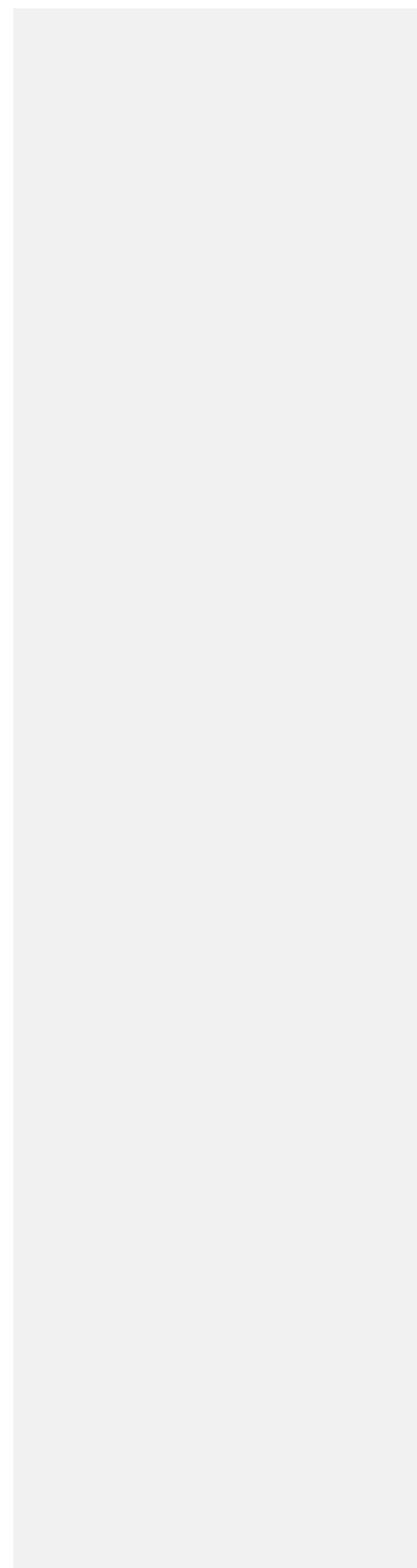# Targeted District Review Protocol

Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education
Center for District and School Accountability
75 Pleasant Street, Malden, MA 02148

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Introduction to the Targeted District Review

District Accountability and Assistance

Research on effective school and district leadership has highlighted the importance of a concerted districtwide focus on aligning all of the district's systems in service of student achievement. This focus is demonstrated by clear standards for performance and goals for improvement, coupled with an ongoing cyclical process for measuring progress.

To that end, the Center for District and School Accountability at the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education conducts district reviews that provide an assessment of district systems, allowing district leaders to reflect on their improvement goals and strengthen performance. *District reviews are conducted under Chapter 15, Section 55A of the Massachusetts General Laws.*

The district review is based on ESE's District Standards and Indicators, which are areas of focus in which district capacity and excellence should be built in a systemic way.

A. The District Standards and Indicators[1]

    I. **Leadership and Governance**
1. Focused School Committee Governance
2. Effective District and School Leadership
3. District and School Improvement Planning
4. Educationally Sound Budget Development
5. Effective District Systems for School Support and Intervention

    II. **Curriculum and Instruction**
1. Aligned, Consistently Delivered, and Continuously Improving Curriculum
2. Strong Instructional Leadership and Effective Instruction
3. Tiered instruction and Sufficient Instructional Time

    III. **Assessment**
1. Data Collection and Dissemination
2. Data-Driven Decision-Making
3. Student Assessment

    IV. **Human Resources and Professional Development**
1. Staff recruitment, Selection, Assignment
2. Educator Growth and Evaluation
3. Professional Learning

    V. **Student Support**
1. Academic and Non-Academic Support
2. Access and Equity
3. Educational Continuity and Student Participation
4. Family, Community, and Partner Engagement
5. Safety

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[1] For a detailed description of the District Standards and Indicators, see Appendix D. District Indicators are continuously updated and clarified to reflect ESE priorities.

VI. **Financial and Asset Management**
   1. Comprehensive and Transparent Budget Process
   2. Adequate Resources
   3. Effective Resource Management and Allocation
   4. Financial Tracking, Forecasting, Controls, and Audits
   5. Capital Planning and Facility Maintenance

These six standards and their 24 related indicators were developed collaboratively based on input from school and district stakeholders about which systems and system components most directly impact student achievement. The District Standards and Indicators also form the foundation for the state's *Framework for District Accountability and Assistance*.

B.   The Framework for District Accountability and Assistance

The *Framework for District Accountability and Assistance* defines and brings coherence to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's approach to engaging with districts to improve student performance. District accountability and Department assistance must be closely linked in order to produce sustainable improvement. The *Framework* defines the roles and expectations of the district and the Department based on the performance of the district's schools. Every district in the Commonwealth falls into one of five levels, with districts requiring the least state intervention placed in Level 1, and districts requiring the most intervention in Level 5. At each of the five levels, the *Framework* distinguishes the Department's role and districts' responsibilities with respect to accountability, assistance, and intervention. Districts whose student performance and growth place them in Level 3 and 4 are given high priority for Department assistance.

C.   The Framework for District Accountability and The Conditions for School Effectiveness (CSEs)

The Department's theory of action is that if state interventions are concentrated on ensuring that the necessary district systems are in place and are focused on establishing and sustaining the Conditions for School Effectiveness (http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/school-effect-conditions.pdf) in each school, substantial gains in student performance will result. Accordingly, the *District Standards and Indicators* incorporate the CSEs. In fact, the first CSE points to the need for the strong district systems of support and practices as specified in the District Standards and Indicators.

D.   The District Review as Support for a Standards-Based District Inquiry Cycle

Using the District Standards and Indicators as the touchstone, ESE's Center for District and School Accountability has developed a district review that is designed to identify the systems, policies, and practices that drive the day-to-day work of the school district, as well as those factors that help or hinder staff performance and, ultimately, student performance.

Having a district review adds value to the improvement cycle by providing an experienced team of district leaders who will provide an objective analysis and suggestions for improvement. The value of the district review is measured: first, by the reflection preparing and participating in the review promotes; second, by the usefulness of the findings and recommendations to district leaders and stakeholders; third, by the effectiveness of the resulting action steps and goals that the process generates; and, ultimately, by improved results.

The Targeted District Review

A.   A Standards-based, Evidence-based Process

The targeted district review is an evidence-based process focusing on three District Standards. Targeted reviews will address one of the following set of three standards: **Governance and Administrative Systems** (Leadership and Governance, Human Resources/Professional Development, and Financial and Asset Management standards)

or **Student-Centered Systems** (Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment, and Student Support standards). ESE and the district will collaboratively identify the focus of the targeted review.

The identified District Standards and Indicators will be used to organize the collection and analysis of data in order to generate findings about key district systems and practices and recommendations for improvement. In addition, the targeted district review is designed to promote district reflection on its own performance and potential next steps. In alignment with the Framework for District Accountability and Assistance described above, districts whose performance level places them in Level 2 will typically participate in a targeted district review (Level 3 and 4 districts typically receive a comprehensive review). Other relevant factors will also be taken into consideration when determining if a district will participate in a targeted or comprehensive review.

