enrolled in Migrant Head Start or YMCA programs, if available. If a child is unable to enroll in a program, only then will the migratory child be enrolled in a direct preschool service provided by the MMEP (home-based and/or site-based). Another example is the MMEP collaboration with school districts receiving McKinney Vento Homeless Education grants to support and facilitate enrolling migrant homeless students in existing district support programs. In addition to the stakeholders listed under section ii, a list of partnerships is provided at the end of this response.

Student Group: Preschool
Services Type: Enrollment assistance in Early Childhood Program
Timeframe: Ongoing
Components: Identify Early Childhood centers in  child's community and assist parent/guardian in enrollment process. Monitor waitlist status, if necessary. 
Curriculum: Not applicable
Asssessment Type: Enrollment progress documented in a Daily Activity and referral log.

Student Group: Preschool
Service Type: Home-based Family Literacy Programming for any preschooler not enrolled in Early Childhood Program within the community. PFS will  be given to older students (4-5 yrs old)
Timeframe: School Year
Components: Mutliple home visits made by certified early childhood teacher to work with preschooler and a parent/guardian in native language.
Curriculum: Raising a Reader or GENESEO Early Start Famiily Literacy Kits.
Assessment Type: Parent/Guardian Satisfaction Survey

Student Group: Preschool
Service Type: Site-based Summer Program (two sites)
Timeframe: Summer Term
Components: Pre-school classrooms focused on kindergarten readiness, English Language Arts (emerging reading and writing), and mathematics.
Curriculum: Curricular decisions made by individual teachers based on selection of picture books selected by MMEP.
Assessment Type: Minutes of Instruction; Preschool Rubric (pre/post); Kindergarten Rubric (pre/post)

Student Group: Preschool
Service Type: Home-based Summer Program: Any preschool student residing outside of the two Site-based summer programs.
Timeframe: Summer Term
Components: One-on-one instruction with teacher/tutor.
Curriculum: Familiy Literacy Curriculum based on Raising a Reader or Geneseo Early Start Famiily Literacy Kits.
Assessment Type: Parent/Guardian Satisfaction/Feedback Survey

Student Group: Preschool
Service Types: Enrollment in Summer Enrichment Programs (ex. Migrant Head Start and YMCA).
Timeframe: Summer Term
Components: Dependent on Program; focus on English Language skills and Kindergarten Readiness
Curriculum: Dependent on Program
Assessment Type: Dependent on Program

Student Group: K-12
Service Type: Home-based Academic Tutoring for K-12 students not receiving such services through their school, or those who need additional supports, especially PFS and high risk
Timeframe: School Year
Components: Individual Instruction
Curriculum: Homework and supplemental academmic assistance
Assessment Type: Minutes of Instruction; Parent/guardian Satisfaction/Feedback Survey

Student Group: 9-12
Service Type: Site-based Academic Tutoring (two sites)
Timeframe: School Year
Components: Small Group Instruction
Curriculum: Homework and supplemental academic assistance
Assessment Type: Minutes of Instruction

Student Group: K-8
Service Type: Site-based Summer Program (two sites)
Timeframe: Summer Term
Components: Singular or clustered grade classrooms - implementing ELA/Math curriculum
Curriculum: Math Matters
Assessment Type: Math Matters (pre/post)

Student Group: 9-12
Service Type: Site-based Summer Program (three sites)
Timeframe: Summer Term
Components: Singular or clustered grade classrooms - implementing STEM curriculum and District summer reading assignments
Curriculum: TeachEngineering; Summer reading as assigned by District/School
Assessment Type: Minutes of Instruction

Student Group: K-12
Service Type: Home-based Summer Program (Students who do not reside near one of the site-based programs)
Timeframe: Summer Term
Components: Individual instruction implementing ELA/Math curriculum
Curriculum: Math Matters; ACReS
Assessment Type: Minutes of Instruction; Math Matters (pre/post); ACReS unit tests

Student Group: OSY/High School Students
Service Type: Career and Graduation Readiness Program
Timeframe: School Year
Components: Workshops and Fieldtrips
Curriculum: Not Applicable
Assessment Type: Attendance; Feedback Surveys

Student Group: OSY
Service Type: Site-based Program (two sites)
Timeframe: School Year and Summer Term
Components: Small group instruction focused on ELL/LIfe Skills; HSE completion via HiSET/GED Exam Preparation
Curriculum: OSY-CIG Life Skills Lessons; Interactive English; HiSET/GED Exam Preparatory Materials
Assessment Type: Minutes of Instruction; English Language Screeener; Interactive English Unit Tests; HiSET/GED practice exams; Life Skills Assessment (pre/post)

Student Group: OSY
Service Type: Home-based Program
Timeframe: School Year and Summer Term
Components: Individual instruction focused on ELL/Life Skills
Curriculum: OSY-CIG Life Skills Lesson; Interactive English
Assessment Type: Minutes of Instruction; English Language Screener; Interactive English unit tests; Life Skills Assessment (pre/post)

Student Group: OSY
Service Type: Enrollment in Community Based Courses
Timeframe: Ongoing
Components: ELL; HiSET/GED Prep; ABE; Life Skills, etc.
Curriculum: Varies
Assessment Type: Not Applicable

Student Group: Parents
Service Type: State Parent Advisory Council
Timeframe: Two
Components: Not Applicable
Curriculum: Not Applicable
Assessment Type: Meeting Feeedback Forms

Student Group: Parents
Service Type: Regional Parent Advisory Council
Timeframe: Four
Components: Not Applicable
Curriculum: Not Applicable
Assessment Type: Meeting Feddback Forms

Student Group: Parents
Service Type: Parent/Family Enrichment Workshops
Timeframe: School Year
Components: Immigration; Child Car Safety; Special Education; Family Literacy; Nutrition; etc.
Assessment Type: Attendance; Workshop Feedback Forms. 


Current and Past Curriculum Collaboration Highlights:

* A modified family literacy curriculum based on Raising a Reader, and the GENESEO Migrant Center’s family literacy program, is implemented with preschoolers.
* Math Matters, a math curriculum developed through a multi-state consortium of Migrant Education programs, is implemented for all K-8 students. Math Matters is aligned with Common Core, is bilingual, and incorporates math with language arts. The site-based Math Matters format is based on Responsive Classroom, therefore also integrating the bullying prevention curriculum selected by the MMEP.
* Three STEM curriculum units were selected from TeachEngineering, a collaborative project between faculty members, students and teachers associated with a National Science Foundation grant at the University of Colorado, Boulder; Oregon State University; Duke University; Colorado School of Mines; Worcester Polytechnic Institute; and American Society for Engineering Education. The units are cohesive collections of lessons and activities that allow students to learn hands-on, applied scientific and mathematics concepts to discuss environmental and urban development issues and seek potential solutions to these issues. The curriculum was well received by teaching staff and students and will continue to be used in upcoming high school programming.
* Interactive English, published by Intercambio-Uniting Communities is being used for OSY instruction. Life skills are integrated into the curriculum and supplemented through short lessons developed through the OSY-Consortium Grant that the MMEP participates in. Interactive English addresses common challenges faced by adult-based programs. The materials are designed to be used in both classroom and one-on-one teaching sessions and have shorter completion cycles that allow students to experience the achievement of completing a book even when they are unable to make long-term uninterrupted commitments to attending class. The materials are also designed to be taught by educators of all different teaching experience levels and focus on speaking, listening, reading, and writing, making this curriculum a very solid fit for the migratory OSY population in the state.
* Eligible MMEP OSY interested in pursuing their high school equivalency certificate through HiSET/GED exam can dually enroll in the MMEP HiSET/GED Exam Preparation Program. The staff coordinate curricular and support services for these interested MMEP students.
* The MMEP program uses the Pathways Curriculum from its partnership in the iSOSY grant.

In addition, the MMEP uses a collaborative approach to promote the transition of migratory secondary students to post-secondary education and/or employment. Formal presentations at Parent Advisory Council meetings (PAC) and parent involvement workshops aid in building the capacity of parents to understand and support their children along the pathway to university. Direct service for students is geared toward helping them explore career options, assist them in setting personal learning goals and ensure they are supported in the coursework needed to reach those goals. This includes curricula that prepare them for college entrance testing and state assessment preparation, as well as soft skills and academic/career readiness skills awareness, developed through fieldtrips to local universities and industries throughout the school year and summer sessions. Collaborative efforts have been made to support migrant students transition from high school with school districts, community-based organizations, and local colleges. Examples of partnerships established by MMEP staff for not only this population but for all migrant students and parents are as follows:

* School district McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Coordinators.
* School district Perkins grant recipients
* Community schools
* UMASS - Dartmouth Labor Program
* College Advising Corps
* uAspire
* Project Coach at Smith College
* Springfield Technical Community College
* Fitchburg State College
* World Education, Inc.
* Student Immigrant Movement
* Migrant Head Start
* The Haven Project
* New North Citizens Council
* East Boston Social Center
* Many local business and industry leaders throughout the state

The MMEP will continue to develop these relationships and expand the range of organizations to best identify and serve the migratory population in the state.

* 1. Describe how the State and its local operating agencies, which may include LEAs, will use funds received under Title I, Part C to promote interstate and intrastate coordination of services for migratory children, including how the State will provide for educational continuity through the timely transfer of pertinent school records, including information on health, when children move from one school to another, whether or not such move occurs during the regular school year (*i.e.*, through use of the Migrant Student Information Exchange (MSIX), among other vehicles).

The MSIX is a priority for all MMEP staff, who have essential roles in the utilization and maintenance of the MSIX. The MMEP Data Manager and MMEP Program Director act as the coordinators of this effort. The tasks of these two individuals in relation to MSIX are as follows:

1. Develop accounts and assign roles as the MSIX User Administrators.
2. Assign specific tasks related to the collection and maintenance of electronic records.
3. Develop and implement policies and procedure for all data included in MSIX for the MMEP.
4. Act as the principal trainers of MSIX for MMEP staff.

The MMEP Data Manager is responsible for entering the enrollment records, credit accrual, and the assessment data for migrant students into the MIS 2000 database which in turn holds the data for MSIX retrieval. This individual is also jointly responsible along with the MMEP Leadership Team, for communicating with all secondary schools where migratory youth attend to efficiently obtain credit accrual information for all migratory high school students throughout the state. The MMEP Data Manager and MMEP Program Director ensure that all secondary coursework is input into MSIX and conduct searches of prior MSIX records to assist in the credit transfer for secondary migratory students.

The MMEP Data Manager was responsible for creating records and data entry into two data systems for every child who is determined to be migrant through the MMEP’s comprehensive identification and recruitment efforts. For the 2016-2017 school year, the MMEP consulted with MS/EdD company to map the two data systems; therefore, removing the double entry that is required now for all MSIX Minimum Data Elements (MDEs).

MMEP staff are responsible for checking the MSIX database when a potential migratory student has been identified for eligibility, and for sourcing and compiling information that will later be entered into the migrant databases. In addition, the MMEP staff are able to actively seek and retrieve academic and health records using MSIX and provide those records to school district staff when applicable.

In addition to receiving an initial orientation and training on MSIX, all MMEP staff participate in the MSIX on-line training when they initially sign up for MSIX. MMEP staff receive an annual MSIX training and review, which specifically focuses on what information is available on a consolidated student record and how best to use that information to drive effective service delivery for the individual. Specifically, MMEP ID&R staff receive MSIX training at one of their bi-monthly team meetings. This training is focused on potential uses of MSIX data, as well as reports to assist in recruitment efforts and eligibility verification.

For the 2016-17 school year, additional training was provided to the MMEP staff to input enrollment data on a weekly basis. This required a one-day training and possibly some additional support from the MMEP Data Manager and MMEP Program Director.

When a migratory student is moving from Massachusetts to a known location, the MMEP Data Manager enters the MSIX student record and sends a notification to the receiving state. The MMEP Data Manager, the MMEP ID&R/Program Director, and the MMEP State Director are listed as contacts if the receiving state staff requires further information. The MMEP Data Manager, MMEP ID&R/Program Director, and the MMEP Program Director receive all notifications from a sending state when a migratory student is arriving in Massachusetts. The MMEP ID&R/Program Director has the primary responsibility to follow through with the initial contact for the new family/youth and requests a copy of the COE from the sending state. When the contact has been made, the MMEP ID&R/Program Director and the MMEP ID&R staff person meet with the family/youth in a face-to-face visit and a MMEP COE is completed. The COE then follows the same protocol of any COE that is submitted in the state. In the 2016-2017 school year, the MMEP consulted with MS/EdD to move from a paper COE to an electronic COE, as well as to create MSIX Identification Cards for all eligible migratory students. These laminated cards, which contain their MSIX number, are provided to the students and allow them to link up to another migrant program if they were to move and re-qualify.

In addition to the utilization of MSIX to promote interstate and intrastate coordination of services for migratory students, the MMEP Leadership Team and staff, as well as MMMP parents attend various National MEP conferences and meetings. Examples of conferences and meetings are as follows: Office of Migrant Education Annual Director’s Meeting, the Interstate Migrant Education Council, OSY Consortium Grant State Steering Meetings, National ID&R Forum, and the National Association of State Directors of Migrant Education Council. MMEP staff also attend conferences within Massachusetts, as well as participate on advisory groups and coalitions throughout the state to support and promote networks among agencies serving the migrant population.

