

# Targeted District Review Report



## Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School

Review conducted October 11-13, 2016

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Center for District and School Accountability

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and  
Secondary Education

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## Executive Summary

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At the time of the onsite in October 2016, Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School was focused on improving student achievement and school climate. During the 2014-2015 academic year, student performance data indicated that, for the second year in a row, the school's percentile ranking with regard to other schools of the same school type had decreased, in 2016 to the 21<sup>st</sup> percentile. Also, the school faced public controversy about school climate, specifically equity and discrimination issues.

The school climate matter led to teacher and administrator resignations and coincided with the planned retirement of the superintendent. In October 2015 the school committee designated a long-time teacher and school administrator to replace the retiring superintendent. In November 2015 the newly appointed superintendent assumed leadership and moved swiftly to address both challenges.

The superintendent addressed the matter of declining student achievement by redefining the responsibilities of school administrators and providing clear lines of authority. The academic and vocational principals were designated the school's instructional leaders, a move that removed them from near total involvement in disciplinary issues and enabled them to spend more time observing instruction and evaluating staff. Also, the 27-member leadership team met less frequently, and small groups of staff met more frequently.

An outside organization was brought in to help the school better understand school climate. After conducting interviews and surveys, in spring 2016 the organization made four recommendations that provided direction for the school as it undertook to address the issues. During the summer 2016 the superintendent began implementing a comprehensive plan to improve school climate by addressing the cultural competence needs the organization had identified. The superintendent directed that the 2016-2017 school year begin with professional development (PD) focused solely on the cultural competence needs described in the recommendations.

The review team found considerable strength in the smooth operation of the school as teachers and students moved through their day, both friendly and focused. The district's budget development process was orderly and inclusive.

The review team's observations of instruction confirmed the school's recognition of declining student achievement. In observed classrooms, review team members consistently found instruction in vocational classes more effective than that in academic classes. Reviewers frequently found observed academic classes to be teacher-led with limited student involvement.

Although district leaders were moving deliberately to address matters of cultural competence and to strengthen educational leadership, the systems needed to support the school as it implemented change were not sufficiently strong. The district did not have a District Improvement Plan that serves as an action plan with essential components to guide efforts to attain strategic goals. Staff evaluations were not consistently providing educators with clear, specific feedback to improve instruction along with

recommendations that might contribute to their growth. And---with the exception of PD about cultural competence---PD was not addressing the school's broad educational needs. Also, improvement planning was not informing decisions for resource allocation when planning the budget. Finally, operations in the business department needed attention; purchasing practices were inconsistent and the district was not providing comprehensive budget documents and financial information to stakeholders.

The superintendent, the principals, and the school committee are at the early stages of identifying the school's challenges and addressing them. Their decisive and swift response to the school climate issues bodes well for the school as it tackles improvement planning, classroom instruction, educator evaluation, professional development, practices in the business office, as well as resource allocation and budget development.

# Greater New Bedford RVTHS Targeted District Review Overview

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## Purpose

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

Districts whose performance level places them in Level 2 of ESE's framework for district accountability and assistance will typically participate in a targeted district review (Level 3 and Level 4 districts typically receive a comprehensive review). Other relevant factors are taken into consideration when determining if a district will participate in a targeted or comprehensive review.

## Methodology

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

This targeted review by the Center for District and School Accountability (CDSA) focused on the following standards: Leadership and Governance, Instruction, Human Resources and Professional Development, and Financial and Asset Management.

## Site Visit

The site visit to the Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School was conducted from October 11- 13, 2016. The site visit included 17.5 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 54 stakeholders, including school committee members, district administrators, school staff, and students. The review team conducted 1 focus group with 19 teachers.

A list of review team members, information about review activities, and the site visit schedule are in Appendix A, and Appendix B provides information about enrollment, student performance, and expenditures. The team observed classroom instructional practice in 42 classrooms in the school. The team collected data using an instructional inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching. This data is contained in Appendix C.

## **District Profile**

Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School serves students in grades 9-12 from the towns of New Bedford, Dartmouth, and Fairhaven. The school district has a regional school committee form of government and the chair of the school committee is elected. The eight members of the school committee meet bi-weekly. School committee members are viewed as direct representatives of town officials and report directly to them because the district's regional agreement requires that school committee members be appointed by their town officials instead of elected by town residents.

The current superintendent has been in the position since November 2015. The district leadership team includes: the academic and vocational principals; the director of guidance/pupil personnel services; the business manager; the special education director; the director of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and accountability; and the scheduling coordinator. Central office positions increased in the 2016-2017 school year with the appointment of the director of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and accountability. The district has two principals leading the school. There are 19 other school administrators, including assistant principals, department heads, cluster coordinators, and a technology director. In 2015-2016, there were 176.3 teachers in the district.

In the 2015-2016 school year, 2,170 students were enrolled in the district's single school.<sup>1</sup>

Between 2012 and 2016 student enrollment increased from 2,140 to 2,170. Enrollment figures by race/ethnicity and high needs populations (i.e., students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, and English language learners (ELLs) and former ELLs) as compared with the state are provided in Tables B1a and B1b in Appendix B.

Total in-district per-pupil expenditures were lower than the median in-district per pupil expenditures for 8 vocational/agricultural districts of similar size (>1,000 students) in fiscal year 2015: \$18,592 as compared with \$18,670. Actual net school spending has been above what is required by the Chapter 70 state education aid program, as shown in Table B6 in Appendix B.

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<sup>1</sup> As of October 1, 2015

## Student Performance

### District and Subgroup Results

The Greater New Bedford Regional Technical Vocational School District is a Level 2 district because Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School is in Level 2 for not meeting its gap narrowing targets for all students with a cumulative PPI of 66 and 73 for high needs students; the target is 75.

**Table 2: Greater New Bedford RTSD  
District and School PPI, Percentile, and Level 2013–2016**

School	Group	Annual PPI				Cumulative PPI	School Percentile	Accountability Level
		2013	2014	2015	2016			
Greater New Bedford RVTHS	All	75	61	50	79	66	21	2
	High Needs	75	71	71	75	73		
District	All	75	61	50	79	66	--	2
	High Needs	75	71	71	75	73		

Between 2013 and 2016, ELA proficiency rates improved by 4 percentage points for all students in the district and by 5 and 7 percentage points for high needs students and for students with disabilities, respectively. The 2015 ELA proficiency rate was 1 percentage point higher than the state rate for all students and was between 8 and 19 percentage points higher than the state rate for high needs students, economically disadvantaged students, and English language learners.

**Table 3 Greater New Bedford RTSD  
ELA Proficiency by Subgroup 2013–2016<sup>2</sup>**

Group		2013	2014	2015	2016	4-Year Trend	Above/Below State 2015
All students	District	89%	91%	92%	93%	4	1
	State	91%	89%	91%	--	--	
High Needs	District	84%	88%	88%	89%	5	9
	State	81%	79%	79%	--	--	
Economically Disadvantaged	District	--	--	92%	90%	--	8
	State	--	--	84%	--	--	
ELL and former ELL students	District	75%	71%	77%	71%	-4	19
	State	57%	52%	58%	--	--	
Students with disabilities	District	51%	70%	66%	58%	7	-1
	State	66%	63%	67%	--	--	

<sup>2</sup> State refers to the 10<sup>th</sup> grade state rate.

Between 2013 and 2016, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced in math declined by 4 percentage points for all students, by 14 percentage points for English language learners and students with disabilities, and by 10 percentage points for high needs students. In 2015 the math proficiency rate was 5 and 7 percentage points lower than the state rate for all students and students with disabilities, respectively, and 25 percentage points lower than the state rate for English language learners.

**Table 4: Greater New Bedford RVTSD  
Math Proficiency by Subgroup 2013–2016<sup>3</sup>**

Group		2013	2014	2015	2016	4-Year Trend	Above/Below State 2015
All students	District	78%	74%	73%	74%	-4	-5
	State	80%	78%	78%	--	--	
High Needs	District	74%	67%	61%	64%	-10	3
	State	61%	60%	58%	--	--	
Economically Disadvantaged	District	--	--	67%	66%	--	4
	State	--	--	63%	--	--	
ELL and former ELL students	District	56%	21%	16%	42%	-14	-25
	State	39%	42%	41%	--	--	
Students with disabilities	District	33%	41%	32%	19%	-14	-7
	State	40%	40%	39%	--	--	

Between 2013 and 2016, the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced in science improved by 4 percentage point for all students and high needs students, and by 1 point for English language learners. In 2016 the science proficiency rate was 3 and 13 percentage points lower than the state rate for all students and students with disabilities, respectively, and between 13 and 15 percentage points higher for high needs students, economically disadvantaged students, and English language learners.

**Table 5: Greater New Bedford RVTSD  
Science Proficiency by Subgroup 2013–2016<sup>4</sup>**

Group		2013	2014	2015	2016	4-Year Trend	Above/Below State 2016
All students	District	66%	62%	57%	70%	4	-3
	State	71%	71%	71%	73%	2	
High Needs	District	60%	55%	47%	64%	4	14
	State	49%	49%	48%	50%	1	
Economically Disadvantaged	District	--	--	51%	66%	--	13
	State	--	--	52%	53%	--	
ELL and former ELL students	District	43%	14%	27%	44%	1	15
	State	28%	26%	27%	29%	1	
Students with disabilities	District	27%	34%	25%	24%	-3	-13
	State	33%	33%	35%	37%	4	

<sup>3</sup> State refers to the 10<sup>th</sup> grade state rate.

<sup>4</sup> State refers to the 10<sup>th</sup> grade state rate.



The district reached its 2016 Composite Performance Index (CPI) targets in ELA for all students, high needs students, and students with disabilities and in ELA and science or economically disadvantaged students. The district did not reach its CPI targets in math and science for all students, high needs students, and in math for students with disabilities and for economically disadvantaged students.

**Table 6: Greater New Bedford RVTSD  
2016 CPI and Targets by Subgroup**

Group	ELA			Math			Science		
	2016 CPI	2016 Target	Rating	2016 CPI	2016 Target	Rating	2016 CPI	2016 Target	Rating
All students	98.0	96.9	Above Target	89.5	93.5	Improved Below Target	88.5	90.3	Improved Below Target
High Needs	96.2	95.9	On Target	84.3	91.5	Improved Below Target	84.9	87.5	Improved Below Target
Economically Disadvantaged <sup>5</sup>	96.7	97.4	On Target	84.8	88.3	No Change	85.9	82.5	Above Target
ELLs	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Students with disabilities	85.6	85.4	On Target	57.0	80.2	Declined	60.3	72.2	No Change

Students' growth in ELA and math was moderate compared with their academic peers statewide for all students and high needs students and in math for economically disadvantaged students. Students' growth in ELA and math was low compared with their academic peers statewide for students with disabilities and in ELA for economically disadvantaged students.