To focus the analysis, reviews will collect evidence for the identified district standards (see above). The reviews will seek to identify those systems and practices that may be impeding rapid improvement as well as those that are most likely contributing to positive results. The district review team consists of independent consultants with expertise in the district standards. The size of the team will be responsive to district size and needs, with teams typically ranging from four to five members. The Center for District and School Accountability (CDSA) screens, selects, and trains experienced, independent district reviewers and provides protocols, materials, and oversight of the review process. CDSA shares the review findings with district stakeholders and, if further assistance and intervention is recommended, with ESE's Division for Accountability, Partnerships, and Technical Assistance.

The district reviewers review selected district documents and ESE data and reports before conducting a district visit that includes visits to various district schools. The appendices to this protocol provide an array of material for the review team to use to understand district policies, systems, processes, practices, and outcomes. The team holds interviews and focus groups with such stakeholders as school committee members, teachers' association representatives, administrators, teachers, parents, and students. Team members also observe classrooms. The team then meets to develop findings and recommendations before submitting the draft of the district review report to ESE.

B. <u>Preparing for the Targeted District Review</u>

Districts will complete the District Self-Assessment Tool to promote reflection on the district's progress toward the standards as well as to support preparation for the visit. The Self-Assessment Tool will serve as a key step in the targeted review process, as the self-assessment will be used to determine the set of three standards to be reviewed.

The district should provide copies of the documents that it has and uses. For the purposes of this targeted review, the district is not required to create any documents; additionally, the document request list will be modified to align to the standards identified for the targeted review. Requests for documents other than those listed in this protocol will be limited to those referred to in interviews and focus groups when they are critical to a finding. The district and the review coordinator will also work together to prepare a site visit schedule (see sample site visit schedule below).

ESE staff offer an optional pre-review call with the superintendent and a designated review liaison to clarify and answer questions about the review process. Other members of the leadership team may also be invited to this discussion. CDSA also provides sample templates and letters developed to communicate with various constituencies about the review.

C. <u>Six Stages of the Targeted District Review</u>

The targeted district review consists of the six stages outlined below.

1. **Focusing the Targeted Review**

    After the district submits the Self-Assessment Tool, ESE staff will review the information provided by the district, all student performance data, other key data points, and additional relevant contextual information about the district. Then, ESE staff will meet with district leadership to collaboratively determine the three standards that will be the focus for the targeted district review. These identified standards will guide all aspects of the visit, including interview participants and questions and the scope of the final report.

2. **Document and Data Review**

    The team reviews information about the district's context, student performance, goals and processes, and resources specific to the identified standards. The Center for District and School Accountability collects information and data from ESE and the district and provides it to the team.

    - Team members are each assigned to one or more of the identified standards
    - The standards and indicators serve as a framework for collecting and sorting information
    - Team members independently review documents and data to learn about district practices
    - Team members independently develop specific questions related to their standard
    - The team comes together to collectively review data analyses
    - Team members prioritize and tailor questions
    - The team collectively reviews, and the coordinator adjusts, the on-site schedule as needed

3. **On-Site Visit**

    During the three-day on-site review, the review team conducts observations and asks questions about practices.

    - Introductory meeting: purpose of the review and a discussion of the review process
    - School committee interviews
    - District, school, and program leaders interviews
    - Teachers' association leadership interview
    - Teacher focus groups
    - Parent interviews
    - High school student interviews
    - School visits
    - Classroom observations
    - Team evidence gathering and sharing throughout the visit
    - Closing District Debrief meeting to wrap up the review and explain next steps.

4. **Analysis of Evidence and Draft Report Development**

    The CDSA and the review team use the evidence gathered from the review to generate a draft report; after receiving any factual corrections from the district, CDSA staff finalize the report. The CDSA ensures that review team members follow a strict protocol for evidence triangulation. The process of report production consists of:

    - Evidence sorting
    - Team identification of priority findings
    - Developing team consensus on written evidence in findings
    - Collective revision of and feedback on all written draft findings
    - Development of preliminary recommendations
    - The coordinator creates the draft report

- CDSA staff edit the draft to ensure that findings are supported by sufficient evidence and recommendations are aligned with current Department guidance
- Draft findings are sent to superintendent to check for factual accuracy
- CDSA staff respond to the district's corrections and finalize the recommendations

5. **Publication of the Final Report**
- Final reports include a description of the district context and background, demographic and student achievement data, findings focused on the school system's most significant strengths and challenges, and recommendations that the district can use for ongoing systematic improvement and that ESE can consider in giving the district priority for technical assistance and other resources.
- The goal is to provide a draft report two to three months after the onsite visit. Final reports are posted to the ESE website (http://www.mass.gov/edu/government/departments-and-boards/ese/programs/accountability/reports/district-review-reports/).
- At the district's request, ESE representatives may present the findings and recommendations to the district's school committee.

6. **Supporting the District after the Review**
After the review, district leaders should have a clearer sense of which practices are contributing to success and which might need to be further developed.

In addition, districts have the option of participating in an ESE-led session "Next Steps" meeting. This is an optional session that takes place after the report is published. The purpose of the meeting is to assist district leaders in reflecting on the report, thinking through areas for improvement that are most important/most likely to have an impact on student achievement and outcomes, and identifying steps that should be taken to address these areas. The meeting should include district leaders and other stakeholders, in addition to ESE representatives.

Possible Activities during Targeted District and School Visits (Dependent on Review Type)

Activities	Description
Orientation meeting	The review team will introduce themselves and begin the ongoing communication with the district that will characterize the review's joint process.
Interview with the Superintendent	The superintendent will provide top-level insight into key district initiatives.
Interviews with district leaders	The review team will meet with key district leaders to discuss all aspects of district programs and processes. Representation at mid-point interviews should include key district leaders, such as the superintendent, assistant superintendent(s), curriculum supervisors at the district and department levels, chief financial officer, business manager, HR director, special education director, Title I director
Document review	The team will review materials that the district provides on-site.
District partners who directly support district efforts	The review team may meet with any other internal or external partners who have worked with the district to support development and/or implementation of district- and school-level

Activities	Description
	initiatives.
School committee interview	All committee members should be invited. The review team will try to accommodate the schedule for the committee members who attend. Committee members will be interviewed in sub quorum groups.
Interview with municipal leaders	The mayor(s) or town manager(s) of the school district community or communities may be interviewed. Members of the finance committee(s) may also be invited.
Interviews with teachers' association leadership	The president should be invited. The president may delegate this responsibility and may choose to include others.
Interviews with school leaders	School leaders include the principals and may also include key assistants (e.g., assistant principals, curriculum director, and/or lead teachers).
Teacher and specialist focus groups	Groups of teachers, typically representing specific grade spans, make up focus groups. All teachers should be invited. The focus group(s) will be scheduled so that invited teachers may attend after school hours. Interviews with specialists may also be conducted separately from the teacher focus groups. School leaders are asked to identify personnel who play a significant role in school functioning and improvement, such as the school's special education director, ELL coordinator, curriculum coordinators, coaches, and other relevant staff.
School council/ parent focus group	School council members and representatives of parent groups are invited.
Classroom visits	Classroom visits will be conducted. Classroom visits are designed to understand instructional trends and are not evaluations of individual teachers. See Appendix C.
Teacher team meetings	The team may observe regularly scheduled teacher team meetings. Team members will ask questions only if invited to do so.
Student focus group(s)	A selection of middle/high school students representing a variety of grade levels and varying instructional needs may participate in a focus group. Students are selected by the school's leadership and/or staff.
District Debrief Meeting	The review team coordinator will wrap up the onsite review and explain next steps.