* 1. Describe the unique educational needs of the State’s migratory children, including preschool migratory children and migratory children who have dropped out of school, and other needs that must be met in order for migratory children to participate effectively in school, based on the State’s most recent comprehensive needs assessment.

The MMEP has completed a comprehensive needs assessment (CNA) following guidance of the CNA Toolkit as developed by the Office of Migrant Education (OME). Using the CNA Toolkit, the MMEP developed a plan, using data and current research, which addressed the complexities of successfully serving migratory students.

A collaborative process brought together an MMEP leadership team for the initial development of the migratory student profile. An additional advisory group of key stakeholders was consulted for further development and review of this student profile.

The migratory student profile consisted of data gathered from multiple sources. Data included results of the most recent program evaluation reports that measured the progress towards state performance goals of migratory kindergarten through twelfth grade students. Key stakeholders were led in discussion and analysis of the migratory student profile to determine what migrant children need in order to have successful educational outcomes. This led to further questions and the initial development of concern statements.

META Associates was contracted to assist in the completion in the CNA process. META Associates collaborated with the MMEP to review the concern statements and supporting data, develop a survey to be used to corroborate the concern statements with key stakeholders, and then completed the CNA/SDP process in February 2022. These CNA and SDP processes and reports will serve as a future guide to develop additional CNA and SDP reports.

* 1. Describe the current measurable program objectives and outcomes for Title I, Part C, and the strategies the SEA will pursue on a statewide basis to achieve such objectives and outcomes consistent with section 1304(b)(1)(D) of the ESEA.

The MMEP will use multiple data sources to obtain information to improve program delivery and to measure progress towards goals set in the SDP and the Government Performance Results Act Migrant Education Program measurements (GPRAs). Records will be reviewed and compared to current program information. Data collected will be assessed against the benchmarks the program has set through the current SDP. Additional programmatic assessment data gathered in the 2016-17 has served as baseline data for annual evaluations. SDP and programmatic assessments assist the MMEP to measure whether activities have had a positive impact on meeting program objectives. Assessment data and attendance also aids decision-making in regard to resources and programming for the subsequent program year in order to achieve positive impacts and helps determine future projects and programs so that they are easier to evaluate. The evaluation incorporates all mandatory aspects from the OME evaluation checklist, including disaggregation of Priority for Services (PFS) and non-PFS students.

The evaluation tools focus on measuring student growth in knowledge and skills based on curricular selections. The methods for gathering evaluation data are systematic and use reliable qualitative and quantitative data. Evaluation tools include but are not limited to the following: pre-school rubrics measuring kindergarten readiness milestones; pre and post curricular assessments for Math Matters curriculum and OSY life skills lessons; unit tests for ELL curricular units for OSY; state assessment data; oral language measurements (OSY population only), and program participant evaluations. Future adjustments in assessment tools will be made as necessary depending upon any future adjustments in curriculum needs, etc.

Scores from the state assessments for migratory students in grades 3-8 and 9-12 allow the MMEP to provide guidance and interventions, when necessary, to assist students in attaining proficiency or better in reading/language arts and math (GPRA Performance Goals 1 and 5). ELL state test scores (WIDA/ACCESS) and progress reports of identified migratory students allows the MMEP to provide better support of all MMEP ELL students in progressing in their English language abilities (State Performance Goal 1).

School districts provide report cards of migratory students (K-12) to the MMEP; thus, assisting the MMEP in providing support to all students to be promoted to the next grade within one school year or graduate (GPRA Performance Goal 3). This is especially pertinent for the secondary migrant students as it allows the MMEP to provide any interventions needed to ensure a student’s graduation from high school (State Performance Goal 3). Secondary student report cards also provide information on an individual student’s progress in mathematics and allows the MMEP to better support students in enrolling in and passing Algebra I by the time that student enters 11th grade (GPRA Performance Goal 4).

The MMEP has also prioritized building stronger relationships with school districts to support district initiatives around state assessment proficiencies and graduation rates. Collaborative discussions with school districts have focused on how the MMEP can help facilitate migratory students in attending district offered services for migrant students to meet state assessment proficiencies. The MMEP will continue to support districts and migratory students in meeting the rigorous academic performance standards of the state.

The MMEP identified an additional Support Services goal while developing the current SDP due in part to the pandemic. Areas of concern under this goal include:

* + - Lack of awareness of and/or adequate access to district services for which migrant students are eligible.
    - Limited and delayed access to available resources such as to community-based early childhood programs.
* Loss of instructional time during the pandemic due to various factors including, the need to work instead of attending virtual lessons, lack of technology skills, technology support in the home, school supplies, quality Internet access, and devices.
* Difficulty accessing appropriate health care due to difficulties navigating systems, lack of knowledge of the systems, and inconsistent transfer of health records.
* Lack of access to mental health services to address trauma, stress, and depression that are barriers to their academic success.

* 1. Describe how the SEA will ensure there is consultation with parents of migratory children, including parent advisory councils, at both the State and local level, in the planning and operation of Title I, Part C programs that span not less than one school year in duration, consistent with section 1304(c)(3) of the ESEA.

The MMEP will continue to host the following activities to ensure consultation with the parents of migrant children:

* A minimum of eight regional parent advisory council meetings (RPAC) in the primary cities of the state with a migratory population.
* At least one state parent advisory council meetings (SPAC) centrally located in the state during the school year.
* Two regional workshops directly or through a network of community-based organizations or school districts on various educational and health topics. These workshops provide capacity-building training and activities for the parents.
* College and career workshops for the parents, high school and OSY students.

The SPAC and RPAC provide a forum for parents to consult with the MMEP staff on the planning and operation of the program to best meet the needs of their children. In accordance with the by-laws, the Parent Involvement Plan (PIP) was and is reviewed and evaluated by the current members and amended as needed on an annual basis. The PIP serves as a guide for the MMEP in achieving a high level of parental involvement. The MMEP will continue a shared responsibility with the parents to improve their children’s achievement and to meet the State’s standards in academic performance. The MMEP members of the SPAC developed these goals, objectives, and expectations for parent involvement:

1. Increase the participation of all eligible parents in the MMEP sponsored activities.
2. Reduce barriers that prevent parents from participating in the MMEP sponsored activities.
3. Coordinate resources that enable parents to be involved in school, as well as educational and employment activities.
4. Educate teachers, administrators, and other staff on the values of working with migrant parents.
5. Increase the participation of all eligible migrant students in MMEP sponsored activities.
6. Distribute copies of the Parent Involvement Plan to all migrant parents annually

Parents who participate in the SPAC are the representatives of their respective RPAC. The RPAC meetings are held 4-6 weeks prior to a SPAC meeting. The agenda of the RPAC is developed to allow discussion and input to take place on a regional level. The representatives then convey the consensus of the regional parent group to the SPAC.

Translation is and will continue to be provided as required by law and as necessary to the parents at the SPAC and RPAC meetings, as well as at the additional parental activities described, to reduce the language barriers that will result in the encouragement of participation of the parents at the meetings.

* 1. Describe the SEA’s priorities for use of Title I, Part C funds, specifically related to the needs of migratory children with “priority for services” under section 1304(d) of the ESEA, including:
     + The measures and sources of data the SEA, and if applicable, its local operating agencies, which may include LEAs, will use to identify those migratory children who are a priority for services; and
     + When and how the SEA will communicate those determinations to all local operating agencies, which may include LEAs, in the State.

The MMEP has established the Priority for Services Checklist (see below) to accurately identify migratory students who have had an interruption in their formal education. In providing services with funds received under this part, each recipient of such funds shall give priority to migratory children who (1) have made a qualifying move within the previous 1-year period and (2) who is failing or most at risk of failing to meet Massachusetts’ challenging academic content standards and challenging academic achievement standards or have dropped out of school.

**Priority for Services Checklist:**

**Section 1: Did this student make a qualifying move within the previous 1-year period?**

* A qualifying move has been made within the last 365 days (based on enrollment in the MEP)
  + QAD:
  + School Enrollment Day:
  + Qualifying Move Date (if different than QAD):

**Section 2: Is student failing or at risk of failing?**

* Student is determined to be homeless (as defined under McKinney Vento)
* Student is an Emancipated Youth
* Student is chronically/consistently absent from school
* Student is 100% Remote Learning without appropriate home supports
* Failing to achieve Proficiency on MCAS for grades 3 and up
* Failing to make progress on WIDA
* Failing grades on report card
* Retention in one or more grades
* Stopped attending school
* Considered SLIFE as defined by MA DESE Office of Language Acquisition’s SLIFE Guidance
* MMEP assessment data

OR

* Dropped out of School

Projects must maintain documentation of one or more of the “at-risk of failing” factors above for each student determined to have PFS and attach documentation to the PFS form.

A student will either qualify as being PFS (having both an educational interruption and failure/risk of failure), pending PFS (having the interruption but awaiting documentation on failure/risk of failure), or not PFS. This is documented in the individual student’s file.

Students who qualify for PFS will receive more robust services, tailored to the student’s individual educational needs. The first step in determining the individual student plan will be consultation with the student’s school and teachers. MEP funding will be used to remove barriers preventing the student from receiving school-based services (transportation, fees, etc.) and for direct service delivery, such as home-based tutoring. Priority is given to all PFS students before funding is used for non-PFS migratory students.

1. **Title I, Part D: Prevention and Intervention Programs for Children and Youth who are Neglected, Delinquent, or At-Risk** 
   1. Describe the SEA’s plan for assisting in the transition of children and youth between correctional facilities and locally operated programs.

DESE facilitates the transition of children and youth between Title I, Part D-funded correctional facilities and locally operated programs by:

* + - Developing clear and direct instructions by including language within the grant application process that reflect transition activities as a federal and state priority.
    - Providing funding through the grant program that may be used to support supplemental instruction, professional development for Title I. Part D staff, the purchase of instructional materials, and transition services for eligible students.
    - Meeting with corrections and local staff to provide technical assistance to eligible state agencies to explore options, develop collaborations and initiate transitional efforts.
    - Monitoring grant-funded facilities for faithfulness to program objectives, requirements, and identified support activities.
  1. Describe the program objectives and outcomes established by the State that will be used to assess the effectiveness of the program in improving the academic, career, and technical skills of children in the program, including the knowledge and skills needed to earn a regular high school diploma and make a successful transition to postsecondary education, career and technical education, or employment.

The overarching goal of the Title I Part D program is to prepare children and youth in juvenile secure-care or adult custodial settings for success in attaining a high school diploma or equivalency and preparation beyond by providing supplemental services during custody and transition services that students receive in preparation for reentry. . To that end, DESE has established the following objectives, outcomes, and support strategies for children and youth attending Department of Youth Services (DYS) programs and programs supported by [Special Education in Institutional Settings (SEIS)](http://www.doe.mass.edu/seis/programs.html), and youth attending adult education programs in MA county houses of corrections (CHOCs) and the Department of Corrections (DOC).

* **Objective 1**: Increase and improve transition services for DYS youth and young adults in correctional facilities in order to: (1a.) Increase enrollment in education programming in their communities of reentry, with the goal of finishing a high school diploma or equivalency credential; (1b.) Provide further opportunities for eligible students to enroll in postsecondary education; (1c.) Facilitate enrollment in vocational education and training programs; and (1d.) Increase opportunities for students to connect with potential employers in their communities of reentry.

**DESE Support Strategies**: Assist eligible state agencies in improving and increasing collaborations among relevant community agencies through the provision of guidance and technical assistance. Revise monitoring processes and practices to ensure program fidelity.

**Outcomes:** Require state agencies to provide evidence of provision of transitions services, community collaborations, mentorship programs, connections to social service providers, facilitated referrals to postsecondary institutions, vocational education and training programs, MassHire, and other social service agencies as relevant to meet students’ needs.

E[[19]](#footnote-20)

**Objective 2:** (2a.) Document improved literacy, numeracy, and English-learner skills for DYS youth and young adults in correctional facilities, and (2b.) Increase supports and opportunities for DYS youth and young adults in correctional facilities to earn High School diplomas or High School equivalency credentials

**DESE Support Strategies:** Provide funding, guidance, technical assistance, and opportunities for staff professional development for supplemental support of core programming to eligible State Agencies. Require recipients to provide evidence of rigor, intensity, and alignment with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks (DYS), the College and Career Readiness Standards for Adult Education (adult facilities), and/or the MA ELPS during regular monitoring visits.

**Outcomes:** Evidence of credentials earned and improved scores in eligible students’ educational functioning levels in literacy, numeracy, and English language acquisition, as measured by regular assessments such as the TABE, MAPT, BEST Plus, and/or HSE equivalency tests, or the earning of high school credits toward a diploma.

**Objective 3**: Ensure that recipient program staff is trained to work with at-risk students with disabilities, learning differences, and unique lived experiences that brought them to custody: physical, cognitive, social-emotional, behavioral, and trauma-based; that instruction addresses those needs, and is provided through the lens of Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

**DESE Support Strategies:** Through internal collaborations with SEIS, professional development providers, and our diversity support partners, we will provide recipient programs with guidance, technical assistance, and opportunities for ongoing and updated professional development using current evidence-based best practices and curriculum.