**Table 7: Greater New Bedford RVTSD  
2016 Median ELA and Math SGP by Subgroup**

Group	Median ELA SGP			Median Math SGP		
	District	State	Growth Level	District	State	Growth Level
All students	41.0	--	Moderate	45.0	--	Moderate
High Needs	41.0	--	Moderate	46.0	--	Moderate
Econ. Disad.	39.0	--	Low	45.5	--	Moderate
ELLs	--	--	--	--	--	--
SWD	30.5	--	Low	33.0	--	Low

<sup>5</sup> The economically disadvantaged subgroup does not have a CPI target and rating because 2015 is the first year that a CPI was calculated for the economically disadvantaged group and will serve as a baseline for future years' CPI targets.

The district's rate of out-of-school suspensions was lower than the state rate for all students and for high needs students, economically disadvantaged students, and students with disabilities. The rate of in-school suspensions was twice the state rate for all students and for students with disabilities and above the state rate for high needs students and economically disadvantaged students.

**Table 8: Greater New Bedford RVTSD  
Out-of-School and In-School Suspension Rate by Subgroup 2013–2016**

Group	Type of Suspension	2013	2014	2015	2016	State (2016)
High Needs	OSS	2.8%	2.1%	1.7%	2.8%	4.9%
	ISS	2.1%	4.4%	4.8%	4.6%	2.9%
Economically disadvantaged*	OSS	2.9%	2.2%	1.7%	3.0%	5.6%
	ISS	2.1%	4.5%	4.6%	4.2%	3.2%
ELLs	OSS	--	--	--	--	4.0%
	ISS	--	--	--	--	1.9%
Students with disabilities	OSS	2.5%	2.3%	3.7%	3.2%	5.9%
	ISS	4.0%	6.4%	7.3%	7.7%	3.5%
All Students	OSS	2.5%	2.6%	2.3%	2.2%	2.9%
	ISS	1.9%	3.6%	4.1%	3.9%	1.9%

\*Low income students' suspensions used for 2013 and 2014

The district's four-year cohort graduation rate for all students was above the state rate by 1.8 percentage points and was higher than the state rate by 6.6 to 11.5 percentage points for each subgroup that makes up the high needs population. The district reached the four-year cohort graduation target for all students, high needs students, and students with disabilities.<sup>6</sup>

**Table 9: Greater New Bedford RVTSD  
Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates 2012-2015**

Group	Number Included (2015)	Cohort Year Ending				Change 2012-2015		Change 2014-2015		State (2015)
		2012	2013	2014	2015	Percentage Points	Percent Change	Percentage Points	Percent Change	
High needs	349	90.5	94.0	90.2	85.4	-5.1	-5.6%	-4.8	-5.3%	78.5
Low income	330	90.6	93.9	89.9	84.8	-5.8	-6.4%	-5.1	-5.7%	78.2
ELLs	19	100.0	100.0	--	73.7	-26.3	-26.3%	--	--	64.0
SWD	43	80.0	87.0	87.5	81.4	1.4	1.8%	-6.1	-7.0%	69.9
All students	504	92.3	94.4	91.5	89.1	-3.2	-3.5%	-2.4	-2.6%	87.3

<sup>6</sup> The four-year cohort graduation rate target is 80 percent for each group and refers to the 2015 graduation rate. Low income students did not receive a 2015 accountability rating because of the change to the economically disadvantaged measure.

In 2014 the district’s five-year cohort graduation rate was above the state rate by 4.3 percentage points and was higher than the state rate by 11.5 to 17.1 percentage points for high needs students, low income students, and students with disabilities. The district reached the five-year cohort graduation target for all students, high needs students, and students with disabilities.<sup>7</sup>

**Table 10: Greater New Bedford RVTSD  
Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates 2011-2014**

Group	Number Included (2014)	Cohort Year Ending				Change 2011-2014		Change 2013-2014		State (2014)
		2011	2012	2013	2014	Percentage Points	Percent Change	Percentage Points	Percent Change	
High needs	377	97.4%	93.2%	95.4%	91.8%	-5.6	-5.7%	-3.6	-3.8%	80.3%
Low income	357	97.4%	93.4%	95.4%	91.6%	-5.8	-6.0%	-3.8	-4.0%	79.6%
ELLs	--	71.4%	100%	100%	--	--	--	--	--	69.8%
SWD	64	90.2%	85.0%	87.0%	90.6%	0.4	0.4%	3.6	4.1%	73.5%
All students	543	96.7%	94.6%	96.0%	92.8%	-3.9	-4.0%	-3.2	-3.3%	88.5%

The district’s drop-out rates were lower than the state drop-out rate for all students and for each subgroup that makes up the high needs population.

**Table 11: Greater New Bedford RVTSD  
Drop-out Rates by Subgroup 2012–2015<sup>8</sup>**

	2012	2013	2014	2015	State (2015)
High Needs	1.7%	0.4%	2.1%	1.9%	3.4%
Econ. Disad.	1.6%	0.4%	2.2%	2.2%	3.3%
ELLs	6.3%	0.0%	2.1%	0.0%	5.7%
SWD	3.3%	0.0%	1.8%	1.4%	3.5%
All students	1.4%	0.6%	2.0%	1.8%	1.9%

### Grade and School Results

Between 2013 and 2016, the ELA proficiency rate improved 4 percentage points, from 89 percent to 93 percent, 1 percentage point above the state rate of 92 percent.

<sup>7</sup> The five-year cohort graduation rate target is 85 percent for each group and refers to the 2014 graduation rate. Low income students did not receive a 2015 accountability rating because of the change to the economically disadvantaged measure.

<sup>8</sup> Low income dropout rate used for the 2012, 2013, and 2014 economically disadvantaged dropout rate.

**Table 12: Greater New Bedford RVTSD  
ELA Percent Proficient or Advanced by Grade 2013–2016**

Grade	Number	2013	2014	2015	2016	State	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend
10	538	89%	90%	92%	93%	92%	4%	1%
All	538	89%	90%	92%	93%	--	4%	1%

**Between 2013 and 2016, ELA proficiency rates improved by 4 percentage points.**

- ELA proficiency rates for high needs students improved by 5 percentage points.
- ELA proficiency rates for ELL and former ELL students declined by 4 percentage points.
- ELA proficiency rates for students with disabilities improved by 7 percentage points.

**Table 14: Greater New Bedford RVTSD  
ELA Percent Proficient or Advanced by School and Subgroup 2013-2016**

	2013	2014	2015	2016	4-Year Trend
Greater New Bedford RVTHS	89%	91%	92%	93%	4
High Needs	84%	88%	88%	89%	5
Economically disadvantaged	--	--	92%	90%	--
ELL and former ELL students	75%	71%	77%	71%	-4
Students with disabilities	51%	70%	66%	58%	7

**Between 2013 and 2016 math proficiency rates declined by 4 percentage points, from 78 percent in 2013 to 74 percent in 2016, 4 percentage points below the state rate of 78 percent.**

**Table 15: Greater New Bedford RVTSD  
Math Percent Proficient or Advanced by Grade 2013-2016**

Grade	Number	2013	2014	2015	2016	State (2016)	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend
10	538	78%	74%	72%	74%	78%	-4%	2%
All	538	78%	74%	72%	74%	--	-4%	2%

**Between 2013 and 2016, math proficiency rates declined by 4 percentage points.**

- Math proficiency rates for high needs students declined by 10 percentage points.
- Math proficiency rates for English language learners and students with disabilities declined by 14 percentage points.

**Table 17: Greater New Bedford RVTSD  
Math Percent Proficient or Advanced by School and Subgroup 2013-2016**

	2013	2014	2015	2016	4-Year Trend
Greater New Bedford RVTHS	78%	74%	73%	74%	-4
High Needs	74%	67%	61%	64%	-10
Economically disadvantaged	--	--	67%	66%	--
ELL and former ELL students	56%	21%	16%	42%	-14
Students with disabilities	33%	41%	32%	19%	-14

The 10<sup>th</sup> grade science proficiency rate improved 4 percentage points, from 66 percent in 2013 to 70 percent in 2016, 3 percentage points below the state rate of 73 percent.

**Table 18: Greater New Bedford RVTSD  
Science Percent Proficient or Advanced by Grade 2013-2016**

Grade	Number	2013	2014	2015	2016	State (2016)	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend
10	524	66%	62%	58%	70%	73%	4%	12%
All	524	66%	62%	58%	70%	54%	4%	12%

**Between 2013 and 2016, science proficiency rates improved by 4 percentage points.**

- Science proficiency rates for high needs students improved by 4 percentage points.
- Science proficiency rates for ELL and former ELL students improved by 1 percentage point.
- Science proficiency rates for students with disabilities declined by 3 percentage points.

**Table 20: Greater New Bedford RVTSD  
Science Proficient or Advanced by School and Subgroup 2013–2016**

	2013	2014	2015	2016	4-Year Trend
Greater New Bedford RVTHS	66%	62%	58%	70%	4
High Needs	60%	55%	47%	64%	4
Economically disadvantaged	--	--	51%	66%	--
ELL and former ELL students	43%	14%	27%	44%	1
Students with disabilities	27%	34%	25%	24%	-3

## Leadership and Governance

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### ***Contextual Background***

In October 2015 the district school committee hired a new superintendent following a period of public controversy about equity and discrimination issues. The appointee, a thirty-year veteran of the school district, began his new position in November 2015. The previous superintendent retired as scheduled in October 2015 after six years in the position.

As the new superintendent began his tenure, he addressed the school climate issues with decisive action by bringing in an outside organization to interview and survey staff and to provide a report with recommendations. To lay the groundwork for implementation of the recommendations, the superintendent hired another organization to provide professional development (PD), kept the school committee fully informed, and held meetings with the community as well as with school administrations in New Bedford, Dartmouth, and Fairhaven.

To address declining student achievement,<sup>9</sup> the superintendent restructured the administration, providing clear responsibilities and lines of authority. Principals, assistant principals, directors, cluster coordinators, and department heads have the direction and the authority to carry out their duties. The district recently added a new position, director of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and accountability. The director of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and accountability along with the academic and vocational principals are to provide the school's educational leadership.

The district school committee credited the superintendent with doing an outstanding job in addressing the equity and discrimination issues. Administrators and faculty expressed the view that the superintendent began his tenure during a crisis and addressed the various issues directly.

The school community has approached the 2016-2017 school year as a fresh start and is committed to full participation in the PD provided to address needs identified in the report about school climate. Teachers and administrators said that the school is facing the challenges that have emerged and is moving in the right direction.