Targeted District Review Documentation and Preparation Requirements

For targeted reviews, the list of documents requested by ESE will be tailored to the standards collaboratively identified as the focus of the review. ESE representatives will coordinate with district leadership to identify the specific documents to be submitted.

Documents to be provided <u>by ESE to the review team</u> before the site visit
1. District Profile Data (to be used by the review team if there is a discrepancy with DART or EDW data)
2. District Analysis and Review Tool (DART)
3. Data from Edwin
4. Latest Coordinated Program Review (CPR) Report (even if not published within the last two years) and the follow-up Mid-cycle Report if one has been published since the latest CPR Report
5. Most recent NEASC report
6. Collective bargaining agreement for teachers, including the teacher evaluation tool
7. District's DDMs Plan submitted to ESE
8. Long-term enrollment trends
9. End-of-Year Report

Documents and data to be provided <u>to ESE by the district</u> before the site visit
1. Completed Self-Assessment
2. Organization chart
3. District Improvement Plan and School Improvement Plans
4. School committee minutes for past year
5. Most recent budget proposal with any narrative/presentation used, and approved budget.
6. Curriculum guides and sample curriculum documents or curriculum units of study for ELA, mathematics, and sciences at elementary, middle-, and high-school levels. The district may also choose to provide URL links to curriculum posted online.
7. High school program of studies
8. Copies of data analyses/reports used in schools such as analyses of student performance on midterm and final examinations and benchmark and formative assessments
9. Forms, documents, and templates used in educator evaluation system for all educators, such as rubrics, educator plans, and observation and evidence gathering forms. Please also include URL to online documents related to educator evaluation in order for review team members to review a sample of online documentation. If online access cannot be made available in advance, please provide access during the onsite visit.
10. Classroom observation tools not used for educator evaluation system
11. Descriptions of support programs for all students
12. Description of tiered instruction, academic and non-academic support programs, and DCAP, if applicable
13. Descriptions of career development and awareness programs
14. Sample school or district safety plan
15. Internal and external evaluations of mandated programs such as ELL, special education, and Title I and other programs and services such as the mentor program, before- and after-school and summer-school programs; curriculum reviews and needs assessments

| Documents and data to be provided to ESE by the district before the site visit |
|---|
| 16. Student/family and faculty handbooks |
| 17. Professional Development Plan and current PD program or schedule of courses |
| 18. Teacher common planning time schedules |
| 19. Numbered alphabetical teacher list and administrator list categorized by Educator Evaluation Plan (i.e., One-Year Self-Directed, Two-Year Self-Directed, Improvement, and Developing Educator |
| 20. District document checklist (see below) |
| 21. Job descriptions for central office and school administrators and instructional staff |

Additional notes:
1. Please use the District Documents Checklist to indicate the availability and titles of documents.
2. You are not required to create documents requested on this list that do not already exist.
3. Electronic documents are preferred if available. If documents are on the district website, please provide URL. If not, please upload to ESE Dropbox Central (CDSA Reviews folder).
4. Other pertinent information about the district that might inform the review team is welcome.

District Document Checklist

For targeted reviews, the list of documents requested by ESE will be tailored to the standards collaboratively identified as the focus of the review. ESE representatives will coordinate with district leadership to identify the specific documents to be submitted. This checklist will be modified to align to the requested documents.

Document requested	Provided	Not available	Title(s) of documents, as needed for clarification
1. Completed Self-Assessment			
2. Organization chart			
3. District Improvement Plan and School Improvement Plans			
4. School committee minutes for past year			
5. Most recent budget proposal with any narrative/presentation used, and approved budget.			
6. Curriculum guides and sample curriculum documents or curriculum units of study for ELA, mathematics, and sciences at elementary, middle, and high school levels.			
7. Description of tiered instruction, academic and non-academic support programs for all students, and DCAP, if applicable			
8. High school program of studies			
9. Descriptions of career development and awareness programs			
10. Copies of data analyses/reports used in schools such as analyses of student performance on midterm and final examinations and benchmark and formative			
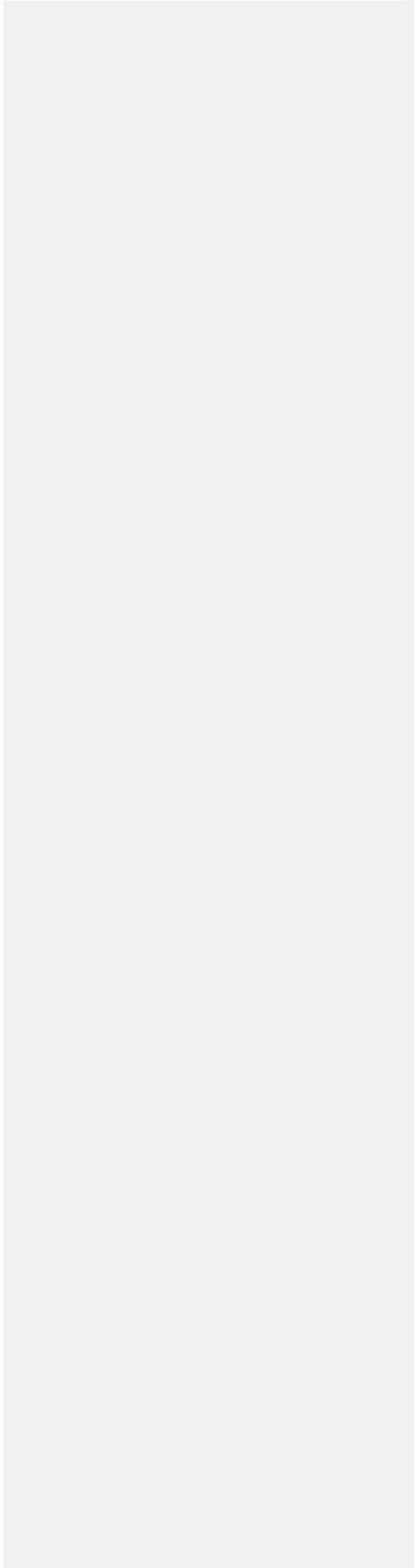
assessments			
11. Forms, documents, and templates used in educator evaluation system for all educators			
12. Classroom observation tools not used for educator evaluation system			
13. Sample school or district safety plan			
14. Internal and external evaluations of mandated programs			
15. Student/family and faculty handbooks			
16. Professional Development Plan and current PD program or schedule of courses			
17. Teacher common planning time schedules			
18. Teacher and administrator list categorized by Educator Evaluation Plan type			
19. Job descriptions for central office and school administrators and instructional staff			
20. Completed district document checklist			

2015-2016 CDSA Draft Site Visit Schedule for Targeted Review

(Blue indicates places where district is to fill in information. Please be sure that interviewees selected for each interview block can answer questions about each level: elementary, middle, and high school.)