**Outcomes:** Recipient programs will provide staff records of ongoing professional development training hours during regular monitoring and through ongoing documentation.

1. **Title III, Part A: Language Instruction for English Learners and Immigrant Students.** 
   1. Describe the SEA’s standardized entrance and exit procedures for English learners consistent with section 3113(b)(2) of the ESEA. These procedures must include valid and reliable, objective criteria that are applied consistently across the State. At a minimum, the standardized exit criteria must:
      * Include a score of proficient on the State’s annual English language proficiency assessment;
      * Be the same criteria used for exiting students from the English learner subgroup for Title I reporting and accountability purposes; and
      * Not include performance on an academic content assessment.

Massachusetts is a member of the WIDA consortium whose standards and assessments are used for English language development programs in the state and whose summative assessment (ACCESS for ELLs 2.0) is used to meet the English language proficiency standards and assessment requirements under Titles I and III of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The consortium also provides the WIDA Screener and WIDA Screener for Kindergarten, English language proficiency screeners, which are aligned to the summative assessment for English language proficiency (ACCESS for ELs 2.0). The consortium includes more than 41 states. As part of the consortium, Massachusetts has access to WIDA’s high quality research and data team. The team offers the state support, data analysis and technical assistance in the areas of English language assessment, progress, and achievement.

ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 provides scores for all individual language domains (reading, writing, listening, and speaking) and takes the language domains into account to arrive at composite scores. Massachusetts uses the overall composite score (all four domains) in conjunction with a literacy score (reading and writing) as part of its exit criteria. Based on the research and data analysis done both internally and by WIDA, Massachusetts’ exit scores are set at a level indicating that the student has attained sufficient English proficiency to enable them to perform in the core content areas without language being a barrier.

After developing proposed state-wide entrance procedures and exit criteria, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education’s proposed procedures and criteria were shared with Title III Directors, smaller, non-Title III EL Directors and Urban Superintendents during face-to-face network meetings. Input was gathered in the form of a survey which was conducted both online and on-paper. Following an analysis of the survey and taking district and Superintendent feedback into account, the following standardized statewide entrance procedures and exit criteria were established:

To meet the Title III requirements of standardized entrance procedures, Massachusetts has adopted the following entrance procedures:

* Administration of Massachusetts’ Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)’s Home Language Survey. The survey will be administered and interpreted by staff who have received DESE-developed and approved, standardized training in administering and interpreting the results.
* Students for whom a language other than English is indicated on the Home Language Survey will be screened for English proficiency using the WIDA Screener or WIDA Screener for Kindergarten. As WIDA does not yet have a preschool screener available for use, and as Massachusetts requires the identification of Pre-K English learners, Pre-K students will be identified using the LAS Links or Pre-IPT. Students not proficient in English, according to the cut scores from test publishers or determined by DESE together with WIDA proficiency level descriptors, as appropriate, qualify as English learners. Districts will submit an assurance when filing grant applications that students are screened within 30 days of enrollment.

To meet the Title III requirements of standardized exit procedures, Massachusetts has adopted the following exit criteria:

Students must have an overall composite ACCESS for ELLs 2.0 score of 4.2 and a literacy score of 3.9. The overall composite score takes into account all four language domains (reading, writing, listening and speaking). The literacy score is composed of reading and writing domain scores. The scores used in making exit decisions were reexamined after an internal data analysis of the 2017 ACCESS results and again after the 2023 ACCESS results and are consistent with guidance and technical assistance provided by WIDA to ensure they are appropriate exit scores for English learners in Massachusetts to perform successfully in the content areas.

Students with the most significant cognitive disabilities may take the WIDA consortium’s alternative English language proficiency assessment, the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs. An EL student who takes the Alternate ACCESS for ELLs is eligible to exit English learner education services and be reclassified as a former EL (FEL) when the student meets both criteria below. The School-Based Language Team must determine that the student has achieved English language proficiency by 1) attaining, at minimum, an overall composite score of Level P2; and 2) achieving a score of 12 on the English Language Observation Form completed by both the student’s special education teacher and ESL teacher. The English Language Observation Form is a standardized form that is aligned to the Alternate ACCESS Performance Level Descriptors. Note: The WIDA Consortium has recently updated the Alternate ACCESS assessment, and the new assessment will be administered in 2024. After this administration, WIDA and the Department will conduct a crosswalk of scores from the old test to the new test and update its exit criteria accordingly.

* 1. SEA Support for English Learner Progress *(ESEA section 3113(b)(6))*: Describe how the SEA will assist eligible entities in meeting:
     + The State-designed long-term goals established under ESEA section 1111(c)(4)(A)(ii), including measurements of interim progress towards meeting such goals, based on the State’s English language proficiency assessments under ESEA section 1111(b)(2)(G); and
     + The challenging State academic standards.

DESE continues to provide technical assistance and professional development targeting Title III served ELs and will provide suggestions for use of Title III funds as needed to help districts meet the State-designed long-term goals under Section 1111(c)(4)(A)(ii) and challenging State academic standards. Districts will provide DESE with reporting elements as required under Section 3121. The SEA will review these reporting elements to ensure that all elements, including progress in English language proficiency and academic content standards, are present. Districts will be asked to use the data to evaluate their programs and consider making changes if necessary to ensure that their programs effectively meet the needs of the students they serve.

Technical assistance through one-on-one phone calls or visits to districts, periodic face-to-face meetings or conferences, and/or webinars will be held to assist districts in ensuring ELs are making progress in English language proficiency as demonstrated by the reporting element in Section 3121(5) and meeting State academic standards as demonstrated in the accountability reporting for proficiency of the EL student group in the State content assessment subject areas.

Where multiple districts demonstrate a need for assistance in ensuring the number and percent of their ELs are making progress in English proficiency or in State academic content areas, professional development will be offered, contingent upon availability of funding.

* 1. Monitoring and Technical Assistance (ESEA section 3113(b)(8)): Describe:
     + - How the SEA will monitor the progress of each eligible entity receiving a Title III, Part A subgrant in helping English learners achieve English proficiency; and
       - The steps the SEA will take to further assist eligible entities if the strategies funded under Title III, Part A are not effective, such as providing technical assistance and modifying such strategies.

Grant applications submitted to the state by Title III eligible entities will include: a requirement of a narrative complying with Section 3116(b)(1)-(3) and a description of how Title III funds will be used to contribute to the agency’s strategies for strengthening the quality of the instructional program that students experience, with special attention to early grades literacy, middle grades mathematics, pathways to post-secondary success, and historically disadvantaged students as appropriate.

The reporting elements as required under Section 3121 will be submitted and reviewed by DESE to identify areas where effectiveness of English learner programs appear to be weak. In order to ensure weak programs are strengthened, the State will consult with Title III eligible entities regarding strategies or program models that may yield more effective program results. If needed, the district Title III program staff will coordinate with others in the district and at the SEA to take part in the overall statewide system of support described in Section 2.2.D of this Plan. In addition to the statewide system of supports, some larger districts undergo routine consulting and technical assistance from the Office of Language Acquisition. The Office of Language Acquisition works closely with districts to review data and offer support and technical assistance designed specifically for the ELs in that district with the goal of increasing effectiveness of English learner programs and success of ELs in attaining proficiency in English language acquisition and in content areas.

1. **Title IV, Part B: 21st Century Community Learning Centers.**
   1. Describe how the SEA will use its Title IV, Part B, and other Federal funds to support State-level strategies that are consistent with the strategies identified in 6.1.A above.

The Massachusetts 21st Century Community Learning Centers (MA 21st CCLC) Programs provides additional learning time through the implementation of academically enriching programming that increases student engagement and contributes to a well-rounded education. Programming occurs during Out-of-School Time (OST) and/or as part of Expanded Learning Time (ELT – a longer school day/year for all students).

MA 21st CCLC programs strive to ensure that learning is meaningful, collaborative, supports mastery, and expands horizons. Programs focus on effectively engaging students and families with identities and cultures ­that have been historically marginalized in educational settings - including but not limited to students from families who are low income; students who are Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC); first generation students; emerging multilingual students; students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs); and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning (LGBTQ+) students.

DESE’s overarching priorities for this program include using more time to:

* Contribute to students’ well-rounded education by implementing high quality project-based learning that is multi-disciplinary and supports standards-aligned learning in core subject areas.
* Strengthen student learning during the school year and summer by combining content knowledge with ***interactive****,* ***relevant****,* and ***engaging*** learning experiences that emphasize the skills necessary to apply that knowledge successfully so that all students can be successful in school, empowered to make informed choices in life after high school, and prepared for college and careers.
* Use data effectively in designing programming that addresses student needs and interests and in demonstrating continuous program improvement efforts.
* Develop systems of support that are culturally relevant - and leverage the knowledge, strengths, and assets of students, families, educators, and the community.
* Implement effective family engagement strategies with families of students served by the 21st CCLC - that are culturally responsive, collaborative, and demonstrates an understanding of different languages, norms, and values with a goal of providing opportunities for meaningful engagement in their children’s education, including opportunities for literacy and related educational development. Develop sustainable models for providing additional quality learning time.

All MA 21st CCLC OST subgrantees are currently required to provide a minimum of 400 hours of programming during the school year and summer. Students participating are expected to attend regularly and meet statewide developed attendance requirements. ELT subgrantees are currently required to provide a minimum of 300 additional hours over the traditional school schedule. Schools must extend the school year for all students by at least 180 hours, and then offer an additional 120 hours as part of a school vacation or summer program for a select group of students that would benefit from additional supports.

Subgrantees are required to utilize the field-tested and research-based Survey of Academic and Youth Outcomes (SAYO) suite of tools to assess how participation in 21st CCLC programs contribute to growth in students' academic and social emotional learning. The SAYO is a pre/post survey designed to measure the effects of programming provided to students served by 21st CCLC funded programs. The SAYO includes the following domains: Math and English Language Arts domains (sub-grantees select their academic focus area based on student level data); and SEL domains of engagement in learning, critical thinking, communication, perseverance, leadership, self-regulation, relationship with adults and relationship with peers. The SAYO-T (Teacher) and SAYO-S (Staff) are completed by school day teachers and program staff/academic enrichment providers, respectively. The SAYO-Y, taken by students, measures their experiences in the MA 21st CCLC program, sense of competence, and future aspirations.

The Assessment of Program Practices Tool (APT) assesses program practices that research suggests are related to the domains measured by the SAYO and is intended to assist with continuous program improvement. The goal of the APT is to assess the extent to which subgrantees are implementing practices congruent with their desired SAYO outcomes.

The SAYO suite of tools has been modified and improved as needed over time and seeks to capture changes in youth that are associated with participation in a high-quality, academically enriched program, which would likely occur over a one-year period.

Monitoring efforts have been established that provide technical assistance to subgrantees while addressing programmatic, performance, and fiscal issues. These efforts include site visits, training sessions, meetings, verbal and written communications, survey and data collection and analysis, mid-year and year-end evaluation reports, and a yearly continuation grant application. Student-level demographic and attendance data is collected bi-annually for all participating students. SAYO pre/post data is collected three times per year (fall, spring and summer) on a representative sample of students.

Family and community engagement is a priority and a required element of the MA 21st CCLC program. Applicants are encouraged to set aside a minimum of five percent (5%) of their overall budget for the purposes of engaging families and the community in meaningful ways.

* 1. Describe the SEA’s processes, procedures, and priorities used to award subgrants consistent with the strategies identified above in 6.1.A. above and to the extent permitted under applicable law and regulations.

The MA 21st CCLC’s grant eligibility criterion complies with all federal requirements and has evolved to include new state measures of economic status. Priority is given to applicants that meet any or all of the following criteria:

* Schools in chronically underperforming status and the Strategic Transformation Region.
* Propose to provide programming to students in schools designated as Title I School-Wide (SW) programs.
* Applications submitted with a full partnership, including a school district as well as one or more community-based organizations and/or other public or private organizations. A school district may receive priority points without a partner if they are able to show that they are unable to partner with a community-based organization in a reasonable geographic proximity and of sufficient quality.
* Districts/Agencies that have not previously received 21st CCLC funding.

*The Department reserves the right to consider additional factors such as geographic distribution and diversity of applicant type in making final award decisions.*

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) offers technical assistance (TA) for interested applicants each year prior to the grant application deadline. A community review team is recruited and trained to make recommendations for which applicants are awarded funding. DESE staff review applications for eligibility and compliance with grant requirements. Final grant awards are generally made each summer, with the goal of programs starting to provide services as soon as possible at the start of the new school year.

Grants are awarded for five-years. Continued funding in years two and three is pending appropriation and contingent upon implementation of grant-required activities and submission of a continuation application that demonstrates the following:

* the ability to use data to inform and support continuous improvement;
* maintenance of grant-funded program attendance levels (for OST and summer programming); and
* annual submission of required information and data.

In years four and five grantees are eligible to receive an estimated 95% (per year) of their original grant award amount. Continued funding is contingent upon meeting the above noted requirements along with:

* evidence that the grantee, at a reduced funding level, is able to continue to maintain and sustain the same program attendance levels and program offerings;
* evidence that the grantee is working toward sustaining programming beyond the grant period; and
* Department completion of a risk assessment demonstrating that grant requirements have been, on average, met or exceeded across the previous years of funding during this grant cycle.