Over the last two planning cycles, the district has chosen to combine the District Improvement Plan and the school's strategic plan. The current *Strategic District Improvement Plan Timeline* covers fiscal years 2016-2018 and is a continuation of the 2012-2015 *Strategic District Improvement Plan*. The team did not find evidence of annual progress reports for either plan.

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<sup>9</sup> Student performance data indicated that, for the second year in a row, the school's percentile ranking with regard to other schools of the same school type had decreased, in 2016 to the 21<sup>st</sup> percentile.

## Strength Findings

### 1. The superintendent provides decisive leadership.

- A. The superintendent took decisive measures soon after he was appointed to address the issues of equity and discrimination in the school and to increase administrative effectiveness in raising student achievement.
1. The superintendent invited an outside organization to investigate issues of cultural competence in the school and to provide the school with recommendations.
  2. The superintendent also networked to determine which organization should deliver the professional development (PD) about cultural competence. As a result, he contracted with another outside organization to provide PD for administrators, teachers, and students in cultural competency.
  3. Within his first year, the superintendent reworked the school's organizational structure to provide clear responsibilities and lines of authority that would help the school to improve student achievement.
    - a. Principals now have full authority as the school's instructional leaders.
    - b. The school director positions (the director of curriculum, instruction, assessment and accountability; the director of guidance/pupil personnel services; and the director of special services) now have full authority for their areas of responsibility.
    - c. Assistant principals have been given responsibility for all student discipline, thus enabling principals to be the instructional leaders.
    - d. Former administrative staff meetings involving 27 administrators have been streamlined.
      - i. The superintendent meets with principals on Monday morning. The business administrator sometimes attends. The agenda addresses operational and strategic matters set by the superintendent with input from principals.
      - ii. The principals meet with their staff once or twice each month. The agenda addresses operational and strategic matters set by the principals with input from participants.
      - iii. Others are brought into meetings as needed.
      - iv. Individual department meetings take place during the monthly in-service day.

- B.** The superintendent is participating in the Massachusetts New Superintendent Induction Program, which provides training and support for the development of an entry plan and district strategy, as well as ongoing leadership coaching.

**Impact:** The superintendent is promoting a culture of collaboration and joint responsibility for student learning.

**2. Many stakeholders have described the leadership style of the superintendent in positive terms.**

- A.** Principals characterized the superintendent as receptive to input and available for discussion.
  - 1. The superintendent and the principals have an open door policy.
- B.** School administrators described the superintendent as someone who listens, works with people, and is honest. They also reported that he is passionate about the school and always places students first.
- C.** Teachers stated that the superintendent is proactive, establishing committees to address issues. They also said that he is honest and provides full information about issues.
- D.** Students said that they see the superintendent in the morning, walking around the school, in the cafeteria, and at student events.
  - 1. In an effort to expand communication across the school communities, the superintendent told the team that he has established a Cultural Competence Committee and has requested that the student representative to the school committee also attend the Gay Straight Alliance meetings.
- E.** School committee members described the superintendent as dedicated to the student body and enthusiastic about the school. They also said that he is receptive to the school committee's suggestions concerning the equity and discrimination issues in the school. And they reported that one major reason the committee selected him as superintendent was that he had constructive ideas for improving the school.
- F.** The city council and the towns' boards of selectmen considered it a significant step when the superintendent met with them to address the equity and discrimination issues and to answer their questions.

**3. The Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School community provides a caring and supportive educational environment for students and staff.**

- A.** There is a strong positive relationship among and between students and staff.
  - 1. Students described the school as having a "family atmosphere and said that the "relationships we've made here are going to last." They said that they are "being taught by



professionals in [their] field”, that they “can always find someone to talk to,” and that “teachers are willing to help you do better.”

2. Parents described the school as having a feeling of “general friendliness” and “comfort,” noting: “People are happy to give you directions,” and “Somebody’s always trying to help.”
  3. Faculty said that “students are happy and engaged” at the school and “teachers are empathetic to students’ needs, giving them the opportunities they need to build skill sets, and advocating for their needs.”
  4. Students in an early childhood class were observed “helping each other, and were not teacher directed.” In a chemistry class, “students worked in pairs and helped one another.” In a carpentry class, an observer noted “student–to-student help.”
- B.** Interviews and a document review indicated that the school provides a range of course offerings, student services, and activities to support struggling students, challenge high achievers, and enrich students’ high school experience.
1. On-site advanced placement (AP) courses are provided in English language arts and in European history. Additional AP courses are available through distance learning.
  2. The school offers eleventh and twelfth grade students who qualify the opportunity to participate in supervised, paid, on-the-job training in their career areas through the Cooperative Education Program.
  3. Students benefit from a large selection of extra-curricular activities and athletic teams. There are 30 student clubs and activities and 20 sports teams.
  4. Students receive support and assistance from teachers.
    - a. Teachers are available to provide extra help to students during the after-school help period from 2:30–3:00, and many teachers stay well beyond that to work with students.
      - i. One student reported, “A teacher will stay with after with me if I need help.” Another told the team: “There’s an after-school program in the library where teachers are there to help.
      - ii. When asked about the district’s top priorities, teachers responded, “Making sure the students are successful and achieve their goals.”
- C.** The faculty and staff feel valued and secure in their employment and their work environment.
1. Faculty characterized the school as a “great place to work” where “people are dedicated.” They described the superintendent as “proactive” and “up-front” and said there are “no surprises.”

2. Faculty reported that “procedures are in the employee handbook.” They said that if they have a problem, they can go to their immediate supervisor. If they need more help, they can “go to HR [and] arrange mediation.”
3. According to ESE data, in recent years teacher retention has been 95 percent or higher.

**D. Students feel safe.**

1. Students described the school as “a really safe environment” in which rules “are fairly enforced” and “consistent.”
  - a. During the onsite visit, review team members noted that halls were orderly, students were well disciplined; and staff and students were generally smiling and pleasant.

**Impact:** Students who feel supported and are part of a caring community are better able to focus on their educational and career goals. Likewise, faculty and staff in this environment are able to focus on improving instruction and creating an enriched educational experience for students.

## Challenges and Areas for Growth

**4. The district does not have a comprehensive, actionable District Improvement Plan.**

- A.** The district has a three-year strategic plan, *FY16-FY18 Strategic District Improvement Plan Timeline*. However, this plan does not serve as an action plan with essential components to guide efforts to attain strategic goals.
  1. Although the district has highlighted strategic goals in the strategic plan and designated staff with primary responsibilities for achieving these goals, it has not identified measurable evidence, outcomes, indicators, and specific student performance goals based on achievement data to indicate that goals have been achieved.
- B.** The *FY16-FY18 Strategic District Improvement Plan Timeline* does not include the resources needed to complete the strategies or achieve the goals outlined in the plan.
  1. For example, the goal that specifies “Improved instruction, learning and support in core areas” includes strategies for professional development, expansion of Advanced Placement courses, and the purchase of IPADs. However, there is no indication of the cost or the resources needed.
- C.** The majority of the strategic plan’s goals are not SMART (Specific and Strategic; Measurable; Action-oriented; Rigorous, Realistic, and Results-Focused; and Timed and Tracked), and are repeated or reworded from the previous strategic plan.

1. For example, 44 of the 50 goals in the *FY16-FY18 Strategic District Improvement Plan Timeline* are identical or reworded from the *2012-2015 Strategic District Improvement Plan* suggesting little progress on these goals over the life of the 2012-2015 plan. Only 6 goals in the FY16-FY18 plan are new to that plan.
  2. The FY16-FY18 plan has a number of goal statements that are action-oriented, but do not indicate how progress will be measured or tracked.
    - a. For example, the goal statement for improving teaching and learning states, “Improve instruction, learning and support in core areas.”
    - b. The first goal statement for Common Core Alignment and Comment Assessment states, “Align curriculum to meet common core requirements.”
    - c. Other action-oriented goals are “Improve use of DCAP [District Curriculum Accommodation Plan] and IST [Instructional Support Team],” “Increase the achievement of our special education students in mathematics on the MCAS,” and “Increase overall achievement on MCAS testing.”
- D.** The *FY16-FY18 Strategic District Improvement Plan Timeline* does not contain all the elements needed to ensure progress and accountability for meeting strategic goals.
1. The FY16-FY18 plan does not include benchmarks for each goal upon which progress could be measured.
  2. The 2012-2015 strategic plan includes a column assigning evaluation responsibilities for each strategy to an administrator. The FY16-FY18 plan does not include that column, making it difficult to ensure tracking of progress.
  3. The timeframe for achieving goals is overly broad. Thirty-five of the eighty-one timeframes are either three-year or ongoing goals. Forty-two of the timeframes are one-year goals thus making accountability and tracking difficult. Only 4 of the eighty-one goals specify more than the calendar year in which they will be addressed.
- E.** The development of the *FY16-FY18 Strategic District Improvement Plan Timeline* was coordinated, but not collaborative.
1. Administrators reported that they were assigned a specific portion of the strategic plan’s timeline to update and information on who should receive the updated timeline.
  2. The superintendent told the team that the FY16-FY18 strategic plan was directed and created “top-down” with no participation from stakeholders outside the faculty and administration.
  3. A review of the FY16-FY18 strategic plan indicated a revised timeline, but did not suggest an update of other elements of the plan, namely the Introduction, Mission, and Philosophy.

**Impact:** Without a clearly articulated, complete, and comprehensive District Improvement Plan, the district and the community cannot systematically implement, monitor, and refine continuous improvement initiatives or keep the community informed concerning the district's progress in meeting improvement priorities.

**5. District leadership has not developed sufficiently collaborative relations and clear lines of communications with regional member communities and municipal officials.**

**A.** School district leadership has not established a fully inclusive process to facilitate communication and participation about the direction, progress, and needs of the regional vocational school district.

1. The superintendent told the team that external stakeholders did not participate in the development of the *FY16-FY18 Strategic District Improvement Plan Timeline*.
2. District leaders said that external stakeholders are involved in the budget development process only when advisory committees for vocational programs make budgetary recommendations, as well as during the required public hearing.
3. School administrators stated that the development and monitoring of the strategic district improvement plan timeline has been an internal process with the goals and strategies developed by the individuals or groups responsible for the attainment of the goal.

**B.** The district does not sufficiently communicate with the regional member communities and municipal officials about changes, progress, and needs in the district.

1. For example, a review of minutes for six district school committee meetings between August 11, 2015, and April 12, 2016, indicated little detail about discussion and agenda items recorded in the minutes, making it challenging for stakeholders to understand what they entailed.
2. In addition, the superintendent's entry plan, "The Artisan Report," is not on the school's website.
3. The district's budget is not provided to town officials (see Financial and Asset Management finding 4 below).