Notes: This schedule serves as a guide and will be modified to align to the focus of the Targeted Review. Team members may use laptops to take notes during interviews, focus groups, etc. With the exception of meetings with leadership teams, supervising staff should not be scheduled in focus groups with those under their supervision.

Day 1—Day, Date

Time	Activity	Time	Activity	Time	Activity
7:30-8:30	**Review Team Meeting**				
8:30-9:15	**Orientation with District Leaders and Principals** **Note meeting location.** Entire team meets with whomever the district wishes in whatever location fits the group. Most districts include superintendent, business manager, and principals. Many districts add special education director, curriculum coordinators, guidance director, et. al.				
9:30-11:00	**Classroom Visits/Doc Review**	9:30-11:00	**Standards Interview** **Note which of the 3 district standards this interview will focus on** (there need to be at least 2 interviews for each standard during the onsite visit). **Note meeting location.** **List interviewees' names, titles.**	9:30-11:00	**Superintendent Interview** Typically in the superintendent's office.
11:00-12:30	**Review Team Meeting / Lunch**				
12:30-2:00	**Classroom Visits**	12:30-2:00	**Classroom Visits**	12:30-2:00	**Standards Interview** **Note which of the 3 district standards this interview will focus on** (there need to be at least 2 interviews for each standard during the onsite visit). **Note meeting location.** **List interviewees' names, titles.**

Time	Activity	Time	Activity	Time	Activity
2:00-3:30	**Review of Documents** (Documents not available before onsite or randomly selected personnel files)	2:00-3:30	**Teacher Focus Group** **Note meeting location.** **Note which level** (there should be a teacher focus group for each level during the onsite). This group is open to all; invitation needs to be posted and announced in each school. The time can be adjusted for teacher convenience; specify convenient location. Personnel who participate in evaluating teachers should not attend.	2:00-3:30	**Standards Interview** **Note which of the 3 district standards this interview will focus on.** **Note meeting location.** **List interviewees' names, titles.**
3:30-4:30	**Elementary Teacher Focus Group** **Note meeting location.** **Note which level** (there should be a teacher focus group for each level during the onsite). This group is open to all; invitation needs to be posted and announced in each school. The time can be adjusted for teacher convenience; specify convenient location. Personnel who participate in evaluating teachers should not attend.			**Teachers' Association Interview** **Note meeting location.** **List interviewees' names, titles.** Only members of the teachers' association should be present.		
4:30-5:30	**Team Debrief**				

Draft Site Visit Schedule

Day 2—Day, Date

Time	Activity	Time	Activity	Time	Activity
7:30-8:00	**Review Team Meeting**				
8:00-9:30	**Classroom Visits**	8:00-9:30	**Classroom Visits**	8:00-9:30	**Standards Interview** **Note which of the 3 district standards this interview will focus on.** **Note meeting location.** **List interviewees' names, titles.**
9:30-11:00	**Classroom Visits**	9:30-11:00	**Classroom Visits**	9:30-11:00	**Standards Interview** **Note which of the 3 district standards this interview will focus on.** **Note meeting location.** **List interviewees' names, titles.**
11:00-12:00	**Classroom Visits**	11:00-12:00	**Classroom Visits**	11:00-12:00	**Review of Documents**
12:00-1:30	**Team Meeting/ Lunch**				
1:30–3:00	**Review of Documents**	1:30–3:00	**Standards Interview** **Note which of the 3 district standards this interview will focus on.** **Note meeting location.** **List interviewees' names, titles.**	1:30–3:00	**Principal Interview** **Note meeting location.** **List interviewees' names, titles.** All principals should attend, if possible.
3:00-4:00	**Teacher Focus Group** **Note meeting location.** **Note which level** (there should be a teacher focus group for each level during the onsite). This group is open to all; invitation needs to be posted and announced in	3:15-4:15	**Town Officials Interview (for Administrative Systems reviews)** **Note meeting location.** Participants to be determined by the district and review team coordinator.		

	each school. The time can be adjusted for teacher convenience; specify convenient location. Personnel who participate in evaluating teachers should not attend.		
4:00-5:00	**Parent Focus Group** **Note meeting location.** All interested parents may participate.	4:00-5:00	**School Committee Interview** **Note meeting location.** All committee members should be invited, but interviews take place with sub-quorum groups.
5:00-6:00	**School Committee Interview** **Note meeting location.** All committee members should be invited, but interviews take place with sub-quorum groups.	5:00-6:00	**School Committee Interview** **Note meeting location.** All committee members should be invited, but interviews take place with sub-quorum groups.

Draft Site Visit Schedule

Day 3—Day, Date

Time	*Activity*	*Time*	*Activity*	*Time*	*Activity*
7:30-8:00	**Review Team Meeting**				
8:00-9:30	**Classroom visits**	8:00-9:30	**Classroom visits**	8:00-9:30 (1 hour during this block)	**Student Focus Group** **Note meeting location.** A selection of high school students representing a variety of grade levels and varying instructional needs may participate in the focus group. Students are selected by the school's leadership and/or staff.

9:30-12:00	Follow-up interview with superintendent	9:30-11:00	Follow-up interviews or classroom visits **Note meeting location.**	9:30-11:00	Follow-up interviews or classroom visits **Note meeting location.**
12:00-3:00	**Team discussion/lunch**				
3:00-4:00	**District Debrief** **Note meeting location.**				
4:00-5:00	**Review Team Debrief**				

Appendix A: Expectations for Review Participants

The review places a value on engaging the district in understanding its own systems and practices. The process is evidence-based and designed to promote learning and improvement. Clear communication among the district, its schools, and the review team is essential to the process. All review team members have extensive experience in the area they are reviewing, are governed by a Code of Conduct (see below), are objective, and limit disruption to teaching and learning.

Code of Conduct for Reviewers

1. **Carry out work with integrity**.

    a. Treat all those you meet with courtesy and sensitivity. Try to limit stress.
    b. Allay anxiety through mutual respect and valuing opinions. Show an interest in what is said.
    c. Focus attention and questions on topics that will reveal how well students are learning.
    d. Protect sensitive and confidential information, e.g., personnel files or educator evaluation documents.

2. **Act in the best interests of students and staff.**
    a. Emphasize that students come first and are at the center of the review.
    b. As much as possible, limit disruption to teaching and learning.
    c. Do not criticize the work of a teacher or anyone else involved with the school.
    d. Use classroom visits to understand instruction at the school. Classroom visits are not evaluations of specific teachers. Do not share specific feedback and information about individual classes with any school personnel.
    e. Except for the superintendent, do not identify any staff member by name. Identify individuals by position only, where appropriate, in both oral and written reports.
    f. Try to understand what leaders and teachers are doing and why.

3. **Base findings on evidence.**
    a. Findings must be robust, fully supported by evidence, and defensible.
    b. Findings must be reliable in that others would make the same finding from the same evidence.
    c. Be prepared to ask questions to establish whether a view is based on evidence. This applies, as well, to review team members' findings.
    d. Discussion with staff and review team members is part of the process to create a validated and reliable evidence base from which findings are made.