Substantial training and technical assistance systems have been developed to support subgrantees and DESE’s overarching priorities for additional learning time. Offerings include professional development and technical assistance (provided by highly qualified internal staff and outside consultants and contractors), regional networks, professional learning communities, and peer mentoring.

DESE provides an opportunity for subgrantees that are in their final year of their funding cycle to apply to receive a subsequent three-year grant through a competitive Exemplary Grant process. Exemplary applicants must demonstrate continuous program improvement through data, an evaluative site visit, and an application process that demonstrates the applicant’s ability to serve as a resource and mentor for new and other existing MA 21st CCLC and OST programs in the Commonwealth.

1. **Title V, Part B, Subpart 2: Rural and Low-Income School Program.**
   1. Provide the SEA’s specific measurable program objectives and outcomes related to activities under the Rural and Low-Income School Program, if applicable.

**Background**

The goal of Massachusetts’ public education system for preschool through grade 12 is to prepare all students for success after high school. DESE has identified five primary strategies that support this goal:

* Strengthen standards, curriculum, instruction, and assessment
* Promote educator effectiveness
* Support social-emotional learning, health, and safety
* Turn around the lowest performing districts and schools
* Enhance resource allocation and data use

The state’s overarching goal and supporting strategies apply equally to students participating in Rural and Low-Income School (RLIS)-funded programs, which are designed to provide supplemental funding for rural districts to increase student achievement. In FY23, one district in Massachusetts was eligible for RLIS funding.

**Program objectives and outcomes**

Funds received under the RLIS program must be used to help all students meet the state’s academic standards and to support activities allowable under Title I, Part A, Title II, Part A, Title III, or Title IV, Part A, and may include parent involvement activities. Accordingly, RLIS-funded program objectives and measurable outcomes include the following:

* strengthen the core program in schools and provide academic and/or support services to low-achieving students at the preschool, elementary, middle, and high school levels;
* increase graduation rates and decrease dropout rates;
* improve the quality and effectiveness of teachers, principals, and other school leaders;
* increase the number of teachers, principals, and other school leaders who are effective in improving student academic achievement in schools;
* provide low-income and minority students equitable access to effective teachers, principals, and other school leaders;
* increase the English language proficiency of ELs by providing effective language instruction educational programs that meet the needs of ELs and increase English language proficiency and student academic achievement;
* support well-rounded educational opportunities;
* support safe and healthy students;
* support effective use of technology; and/or
* support family engagement activities

All activities funded under the RLIS program must be identified through district needs assessments and improvement plans and aligned with recipient districts’ objectives and expected outcomes for programs funded through Title I, Part A, Title II, Part A, Title III, and/or Title IV, Part A, including the expectations for academic achievement defined by the state’s district and school accountability system. Overall academic achievement objectives and outcomes for Titles I-IV are described in Sections 4 through 6, and in the Long-Term Goals section of this Consolidated State Plan.

As part of the annual application for funding, districts are required to describe the specific program objectives and anticipated outcomes that they have identified to increase student achievement. Massachusetts provides direct technical assistance to recipient districts, including help with application planning and completion, opportunities to network with similarly situated districts, and the appropriate level of assistance and intervention as dictated by the state’s accountability and assistance system. Most importantly, low-performing schools are provided direct expert assistance, supplemental funding, research-based resources, and preferred access to professional development. Such access might include coaching, professional development focused on instructional leadership and curriculum development, planning and program implementation support, and data analysis assistance. All recipients, regardless of level of performance or rate of growth, are monitored for both fund use and reported measures of program effectiveness.

1. **McKinney-Vento Act.** 
   1. Consistent with section 722(g)(1)(B) of the McKinney-Vento Act, describe the procedures the SEA will use to identify homeless children and youths in the State and assess their needs.

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) through the Education of Homeless Children and Youth program (MA EHCY) currently employs several strategies to identify and assess the needs of homeless children and youth. These strategies include training, outreach, technical assistance and guidance, monitoring, McKinney-Vento sub-grants, and state law. These strategies are used in tandem to ensure that, regardless of where or when children become homeless, whether they are in sub-grant districts or not, they are able to access a public education.

A key strategy in identification is training offered to a broad audience which include homeless liaisons, district staff, district administrators, other state agencies, and community service providers. Training opportunities cover how homelessness is defined, what it looks like across Massachusetts, the educational rights of homeless children and youth, the roles of the homeless liaison and state coordinator, and best practices in addressing the needs of homeless children and youth. DESE uses a variety of formats and tailors trainings to current topics and specific requests.

* Typically, McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Orientation sessions are full-day events offered every October regionally and are designed primarily for new liaisons, district staff working with homeless students and staff from providers and sister agencies that support our homeless families and youth. Orientation sessions cover the technical aspects of the law, who is homeless, educational rights, and the roles of the homeless liaison and the state coordinator. The impact of homelessness on behavior and learning, what homelessness looks like in different parts of the state, and how the state shelter system works are also covered. The importance of collaboration, knowing where to find resources and best practices are stressed. PowerPoint slides from the Orientations are posted on the MA EHCY webpage.
* Office Hours can provide further training for homeless liaisons and district staff and are offered virtually twice a month covering a wide range of topics with extended time for questions and answers. Topics covered include but are not limited to building awareness, best practices for enrollment, supporting student mental health, supporting students in migratory families that are homeless, and transportation. PowerPoint presentations from Office hours and other trainings are posted on the MA homeless education webpage for liaisons to use in-district or review for their own purposes.
* In 2019 a network of regional liaisons was established across the state to provide an additional layer of support to district homeless liaisons. They are experienced liaisons themselves and are available to provide technical assistance, training and mentoring to districts in their regions. The regional liaisons also run the semi-annual grantee meetings, report updates to the state steering committee and meet with the state coordinator monthly to support each other and surface current concerns.
* Homelessness looks very different across Massachusetts from large urban centers to the smaller New England towns of the Berkshires and the coastline. To address this, local conversations are provided at the request of a small group of liaisons and are facilitated discussions of local concerns, whether that means talking about the doubling up of homeless children and youth with friends and relatives in dense communities, or the impact of the large shelter system on small towns, etc.
* Webinars are also offered as pressing topics arise in an effort to reach a large number of district liaisons and staff with specific information.
* District level training tailored to specific groups such as enrollment staff, administrators, or school nurses is offered periodically by the state coordinator or regional liaisons in collaboration with the district’s homeless liaison. By focusing on the detailed knowledge of the local streets and buildings and the “red flags”/early warning indicators of homelessness in school engagement, health, and wellbeing, targeted district training has resulted in increased identification and appreciation of the rights of homeless children and youth.

* DESE shares announcements from the National Center for Homeless Education’s (NCHE) training opportunities and the National Association for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth’s (NAEHCY) annual conference with districts and charter schools.
* The Massachusetts Migrant Education Program (MMEP) has coordinated with the MA EHCY program to develop and implement a Migrant Homeless Verification form to be used by migrant recruiters when they are working with families in their homes. Training is provided by the state coordinator to ensure the recruiters understand the McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Act, the definition of homelessness, and the educational right of the children they are working with.
* A category within the McKinney-Vento subgrant focuses on migratory students who are homeless. This has strengthened collaboration between districts with significant numbers and the MMEP and has leveraged existing district programming to serve students with longer summer and evening programming and improving access to educational services.
* In Massachusetts, children with disabilities make up 27% of the homeless student population compared to 17% of the statewide student body. As a member of the State Special Education Advisory Council the state coordinator has presented on the needs and rights of homeless students including young children. Additionally, many homeless liaisons are also special education directors and/or early childhood directors. Trainings and presentations to these groups cite the disproportionate representation and the importance of identifying homeless students with disabilities, expediting enrollment, evaluations, and implementation of individual education plans (IEPs).

In addition to providing extensive training DESE uses outreach to families, service providers, and partners as a strategy to identify homeless children and youth and to assess their needs.

* The MA EHCY program distributes posters and brochures outlining the educational right of homeless children and youth to LEAs, service providers, partners, and at all trainings and events.
* The MA EHCY website is updated regularly, includes a list of homeless liaisons, annual data collection results, and links to other resources. This website is also used by parents and providers alike to connect with liaisons and seek guidance and support.
* The state coordinator and regional liaisons provide presentations and updates to a variety of community groups such as local legal service providers, the Massachusetts Coalition for the Homeless, local councils on aging, and grassroots groups supporting homeless families.
* Outreach and collaboration with service providers increases referrals to homeless liaisons of families and students that are identified outside of the school or classroom.
* The state coordinator represents DESE at the Massachusetts Interagency Council for Housing and Homelessness, Massachusetts Unaccompanied Homeless Youth and Young Adult Commission, State Special Education Advisory Council, and the State Head Start Coordinating Council.

The MA EHCY program handles 400-500 cases per year and hundreds of informational calls. Providing guidance through the office of the state coordinator and the regional liaisons offers families and providers another avenue to identify homelessness and the needs of homeless students. Often having a third party to discuss sensitive issues such as housing and homelessness creates a safe space for self-disclosure without a family feeling they may jeopardize their relationship with a school district. The technical assistance and guidance offered to school districts allows suggestions around best practices to be tailored to particular cases.

The McKinney-Vento sub-grants serve as another means of strengthening identification and assessing the needs of homeless children and youth. While currently only 29 districts out of 401 districts receive subgrants, their homeless students represent 75% of the state’s homeless student population. Several of the sub-grantees, both large and small, identify 10-12% of their district student body as homeless at some point during the school year.

Sub-grantees are currently required to hold service coordination committee meetings four times a year to build awareness in the community, increase identification and expand access to services and resources. As a result, communication between school districts and providers has grown, which enables both to make referrals with confidence to the other.

* Building awareness of homelessness, the needs of homeless students and their educational rights, along with the identification of homeless children and youth continue to be priority activities in Requests for Proposals.
* Further, the state coordinator has encouraged districts, particularly sub-grantees, to engage school committees on an ongoing basis. The intent of this strategy is to ensure that school committee members understand the needs of homeless students so that they are better able to address concerns when they arise. It has had the added benefit of school committee members being able to assist their constituents experiencing housing instability.
* Sub-Grantee meetings are held twice a year and provide opportunities to share best practices and challenges. Discussions have focused on engaging community providers, identifying and supporting unaccompanied homeless youth, district training, collaboration with MMEP and training opportunities for liaisons.

Interagency collaboration has been critical to the implementation and identification both through the sub-grantees and at the SEA level. When McKinney-Vento was reauthorized in 2002 under the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB), the state legislature established the McKinney-Vento Steering Committee with the express purpose of advising DESE on the implementation of the law. This Committee has continued to meet on a semi-annual basis since 2003 and serves as a sounding board of stakeholders for the MA EHCY.

* 1. Describe the SEA’s programs for school personnel (including liaisons designated under section 722(g)(1)(J)(ii) of the McKinney-Vento Act, principals and other school leaders, attendance officers, teachers, enrollment personnel, and specialized instructional support personnel) to heighten the awareness of such school personnel of the specific needs of homeless children and youths, including such children and youths who are runaway and homeless youths.

As with identification, DESE places an emphasis on informing a broad audience through a variety of mediums to increase the awareness of the needs of homeless children and youth and their educational rights. It has been the experience of the state coordinator that the more that is understood about the needs of homeless students and the importance of educational stability, the greater the acceptance of their educational rights that ensure that. As mentioned above, trainings range from full-day orientation sessions, breakout sessions at state conferences (including Title I) to regional local discussions of particular needs in an area. Targeted training for front line staff such as enrollment staff, guidance and adjustment counselors and school nurses focus on red flags/early warning indicators of homelessness. Webinars, online posting of information and online training opportunities are all designed to reach as broad an audience as possible. These strategies complement the more traditional outreach efforts of distributing posters and brochures wherever homeless families receive services or access resources. All outreach and training opportunities are open to the public including service providers and state agencies.

Another opportunity to heighten awareness is seen in the hundreds of cases and informational calls the MA EHCY program receives. Staff intentionally walk liaisons and providers through cases to support their understanding of who is homeless, the needs of homeless families, how to assist homeless children accessing school, what their rights are, and suggest best practices in supporting them.

Similarly, monitoring is approached as an opportunity to heighten awareness and improve the identification and support of homeless students. The MA EHCY program is aligned with DESE’s LEA monitoring schedule for federal programs. The process has been streamlined making it less onerous on LEAs and increases the number of LEAs monitored each year. The state coordinator continues to frame it as a tutorial whenever possible.

In addition to those efforts, the state coordinator participates on several commissions and advisory councils. Currently, these include but are not limited to the following:

* The state coordinator represents DESE on the Massachusetts Interagency Council on Housing and Homelessness and its Family Services sub-committee to ensure that homeless children and education are at the table.
* The state coordinator is also active on the state’s Unaccompanied Homeless Youth and Young Adult Commission and participates in that Commission’s Identification and Connections working Group which has overseen three statewide Youth Counts and the reporting of results.
* Massachusetts has been fortunate in being awarded several Youth Housing Demonstration Project (YHDP) grants. The state coordinator has participated in these or ensured that schools are well represented through regional and local homeless liaisons.
* For young homeless children the state coordinator sits on the Head Start State Coordinating Council based at the Department of Early Education and Care and its recently formed subcommittee on homeless children.
* The state coordinator is also a member of the state special education advisory council and has presented on mobility and access concerns and more broadly on homeless education and the reauthorization.
* The state coordinator has joined and is active on the Interagency Coordinating Council (ICC) for Early Intervention representing the needs of students and families who are homeless.