**Impact:** Without adequate collaboration and open lines of communication between the regional school district and the regional member communities, the district misses an opportunity to ensure transparency and trust in relations with some stakeholders and some stakeholders do not have a full understanding of the district's mission, goals, and progress in improving student learning.

## Recommendations

### 1. The district should enhance its District Improvement Plan (DIP) ensuring that it serves as an action plan with essential components to guide efforts to attain strategic goals.

- A. Under the leadership of the superintendent, a working group with wide representation should analyze student performance and other data and develop a DIP or revise the existing district plan.
  - 1. It is critically important that this stakeholder group recognize, and be committed to, the role of the DIP in creating a blueprint for student success and achieving greater teacher effectiveness.
- B. The DIP should include the district's mission or vision, goals, and priorities for action.
  - 1. DIP goals should be SMART (Specific and Strategic; Measureable; Action oriented; Rigorous, Realistic, and Results Focused; and Timed and Tracked).
- C. The DIP's performance goals for students should drive the development, implementation, and modification of the district's educational programs.
  - 1. Professional development should be designed to support DIP initiatives and goals.
- D. The identified district priorities established in the DIP should be supported by appropriate allocation of resources that are clearly identified in the DIP and in the annual district budget.
- E. Principals should regularly report progress toward DIP goals to the superintendent, school committee, staff, families, and community.
  - 1. The district should establish procedures to review the DIP annually. Strategic activities and benchmarks should be adjusted when necessary to meet current conditions.
- F. This work should support the planning that the superintendent has been conducting as part of the New Superintendent Induction Program.

**Benefits:** By implementing this recommendation, the district will have a guiding document that ensures that the work in the school is intentionally designed to accomplish the district's short- and long-term goals.

#### Recommended resources:

- ESE's *Planning for Success* tools (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/success/>) support the improvement planning process by spotlighting practices, characteristics, and behaviors that support effective planning and implementation and meet existing state requirements for improvement planning.

- *What Makes a Goal Smarter?* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/eval/resources/presentations/SMARTGoals/Handout5.pdf>) is a description of SMART goals with accompanying examples. The handout was designed to support educators in developing goals as part of the educator evaluation system, but could also be a useful reference for the district as it develops or refines its DIP and SIPs.
- ESE's *District Analysis and Review Tool (DART)* ([www.mass.gov/ese/dart](http://www.mass.gov/ese/dart)) is organized by the District Standards and can help district leaders see where similar districts in the state are showing progress in specific areas to identify possible best practice.
- ESE's *Statistical Reports* page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/infoservices/reports/>) provides links to downloadable district-level reports on graduation rates, grade retention, dropout rates, educator evaluation data, enrollment, mobility, and other data.

**2. District leaders should take action to improve communication with regional member communities and municipal officials.**

- A.** The formal communication process for district and school leaders should provide structured opportunities to discuss district and school needs and provide a consistent message to stakeholders.
  - 1. Regularly scheduled, timely, and agenda-driven administrative meetings should be conducted.
- B.** The district should provide the proposed annual district budget to municipal officials following the completion of the internal budget development process and before the final vote of the regional district school committee.
- C.** The work group developing the District Improvement Plan (DIP) should include municipal officials and representatives from regional member communities.
  - 1. The completed DIP should be distributed to municipal officials and the communities at large.
- D.** School committee minutes of monthly meetings should be sufficiently detailed.

**Benefits:** Implementing this recommendation will likely mean improved transparency and trust in relations as stakeholders work to address the challenges facing the district.

**Recommended resources:**

- *Labor-Management-Community Collaboration in Springfield Public Schools* (<http://www.renniecenter.org/research/LaborMgmtCommunityCollab.pdf>) is a case study from the Rennie Center describing how a district improved collaboration, communication, and relationships among adult stakeholders with the goal of improved student achievement.

# Instruction

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## ***Contextual Background***

At Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School, students spend alternating weeks in academic and vocational classrooms. In observed classrooms, review team members consistently found instruction in vocational classes more effective than that in academic classes. Observers frequently found academic classes to be teacher-led with limited student involvement.

The reorganization of the administrative staff under the new superintendent may begin to address this issue. The two principals have been designated the instructional leaders in the school, a role the principals could not previously assume because they were so involved in discipline issues. Responsibility for teacher support and evaluation had consistently been assigned to department heads and cluster coordinators. Principals said that they had not been spending a significant portion of their time in classrooms either observing instruction informally or formally. Principals' newly defined roles will give them the authority to spend more time observing instruction, providing instructional feedback to teachers, and making recommendations that contribute to teachers' growth.

## **Strength Finding**

The team observed 42 classes at Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational Technical High School. The team observed 8 ELA classes, 7 mathematics classes, and 7 classes in other subject areas. Among the classes observed were 4 special education classes, 1 ELL class, and 19 vocational education classes. The observations were approximately 20 minutes in length. All review team members collected data using ESE's instructional inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching.

This data is presented in Appendix C.

- 1. Instruction in observed vocational classrooms was strong in most areas. State frameworks guide the instruction, and students work to achieve the competencies that will lead them to attain the learning objectives and pursue a path toward their career. The teacher circulates in the classroom, and students are focused on their individual achievement and growth.**
  - A.** Learning objectives for vocational students are individualized based on the week's lesson and developed in the context of the state frameworks for the particular vocational area.
    1. A document review indicated that vocational teachers track student competencies on Excel spreadsheets maintained in a shared folder.
  - B.** In 90 percent of vocational classrooms observed, team members found moderate and strong evidence that students were motivated and engaged in the lesson (characteristic #5). In 89 percent of vocational classes, observers found moderate or strong evidence that teachers facilitated tasks that encouraged students to develop and engage in critical thinking (characteristic #6).

1. In several classrooms, observers noted that when students had questions they turned to one another for answers, rather than going directly to the teacher.
  2. One observer noted “a high level of student responsibility marked by teacher oversight rather than assistance.”
  3. In a Legal and Protective Services classroom, students, rather than the teacher, determined what would be included in the crime report.
- C. In 95 percent of vocational classrooms visited, observers found moderate and strong evidence of a classroom climate characterized by respectful behavior, routines, tone, and discourse (characteristic #10) and noted that teachers used appropriate resources aligned to students’ diverse learning needs (characteristic #9).
1. Observers noted vocational teachers moving around the classroom and engaging with a number of students concerning their progress.
  2. An observer noted that a teacher asked students a series of questions but did not answer them. In this way, he encouraged students to do their own analysis of a problem.
  3. Observers noted new equipment in culinary arts and in media technology.

**Impact:** Students are more successful learners when they understand what they are expected to know and do, when expectations are high, and when the work is highly relevant to their future career. In addition, students engaged in their own learning and working with other students and the teacher to seek answers to questions deepen their understandings. And classrooms characterized by respect and a positive tone provide the best context for learning.

## Challenges and Areas for Growth

2. **In observed academic classes, instruction was consistently less effective than that in vocational classes.**
  - A. Instruction in academic classrooms was not sufficiently challenging, and differentiation of instruction to provide entry points for all students was limited.
    1. In only 52 percent of academic classrooms, observers found moderate and strong evidence of teachers encouraging students to develop and engage in critical thinking (characteristic # 6).
    2. Instruction in academic classrooms tended to be large group with the teacher occasionally asking questions and getting limited responses from students. In one instance, the teacher answered his questions himself.



3. In an honors class, individual students read the text aloud while others followed along in their books.
  4. In another honors class, students copied terms and their definitions from the white board into their notes.
  5. In another class, the teacher read the text aloud to the students while they followed along in their books.
- B.** In only 43 percent of the academic classrooms observed (10 of 23 classes), team members found moderate and strong evidence of students assuming responsibility for their own learning whether working in small groups, in pairs, or individually (characteristic # 7).
1. For example, students worked in pairs in two classrooms.
  2. Students worked independently on projects in a computer lab.
  3. In a biology class, the class did a sample problem together and then students worked a problem on their own.
  4. In two classrooms, students worked individually on work sheets.
- C.** In only 26 percent of observed academic classrooms, there was moderate and strong evidence of the teacher differentiating instruction so that the lesson was accessible to all learners (characteristic # 8).
1. In many instances in academic classrooms, teachers were lecturing to the whole group with limited participation by students. Teachers seldom provided entry points for students at various ability levels.

**Impact:** In academic classrooms, many students at all ability levels are not receiving the instruction they need to improve their achievement. They have insufficient opportunities to develop as critical thinkers or to assume responsibility for their own learning. Without adequate differentiation of learning opportunities, some students are unable to access the curriculum.

## **Recommendation**

- 1. The administrative team should continue to conduct learning walks to generalize and share feedback about trends observed, and discuss improvement strategies regularly with teachers.**
  - A.** The district should use understanding gained through the learning walks to inform the district's instructional expectations.
    1. Priorities should be sequenced based upon critical need and ability and included as annual goals in the strategic plan.

2. As the strategic plan is implemented, learning walks should continue to assess the quality of implementation and to establish new priorities as instructional practice improves.
- B.** The district is encouraged to provide opportunities for educators to discuss ideas and strategies related to instruction. These opportunities might include grade level, department meetings, faculty meetings, common planning time, or professional development days.
  - C.** Teachers should be provided with appropriate guidance and feedback on instruction.
    1. Job-embedded professional development should focus on elements of instructional expectations, and especially skills associated with making lessons accessible to all learners and providing opportunities for students to develop as critical thinkers.
    2. Principals, as instructional leaders, should ensure that teachers have the information and support necessary to meet the district's expectations for instruction.
    3. Teachers should receive frequent, specific feedback that helps them to continually improve their instruction (see the related Human Resources and Professional Development recommendation below).

**Benefits** from implementing this recommendation include clear and articulated expectations for educators for what constitutes high-quality teaching. This will provide a common language that will facilitate more focused feedback and professional development. A district that prioritizes high-quality instruction for all students creates and sustains a culture of continuous improvement, resulting in professional growth and increased student achievement.

**Recommended resources:**

- ESE's *Learning Walkthrough Implementation Guide* (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/government/departments-and-boards/ease/programs/accountability/tools-and-resources/district-analysis-review-and-assistance/learning-walkthrough-implementation-guide.html>) is a resource to support instructional leaders in establishing a walkthrough process and a culture of collaboration. (
- Appendix 4, *Characteristics of Standards-Based Teaching and Learning: Continuum of Practice* (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ease/accountability/dart/walkthrough/continuum-practice.pdf>) is a framework that provides a common language or reference point for looking at teaching and learning.