ESE preparation for the review

CDSA will assemble a review team that includes independent consultants with expertise in the district standards. Before the site visit, the district will send documents requested to CDSA. Team members will individually review these documents and other relevant information on the district provided by ESE. This will help them prepare thoughtful, tailored questions. The team will meet for two days at ESE before the site visit to review documents on the district, sort evidence, and develop district-specific questions for various stakeholders in the district.

The Department and review team coordinator will work collaboratively with the district to establish a specific schedule for the site visit that meets the needs of the district and its schools, to the extent possible. The district liaison will work to establish an appropriate schedule for school visits and set up focus groups that are appropriately composed. The liaison should work with principals to schedule times for principal interviews and teacher team meetings. The district liaison should not share the schedule with other district personnel until the review team coordinator informs the liaison that the schedule is final: schedules undergo numerous changes in the course of preparing for a review.

The site visit will begin with an introductory meeting with key district leaders. This informal meeting will give the review team a chance to introduce themselves and begin the ongoing communication with the district that will

characterize the review's joint process. If district leadership have any particular questions about how district systems are working, this is their opportunity to bring them to the attention of the review team.

During the site visit, the team will review documents and files and conduct a series of interviews and focus groups to gather information. The various interviews and focus groups are listed above; questions are based on indicators under each standard. The purpose of interviews and focus groups at schools is to understand the impact of district systems and practices on staff, students, and parents. The district may present the team with additional information at any point during the site visit. As it progresses, the review team may request additional documents, as well as follow-up interviews to address questions that emerge after focus groups and classroom observations. This will be the team's opportunity to make sure that the evidence it gathers is complete. In addition, the site visit will culminate with a final meeting with district leaders to wrap up the visit and explain next steps.

Methodology
The team gathers evidence from multiple sources including documents, interviews, focus groups, observed teacher team meetings, and classroom visits. Evidence comes from more than one source and is triangulated. This ensures that the team's findings are well-substantiated. In interviews with district personnel, the team checks for understanding by summarizing, restating, and asking follow-up questions.
While team members focus on assigned standards, the team looks at all of the evidence collected, makes connections, and looks for patterns and trends. The team considers the entire body of evidence in order to determine the impact of the district's systems on student achievement.

District Debrief Meeting
In the Debrief Meeting at the end of the site visit, the review team coordinator will wrap up the visit and explain next steps.

Process for the report
- After the site visit, review team members complete the analysis of information collected during the review and develop preliminary findings.
- Using the report template and report template guidance, each review team member takes responsibility for drafting the full text of a set of preliminary findings, based on all notes taken and evidence collected by the entire team during the site visit.
- Each team member brings hard copies of the full text of this set of preliminary findings and the evidence relied on to the written findings review meeting following the on-site review.
- Team members revise the drafts as agreed at the written findings review meeting, adding the recommendations. They ensure that the revised findings are backed by evidence.
- The team reviews the drafts of the recommendations, and if necessary the revised findings, at its recommendations meeting.
- The review team coordinator compiles members' drafts into one document; the draft is edited by Department staff, the draft is sent to the district for feedback, and the draft is further refined.
- The Department finalizes the report, including the recommendations, sends it to the district, ESE staff, and local senators and representatives, and posts it on its website at http://www.mass.gov/edu/government/departments-and-boards/ese/programs/accountability/reports/district-review-reports/.

Expectations for the review team coordinator

- Ensure adherence to the protocol. Exhibit the highest professional standards and be responsible for ensuring that the team does so. If there is a breach or perceived breach of the protocol, inform CDSA immediately.
- As the review begins, make sure that all review team members are scheduled for the interviews they need.
- Maintain and distribute daily team meeting notes.
- Conduct a daily review of the schedule with the team and ensure that all interviews, focus groups, and classroom visits are attended and go smoothly.
- Maintain good channels of communication with the district and schools at all times.
- Take responsibility for facilitating all team meetings on site.
- Schedule school and classroom visits on site.
- Take responsibility for organizing the team and keeping copies of team notes.
- Keep district and school leaders informed of the team's progress throughout the visit.
- Take appropriate actions to follow up on any questions by the team.
- Facilitate the team's District Debrief Meeting at the end of the visit.
- Write a section of the review report and oversee the writing of the entire report.
- Make sure that each team member's evidence is documented in the Dropbox and provide ESE with complete copies of the district documents reviewed by the team, the interview notes, and the observational evidence.

Expectations for review team members
- Adhere to the protocol and follow direction from the review team coordinator.
- Before the site visit, review district and school documents and participate in document review and question preparation; visit the website for the district and relevant parts of the ESE website.
- Arrive punctually for all team meetings and appointments in the district. Adhere to all deadlines.
- Participate fully and collegially on teams, take direction from the review team coordinator, and make any requests to the district only through the review team coordinator.
- Organize notes and additional evidence to share with other team members by the end of each site visit day; make sure the coordinator has all notes and other evidence by end of the site visit.
- Complete assigned section of report according to report template guidance, making sure that it is backed by evidence.
- Participate in refining the draft of the report, ensuring that it contains sufficient evidence, is accurate, and reflects the consensus of the team.
- While revising the draft and adding the recommendations, make sure that statements are backed by evidence.

Expectations for the district
- Explain the purpose and process of the review to all staff.
- Complete and submit the District Self-Assessment.
- Before the site visit, send the documents requested and work with the coordinator to finalize the schedule.
- Provide confidential team meeting space with Internet access and access to a copier and printer during each day on site.
- Provide a space for each interview (not the team room).
- Welcome the review team and recognize that of the goal of the review is to benefit students.
- Work with the review team to ensure that the visit runs smoothly.

- Engage faculty and other stakeholders to reflect on district systems and practices and their impact.
- Encourage and enable teachers to participate in focus groups.
- Provide the review team coordinator with any additional documents requested, including personnel files.
- Maintain good communication with the review team coordinator throughout the review, conveying any concerns or other feedback from staff.
- Respond to the review team's questions and provide additional evidence when necessary.
- Consider participation with Department staff in a Next Steps meeting.
- Consider presenting (or having Department staff present) the final report to the school committee.

Comment [l1]: Rob – look OK?

Appendix B: Guidelines for Classroom Visits

General guidance

Classroom visits are one source of information for the review team on instruction in the district. The team will visit a representative range of grade levels, focusing on core academic areas, especially ELA, mathematics, and science. It is expected that classrooms will be visited for no less than 20 minutes to allow the team to gain an understanding of the lesson and the classroom climate. Visits may be scheduled or spontaneous.

Classroom visits should reflect a typical experience for students and teachers. Teachers do not need to address the classroom visitor or provide an explanation of the lesson. The classroom visitor may walk around the classroom to review student work or classroom postings, if appropriate.

Classroom visits are NOT evaluations of individual teachers. Specific information about individual classes will not be shared with any school personnel. Review team members will not provide feedback to individual teachers.

Guidelines for the review team for classroom visits

- Record factual data on the Instructional Inventory using quotes, tallies, or descriptions.
- Label the Instructional Inventory with descriptive characteristics, not identifiers such as teacher names.
- Avoid distractions to the class.
- If possible, review samples of student work in folders, portfolios, or displays. Include specific examples when completing the tool.
- Talk to students (if appropriate): *What are you learning? Why are you learning it? How do you know if your work is good? What do you do if you need help?*
- Make sure that each class visit lasts about the same amount of time.