Currently, McKinney-Vento sub-grantees are required to convene a service coordination committee four times a year with community-based service providers. The purpose of these committees is to help with identification, heighten awareness in the community of the educational rights and needs of homeless children and to open communications between schools and providers regarding referrals.

* 1. Describe the SEA’s procedures to ensure that disputes regarding the educational placement of homeless children and youths are promptly resolved.

The MA EHCY McKinney-Vento Homeless Education Dispute Resolution Process and the related forms have been posted on the MA EHCY program’s webpage since 2003. They have been reviewed and revised to reflect reauthorization under ESSA and to make the process more parent friendly. Disputes cover eligibility, school selection, and enrollment and have grown in complexity over the years. In all cases the student has the right to attend the school selected by the parent pending a resolution.

Orientation sessions present dispute resolution as a three-stage process. Initially, efforts should be made by the homeless liaison to resolve the dispute at the local level. If concerns still exist, either the liaison or the parent/unaccompanied homeless youth should reach out to the state coordinator, who is not a decision maker in the dispute process but provides technical assistance and guidance. In many situations, concerns and questions can be answered by the state coordinator. At this point other issues such as special education can be directed to the appropriate offices to ensure all of the student’s rights. Finally, if either party remains unhappy with the guidance they received, the dispute process may be initiated. At any stage a parent may engage an attorney or advocate to assist or represent him/her. Due to the inherent conflict of interest in their position, homeless liaisons may not deny enrollment without providing the parent with the right to appeal to DESE.

The Dispute process itself currently consists of two brief forms: the School District Notification to Parent/Guardian of Enrollment Decision and the Parent/Guardian Appeal of School District Enrollment Decision. All parties are encouraged to provide as much information as they feel is relevant. Once all documentation is submitted, disputes are reviewed by the Commissioner’s Designee and Legal Unit. If there are any questions, the state coordinator is asked to follow up with the appropriate parties. A resolution is issued whenever possible within 5-10 school days. DESE typically resolves approximately two dozen a year.

* 1. Describe the SEA’s procedures to ensure that that youths described in section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Act and youths separated from the public schools are identified and accorded equal access to appropriate secondary education and support services, including by identifying and removing barriers that prevent youths described in this paragraph from receiving appropriate credit for full or partial coursework satisfactorily completed while attending a prior school, in accordance with State, local, and school policies.

Massachusetts has taken a multi-pronged approach to the needs of both unaccompanied homeless youth enrolled in school and those youth who have been separated from school including youth that have had little or no education. This means that while the definition and identification of unaccompanied homeless youth, their needs and best practices in supporting them are covered in the MA EHCY program trainings, technical assistance, sub-grant funding, and monitoring as described above, the program also reaches out to other offices within DESE to integrate awareness and the needs of unaccompanied homeless youth into their work. Examples of this collaboration include the following:

* The state coordinator has presented and recommended homeless liaisons to speak on panels at DESE’s conference on dropout prevention and re-engagement. Trainings offered by other units within the Department that address the re-engagement and support of out of school youth are highlighted for homeless liaisons.
* MA EHCY will continue to collaborate with DESE’s dropout prevention staff and encourage the use of Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) for homeless students given their high mobility. Training has been and will continue to be provided with a specific focus on re-engaging youth, using student developed Individual Learning Plans (ILPs), assisting youth with FASFA applications, verification of homelessness, and college and career counseling. The National Center for Homeless Education’s template for FASFA verification is posted and distributed to homeless liaisons. Verification of homelessness for all students, particularly unaccompanied homeless youth, is covered in the Orientation sessions for homeless liaisons and is discussed in technical assistance calls.

The 2014 graduation rate for unaccompanied homeless youth in a four-year cohort was 67% and given a fifth year went up to 74.8%. This is slightly higher than the rate for homeless students that remain with their parents which was 63%. There are a few possible reasons for this: 1) there may be a closer link between having a place to stay at night and going to school during the day for unaccompanied youth (an adult may be more willing to take you in for the night if you are going to school the next day), 2) the resources unaccompanied youth tend to turn to are friends and relatives that are close by, and 3) students that stay with their parents are more likely to end up outside of their school district while their families are moved around in the shelter system or are in search of services that are more spread out. This would suggest that the most important strategy for improving graduation rates for homeless students may be to ensure that they remain in or return to their school of origin, staying connected to faculty that know them, and minimizing the concern of credit loss.

Massachusetts school districts exercise home rule for all course credit and graduation requirements. While full credit for standard completed courses has not been a problem, extending partial credit has been difficult particularly in those situations when students have moved between high schools with traditional scheduling and block scheduling. Reauthorization provides another opportunity to explore new ways of addressing this issue.

Other strategies to support homeless youth, particularly those that are unaccompanied, both enrolled in school and those separated from school include the following:

* Many districts have implemented or partnered with mentoring programs to re-engage students at risk of dropping out or who have already left school. This is based on extensive research showing that feeling connected to a caring adult is a strong protective factor that supports high school graduation.
* Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) are designed by students to explore their interests, career options, and to support post-secondary education planning. ILPs travel with a student and provide a way for students to communicate and engage with a school to meet their needs. This is a positive platform particularly for students who are highly mobile and/or homeless. Similarly, the state coordinator has reached out to DESE’s dropout prevention staff to incorporate other strategies such as Early Warning Indicators.
* Massachusetts has supported districts that have developed alternative education programs for students that are better suited for non-traditional classroom settings. These programs can be very helpful for homeless students and particularly unaccompanied homeless youth who need to work during school hours, recover credits, or juggle other responsibilities due to their living arrangements.
* The state coordinator represents DESE on the Massachusetts Commission for Unaccompanied Homeless Youth and Young Adults. This commission has built awareness of unaccompanied youth, their needs, and is piloting programs and services to address those needs.
* The state coordinator has worked with the Departments of Higher Education (DHE) and Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) to establish the Moving to College Scholarship (MTC). This is an outgrowth of the work done by the Post-Secondary Homeless Student Network. These scholarships provide four years of year-round housing and meals for students who are homeless and want to attend one of eight participating public universities or community colleges
  1. Describe the SEA’s procedures to ensure that homeless children and youths:
     + Have access to public preschool programs, administered by the SEA or LEA, as provided to other children in the State;
     + Who meet the relevant eligibility criteria, do not face barriers to accessing academic and extracurricular activities; and
     + Who meet the relevant eligibility criteria, are able to participate in Federal, State, and local nutrition programs.

Among the procedures used by DESE at the SEA level to ensure homeless children and youth’s access to education is monitoring of districts. The MA EHCY program has monitored both sub-grant and non-sub-grant districts since the 2007-2008 school year for compliance under No Child Left Behind. The state typically monitors sixty to seventy districts for federal program compliance on a six-year rotating basis with mid-cycle reviews at the three-year mark. The MA EHCY program follows the same schedule and selects twenty or more of those districts each year. This procedure has been streamlined to a desk review and focused site visits as needed and is being further updated to reflect reauthorization under the ESSA. As mentioned above, monitoring is also viewed as an opportunity to provide direct training where needed and to ensure that homeless students’ educational rights are being honored.

A. Access to preschool: Massachusetts does not have universal mandatory preschool nor does the SEA administer any preschool programs. As a result, early education programming and transportation to that programming varies from district to district. In the past this has meant that while the state recognized preschool as a school of origin for homeless children and the importance of their educational stability, access to transportation when needed was uneven and/or unlikely. Reauthorization under the ESSA addresses this barrier by extending transportation to the school of origin for homeless preschool children and districts are now sharing this responsibility.

* McKinney-Vento Orientations and regional roundtables include a focus on the targeted populations of preschoolers and unaccompanied homeless youth, and the role of the homeless liaison to ensure their access to education to the extent that the district offers a preschool education and wherever possible liaisons are urged to find a way to get a homeless preschooler enrolled and placed in a seat. However, many districts do not offer preschool or offer only programming limited to special education. When no programming is offered in district or there are no available appropriate seats, the liaison is directed to refer families to community based early education, including Head Start, where available.
* For a few grant cycles the EHCY Request for Proposals allowed applicants to request additional funding for preschoolers and/or unaccompanied homeless youth. However, there was no evidence that this increased identification or access for either group and was discontinued.
* The state coordinator participates in DESE’s internal Early Learning Working Group.
* The state coordinator sits on the MA Head Start State Collaboration Office Advisory Council at the Department of Early Education and Care and collaborates with Horizons for Homeless Children, a nonprofit early education provider and advocate for young homeless children (primarily birth to age 5). Both organizations are members of the state’s McKinney-Vento Steering Committee.

B. Access to academic and extracurricular activities:

Due to their high level of mobility homeless students have in many cases lost all their connections to community, providers, family, and friends. Full participation in school including extracurricular activities provides students with opportunities to find their niche in a group, feel connected again, and be able to contribute to a goal. For this reason the MA EHCY has long stressed the importance of homeless students accessing all school courses, activities and events including academic and extracurricular activities such as summer school and all school courses, magnet schools, career and technical education, advanced placement, on-line learning, charter school, special education, gifted and talented programs, vocational education, English language services, Title I programming, and school sponsored activities that take place outside of the typical school day. Districts have ensured that homeless students are able to participate in local field trips, long distance field trips, proms, sports teams, and after school clubs.

The MA EHCY program has always required access and the removal of barriers to summer programming for courses a district required of a student to stay on track for graduation or to be promoted to the next grade. Under ESSA access is expanded to all summer programming not just required courses. Trainings and updates to districts have already included this change.

The two most often cited barriers to full participation are fees and transportation. If fees are a barrier districts must waive them or find scholarships. Often the local Parent Teacher Organization/Association or a community group steps in financially. If transportation poses a barrier to participation, districts are advised to provide it and to be creative for those unusual times when events are held away from the school campus and during out-of-school time. The barrier that has been hardest to overcome is the chronic and severe lack of drivers appropriately licensed to transport children. The state coordinator has reached out to the MA Department of Transportation and the Massachusetts Association of Pupil Transporters highlighting the growing number of homeless students, the expansion of their transportation rights under ESSA, and the large number of children in foster care now covered under Title 1. The state legislature, which has provided some reimbursement for homeless transportation, is in the process of establishing a commission to find other solutions to this crisis.

C. Access to nutrition programs:

Training and technical assistance with school districts stresses that homelessness and food insecurity go hand-in-hand. School meals are highlighted as one of the non-academic ways schools are able to support homeless students and their families. This has included breakfast and lunch with many districts now serving breakfast in the classroom and several districts are considering serving dinner. Other strategies such as sharing tables where uneaten packaged foods can be set aside rather than thrown out are cited and encouraged as best practices and are recommended by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA). In addition, food banks and food service directors collaborate to fill homeless students’’ backpacks for weekends and school breaks.

Other strategies used to ensure homeless children and youth’s access to healthy meals have included the following.

* The State Nutrition programs are based at DESE and have collaborated with the state coordinator to extend summer feeding programs to hotels serving as shelters. This has required a waiver from the USDA and the coordination of sponsors and hotels. During the summer of 2016, more than 1,000 homeless children received more than 10,000 summer meals through this effort. During the pandemic, the Nutrition Office supported districts in providing Grab-and-Go meals. The state legislation supported universal school meals through the 2022-2023 school year ensuring all students including those that are homeless have access to nutritional meals.
* The State’s Nutrition staff regularly monitors homeless student participation in free school meals. Where they find a lack of compliance, they communicate that to the state coordinator who in turn addresses the issue with the local homeless liaison, notes it for further monitoring and highlights homeless student access to nutrition programming in trainings.

* 1. Describe the SEA’s strategies to address problems with respect to the education of homeless children and youths, including problems resulting from enrollment delays and retention, consistent with sections 722(g)(1)(H) and (I) of the McKinney-Vento Act.

The point at which children enter a school is often the point at which they are identified as homeless. One of the strongest strategies to ensure identification at enrollment and to eliminating enrollment delays has been the training of enrollment staff. This group is often overlooked for training and professional development opportunities so when their role in working with families is spotlighted, they respond enthusiastically. The detailed knowledge of the community and each family within the school is framed as the foundation for spotting the clues to possible homelessness. These trainings offered by the state coordinator or regional liaisons and local homeless liaison together have time and again ensured greater immediate access for incoming students and has facilitated access to support services for families and students that might otherwise have become disconnected.