## Human Resources and Professional Development

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### ***Contextual Background***

For the 11-month period before the district review in October 2016, the district experienced a considerable change in administrative personnel, including the superintendent, the academic principal, the director of guidance/pupil personnel services, the technology director, and an assistant principal. In addition, a new position was added, a director of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and accountability. The director of guidance/pupil personnel services and the director of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and accountability were the only positions filled by external candidates. One factor contributing to the turnover was a public controversy concerned with equity and discrimination at the school. To address the matter, the new superintendent brought in one outside organization to better understand school climate and make recommendations to address the issues and another outside organization to provide related professional development (PD). The superintendent also directed that the 2016-2017 school year begin with PD focused solely on the cultural competence issues identified. Plans are in place to implement later in the 2016-2017 school year PD on co-teaching in special education classes and administrator training on the educator evaluation system.

### **Challenges and Areas for Growth**

**1. The district has not achieved consistency in implementing its educator evaluation system.**

**A.** Teachers' evaluations generally did not provide specific suggestions for teachers to improve instruction or offer recommendations that might contribute to teachers' professional growth.

1. Team members reviewed the personnel folders of 44 teachers randomly selected from across the district.
2. The team found only 17 evaluations that provided specific suggestions concerning ways for teachers to improve instructional techniques.
3. The team found few evaluations with recommendations that might contribute to the teacher's growth or that would support district goals.
4. Of the 44 folders reviewed, 22 had completed summative evaluations and 22 had formative evaluations. This suggests that teachers' evaluations are an embedded practice in the district since over a two-year period each teacher would have received a summative evaluation.
5. Team members found evidence that evaluators discussed teachers' annual professional development plans during goal-setting meetings conducted as part of the educator evaluation process.

**B.** The team also reviewed the personnel folders of all 16 administrators.

1. School leaders said that before the 2015-2016 school year administrators' evaluations had been conducted irregularly and inconsistently.
2. Of the 16 administrators' evaluations reviewed during the site visit, only 3 included suggestions about improving practice, and only 3 recommended professional development to contribute to professional growth.
3. Most administrators' folders contained a self-evaluation, SMART goals (Specific and Strategic; Measureable; Action-oriented; Rigorous, Realistic, and Results-focused; and Timed and Tracked), or both.

**Impact:** Without consistently providing teachers and administrators with clear, specific feedback to improve instruction along with recommendations for that might contribute to educators' growth, the district reduces its ability to systematically promote the professional competencies of its staff and to substantially enhance learning opportunities, classroom instruction, and academic achievement for all the district's students.

**2. The district does not have a professional development plan or a cohesive set of learning experiences driven by district improvement plans or student outcomes. In response to recommendations from an outside organization, however, it has engaged the entire school community in professional development focused on improving school climate.**

- A.** The district does not have a professional development plan that addresses schoolwide teacher, student, and administrator needs.
1. When asked about a professional development plan, members of the professional development committee provided a report listing three years of training and professional development offerings. In general, the offerings were tailored to a particular audience, for example, to meet the certification needs of teachers in a particular vocational area.
    - a. Most of these, with the exception of state-mandated training, were attended by individuals or small groups of teachers and/or administrators.
  2. The district has monthly released-time in-service days. Teachers said that topics for these so far in 2016-2017 have been "compliance driven."
  3. Professional development is coordinated through the professional development committee, but budgeted through the academic departments and vocational clusters.
  4. Teachers offered differing views about the quantity and effectiveness of professional development provided.
    - a. When teachers in a focus group were asked whether available professional development met teachers' needs, one teacher answered "No," while another replied

“Yes.” A third teacher said that professional development was provided monthly, while yet another said that professional development was not offered in his department.

- b. One teacher expressed the opinion that the new administration recognized that previous administrations “haven’t supported PD,” noting “That’s changing.”
- B.** Administrators told the review team that the district has a plan in place to develop and implement a professional development plan that meets the needs of individuals, groups of teachers, and the school.
1. Administrators have begun to do learning walks, using guidelines issued by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.
    - a. One of the goals for the learning walks is to gather data to determine the instructional needs of the school.
  2. The district has scheduled a four-day training conducted by an outside organization for administrators in evaluating teacher s effectively.
  3. Principals, department heads, directors, and professional development co-chairs spoke of a plan for a three-year grant-funded training program for general and special educators on co-teaching.

**Impact:** Without the development and implementation of a coherent professional development plan, the school does not have a mechanism in place to ensure that district staff are provided the tools and strategies necessary to improve student learning---and the goal of connecting the educator evaluation system and professional development is compromised.



## Recommendations

- 1. The district should develop policies and practices to effectively promote the culture of growth-oriented collaborative supervision and evidence-based evaluation that is the goal of the educator evaluation system.**
  - A.** The district should review its current supervisory policies, practices, and expectations to ensure that the quantity and quality of evaluative feedback, both written and verbal, is enhanced.
  - B.** Evaluators should serve as instructional coaches/mentors to educators, to provide them with feedback and guidance that is continuous, frequent, and focused on specific professional practice and skills.
  - C.** The district should support and monitor the skills and practices of all evaluators to ensure that they are regularly providing all staff with high-quality instructional feedback that is timely, informative, instructive, and conducive to their professional development and overall

effectiveness. All administrators should receive ongoing training to enhance their ability to observe and to analyze instruction and to provide feedback focused directly on professional practice, growth, and student achievement.

**Benefits:** Implementing this recommendation will mean improved outcomes for students and staff.

**Recommended resources:**

- The *Calibration Video Library* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/eval/resources/calibration/>) provides Massachusetts districts with a video training tool to support evaluator calibration around observations and feedback. Drawn from School Improvement Network's collection of high-quality educational content, the library includes 42 videos of K-12 instruction.
- The Online Calibration Training Tool (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/eval/resources/calibration/tool/enables>) enables educators to watch videos of classroom instruction from ESE's *Calibration Video Library* tagged to specific elements from the *Model Classroom Teacher Rubric*   and then individually assess the educator's practice and provide the educator with written feedback.

**2. The school should develop a professional development plan that is aligned with school improvement initiatives.**

- A.** The school should outline and document a set of learning experiences for its educators that is systemic, sustained, and aligned.
1. Working with the professional development (PD) committee, district leaders should create a PD plan for the district that is aligned with the strategic plan and the district's instructional expectations (see the Leadership and Governance and Instruction recommendations above).
    - a. As part of the plan, the PD committee should specify specific PD needs, determine how they might be met, and recommend adjustments in PD practices to meet them.
  2. The plan should address needs indicated by student performance data and trends from classroom observations. It should include goals focused on improving teachers' practice and students' outcomes.
  3. PD requires a long-term commitment by administrators and embedded structures such as facilitated team meetings, to convey and promote a common understanding of instructional practices expected from all educators.

**Benefits:** Implementing this recommendation will move the district toward high-quality PD. A high-quality PD program coupled with the resources available in the district will likely lead to improved student achievement.

**Recommended resource:**

- *The Massachusetts Standards for Professional Development* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/pd/standards.pdf>) describe, identify, and characterize what high-quality learning experiences should look like for educators.

## Financial and Asset Management

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### ***Contextual Background***

In recent years the district has met and slightly exceeded net school spending obligations. The percentage over required net school spending has decreased over the last 6 years, from a high of 6 percent in fiscal year 2012 to a low of 2.4 percent in fiscal year 2016. Historically, the three member communities have not been asked to contribute more than the required minimum contribution. Administrators and town officials reported that consequently the process of approving the operating budget has not been contentious. The district has consistently maintained Excess & Deficiency account balances in the 3 to 4 percent range and has appropriated \$650,000 from the Excess & Deficiency account as revenue for the operating budget for the past three years.

The member municipalities of New Bedford, Dartmouth, and Fairhaven have seen improvement in their financial conditions over the past several years. Both Dartmouth and Fairhaven have healthy free cash accounts of over \$5 million as well as stabilization funds in excess of \$3 million. New Bedford's free cash is over \$2 million with a stabilization fund of over \$14 million.

The school's one building was built in 1977. A recent school building project that involved an addition and renovations was funded by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) at 80 percent with 2 of the 3 member towns approving the remaining 20 percent of the cost. The project was completed in 2014. The building, grounds, and athletic facilities are attractive and well-maintained.

At the time of the site visit in October 2016, the business manager had been in his position for three months, and previously had worked as business manager in both a town and in a regional school district. The business manager told the team that he was familiarizing himself with the operations and needs of a vocational district as well as assessing financial practices and procedures in the district.

### **Strength Finding**

- 1. The development of the district's budget includes stakeholders through an open and participatory process.**
  - A.** Interviews and a document review indicated that the district has a budget development process that includes input from stakeholders at all levels.
    1. To begin budget development for fiscal year 2016, the superintendent informed 19 department administrators in October 2016 of the dates for individual department budget meetings with the superintendent, principals, business manager, and accountant.
    2. Then budget directives were sent to the department administrators who then met with teachers and staff to discuss budgetary needs.



3. Members of the budget subcommittee of the school committee are included in subsequent budget meetings with department administrators.
    - a. Subcommittee members meet with representatives of all cost centers over three mornings at which time they are asked to justify their budget requests.
  4. Cluster coordinators meet with their vocational advisory committees to discuss needs for supplies and equipment for the following year.
    - a. Principals told the team that these meetings are important because of the advisory committee members' connections to the related industries and community. Advisory committee members can justify expenditures based on their knowledge of new developments in the vocational area. Cluster coordinators can then justify budget requests to the principal.
  5. Teachers also request supplies and equipment.
    - a. Vocational teachers are asked how much money is needed per student. They also meet with their advisory committees to discuss equipment needs.
- B.** School committee members are involved and informed throughout the budget development process.
1. School committee members can then inform and advise their city and town officials on the activities and outlook of the district.
  2. School committee members are viewed as direct representatives of town officials and report directly to them because the district's regional agreement requires that school committee members be appointed by their town officials instead of elected by town residents.

**Impact:** Through an inclusive budget development process, stakeholders can feel assured that their needs and concerns are considered and addressed.

## **Challenges and Areas for Growth**

- 2. Improvement planning has not informed decisions for resource allocation when planning the budget.**
  - A.** Interviews and a document review indicated that the budget development process does not include a review of or alignment with improvement planning.
  - B.** The business office staff responsible for budget development indicated that they were not familiar with the *FY16-FY18 Strategic District Improvement Plan Timeline*.

- C. When asked about the budget development process, principals and business office staff did not refer to consulting or aligning the budget with the *FY16-FY18 Strategic District Improvement Plan Timeline*.

**Impact:** In the absence of a comprehensive review of and alignment between the *FY16-FY18 Strategic District Improvement Plan Timeline* and the budget, the district misses the opportunity to effectively plan and allocate resources for school, district, and student improvement initiatives.