Guidelines for discussion during team meetings (all to take place in the team meeting room):

- All team members share evidence related to each characteristic.
- They state factual evidence and do not make judgmental or subjective statements.
- The team shares and tallies the evidence for all classes/characteristics.
- The team shares highlights (big ideas, trends, areas of strong practice, areas of need) from the aggregated evidence they collected.
- The team discusses overarching trends, strengths, and challenges observed.
- The team reaches consensus on the trends across classroom visits.
- A team member enters data into the visit tool spreadsheet and shares it with the team.

Appendix C: Review of Educator Evaluations

District reviews are, by nature, program quality reviews rather than compliance reviews. The only exception to this is in the review of teacher evaluations. Since it is so important to the improvement of student achievement that a district engages the highest quality teaching staff possible, the review team must carefully look at how teachers are evaluated and how their professional development is encouraged.

1. Based on the number of teachers working in the district, the review team will identify between **20 and 30 teachers** and ask to see the following documents for each of them:
   - Teacher self-assessment
   - Plan development (also called goal setting, teacher rubric analysis, etc.)
   - Announced and unannounced observation reports
   - Formative assessment/evaluations
   - Summative evaluations (also called teacher evaluations) if teachers have been evaluated during the previous school year

2. In addition, the review team will ask to see the following documents for **each currently serving administrator**, including the **superintendent**:
   - Self-assessment
   - Plan development (also called goal setting)
   - Observation reports
   - Formative assessment/evaluation report
   - Summative evaluation (also called administrative evaluations)

If records are kept online, the district should provide electronic access for the assigned members of the review team. If there are paper-based documents, hard copies should be provided. In the case of formative evaluations or classroom observation reports that are stored locally on laptop or tablet devices, the district should provide time for the review team members to review the necessary documents in their current electronic state.

The review team recognizes that in most districts, only about half the teachers are being evaluated each year. Depending on the date of the review, some documents on the lists above may not have been generated for teachers being evaluated this year. The district should let review team members know when a requested teacher is currently undergoing the process and provide what documents are available at the time of the review. When summative evaluations are available for the previous year, the district should include them, even if formative assessments are provided for the current year.

Appendix D: District Standards and Indicators

Leadership and Governance
1. Focused School Committee Governance
2. Effective District and School Leadership
3. District and School Improvement Planning
4. Educationally Sound Budget Development
5. Effective District Systems for School Support and Intervention

Curriculum and Instruction
1. Aligned, Consistently Delivered, and Continuously Improving Curriculum
2. Strong Instructional Leadership and Effective Instruction
3. Tiered Instruction and Sufficient Instructional Time

Assessment
1. Data Collection and Dissemination
2. Data-Driven Decision-Making
3. Student Assessment

Human Resources and Professional Development
1. Staff Recruitment, Selection, Assignment
2. Educator Growth and Evaluation
3. Professional Learning

Student Support
1. Academic and Non-Academic Support
2. Access and Equity
3. Educational Continuity and Student Participation
4. Family, Community, and Partner Engagement
5. Safety

Financial and Asset Management
1. Comprehensive and Transparent Budget Process
2. Adequate Resources
3. Effective Resource Management and Allocation
4. Financial Tracking, Forecasting, Controls, and Audits
5. Capital Planning and Facility Maintenance

Leadership and Governance: School committee and district and school leaders establish, implement, and continuously evaluate the effectiveness of policies and procedures that are standards-based, driven by student achievement data, and designed to promote continuous improvement of instructional practice and high achievement for all students. Leadership decisions and actions related to the attainment of district and school goals are routinely communicated to the community and promote the public confidence, community support, and financial commitment needed to achieve high performance by students and staff.

1. **Focused School Committee Governance:** School committee members are informed and knowledgeable about their responsibilities under the Education Reform Act. In their policy-making and decision-making processes, they are guided by improvement plan goals and informed by student achievement data and other educationally relevant data. The performance of the superintendent is annually evaluated based on the attainment of the goals in the district improvement plan, MCAS results, and other student achievement data. Together with the superintendent, the school committee creates a culture of collaboration and develops contracts and agreements, which encourage all stakeholders to work together to support higher levels of student achievement.

2. **Effective District and School Leadership**: The superintendent promotes a culture of transparency, accountability, public confidence, collaboration, and joint responsibility for student learning in the district and broader community. The superintendent effectively delegates educational and operational leadership to principals, program leaders, and administrators, and annually evaluates their performance in their roles based on the goals in the district and school improvement plans, MCAS results, and other relevant data.

   The district and each school take action to attract, develop, and retain an effective school leadership team that obtains staff commitment to improving student learning and implements a well-designed strategy for accomplishing a clearly-defined mission and set of goals, in part by leveraging resources. Each school leadership team: a) ensures staff understanding of, and commitment to, the school's mission and strategies; b) supports teacher leadership and a collaborative learning culture; c) uses supervision and evaluation practices that assist teacher development; and d) focuses staff time and resources on instructional improvement and student learning through effective management of operations and use of data for improvement planning and management (CSE #2).

3. **District and School Improvement Planning:** The district and school leaders have a well-understood vision or mission, goals, and priorities for action that are outlined in a District Improvement Plan. The plan's performance goals for students and its analysis of student achievement data drive the development, implementation, and modification of educational programs. Each school uses an approved School Improvement Plan (SIP) that is aligned with the district's plan and based on an analysis of student achievement data. District and school plans are developed and refined through an iterative process that includes input from staff, families, and partners on district goals, initiatives, policies, and programs. District and school leaders periodically report to the school committee, staff, families, and community on the extent of the attainment of the goals in the plans, particularly regarding student achievement.

4. **Educationally-sound Budget Development:** The superintendent annually recommends to the school committee educationally-sound budgets based primarily on its improvement planning and analysis of data. The budget is developed and resources are allocated based on the ongoing analysis of aggregated and disaggregated student assessment data to assure the budget's effectiveness in supporting improved achievement for all student populations. District leaders promote equity by distinguishing among the needs of individual schools' populations and allocating adequate resources to the schools and students with greater needs. Each school's administrators are actively involved in the development of its budget.

5. **Effective District Systems for School Support and Intervention**: *The district has systems and processes for anticipating and addressing school staffing, instructional, and operational needs in timely, efficient, and effective ways. Using these, it monitors the performance of students and conditions in each school. The district also identifies any persistently low-achieving and/or struggling schools; makes any needed changes in staffing, schedule and/or governance; and supports an ambitious, yet realistic, plan for school improvement, including goals, timelines, and benchmarks, with explicit consequences for not meeting benchmarks. The district provides its lowest achieving and struggling schools with additional monitoring and effective support for improvement. (CSE #1)*

ESE priorities for leadership and governance, 2015-2016

- Clear, well-defined systems of supports for its schools, particularly its lowest performing ones.
- Central office personnel and practices that support the differentiated needs of schools.
- High expectations for student achievement that are reflected in policies, practices, and allocations of resources that support high quality instruction and services for all students.
- Constellation of health, behavioral, and socio-economic supports for its students, particularly its at-risk students.
- Promotion of high achievement through excellent classroom instruction and an effectively implemented educator evaluation demonstrating appropriate ratings of educators.
- An organized system of support with local and priority partners that demonstrate effectiveness in contributing to raising student achievement.