* The MA DESE Homeless Education Advisory has been reviewed and revised to reflect reauthorization under ESSA and addresses the immediate enrollment of homeless students, with or without the documentation normally required for enrollment including academic records, records of immunization and other required health records, proof of residency birth certificates, guardianship records, and evaluations for special services or programs, as well as school records, school selection, and transportation. The Advisory is posted on the MA EHCY webpage and is covered in all Orientation and training sessions for homeless liaisons.
* Districts may offer residency affidavits to be completed by host families in doubled up situations. While helpful, districts are reminded that a child may *not* be held out of school while an affidavit is being obtained or if the host refuses to complete one.
* Unpaid fees and fines must be waived and cannot delay enrollment or the transfer of school records.
* The MA Migrant Education Program and the MA EHCY Program have developed a homeless verification form used by Migrant recruiters when they are with families in their homes. Provided with training from the state coordinator recruiters are able to smooth out the enrollment process for those students that are both in migrant families and homeless. This has increased the identification of migrant children living in homeless situations.
* School to school transfer of records has expedited appropriate placement of students with the services they need, particularly when the transfer of records complements discussions with parents about a student’s needs.
* The MA EHCY program serves as a third-party conduit for the transfer of records in severe domestic violence cases and the state coordinator on many occasions has reached out to counterparts in other states to facilitate the transfer of records across state lines.
* The MA Department of Public Health (DPH) reviews its policies on immunizations and health records annually. Notifications of these updates go out to all school health providers and include McKinney-Vento citations and contact information for the state coordinator. This collaboration with DPH has removed barriers during enrollment and has built awareness among school nurses who are often the front-line staff identifying already enrolled homeless students. Similarly, guidance and adjustment counselors may become aware of already enrolled students’ homelessness before other staff or faculty members. Training for this group focuses on the impact of homelessness on learning and behavior and equips guidance and adjustment counselors with the knowledge they need to support their students including high school students who are approaching graduation and planning for post-secondary education.
* As a best practice, larger districts and most mid-size districts have implemented building contacts that are able to support the district’s homeless liaison in identifying and supporting homeless students at the building level. This expands the liaison’s capacity, ensures students’ rights, and reduces disruptions.
* The state coordinator stresses collaboration with local medical, dental, and mental health clinics that can provide immunizations and physical examinations. This collaboration has facilitated homeless students being treated for their needs and ensure access to sports and other school activities.
* The state coordinator has presented as part of the school nurses certification training required by the MA Department of Public Health. This has increased awareness and understanding of student needs and rights by school nurses. They are often hearing concerns from students and families before even a classroom teacher. School nurses and health providers have been grateful to know how to answer questions and to refer students and families that have self-disclosed their homelessness.
* Only a few districts require uniforms, and they are prepared to provide uniforms for students that need them, particularly homeless students.
* The attendance rate for homeless students in Massachusetts is 89%. Sometimes this is a result of the state shelter system placing families long distances from the community and school of origin but is also impacted the chronic and severe shortage of drivers. To address these issues MA EHCY has collaborated with the MA Department of Housing and Community Development (the state agency charged with running the state shelter system) regarding shelter placements. MA EHCY has also worked with the MA Department of Transportation, the Massachusetts Association of Pupil Transporters and transportation vendors to review options for ensuring appropriately licensed drivers and vehicles. As the economy improves drivers leave for better paying year-round jobs even as the numbers of homeless students continues to rise.
  1. Assistance from Counselors *(722(g)(1)(K))*: A description of how youths described in section 725(2) will receive assistance from counselors to advise such youths and prepare and improve the readiness of such youths for college.

As discussed in question iv the MA EHCY program continues to ensure homeless youth as defined in section 725(2) are provided with equal access to college and career counseling, assistance in completing FASFA applications and verification of their homelessness. In addition, through both internal and external collaboration MAEHCY has sought to expand support prior to secondary graduation, through the transition to and graduation from post-secondary education. Strategies to ensure support include the following.

* Individual Learning Plans (ILPs) are designed by students to explore their interests, career options, and to support post-secondary education planning. ILPs travel with a student and provide a way for students to communicate and engage with a school to meet their needs. This is a positive platform particularly for students who are highly mobile and/or homeless. Similarly, the state coordinator has reached out to DESE’s dropout prevention staff to incorporate other strategies such as Early Warning Indicators.
* The state coordinator represents DESE on the Massachusetts Commission for Unaccompanied Homeless Youth and Young Adults and actively participates on its Identification and Connections working group which has overseen three annual statewide Youth Counts. This commission has built awareness of unaccompanied youth, their needs, and is piloting programs and services to address those needs.
* The state coordinator has worked with the Departments of Higher Education (DHE) and Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS) to establish the Moving to College Scholarship (MTC). This is an outgrowth of the work done by the Post-Secondary Homeless Student Network. These scholarships provide four years of year-round housing and meals for students who are homeless and want to attend one of eight participating public universities or community colleges.

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, through the MA EHCY Program, strives to ensure educational access and stability of homeless children and youth through building awareness, increased identification, policy revision, public notice of educational rights, and equal access to comparable services. Strategies to accomplish this include training, outreach, technical assistance and guidance, monitoring and intra- and interagency coordination and collaboration with a broad array of stakeholders.

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# APPENDIX A: Measurements of Interim Progress

*Instructions: Each SEA must include the measurements of interim progress toward meeting the long-term goals for academic achievement, graduation rates, and English language proficiency, set forth in the State’s response to Title I, Part A question 4.iii, for all students and separately for each subgroup of students, including those listed in response to question 4.i.a. of this document. For academic achievement and graduation rates, the State’s measurements of interim progress must take into account the improvement necessary on such measures to make significant progress in closing statewide proficiency and graduation rate gaps.*

**A. Academic Achievement**

Baseline data, long-term goals, and measurements of interim progress for **non-high school grades** are included in the table below:

| Group | Subject | 2022  Achievement (Next Generation MCAS average scaled score) | 2023  Target | 2024-2027 Annual Improvement Increment |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| All Students | ELA | 494.1 | 496.9 | 2.8 |
| High needs | 484.9 | 487.9 | 3.0 |
| Low income | 484.5 | 487.6 | 3.1 |
| EL and Former EL | 481.1 | 484.4 | 3.3 |
| Students w/disabilities | 476.1 | 479.3 | 3.2 |
| Amer. Ind. or Alaska Nat. | 487.6 | 490.4 | 2.8 |
| Asian | 506.4 | 509.9 | 3.5 |
| Afr. Amer./Black | 485.5 | 489.2 | 3.7 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 482.8 | 486.4 | 3.6 |
| Multi-race, Non-Hisp./Lat. | 497.8 | 500.6 | 2.8 |
| Nat. Haw. or Pacif. Isl. | 494.4 | 497.2 | 2.8 |
| White | 498.3 | 501.1 | 2.8 |
| All Students | Math | 493.4 | 496.0 | 2.6 |
| High needs | 483.8 | 486.8 | 3.0 |
| Low income | 482.7 | 485.6 | 2.9 |
| EL and Former EL | 482.3 | 486.0 | 3.7 |
| Students w/disabilities | 476.1 | 479.4 | 3.3 |
| Amer. Ind. or Alaska Nat. | 487.4 | 490.0 | 2.6 |
| Asian | 512.1 | 516.5 | 4.4 |
| Afr. Amer./Black | 481.9 | 485.7 | 3.8 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 481.1 | 484.7 | 3.6 |
| Multi-race, Non-Hisp./Lat. | 496.4 | 499.0 | 2.6 |
| Nat. Haw. or Pacif. Isl. | 492.6 | 495.2 | 2.6 |
| White | 497.8 | 500.4 | 2.6 |
| All Students | Science | 494.5 | 498.4 | 3.9 |
| High needs | 484.6 | 489.3 | 4.7 |
| Low income | 483.6 | 488.4 | 4.8 |
| EL and Former EL | 479.6 | 484.5 | 4.9 |
| Students w/disabilities | 477.5 | 482.4 | 4.9 |
| Amer. Ind. or Alaska Nat. | 487.3 | 491.2 | 3.9 |
| Asian | 508.0 | 513.1 | 5.1 |
| Afr. Amer./Black | 482.3 | 487.4 | 5.1 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 481.6 | 486.3 | 4.7 |
| Multi-race, Non-Hisp./Lat. | 497.6 | 501.5 | 3.9 |
| Nat. Haw. or Pacif. Isl. | 493.5 | 497.4 | 3.9 |
| White | 499.9 | 503.6 | 3.7 |

Baseline data, long-term goals, and measurements of interim progress for **high school grades** are included in the table below:

| Group | Subject | 2022  Achievement (Next Generation MCAS average scaled score) | 2023  Target | 2024-2027 Annual Improvement Increment |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| All Students | ELA | 502.5 | 507.0 | 4.5 |
| High needs | 492.9 | 498.0 | 5.1 |
| Low income | 493.3 | 498.4 | 5.1 |
| EL and Former EL | 481.4 | 486.5 | 5.1 |
| Students w/disabilities | 485.1 | 489.9 | 4.8 |
| Amer. Ind. or Alaska Nat. | 499.9 | 504.4 | 4.5 |
| Asian | 513.4 | 518.5 | 5.1 |
| Afr. Amer./Black | 494.4 | 499.5 | 5.1 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 491.7 | 496.8 | 5.1 |
| Multi-race, Non-Hisp./Lat. | 505.5 | 510.0 | 4.5 |
| Nat. Haw. or Pacif. Isl. | 500.5 | 505.0 | 4.5 |
| White | 506.2 | 510.7 | 4.5 |
| All Students | Math | 501.0 | 505.0 | 4.0 |
| High needs | 489.7 | 494.8 | 5.1 |
| Low income | 489.7 | 494.8 | 5.1 |
| EL and Former EL | 481.8 | 486.9 | 5.1 |
| Students w/disabilities | 482.6 | 487.7 | 5.1 |
| Amer. Ind. or Alaska Nat. | 495.4 | 499.4 | 4.0 |
| Asian | 520.3 | 525.4 | 5.1 |
| Afr. Amer./Black | 488.3 | 493.4 | 5.1 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 487.8 | 492.9 | 5.1 |
| Multi-race, Non-Hisp./Lat. | 503.4 | 507.4 | 4.0 |
| Nat. Haw. or Pacif. Isl. | 500.2 | 504.2 | 4.0 |
| White | 505.3 | 509.6 | 4.3 |
| All Students | Science | 499.0 | 502.5 | 3.5 |
| High needs | 487.7 | 492.8 | 5.1 |
| Low income | 487.5 | 492.6 | 5.1 |
| EL and Former EL | 477.5 | 482.4 | 4.9 |
| Students w/disabilities | 481.6 | 486.4 | 4.8 |
| Amer. Ind. or Alaska Nat. | 495.1 | 498.6 | 3.5 |
| Asian | 513.1 | 518.1 | 5.0 |
| Afr. Amer./Black | 486.7 | 491.2 | 4.5 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 485.3 | 490.3 | 5.0 |
| Multi-race, Non-Hisp./Lat. | 501.6 | 505.1 | 3.5 |
| Nat. Haw. or Pacif. Isl. | 499.2 | 502.7 | 3.5 |
| White | 503.8 | 507.3 | 3.5 |

**B. Graduation Rates**

Four-year adjusted cohort graduation rate:

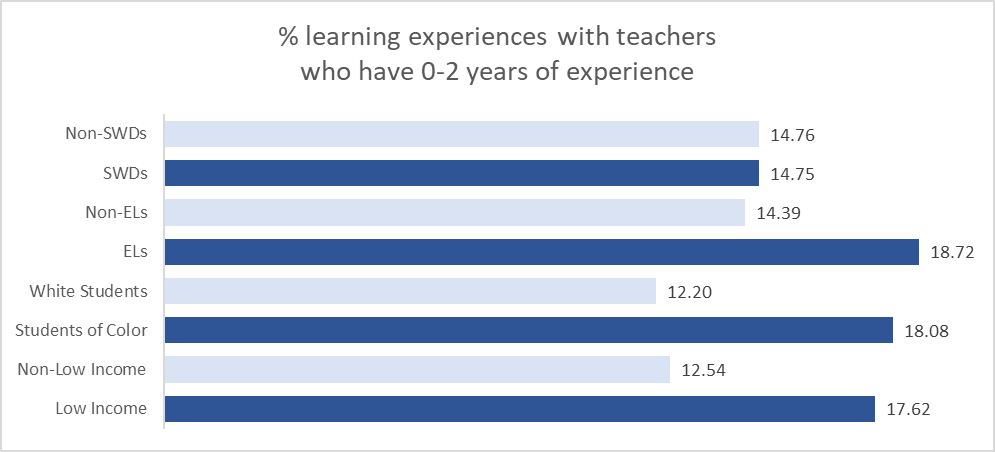
| Group | 2021 4-Yr Grad Rate Baseline (%) | 2022 4-Yr Grad Rate Target (%) | 2023-2026 4-Yr Grad Rate Annual Improvement Increment (%) |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| All Students | 89.8 | 91.9 | 2.0 |
| High needs | 82.4 | 86.7 | 4.3 |
| Low income | 81.7 | 86.3 | 4.6 |
| EL and Former EL | 71.8 | 77.5 | 5.7 |
| Students w/disabilities | 76.6 | 82.7 | 6.1 |
| Amer. Ind. or Alaska Nat. | 82.3 | 84.3 | 2.0 |
| Asian | 96.1 | 95.0 | 3.1 |
| Afr. Amer./Black | 84.4 | 89.3 | 4.9 |
| Hispanic/Latino | 80.0 | 84.7 | 4.7 |
| Multi-race, Non-Hisp./Lat. | 88.8 | 90.8 | 2.0 |
| Nat. Haw. or Pacif. Isl. | 86.0 | 88.0 | 2.0 |
| White | 93.2 | 95.0 | 2.0 |