**3. The district does not have a consistent system across all departments for procuring, tracking, and monitoring purchases (as specified in Section D, Fiscal Management, of the school committee’s policy manual), and some expenses are not assigned to the correct budget lines in the end-of-year reports.**

- A. The district’s purchasing practices differ among the academic, vocational, and facilities departments.
  - 1. Although the district has a purchasing/operations position, most purchasing is the responsibility of department-level staff.
    - a. The purchasing/operations position reports to the facilities manager and is responsible only for facilities supplies and major purchases such as paper for the entire year.
  - 2. Purchases in the vocational and academic departments are approved by cluster coordinators and department heads and are processed by their administrative assistants.
  - 3. A business office employee said that spending from vocational revolving funds is approved by cluster coordinators who are allowed to spend whatever amount they receive in revenue.
  - 4. Districtwide purchase orders are used only for purchases that exceed \$1,000.
    - a. A business office employee stated that the district’s policy only requires purchase orders for purchases that exceed \$1,000.
    - b. A review of the district’s policy manual did not find such a policy.
      - i. The manual states: “All purchases for the district shall be made in accordance with state law and the district’s purchasing guidelines. School purchases will be made only on official purchase orders approved for issuance by the appropriate unit head and signed by the business manager, with such exceptions as may be made by the latter for emergency purchases.”
- B. Academic and vocational department-level purchases are entered and monitored by administrative assistants in software systems other than the districtwide accounting system.
  - 1. Administrative assistants use an internal purchase order number for their departments and track their purchases in Excel or QuickBooks.

- C. At the end of each month, a business office employee obtains a list of department purchases from the administrative assistants and enters them into Munis, the district accounting system.
- D. In an effort to control spending, the business office has a practice of ending all purchases in mid-April.
  - 1. In response to a question on monitoring spending and the use of Excess & Deficiency funds, a business office staff member stated that the district has a purchasing deadline of mid-April and only makes exceptions for emergencies. The staff member said that a request for Excess & Deficiency funds in an emergency has never been needed.
- E. A review of the district's end-of-year-end reports showed that some costs are not included in the reports, and some purchases are not being assigned to the correct expense lines.
  - 1. When a business office staff member was asked about a decrease of over \$443,000 in school lunch costs from fiscal year 2014 to fiscal year 2015, the team was told that \$632,894 of expenses was not included in the end-of-year report for fiscal year 2015.
  - 2. When asked about an unusually high amount in the "Other Expenses" line under Business and Finance in the fiscal year 2015 end-of-year report, a district administrator found that \$591,777 of end-of-year encumbrances was reported incorrectly as an aggregate on this line. The administrator stated that these outstanding purchase orders should have been reported on the budget line where they would reflect a related expense.
    - a. An amount of \$736,560 was charged to the "Other Expenses" line under Business and Finance in the fiscal year 2014 end-of-year report suggesting a practice of incorrect expense category assignments.

**Impact:** Without a consistent procedure for procuring, tracking, and monitoring supplies and services, the district cannot accurately assess its financial position at any given time. As a result, district spending might exceed revenue or the district might miss opportunities to procure additional supplies or services. Incorrect assignment of expenses presents an inaccurate picture of how the district is spending its funds and can make budget development difficult. It also can result in inaccurate reporting.

**4. The district's final budget document does not include all sources of revenue and the document is not easily accessible to all stakeholders.**

- A. Revenue from special revenue sources and corresponding expenses are not included in the district's budget document.
  - 1. Significant revenue from revolving accounts such as athletics, adult education, and lunch programs are not included in the budget document.
    - a. As an indication of the significance of the revenues, in year 2015 revenue from all revolving accounts totaled \$1,516,181.

- b. Revolving funds do not have budgets or spending plans.
- B.** Revenue from all grant sources and corresponding expenses are not included in the budget document.
- 1. Although a summary of revenue allocations from the previous year's state and federal grants is included in the budget document, revenue estimates are not included for the upcoming budget year.
    - a. Actual expenses related to the state and federal grants from the previous year are not included in the document.
      - i. Entitlement grant budgets are contained in the grant applications and are not in a budget document.
      - ii. Revenue from competitive grants is not included in the budget document.
      - iii. Competitive grant budgets are listed as a total in a summary compiled by the grants administrator, but this summary is not shared with the school committee.
- C.** Approved budget documents are not distributed to stakeholders beyond the school committee, and they are not easily accessible to the public.
- 1. The fiscal year budget document is not shared with most stakeholders.
    - a. The district's budget is not sent to parents or town officials.
      - i. Town officials receive only their individual assessment totals for the operating budget, transportation, and any capital assessment to be voted upon and approved at town meetings or by the city council.
      - ii. A business office staff member stated that the budget document would be copied and given to anyone who requests it but the employee was not aware of any such request.
  - 2. There is no information on the district's website concerning financial data or financial operations.

**Impact:** By not providing comprehensive budget documents and financial information to its stakeholders, the district may be missing an opportunity to strengthen the trust and confidence needed for continued financial support.

## Recommendations

**1. Aligned with the strengthened strategic planning process recommended under Leadership and Governance above, budget development should take a hard look at whether current resource allocation directly supports strategic improvement, and what reallocations may be needed to fully implement the strategic plan.**

- A.** Key aspects of the strategic plan should be included in the budget narrative, and specific statements about resources provided in the plan document for initiatives that have financial implications, for example, staffing changes, changes in class size, or new professional development.

**Benefits:** Implementing this recommendation will likely mean a greater shared understanding of the strategic plan and the budget, and more support for implementing the plan.

### Recommended resources:

- *Transforming School Funding: A Guide to Implementing Student-Based Budgeting* (<https://www.erstrategies.org/search?q=Transforming+School+Funding>), from Education Resource Strategies, describes a process to help districts tie funding to specific student needs.
- In *Spending Money Wisely: Getting the Most from School District Budgets* (<http://dmcouncil.org/spending-money-wisely-ebook>), authors Nathan Levenson, Karla Baehr, James C. Smith, and Claire Sullivan of The District Management Council identify and discuss the top ten opportunities for districts to realign resources and free up funds to support strategic priorities. Drawing on the wisdom of leading thinkers, district leaders, and education researchers from across the country, the authors gathered a long list of opportunities for resource reallocation. To distill these down to the ten most high-impact opportunities, each opportunity was assessed based on its financial benefit, its impact on student achievement, its political feasibility, and its likelihood of success relative to the complexity of implementation.
- *Best Practices in School District Budgeting* (<http://www.gfoa.org/best-practices-school-district-budgeting>) outlines steps to developing a budget that best aligns resources with student achievement goals. Each step includes a link to a specific resource document with relevant principles.

**2. The district should include in its formal budget document all revenue sources and should make the budget as well as other district financial information more accessible to the public.**

- A.** Revolving fund revenues and expenses should be included in the budget document.
1. Opening balances, estimated revenues, and expected expenditures should be included in the budget document.

- B. The district should include estimated revenue and expense information for all grants in the budget document.
- C. Historical budget and spending data should be included in the final budget document.
- D. Budget documents and other financial information should be posted on the district's website.

**Benefits:** from implementing these recommendations will include a comprehensive budget document that accurately reflects the financial position of the district and the responsible use of all available resources. Transparency about financial information will encourage confidence and trust in the district's leadership and its ability to provide the best education for all students.

**Recommended resources:**

- The Rennie Center's *Smart School Budgeting* ([http://www.renniecenter.org/topics/smart\\_school\\_budgeting.html](http://www.renniecenter.org/topics/smart_school_budgeting.html)) is a summary of existing resources on school finance, budgeting, and reallocation.
- *Best Practices in School District Budgeting* (<http://www.gfoa.org/best-practices-school-district-budgeting>) outlines steps to developing a budget that best aligns resources with student achievement goals. Each step includes a link to a specific resource document with relevant principles and policies to consider.

**3. The district should ensure that the district is following the school committee's policy on purchasing, and that all purchases and expenses are charged to the appropriate budget lines in the end-of-year reports.**

- A. All district purchases should be centralized in the business office as specified in subsection "DJ Purchasing" of the policy manual.
  - 1. The district should develop districtwide purchase orders to be used by all departments.
  - 2. The purchase orders could be paper or electronic as part of a purchase order module in the Munis accounting software system.
  - 3. The business manager should approve all purchase orders.
  - 4. Purchase orders should be required for all district purchases, regardless of dollar limit.
- B. The district should use ESE's Chart of Accounts as the guide for determining the correct assignment of expenses.

**Benefits:** Implementing this recommendation means that purchases will be properly approved and charged to the expense account that aligns with ESE reporting criteria, and that sufficient funds will be available to pay for purchases. In addition, accurate and timely financial information will be available for reporting, budget monitoring, and financial planning.

**Recommended resources:**

- *End-of-Year Financial Report* information can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/accounting/eoy/>.
- *Chart of Accounts---Criteria for Financial Reporting* can be found at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/accounting/eoy/>.

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

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### Review Team Members

The review was conducted from October 11-13, 2016, by the following team of independent ESE consultants.

1. Dr. Wilfrid Savoie, Leadership and Governance
2. Dr. Marta Montleon, Leadership and Governance and Financial and Asset Management
3. Dr. John Roper, Human Resources and Professional Development
4. Marge Foster, Financial and Asset Management
5. Patricia Williams, Instruction, *review team coordinator*

### District Review Activities

The following activities were conducted during the review:

The team conducted interviews with the following financial personnel: business manager, accountant.

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

The team conducted interviews/focus groups with the following central office administrators: principals; director of special services; director of guidance/pupil personnel services; director of curriculum, instruction, assessment, and accountability; and assistant principals.

The team visited Greater New Bedford Regional Vocational High School (grades 9-12).

During school visits, the team conducted interviews with 2 principals and a focus group with 19 high-school teachers.

The team observed 42 classes at the high school.

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

- Student and school performance data, including achievement and growth, enrollment, graduation, dropout, retention, suspension, and attendance rates.
- Data on the district's staffing and finances.
- Published educational reports on the district by ESE, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), and the former Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA).



- District documents such as district and school improvement plans, school committee policies, curriculum documents, summaries of student assessments, job descriptions, collective bargaining agreements, evaluation tools for staff, handbooks, school schedules, and the district’s end-of-year financial reports.
- All completed program and administrator evaluations, and a random selection of completed teacher evaluations.

**Site Visit Schedule**

<b>Tuesday</b> 10/11/2016	<b>Wednesday</b> 10/12/2016	<b>Thursday</b> 10/13/2016
Orientation with district leaders and principals; interviews with district staff and principals; document reviews; review of personnel files; parent focus group; and visits to classrooms for observations.	Standards interviews; interviews with town officials and school committee; interviews with school leaders; parent focus group; classroom observations.	Interviews with school leaders; follow-up interviews; district review team meeting; classroom observations; district wrap-up meeting with the superintendent, principals, and business manager.