II. Curriculum and Instruction: The curricula and instructional practices in the district are developed and implemented to attain high levels of achievement for all students. They are aligned with components of the state curriculum frameworks and revised to promote higher levels of student achievement.

1. **Aligned, consistently delivered, and continuously improving curriculum**: The district and each of its schools have curriculum leadership that ensures consistent use, alignment, and effective delivery of the district's curricula. Teachers and other staff make effective use of curriculum guides for all content areas that include objectives, resources, instructional strategies, timelines, and assessments. The district has an established, documented process for the regular and timely review and revision of curricula based on valid research, the analysis of MCAS results and other assessments, and input from professional staff. *The district ensures that each school's taught curricula a) are aligned to state curriculum frameworks and to the MCAS performance level descriptions, and b) are also aligned vertically (between grades) and horizontally (across classrooms at the same grade level and across sections of the same course). (CSE #3).*

2. **Strong instructional leadership and effective instruction:** he district and each of its schools have leadership and support for effective instruction. District and school leaders address instructional needs and strengths that are identified through active monitoring of instruction and ongoing use of formative and summative student assessment data. *The district ensures that instructional practices are based on evidence from a body of high-quality research and on high expectations for all students and include use of appropriate research-based reading and mathematics programs. It also ensures that instruction focuses on clear objectives, uses appropriate educational materials, and includes: a) a range of strategies, technologies, and supplemental materials aligned with students' developmental levels and learning needs; b) instructional practices and activities that build a respectful climate and enable students to assume increasing responsibility for their own learning; and c) use of class time that maximizes student learning. Each school staff has a common understanding of high-quality evidence-based instruction and a system for monitoring instructional practice. (CSE #4)*

3. **Sufficient instructional time:** The district allocates sufficient instructional time for all students in core content areas. The allocation of time is based on analyses of student achievement data and focused on improving proficiency.

ESE priorities for curriculum and instruction, 2015-2016
- Curriculum materials are aligned to the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks.
- Where applicable, districts are sheltering content consistent with the sheltered English immersion (SEI) endorsement course.
- High rates of students are progressing through levels on ACCESS (ELL assessment).
- Districts have robust tiered systems of instruction or use principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to ensure all students can access the curriculum.

III   Assessment: District and school leadership use student assessment results, local benchmarks, and other pertinent data to improve student achievement and inform all aspects of its decision-making including: policy development and implementation, instructional programs, assessment practices, procedures, and supervision.

1. **Data collection and dissemination:** District assessment policies and practices are characterized by the continuous collection and timely dissemination of data. District and school staff members have access to user-friendly, district-wide and school-based reports on student achievement and other relevant data. All appropriate staff and community members are made aware of internal reports and external review findings.

2. **Data-based decision making**: The district is highly effective at analyzing and using data to drive decision making. District and school leadership annually review student assessment results, external and internal reviews, and other pertinent data to prioritize goals, maximize effectiveness in allocating human and financial resources, and to initiate, modify, or discontinue programs and services. District and school leaders monitor student achievement data throughout the year in order to ascertain progress toward goals identified in the district and school plans, and to make needed adjustments to programs, policies, services, or supervision practices. All professional staff members are supported and expected to use aggregated and disaggregated student achievement data regularly to improve performance.

3. **Student Assessment:** *The district ensures that each school uses a balanced system of formative and benchmark assessments to guide instruction and determine individual remedial and enrichment requirements. Benchmark assessments are given 4-to-8 times per year. (CSE #5)*

ESE priorities for assessment, 2015-2016
- The district has a structure to examine multiple sources of data at the district and school levels that is well organized and leads to decisions about instruction.
- Data literacy is apparent in the way most educators talk about or conduct their work (modifying instruction/decisions).
- District-wide Professional Learning Communities that are well organized and data-focused.
- EWIS and/or other Edwin Analytics reports are used to make decisions around prevention strategies for at risk students.
- Learning models that incorporate technology and teacher-directed instruction (blended learning) are prevalent and effective in classrooms throughout the district.
- The district is using the Schools Interoperability Framework to connect its student information system to the state for data reporting.

IV. **Human Resources and Professional Development:** The district identifies, attracts, and recruits effective personnel, and structures its environment to support, develop, improve, promote, and retain qualified and effective professional staff who are successful in advancing achievement for all students.

1. **Staff Recruitment, selection, and assignment:** The district has policies and practices to secure candidates who are committed and qualified to meet student needs, contribute to a professional learning community, and – in the case of teachers – provide high quality instruction in their content area. The district attracts quality candidates by appropriately compensating staff and by developing varied incentives and other strategies for recruiting and ensuring a diverse pool of high-quality candidates in hard-to-staff positions. Hiring and placement timelines, policies, and practices allow districts to recruit high-quality candidates in a competitive timeframe. Hiring processes include input from appropriate district stakeholders. During the hiring process, the district assesses candidates' proficiency in domains of the common core of professional knowledge and skills. All members of the professional staff have appropriate Massachusetts licensure. In the event of unfilled professional positions, individuals are hired on waivers and provided mentoring and support to attain the standard of substantial annual progress toward appropriate licensure. The district places a high priority on retaining and maximizing the impact of effective professional staff by providing new roles and opportunities for growth and a career ladder. The district provides administrators with guidance and support to make effective decisions regarding the selection and assignment of staff. ***The district ensures that each principal has the authority, guidance, and assistance needed to make staffing decisions based on the school's improvement plan and student needs. (CSE#6)***

2. **Educator growth and evaluation:** The district promotes a culture of growth-oriented supervision through a combination of formal evaluations and ongoing, informal instructional feedback. The district's evaluation procedure for administrators' performance meets the requirements of state law and regulation and is informative, instructive, and used to promote individual growth and overall effectiveness. Compensation and continued employment for administrators are linked to evidence of effectiveness, as assessed by improvement in student performance and other relevant school data. Through effective supervision practices, administrators identify the strengths and needs of assigned staff in order to plan effective implementation of district and school initiatives, assess the application of skills and practices learned from professional development, provide struggling staff with opportunities for additional professional development and support and provide frequent, high-quality feedback focused on professional growth. The district ensures that school leaders regularly use evidence-based supervision processes to monitor and support teachers to meet instructional and program expectations based on high standards of performance aligned to the common core of professional knowledge and skills. The district's evaluation procedure for teachers' performance is aligned to the supervision process, incorporates multiple sources of data including student achievement results, effectively implemented by trained administrators, and fulfills the requirements of state law and regulation. The district has identified variegated strategies for supporting and developing struggling teachers and has dismissed or demoted educators who do not meet evaluation criteria over time. The district ensures that school administrators receive the guidance and support to effectively use the formal evaluation process to hold staff accountable to high professional expectations for performance.