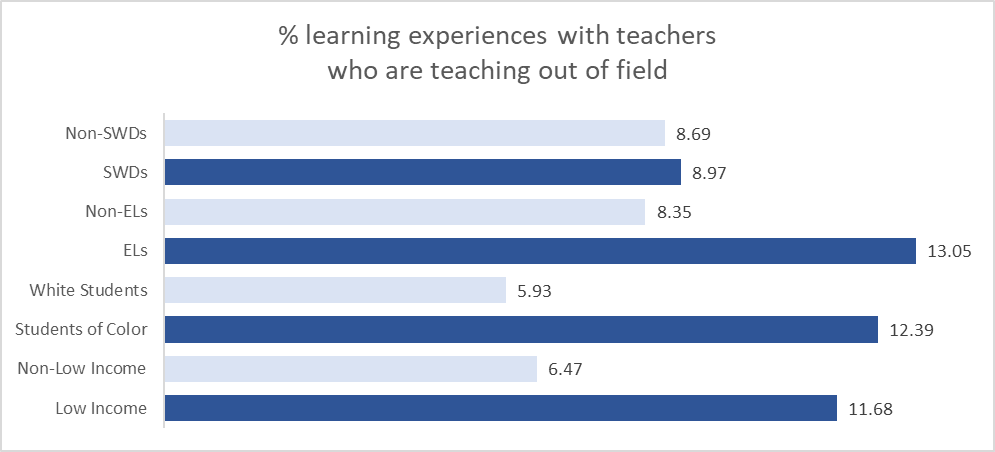
**C. Progress in Achieving English Language Proficiency**

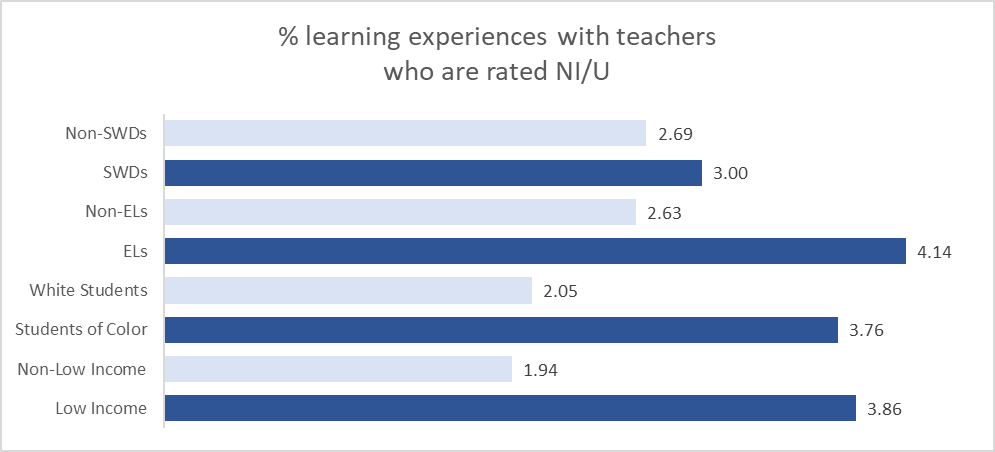
|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Percent of Students Making Progress Toward English Proficiency** | | | |
| Year | 2022 % Making Progress Baseline | 2023 % Making Progress Target | 2024-2027 % Making Progress Annual Improvement Increment |
| % Making Progress  (Non-High School Grades) | 49.7 | 52.4 | 2.7 |
| % Making Progress  (High School Grades) | 22.5 | 23.8 | 1.3 |

# APPENDIX B: Educator Equity Difference in Rates

**Percent of learning experiences with types of teachers over the past five years, by student group, for all schools in state**

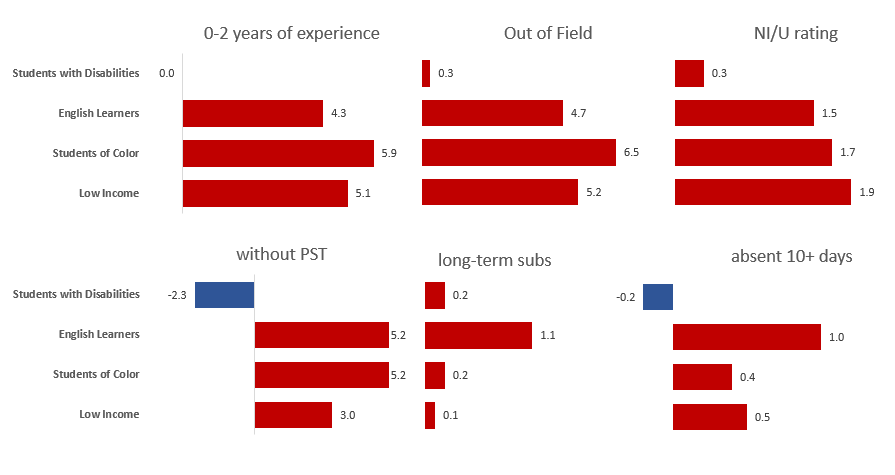






**Sizes of gaps between student groups and their peers in percent of learning experiences with teachers**

Red (positive) bars indicate that a group has had *more* experiences with the designated type of teacher (measured in percentage-point difference). Blue (negative) bars indicate that a group has had *fewer* experiences with the designated type of teacher (also measured in percentage-point difference).



**Percent of learning experiences with types of teachers over the past five years, by student group, for all schools**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Years of experience in MA** | | **In-field** | | **Summative Educator Evaluation Rating** | |
| **Student group** | % 3+ years | % 0-2 years | % in-field | % out-of-field | % Exemplary/ Proficient | % Needs Improvement/ Unsatisfactory |
| Low Income | 82.4 | 17.6 | 88.3 | 11.7 | 98.1 | 1.9 |
| Non-Low Income | 87.5 | 12.5 | 93.5 | 6.5 | 97.6 | 2.4 |
| White | 87.8 | 12.2 | 94.1 | 5.9 | 98.0 | 2.1 |
| Students of color | 81.9 | 18.1 | 87.6 | 12.4 | 96.2 | 3.8 |
| Non-ELs | 85.6 | 14.4 | 91.7 | 8.4 | 97.4 | 2.6 |
| ELs | 81.3 | 18.7 | 87.0 | 13.1 | 95.9 | 4.1 |
| Non-SWDs | 85.2 | 14.8 | 91.3 | 8.7 | 97.3 | 2.7 |
| SWDs | 85.3 | 14.8 | 91.0 | 9.0 | 97.0 | 3.0 |

The table above displays the percentage of learning experiences that students in various groups have had with teachers of different characteristics, showing disparities in access to experienced, in-field, and highly rated teachers. Over the past five years, low income students were more likely than their non-low income peers to be assigned to inexperienced and out-of-field teachers. A similar trend is present when comparing the learning experiences of students of color to those of white students, English Learners to non-English Learners, and Students with Disabilities (SWDs) to their non-SWD peers. For example, students of color had more than twice as many learning experiences with out-of-field teachers than their white peers. To address these disparities, the Department continues to pursue the strategies described in our state plan to address overall gaps in access to experienced, in-field, and highly rated educators.

# APPENDIX C: Stakeholder Engagement Summary

**Summary of Public Outreach on Draft Massachusetts ESSA Plan: Public Comment Period, February 7 - March 9, 2017**

After nearly a year of public outreach, which included several rounds of focus groups, special meetings, public forums, phone calls, and other engagements, DESE drew up a draft plan required under the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and officially solicited public comment on it from February 7 through March 9, 2017. During this official public comment period, DESE received scores of letters, postcards, phone calls, and emails, along with over 1,000 responses to an online survey. The Department also continued to hold meetings with key stakeholders to capture their good thinking in person. The following synthesis represents the feedback that the agency received during the official public comment period. The Department extends its sincere gratitude to all of the people who engaged with the agency on this important matter.

**The Department's Priorities**

The four focus areas laid out in the draft plan received strong support from respondents. When asked to what degree these topics should be special priorities or focus areas, a majority of the 1,039 survey respondents[[20]](#footnote-21) strongly agreed with all four.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Strongly  Agree | Somewhat Agree | Somewhat Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
| Early grades literacy | 78.8% | 17.3% | 2.3% | 1.6% |
| Additional supports for students who have historically struggled to attain proficiency | 74.7% | 20.2% | 2.9% | 2.2% |
| High quality pathways to educational and career opportunities after secondary school | 66.7% | 27.3% | 4.6% | 1.3% |
| Middle grades math | 60.1% | 35.5% | 2.9% | 1.4% |

**Providing access to a well-rounded curriculum**

Respondents frequently and consistently expressed their strong desire for students to receive a well-rounded education. Generally, they expressed that ESSA presents an opportunity for the state and local school districts to strengthen more areas of the curriculum so that the needs of the whole student are addressed. Whether through the inclusion of a metric in the accountability system or specific programming funded through federal entitlement grants, most respondents wanted the ESSA plan to direct attention, resources, and supports for all parts of a well-rounded curriculum. Though not an exclusive list, DESE received responses for the following elements of such a curriculum during the public comment period: (They are sorted here by volume of responses to the open response items on the survey.).

**Physical, Health, and Wellness Education**

In approximately 48 percent of the open response items on the survey, respondents made the case that improving students’ physical health should be a priority, given the research on the links between a healthy, active lifestyles and student achievement, as well as concerns about the opioid crisis and the growing childhood obesity epidemic. Despite the fact that physical education for each student in every grade is a statutory requirement in Massachusetts, many respondents pointed out that this state law is rarely enforced and that the inclusion of physical and health education in the ESSA plan, especially under the Social-Emotional Learning, Health, and Safety strategy, would help reinforce that such programming is essential for all students and that a student’s ability to self-manage their health has long-term benefits. Respondents also noted that ESSA should provide resources and opportunities for both in-school and out-of-school programs that promote physical fitness and health.

**Arts Education**

In over 24 percent of the open response items on the survey, as well as in dozens of letters, emails, and Pantone color swatch postcards, respondents made the case that access to the arts was a fundamental component of the humanities and a critical piece of becoming a well-rounded citizen. Many asked that DESE include access to the arts both as an accountability measure, as it was presented in the draft plan, and as an area where the Commonwealth could enhance its programming (specifically among its Title IV programs, but also in professional development programs such as Title IIA). Some respondents also cited evidence that shows the positive effects of arts education in improving student engagement and corresponding academic improvement in English language arts and mathematics. It is important to note, however, that while no respondents disagreed with the idea of broadening students’ access to the arts, a few expressed a specific concern about including access to the arts as an accountability measure. Their argument was that certain specialized schools with an intentionally narrow program of study, or where arts is “baked into” other courses within the general curriculum, might be adversely impacted by such an accountability measure and that the state ought to consider publicly reporting on student access to the arts rather than using such a measure as part of a formal accountability system.

**Career and Technical Education**

In over 5 percent of open response survey items, respondents expressed a desire for ESSA programs to address, either through career and technical education (CTE) programming, personalized learning programming, or through a metric in the accountability system, the importance of building career pathways throughout the K-12 system. As part of the broader push for a well-rounded curriculum, respondents from both the education and business sectors would like to see ESSA incentivize career-readiness skills being part of schools' general, accepted curriculum rather than existing in a separate niche area of the curriculum.

**Computer Science Education**

In over 5 percent of open response survey items, respondents wrote about the importance of computer science and advanced math skills in the current economy. Respondents wanted to ensure that ESSA provided more opportunities to build upon the momentum established with Massachusetts’ new digital literacy and computer science standards and expand science, technology, engineering and mathematics offerings in the context of a well-rounded curriculum.

**Gifted and Talented Education**

In over 5 percent of open response survey items, respondents lamented the dearth of opportunities for gifted and talented students in the Commonwealth and expressed hope that ESSA could provide resources and/or incentives to develop high-quality talented and gifted programming in districts. The Department heard concerns expressed on behalf of talented and gifted students, as well as those who are profoundly gifted.

**Library and Media Education**

In approximately 2 percent of open response survey items, respondents stated that they would like each student to have access to a library and a professional librarian and that the ESSA plan ought to provide resources **and**/or incentives for high-quality libraries and media centers.

**Civics Education**

In approximately 1 percent of open response survey items, respondents discussed the importance of including civics education, financial literacy, and media literacy as part of a well-rounded curriculum and said that ESSA could provide opportunities for schools and districts to focus on those areas.

**Providing supports to students who have historically struggled to reach grade-level proficiency**

Respondents offered comments on behalf of a wide range of student groups, all of which have historically struggled to reach grade-level proficiency. Below is a summary of many of the concerns and comments the agency received on behalf of said groups.

**English Learner Education**

Many respondents expressed concerns that the state plan needs to focus more on providing supports so that all English learners attain proficiency in all domains of English literacy. Some respondents made the case that low proficiency English learners should be exempt from all state testing. Others argued that a greater emphasis should be placed on growth and progress for English learners and cautioned against putting too much weight on attainment, especially for those students who are new to the language.