## Appendix B: Enrollment, Performance, Expenditures

**Table B1a: Greater New Bedford RVTSD  
2015–2016 Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity**

Student Group	District	Percent of Total	State	Percent of Total
African-American	205	9.4%	83,481	8.8%
Asian	19	0.9%	61,584	6.5%
Hispanic	418	19.3%	176,873	18.6%
Native American	7	0.3%	2,179	0.2%
White	1,456	67.1%	597,502	62.7%
Native Hawaiian	--	--	888	0.1%
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	65	3.0%	30,922	3.2%
<b>All Students</b>	<b>2,170</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>953,429</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Note: As of October 1, 2015

**Table B1b: Greater New Bedford RVTSD  
2015–2016 Student Enrollment by High Needs Populations**

Student Groups	District			State		
	N	Percent of High Needs	Percent of District	N	Percent of High Needs	Percent of State
Students w/ disabilities	138	16.4%	6.4%	165,559	39.4%	17.2%
Econ. Disad.	721	85.8%	33.2%	260,998	62.2%	27.4%
ELLs and Former ELLs	59	7.0%	2.7%	85,763	20.4%	9.0%
All high needs students	840	100.0%	38.7%	419,764	100.0%	43.5%

Notes: As of October 1, 2015. District and state numbers and percentages for students with disabilities and high needs students are calculated including students in out-of-district placements. Total district enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 2,170; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 964,026.

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**Table B2a: Greater New Bedford RTSD  
English Language Arts Performance, 2013–2016**

Grade and Measure		Number Included (2016)	Spring MCAS Year					Gains and Declines	
			2013	2014	2015	2016	State (2016)	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend
10	CPI	538	96.5	97	97.4	98.0	96.7	1.5	0.6
	P+	538	89%	90%	92%	93%	91%	4%	1%
	SGP	473	47	35	40	41	50	-6	1
All	CPI	538	96.5	97	97.4	98.0	--	1.5	0.6
	P+	538	89%	90%	92%	93%	--	4%	1%
	SGP	473	47	35	40	41	--	-6	1

Notes: The number of students included in CPI and percent *Proficient* or *Advanced* (P+) calculations may differ from the number of students included in median SGP calculations. A median SGP is not calculated for students in grade 3 because they are participating in MCAS tests for the first time.

**Table B2b: Greater New Bedford RTSD  
Mathematics Performance, 2013–2016**

Grade and Measure		Number Included (2016)	Spring MCAS Year					Gains and Declines	
			2013	2014	2015	2016	State (2016)	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend
10	CPI	538	89.8	89.8	88.8	89.5	89.7	-0.3	0.7
	P+	538	78%	74%	72%	74%	78%	-4%	2%
	SGP	472	54	44	32	45	50	-9	13
All	CPI	538	89.8	89.8	88.8	89.5	--	-0.3	0.7
	P+	538	78%	74%	72%	74%	--	-4%	2%
	SGP	472	54	44	32	45	--	-9	13

Notes: The number of students included in CPI and percent *Proficient* or *Advanced* (P+) calculations may differ from the number of students included in median SGP calculations. A median SGP is not calculated for students in grade 3 because they are participating in MCAS tests for the first time.

**Table B2c: Greater New Bedford RTSD  
Science and Technology/Engineering Performance, 2013–2016**

Grade and Measure		Number Included (2016)	Spring MCAS Year					Gains and Declines	
			2013	2014	2015	2016	State (2016)	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend
10	CPI	524	86.2	85.2	83.3	88.5	88.9	2.3	5.2
	P+	524	66%	62%	58%	70%	73%	4%	12%
All	CPI	524	86.2	85.2	83.3	88.5	78.7	2.3	5.2
	P+	524	66%	62%	58%	70%	54%	4%	12%

Notes: P+ = percent *Proficient* or *Advanced*. Students participate in Science and Technology/ Engineering (STE) MCAS tests in grades 5, 8, and 10 only. Median SGPs are not calculated for STE.

**Table B3a: Greater New Bedford RVTSD  
English Language Arts (All Grades)  
Performance for Selected Subgroups Compared to State, 2013–2016<sup>10</sup>**

Group and Measure		Number Included (2016)	Spring MCAS Year				Gains and Declines		
			2013	2014	2015	2016	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend	
High Needs	District	CPI	232	94.7	96.3	95.7	96.2	1.5	0.5
		P+	232	84%	88%	88%	88%	4%	0%
		SGP	208	47.0	34.0	35.0	41.0	-6	6
	State	CPI	27,987	93.1	91.5	92.1	92.2	-0.9	0.1
		P+	27,987	81%	79%	79%	80%	-1%	1%
		SGP	22,354	54.0	46.0	47.0	47.0	-7	0
Econ. Disad.	District	CPI	213	--	--	97.2	96.7	--	-0.5
		P+	213	--	--	92%	89%	--	-3%
		SGP	191	--	--	35.0	39.0	--	4
	State	CPI	19,045	--	--	93.4	93.4	--	0
		P+	19,045	--	--	84%	83%	--	-1%
		SGP	15,505	--	--	47.0	48.0	--	1
Students w/ disabilities	District	CPI	33	83.1	89.9	86.9	85.6	2.5	-1.3
		P+	33	51%	70%	66%	58%	7%	-8%
		SGP	30	40.0	37.5	31.0	30.5	-9.5	-0.5
	State	CPI	11,703	88.4	86.0	88.1	88.7	0.3	0.6
		P+	11,703	66%	63%	67%	68%	2%	1%
		SGP	9,422	51.0	44.0	43.0	43.0	-8	0
English language learners or Former ELLs	District	CPI	24	92.2	91.1	88.5	88.5	-3.7	0
		P+	24	75%	71%	77%	71%	-4%	-6%
		SGP	15	--	--	--	--	--	--
	State	CPI	4,984	81.8	77.8	80.7	82.0	0.2	1.3
		P+	4,984	57%	52%	58%	61%	4%	3%
		SGP	2,812	65.0	52.0	59.0	59.0	-6	0
All students	District	CPI	538	96.5	97	97.4	98.0	1.5	0.6
		P+	538	89%	90%	92%	93%	4%	1%
		SGP	473	47.0	35.0	40.0	41.0	-6	1
	State	CPI	69,938	96.9	96.0	96.7	96.7	-0.2	0
		P+	69,938	91%	89%	91%	92%	1%	1%
		SGP	60,642	57.0	50.0	51.0	50.0	-7	-1

Notes: The number of students included in CPI and percent *Proficient* or *Advanced* (P+) calculations may differ from the number of students included in median SGP calculation. State figures are provided for comparison purposes only and do not represent the standard that a particular group is expected to meet.

<sup>10</sup> State refers to the 10<sup>th</sup> grade state results.

**Table B3b: Greater New Bedford RTSD  
Mathematics (All Grades)  
Performance for Selected Subgroups Compared to State, 2013–2016<sup>11</sup>**

Group and Measure			Number Included (2016)	Spring MCAS Year				Gains and Declines	
				2013	2014	2015	2016	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend
High Needs	District	CPI	230	87.1	87.0	82.9	84.3	-2.8	1.4
		P+	230	73%	68%	61%	64%	-9%	3%
		SGP	205	52.0	42.0	29.0	46.0	-6	17
	State	CPI	28,025	80.3	80.6	78.9	78.5	-1.8	-0.4
		P+	28,025	61%	60%	58%	56%	-5%	-2%
		SGP	22,393	45.0	47.0	47.0	47.0	2	0
Economically Disadvantaged	District	CPI	211	--	--	87.2	84.8	--	-2.4
		P+	211	--	--	67%	66%	--	-1%
		SGP	188	--	--	29.0	45.5	--	16.5
	State	CPI	19,056	--	--	81.2	80.5	--	-0.7
		P+	19,056	--	--	63%	60%	--	-3%
		SGP	15,529	--	--	46.0	46.0	--	0
Students w/ disabilities	District	CPI	32	58.7	73.9	65.5	57.0	-1.7	-8.5
		P+	32	33%	40%	32%	19%	-14%	-13%
		SGP	29	43.0	35.0	27.5	33.0	-10	5.5
	State	CPI	11,745	70.0	70.8	69.7	70.6	0.6	0.9
		P+	11,745	40%	40%	39%	39%	-1%	0%
		SGP	9,431	42.0	45.0	46.0	47.0	5	1
English language learners or Former ELLs	District	CPI	24	78.1	58.9	53.8	70.8	-7.3	17
		P+	24	56%	21%	15%	42%	-14%	27%
		SGP	15	--	--	--	--	--	--
	State	CPI	5,033	64.4	67.8	65.8	64.1	-0.3	-1.7
		P+	5,033	39%	42%	41%	37%	-2%	-4%
		SGP	2,847	45.0	53.0	53.0	50.0	5	-3
All students	District	CPI	538	89.8	89.8	88.8	89.5	-0.3	0.7
		P+	538	78%	74%	72%	74%	-4%	2%
		SGP	472	54.0	44.0	32.0	45.0	-9	13
	State	CPI	69,954	90.2	90.0	89.9	89.7	-0.5	-0.2
		P+	69,954	80%	78%	78%	78%	-2%	0%
		SGP	60,820	51.0	50.0	50.0	50.0	-1	0

Notes: The number of students included in CPI and percent *Proficient* or *Advanced* (P+) calculations may differ from the number of students included in median SGP calculation. State figures are provided for comparison purposes only and do not represent the standard that a particular group is expected to meet.

<sup>11</sup> State refers to the 10<sup>th</sup> grade state results.

**Table B3c: Greater New Bedford RVTSD  
Science and Technology/Engineering (All Grades)  
Performance for Selected Subgroups Compared to State, 2013–2016<sup>12</sup>**

Group and Measure		Number Included (2016)	Spring MCAS Year				Gains and Declines		
			2013	2014	2015	2016	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend	
High Needs	District	CPI	224	82.7	81.5	77.5	84.9	2.2	7.4
		P+	224	60%	55%	47%	64%	4%	17%
	State	CPI	26,929	77.7	77.5	77.3	78.2	0.5	0.9
		P+	26,929	49%	49%	48%	50%	1%	2%
Econ. Disad.	District	CPI	205	--	--	80.9	85.9	--	5
		P+	205	--	--	51.0%	66%	--	15%
	State	CPI	18,324	--	--	78.6	79.2	--	0.6
		P+	18,324	--	--	52%	53%	--	1%
Students w/ disabilities	District	CPI	29	58.5	71.8	60.4	60.3	1.8	-0.1
		P+	29	27.0%	34.0%	25.0%	24%	-3%	-1%
	State	CPI	11,630	70.3	70.0	71.2	72.7	2.4	1.5
		P+	11,630	33%	33%	35%	37%	4%	2%
English language learners or Former ELLs	District	CPI	23	71.4	50	63.6	71.7	0.3	8.1
		P+	23	43.0%	14.0%	27.0%	44%	1%	17%
	State	CPI	4,422	63.0	62.6	62.3	63.4	0.4	1.1
		P+	4,222	28%	26%	27%	29%	1%	2%
All students	District	CPI	524	86.2	85.2	83.3	88.5	2.3	5.2
		P+	524	66.0%	62.0%	58.0%	70%	4%	12%
	State	CPI	67,941	88.0	87.9	88.2	88.9	0.9	0.7
		P+	67,941	71%	71%	71%	73%	2%	2%

Notes: Median SGPs are not calculated for Science and Technology/ Engineering (STE). State figures are provided for comparison purposes only and do not represent the standard that a particular group is expected to meet.