3. *Professional learning:* District and school organization, culture, and structures create a climate conducive to adult learning through effective communication, ongoing professional improvement, and joint responsibility for student learning. The district maintains a strong commitment to creating and sustaining a professional development program that supports educators at all stages in their careers. Professional development programs and services are based on district priorities, information about staff needs, student achievement data, and assessments of instructional practices and programs at each school. Programs progress

developmentally and differentiate for educators' different areas of responsibility and levels of expertise and experience. The district supports teacher leadership and growth by creating opportunities for exemplary teachers to have responsibility for instructional leadership and mentoring. ***Professional development includes: a) both job-embedded and individually pursued learning, including content-based learning, that enhances a teacher's knowledge and skills; and b) structures for collaboration that enable teachers to have regular, frequent department and/or grade-level common planning and meeting time that is used to improve implementation of the curriculum and instructional practice. (CSE #7)***

ESE priorities for human resources and professional development, 2015-2016
- The district has implemented an educator evaluation system aligned with the state model.
- Based on the use of observational and other data, all educators have been rated appropriately.
- The district provides ample opportunities for teachers to assume leadership roles and positions.
- The district provides high quality professional development based on the Professional Development Standards.
- Professional development is differentiated to meet the needs of all educators.

Student Support: The district provides quality programs for all students that are comprehensive, accessible and rigorous. Student academic support services and district discipline and behavior practices address the needs of all students. The district is effective in maintaining high rates of attendance for students and staff and retains the participation of students through graduation.

1. **Academic support:** The district has policies, procedures, and practices that promote student high achievement, support course completion, reduce grade retention, and encourage on-time graduation. ***The district has an effective system for identifying all students who are not performing at grade level. Each school schedule is designed to provide adequate learning time for all students in core subjects. For students not yet on track to proficiency in English language arts or mathematics, the district ensures that each school provides additional time and support for individualized instruction through tiered instruction, a data-driven approach to prevention, early detection, and support for students who experience learning or behavioral challenges, including but not limited to students with disabilities and English language learners. (CSE #8)***

2. **Access and equity:** District and school staff members work to close proficiency gaps by using aggregated and disaggregated data on student participation and achievement to adjust policies and practices and to provide additional programs or supports. Inclusive classrooms and programs that use an integrated services model minimize separation of special populations from the mainstream of school activity. The district and its schools work to promote equity through such means as increasing the proportion of underrepresented subgroups in advanced and accelerated programs. Beginning at the middle school level, leaders actively create pathways to ensure that all students are prepared for post-secondary education and career opportunities upon graduation.

3. **Educational continuity and student participation:** District and school policies and practices promote student attendance, which is continuously monitored, reported, and acted upon. They also promote and track staff attendance and participation; appropriate provisions are made to ensure continuity for students. District and school policies and practices also help all students make effective transitions from one school, grade level, or program. Entering and mobile students are promptly placed in educationally-appropriate settings using information from skill and other assessments when prior school records are not accessible. Transient and homeless students have timely and equitable access to quality programs supported by district oversight, policies, and practices to address their needs. Fair and equitable policies, procedures, and practices are implemented to reduce suspensions, exclusions, and other discipline referrals. Policies and

practices are implemented to reduce or minimize dropping out, and the district has practices to recover dropouts and return them to an educationally appropriate placement.

4. **Partnerships and services to support learning:** *The district ensures that each school creates a safe school environment and makes effective use of a system for addressing the social, emotional, and health needs of its students that reflects the behavioral health and public schools framework.[2] Students' needs are met in part through: a) the provision of coordinated student support services and universal breakfast (if eligible); b) the implementation of a systems approach to establishing a productive social culture that minimizes problem behavior for all students; and c) the use of consistent schoolwide attendance and discipline practices and effective classroom management techniques that enable students to assume increasing responsibility for their own behavior and learning. (CSE #9) The district ensures that each school develops strong working relationships with families and appropriate community partners and providers in order to support students' academic progress and social and emotional well-being (CSE #10);* such community partners and providers as human service agencies, corporate and civic sponsors, and higher education give students and families access to health, social, recreational, and supplemental educational services.

5. **Safety:** The district supports schools to maintain safe environments for students. The district has a comprehensive safety plan that is reviewed annually with local police and fire departments and is used to create aligned school plans. The district provides ongoing training for appropriate staff in dealing with crises and emergencies, as well as opportunities for all staff and students to practice safety procedures.

ESE priorities for student support, 2015-2016
- The district implements robust systems to identify and provide intervention for at-risk students in all district schools servicing all grade spans
- The district maintains high graduation rates and has a proactive dropout recovery program, including options for alternative education.
- Seniors complete and students in other grades are on track to complete MassCore requirements.
- The district provides career development education, including career awareness, exploration and immersion activities.

Financial and Asset Management: The district budget document is clear, comprehensive, and aligned to district goals including student achievement and educator effectiveness goals. The budget is created through an open, participatory process. The district pursues and secures resources to improve education. The district effectively manages its financial and capital assets and does the appropriate long-term planning.

1. **Thorough and Inclusive Budget Development**: The superintendent and school committee work together to leverage resources to achieve the best student performance outcomes. Budget development is driven by district and school plans; student outcomes data is used in both. Student needs drive resource allocation to schools. Leaders review revenue and spending trends and make projections to plan beyond the upcoming year. Stakeholders are involved in budget development. Budget development includes all funding sources; general funds, grants and other funds. District leaders manage operations expenditures efficiently through optimizing transportation, participating in shared services or cooperative purchasing, among other strategies. Partnerships with colleges or non-profits, virtual learning, etc. are used to extend education resources if possible.

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[2] *The behavioral health and public schools framework was developed by the Task Force on Behavioral Health and Public Schools pursuant to c. 321, s. 19, of the Massachusetts Acts of 2008.*

2. **Complete and Usable Budget Document**: The budget document and related formal presentation documents have clear and useful summaries as well as financial detail. The budget summary includes narrative about key priorities and how they are supported financially. The budget document includes all funds (grant amounts and expenditures may be estimated). The budget document includes trends information for several years, at least at a summary level. School committee holds a public hearing, and superintendent provides information to the public.

3. **Constructive Civic Relationships**: The district meets or exceeds net school spending. If the district does not meet net school spending, district and municipal leaders work together to plan to meet that requirement. District leaders understand municipal leaders' approach to defining the level of the district's appropriation. District and municipal leaders agree on a method for assigning education-related municipal costs to net school spending. District and municipal leaders have positive working relationships.

4. **Fiscal Health and Financial Management**: The superintendent receives regular reports and information from the business official about current expenditures and projections for annual expenditures, for all sources of funds. The school committee receives regular reports and information from the superintendent about current expenditures and projections for annual expenditures. The district regularly fully spends its available funds, without exceeding them. There is minimal carryover or return of funds to the municipality or to grantors at the end of the year. The district fully uses technology that meets its staffing and financial management needs, and integrates with the municipal system, if applicable. Management of staff and financial resources are integrated.

5. **Capital Planning and Facilities Maintenance**: Buildings are generally in good condition. The district maintains its buildings well. Buildings are neither overcrowded nor under-used. Technology infrastructure is updated. The district has a current capital improvements plan that includes a fiscal component. The municipality has supported capital projects in the past.