**Special Education**

Respondents advocating for more supports for students with disabilities gave feedback on the increasing number of students with emotional and behavioral disabilities and said that ESSA provides an opportunity to help both educators and students address those students' learning needs. Feedback was also nearly universal that the Commonwealth should continue to report on the special education student group and take advantage of the flexibility in ESSA that allows states to also report on those students who formerly qualified for special education services.

**Education for Minority Populations**

The agency engaged in conversations with a number of groups from minority populations. All were strong proponents of the provision in ESSA to continue to report on proficiency and growth by racial and ethnic group so that a spotlight is shone on their progress. Representatives of the Hispanic/Latino community expressed concerns about the needs of undocumented and first-generation families who hope ESSA will result in their receiving clearer and more digestible information about the quality of education their students are receiving. Representatives of the African American community expressed support for the continuation of holding all students and educators to high standards. The Native American community expressed enthusiasm about new provisions in ESSA that enable closer partnerships between tribal education agencies and state education agencies, but representatives of that community also expressed concerns about the stresses of colliding cultures, inequities in the curriculum, and providing the right kinds of social/emotional/behavior supports for their student population.

**Modifications to the Accountability System**

The survey results show that many of the indicators that were proposed in the draft plan were strongly supported by respondents to the survey. This is consistent with the information that the agency gathered throughout the ESSA consultation process.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Strongly support | Somewhat support | Somewhat oppose | Strongly oppose |
| Student access to the arts | 76.0% | 20.1% | 2.7% | 1.1% |
| Student access to a broad curriculum | 68.6% | 27.8% | 2.3% | 1.3% |
| Student access to advanced coursework | 60.6% | 35.3% | 3.0% | 1.1% |
| School climate and culture (as measured by a student survey) | 54.8% | 32.0% | 9.4% | 3.8% |
| Chronic absenteeism | 43.3% | 39.2% | 12.2% | 5.3% |
| 9th grade course passing rates | 34.8% | 49.4% | 12.5% | 3.3% |

When asked to what degree they supported the following statements about the proposed accountability system, respondents were generally in favor of all the statements made:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Strongly support | Somewhat support | Somewhat oppose | Strongly oppose |
| Accountability status for a district should be determined by the performance of all of its students taken together, rather than by the performance of its weakest school. | 49.3% | 36.5% | 9.6% | 4.5% |
| In aiming to provide a multidimensional picture about school performance, the proposed system strikes a good balance between too few and too many data elements. | 21.7% | 56.3% | 16.3% | 5.7% |
| The proposed system includes the right amount of indicators related to outcomes (e.g., student academic attainment, high school graduation). | 23.1% | 53.8% | 16.4% | 6.7% |
| The proposed system includes the right amount of indicators related to inputs (e.g., access to arts or advanced courses). | 31.1% | 42.9% | 17.4% | 8.6% |

With respect to the accountability system in general, respondents offered a wide range of perspectives on what ought to be modified. Some offered that the proposed system is overly complex, difficult for families and educators alike to comprehend, and does not accurately or fairly measure school quality. Some argued for a five-month delay in submitting the plan to the federal government and/or a two-year delay in implementing the accountability system ratings to allow for the Commonwealth’s transitions to both ESSA and to a new, next-generation MCAS. Others had an opposing point of view, contending that the proposed system ought to be enacted immediately and include even more measures, such as the extent to which exclusionary discipline practices are used, more nuanced and advanced measures of school climate and culture (such as family and community involvement), and more specific measures related to academically advanced pathways. However, almost all respondents agreed that an accountability system in general is an important part of the state’s role in improving the education system; the challenge is in getting all of the components right to arrive at what’s best for all students.

**Strengthening Transitions between K-12 and Early Education**

Many respondents wanted to see a clearer and more pronounced narrative around collaboration between K-12 and early education. Throughout the plan, these stakeholders were looking for a clearer vision across state agencies about greater integration for the critical transitions that students make early in their lives. Some respondents expressed the need for more definition around transition activities (such as shared K-12 and early education professional development, shared assessment data, curriculum alignment, summer learning programs, etc.). Respondents expressed hope that the new ESSA provisions that require coordination of K-12 and Head Start, as well as other specific provisions, will enable smoother transitions and more high-quality opportunities for young children.

**Provisions related to non-public schools**

A number of respondents expressed concern that, aside from a formal assurance provided in the form of a checkbox, the draft report did not adequately address the new provisions in ESSA related to funding non-public (private, parochial, etc.) schools and opportunities for professional staff to engage in equitable professional learning activities alongside public sector colleagues. Many of these respondents believe that ESSA, more than any federal education legislation ever has, extends the notion of equitable access to high-quality education for all students, public and private, and that it calls for a partnership between the public and private sectors to provide for the needs of all students.

###

# APPENDIX D: Statement and Assurances Related to Section 427 of GEPA

OMB Control No. 1894-0005 (Exp. 03/31/2017)

**NOTICE TO ALL APPLICANTS**

The purpose of this enclosure is to inform you about a new provision in the Department of Education's General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) that applies to applicants for new grant awards under Department programs. This provision is Section 427 of GEPA, enacted as part of the Improving America's Schools Act of 1994 (Public Law (P.L.) 103-382).

**To Whom Does This Provision Apply?**

Section 427 of GEPA affects applicants for new grant awards under this program. **ALL APPLICANTS FOR NEW AWARDS MUST INCLUDE INFORMATION IN THEIR APPLICATIONS TO ADDRESS THIS NEW PROVISION IN ORDER TO RECEIVE FUNDING UNDER THIS PROGRAM.**

(If this program is a State-formula grant program, a State needs to provide this description only for projects or activities that it carries out with funds reserved for State-level uses. In addition, local school districts or other eligible applicants that apply to the State for funding need to provide this description in their applications to the State for funding. The State would be responsible for ensuring that the school district or other local entity has submitted a sufficient section 427 statement as described below.)

**What Does This Provision Require?**

Section 427 requires each applicant for funds (other than an individual person) to include in its application a description of the steps the applicant proposes to take to ensure equitable access to, and participation in, its Federally-assisted program for students, teachers, and other program beneficiaries with special needs. This provision allows applicants discretion in developing the required description. The statute highlights six types of barriers that can impede equitable access or participation: gender, race, national origin, color, disability, or age. Based on local circumstances, you should determine whether these or other barriers may prevent your students, teachers, etc. from such access or participation in, the Federally-funded project or activity. The description in your application of steps to be taken to overcome these barriers need not be lengthy; you may provide a clear and succinct description of how you plan to address those barriers that are applicable to your circumstances. In addition, the information may be provided in a single narrative, or, if appropriate, may be discussed in connection with related topics in the application.

Section 427 is not intended to duplicate the requirements of civil rights statutes, but rather to ensure that, in designing their projects, applicants for Federal funds address equity concerns that may affect the ability of certain potential beneficiaries to fully participate in the project and to achieve to high standards. Consistent with program requirements and its approved application, an applicant may use the Federal funds awarded to it to eliminate barriers it identifies.

**What are Examples of How an Applicant Might Satisfy the Requirement of This Provision?**

The following examples may help illustrate how an applicant may comply with Section 427.

(1) An applicant that proposes to carry out an adult literacy project serving, among others, adults with limited English proficiency, might describe in its application how it intends to distribute a brochure about the proposed project to such potential participants in their native language.

(2) An applicant that proposes to develop instructional materials for classroom use might describe how it will make the materials available on audio tape or in braille for students who are blind.

(3) An applicant that proposes to carry out a model science program for secondary students and is concerned that girls may be less likely than boys to enroll in the course, might indicate how it intends to conduct "outreach" efforts to girls, to encourage their enrollment.

(4) An applicant that proposes a project to increase school safety might describe the special efforts it will take to address concern of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students, and efforts to reach out to and involve the families of LGBT students

We recognize that many applicants may already be implementing effective steps to ensure equity of access and participation in their grant programs, and we appreciate your cooperation in responding to the requirements of this provision.

# Section 427 of GEPA: Assurance Statement

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE or the Department) adheres to Section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA). DESE’s educational vision is anchored in a commitment to high-quality teaching and learning for elementary and secondary students and adult learners. The Department works with educators in schools, districts, and other organizations to promote teaching and learning that is antiracist, inclusive, multilingual, and multicultural. The Department values each and every student and their families and helps to create affirming environments where students have a sense of belonging and are engaged in deeper learning, resulting in equitable access to opportunities and experiences for all students, particularly those who have been historically underserved.

To implement this vision, the Department will ensure to the fullest extent possible equitable access to, participation in, and appropriate educational opportunities for individuals served. Federally funded activities, programs, and services will be accessible to all teachers, students and program beneficiaries. DESE ensures equal access and participation to all persons regardless of their race, color, ethnicity, religion, national origin, age, citizenship status, disability, gender or sexual orientation in its education programs, services, and/or activities.

For state-level activities as well as all other activities supported by federal assistance through our grant applications for LEAs, DESE will fully enforce all federal and state laws and regulations designed to ensure equitable access to all program beneficiaries and overcome barriers to equitable participation, such as language and disability. DESE will hold LEAs accountable for ensuring equal access and providing reasonable and appropriate accommodations to meet the needs of diverse student groups, staff, community members, and other participants.

Steps taken to ensure equitable access are ongoing, and may include, but are not limited to;

* collecting information on potential special accommodation needs (e.g., assistive technology, wheelchair access, translation) as a standard component of meeting/conference registrations;
* printing materials in multiple languages;
* offering multi-lingual services for participants and others as needed and appropriate;
* responsiveness to cultural differences;
* fostering a positive school climate through restorative practices;
* conducting outreach efforts and target marketing to those not likely to participate;
* providing assistive technology devices to translate/make accessible grant and program materials for participants requiring such accommodations;
* using technology to convey content of program materials;
* using materials that include strategies for addressing the needs of all participants;
* pre-program gender and cultural awareness training for participants;
* development and/or acquisition and dissemination of culturally relevant and sensitive curriculum and informational materials; and
* use of transportation services that include accommodations for individuals with disabilities.

1. Unless otherwise indicated, citations to the ESEA refer to the ESEA, as amended by the ESSA. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. In developing its consolidated State plan, each SEA must meet the requirements section 427 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA) and describe the steps it will take to ensure equitable access to and participation in the included programs for students, teachers and other program beneficiaries with special needs. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 69, §1J and 603 CMR 2.00, the Commissioner may designate a school as underperforming or chronically underperforming if it meets certain state-determined criteria. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Pursuant to M.G.L. c. 69, §1K and 603 CMR 2.00, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, at the recommendation of the Commissioner, may designate a district as underperforming or chronically underperforming if it meets certain state-determined criteria. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. *2016 Evaluation of Level 4 Turnaround Efforts in Massachusetts, Part 2: Impact Study*, American Institutes for Research, <http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/turnaround/impact-study.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. McKay, S. I*mproving Title II of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act*. Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 2015. Retrieved from: <http://cdn.carnegiefoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Title-II-expert-conveing-summary_2-6_formatted.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. MA ESE. *Title II-A: Preparing, Training, and Recruiting High Quality Teachers and Principals*. Retrieved from: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/educators/title-iia/hq/hq_faq.html?section=subjects>. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. MA regulations allow for a person holding a license to be employed for a maximum of 20 percent of his/her time in a role and/or at a grade level for which she/he does not hold a license. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. The Every Student Succeeds Act eliminates the category of Highly Qualified from federal statute. Massachusetts will issue guidance to districts to revise this definition of out-of-field in 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. Lankford, H., Loeb, S., Wyckoff, J. *Teacher Sorting and the Plight of Urban Schools: A Descriptive Analysis*. Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 2002. 24(1): 37-62. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. *Status of the Massachusetts Educator Workforce: Focus on First-Year Teachers.* Massachusetts ESE, 2013. Retrieved from: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/reports/2013-12EducatorReport.pdf>. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
12. MA ESE, 2013. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
13. Cowan, J., Goldhaber, D., and Theobold, R. “Teacher Equity Gaps in Massachusetts.” ESE Policy Brief. October 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
14. Coggshall, J.G., Potemski, A. *Technical assistance response: Issues related to educator equity.* (Personal communication, May 21, 2015). Washington, DC: GTL Center at American Institutes for Research. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
15. Bacher-Hicks, A., Chi, O., and Orellana, A. “COVID-19 and the Composition of the Massachusetts Teacher Workforce.” Policy Brief. October 2021. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
16. Fisher, D., Frey, N. and Pumpian, I., *How to Create a Culture of Achievement in Your School And Classroom.* ASCD, 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
17. Allensworth, Ponisciak, & Mazzeo, 2009, as cited in Coggshall & Potemski, 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
18. Cowan, J., Goldhaber, D., and Theobold, R. “Teacher Equity Gaps in Massachusetts.” ESE Policy Brief. October 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
19. Adult secondary education (ASE) GLE 9-12 [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
20. 52 percent educators, 29 percent concerned citizens, 28 percent parents, 16 percent administrators, 10 percent advocacy groups, 1 percent students (respondent categories do not add up to 100 percent because respondents were permitted to select multiple roles (such as teacher and parent) [↑](#footnote-ref-21)