**Table B4: Greater New Bedford RVTSD  
Annual Grade 9-12 Drop-Out Rates, 2012–2015**

Group	School Year Ending				Change 2012–2015		Change 2014–2015		State (2015)
	2012	2013	2014	2015	Percentage Points	Percent Change	Percentage Points	Percent Change	
High Needs	1.7%	0.4%	2.1%	1.9%	0.2	11.8%	-0.2	-9.5%	3.4%
Econ. Disad.	--	--	--	2.2%	--	--	--	--	3.3%
Students w/ disabilities	3.3%	0.0%	1.8%	1.4%	-1.9	-57.6%	-0.4	-22.2%	3.5%
ELL	6.3%	0.0%	2.1%	0.0%	-6.3	-100%	-2.1	-100%	5.7%
All students	1.4%	0.6%	2.0%	1.8%	0.4	28.6%	-0.2	-10.0%	1.9%

Notes: The annual drop-out rate is calculated by dividing the number of students who drop out over a one-year period by the October 1 grade 9–12 enrollment, multiplied by 100. Drop outs are those students who dropped out of school between July 1 and June 30 of a given year and who did not return to school, graduate, or receive a high school equivalency by the following October 1. Drop-out rates have been rounded; percent change is based on unrounded numbers.

<sup>12</sup> State refers to the 10<sup>th</sup> grade state results.

**Table B5: Greater New Bedford RVTSD  
Attendance Rates, 2013–2016**

Group	School Year Ending				Change 2013–2016		Change 2015–2016		State (2016)
	2013	2014	2015	2016	Percentage Points	Percent Change	Percentage Points	Percent Change	
All students	96.6%	96.6%	96.6%	96.6%	00	0.0%	0.0	0.0%	94.9%

Notes: The attendance rate is calculated by dividing the total number of days students attended school by the total number of days students were enrolled in a particular school year. A student’s attendance rate is counted toward any district the student attended. In addition, district attendance rates included students who were out placed in public collaborative or private alternative schools/programs at public expense. Attendance rates have been rounded; percent change is based on unrounded numbers.

**Table B6: Greater New Bedford RVTSD  
Expenditures, Chapter 70 State Aid, and Net School Spending Fiscal Years 2014–2016**

	FY14		FY15		FY16	
	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual
Expenditures						
From local appropriations for schools:						
By school committee	\$35,798,943	\$43,305,501	\$36,072,240	\$44,123,998	\$36,998,370	\$38,642,434
From revolving funds and grants	--	\$2,619,060	--	\$2,628,684	--	\$3,778,098
Total expenditures	--	\$45,924,561	--	\$46,752,682	--	\$42,420,532
Chapter 70 aid to education program						
Chapter 70 state aid*	--	\$24,084,676	--	\$24,138,401	--	\$24,469,332
Required local contribution	--	\$9,217,036	--	\$9,588,800	--	\$9,854,302
Required net school spending**	--	\$33,301,712	--	\$33,727,201	--	\$34,323,634
Actual net school spending	--	\$34,330,263	--	\$35,268,271	--	\$35,161,835
Over/under required (\$)	--	\$1,028,551	--	\$1,541,070	--	\$838,201
Over/under required (%)	--	3.1%	--	4.6%	--	2.4%

\*Chapter 70 state aid funds are deposited in the local general fund and spent as local appropriations.

\*\*Required net school spending is the total of Chapter 70 aid and required local contribution. Net school spending includes only expenditures from local appropriations, not revolving funds and grants. It includes expenditures for most administration, instruction, operations, and out-of-district tuitions. It does not include transportation, school lunches, debt, or capital.

Sources: FY14, FY15, and FY16 District End-of-Year Reports, Chapter 70 Program information on ESE website

Data retrieved 11/3/16



**Table B7: Greater New Bedford RVTSD  
Expenditures Per In-District Pupil  
Fiscal Years 2013–2015**

<b>Expenditure Category</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>
Administration	\$1,292	\$1,285	\$1,275
Instructional leadership (district and school)	\$1,177	\$1,241	\$1,210
Teachers	\$7,231	\$7,168	\$7,463
Other teaching services	\$742	\$740	\$684
Professional development	\$71	\$65	\$62
Instructional materials, equipment and technology	\$1,201	\$982	\$1,057
Guidance, counseling and testing services	\$525	\$543	\$521
Pupil services	\$1,681	\$1,584	\$1,445
Operations and maintenance	\$1,992	\$1,523	\$1,923
Insurance, retirement and other fixed costs	\$2,680	\$2,802	\$2,951
<b>Total expenditures per in-district pupil</b>	<b>\$18,592</b>	<b>\$17,933</b>	<b>\$18,592</b>

Sources: Per-pupil expenditure reports on ESE website

Note: Any discrepancy between expenditures and total is because of rounding.

## Appendix C: Instructional Inventory

		Insufficient	Minimal	Moderate	Strong	Avg Number of points
		(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(0 to 3)
<b>Focus Area #1: Learning Objectives &amp; Instruction</b>						
1. The teacher demonstrates knowledge of subject matter and content.	<b>V/Tech.</b>	0%	5%	21%	74%	2.7
	<b>Acad.</b>	0%	4%	39%	57%	2.5
	<b>Total #</b>	0	2	13	27	2.6
	<b>Total %</b>	0%	5%	31%	64%	
2. The teacher provides and refers to clear learning objective(s) in the lesson.	<b>V/Tech.</b>	6%	6%	35%	53%	2.4
	<b>Acad.</b>	13%	17%	26%	43%	2.0
	<b>Total #</b>	4	5	12	19	2.2
	<b>Total %</b>	10%	13%	30%	48%	
3. The teacher implements a lesson that reflects high expectations aligned to the learning objective (s).	<b>V/Tech.</b>	0%	11%	42%	47%	2.4
	<b>Acad.</b>	4%	30%	43%	22%	1.8
	<b>Total #</b>	1	9	18	14	2.1
	<b>Total %</b>	2%	21%	43%	33%	
4. The teacher uses appropriate instructional strategies well matched to the learning objective(s).	<b>V/Tech.</b>	0%	11%	16%	74%	2.6
	<b>Acad.</b>	17%	17%	43%	22%	1.7
	<b>Total #</b>	4	6	13	19	2.1
	<b>Total %</b>	10%	14%	31%	45%	
<b>Total Score For Focus Area #1</b>	<b>V/Tech.</b>					<b>10.0</b>
	<b>Acad.</b>					<b>8.0</b>
	<b>Total</b>					<b>8.9</b>

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		Insufficient	Minimal	Moderate	Strong	Avg Number of points
<b>Focus Area #2: Student Engagement &amp; Critical Thinking</b>		(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(0 to 3)
5. Students are motivated and engaged in the lesson.	<b>V/Tech.</b>	0%	11%	32%	58%	2.5
	<b>Acad.</b>	9%	30%	26%	35%	1.9
	<b>Total #</b>	2	9	12	19	2.1
	<b>Total %</b>	5%	21%	29%	45%	
6. The teacher facilitates tasks that encourage students to develop and engage in critical thinking.	<b>V/Tech.</b>	5%	5%	26%	63%	2.5
	<b>Acad.</b>	17%	30%	30%	22%	1.6
	<b>Total #</b>	5	8	12	17	2.0
	<b>Total %</b>	12%	19%	29%	40%	
7. Students assume responsibility for their own learning whether individually, in pairs, or in groups.	<b>V/Tech.</b>	5%	11%	32%	53%	2.3
	<b>Acad.</b>	26%	30%	17%	26%	1.4
	<b>Total #</b>	7	9	10	16	1.8
	<b>Total %</b>	17%	21%	24%	38%	
<b>Total Score For Focus Area #2</b>	<b>V/Tech.</b>					<b>7.3</b>
	<b>Acad.</b>					<b>4.9</b>
	<b>Total</b>					<b>6.0</b>

Greater New Bedford RVTHS Targeted District Review

		Insufficient	Minimal	Moderate	Strong	Avg Number of points
<b>Focus Area #3: Differentiated Instruction &amp; Classroom Culture</b>		(0)	(1)	(2)	(3)	(0 to 3)
8. The teacher appropriately differentiates instruction so the lesson content is accessible for all learners.	<b>V/Tech.</b>	26%	0%	32%	42%	1.9
	<b>Acad.</b>	26%	48%	9%	17%	1.2
	<b>Total #</b>	11	11	8	12	1.5
	<b>Total %</b>	26%	26%	19%	29%	
9. The teacher uses appropriate resources aligned to students' diverse learning needs. (e.g., technology, manipulatives, support personnel).	<b>V/Tech.</b>	0%	5%	16%	79%	2.7
	<b>Acad.</b>	4%	30%	30%	35%	2.0
	<b>Total #</b>	1	8	10	23	2.3
	<b>Total %</b>	2%	19%	24%	55%	
10. The classroom climate is characterized by respectful behavior, routines, tone, and discourse.	<b>V/Tech.</b>	0%	5%	16%	79%	2.7
	<b>Acad.</b>	4%	17%	30%	48%	2.2
	<b>Total #</b>	1	5	10	26	2.5
	<b>Total %</b>	2%	12%	24%	62%	
11. The teacher conducts appropriate formative assessments to check for understanding and provide feedback to students.	<b>V/Tech.</b>	5%	5%	32%	58%	2.4
	<b>Acad.</b>	9%	30%	43%	17%	1.7
	<b>Total #</b>	3	8	16	15	2.0
	<b>Total %</b>	7%	19%	38%	36%	
<b>Total Score For Focus Area #3</b>	<b>V/Tech.</b>					<b>9.8</b>
	<b>Acad.</b>					<b>7.0</b>
	<b>Total</b>					<b>8.3</b>