

# District Review Report

## Gateway Public Schools

Targeted Review conducted February 25–  
27, 2020

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Office of District Reviews and Monitoring

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and  
Secondary Education

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## Executive Summary

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Gateway's student population consists of 825 students<sup>1</sup> who attend Littleville Elementary School, Gateway Regional Middle School, and Gateway Regional High School, all located on one campus in Huntington, and one elementary school located in Chester, Massachusetts. The superintendent has been in his position for 17 years and has formally announced his intention to retire in 2021.

The superintendent and school committee members collaborate well and act as the primary advocates for the district's schools in the six member towns: Blandford, Chester, Huntington, Middlefield, Montgomery, and Russell. Under the guidance of the superintendent, the district has developed a multi-year strategic plan based on community visioning activities and recommendations from the Massachusetts Association of Rural Schools (MARS). The superintendent stated that MARS facilitated discussions among the member towns, providing a structure that supported collaboration, particularly around financial planning. Finances in the district are monitored closely and are affected by school choice, transportation costs, the loss of students to area vocational schools and charter schools, and families choosing to home-school their children. The superintendent told the team that at least 25 years before the onsite review, in response to the loss of students to vocational schools, the high school added a Chapter 74 program in welding. In September 2019, the district added a second program in early education and care.

The leadership team has stabilized in recent years with the two principals occupying their positions for at least the five years before the onsite review and a director of special education since 2016. The position of districtwide curriculum director remained unfilled for three years following a retirement in 2016; in 2019, the superintendent promoted an internal candidate to take on that role.

In 2019, 31.0 percent of students in the district were economically disadvantaged, 19.9 percent were students with disabilities, and 2.7 percent were English learners. In addition, 91.8 percent of students were White; 4.2 percent of students, Hispanic-Latino; 2.3 percent, Multi-race, non-Hispanic; and 1.7 percent of students represented the other racial and ethnic groups.<sup>2</sup> Students, parents, and teachers described a safe and supportive school climate and culture where the adults were attentive to students' needs. The middle and high schools house a health clinic which provides dental, vision, and health services to K-12 students. The district has also undertaken many steps to ensure the physical safety of students within each school, and within classrooms.<sup>3</sup>

Three events in recent years have had an impact on the district and influenced decision-making:

- A grade re-organization took place in 2016, because of the closing of elementary schools in several member towns. In 2016 Gateway Middle School (grades 5-6) closed, and in 2017 Gateway Regional Junior High School, previously a 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade school, picked up the 6<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> DESE enrollment data, 2019.

<sup>2</sup> In 2019, 0.8 percent of students were African-American; 0.4 percent, Asian; 0.4 percent, Native American; and 0.1 percent, Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander.

<sup>3</sup> The team observed items in classrooms such as rods to bar room entrance, and pull-down shades on inside windows.

grade and changed its name to Gateway Regional Middle School; the two remaining elementary schools added the 5<sup>th</sup> grades. While the elementary schools shared the same principal and used similar systems and practices, there was little collaboration and consistency of expectations between the elementary and middle schools, or between the middle and high schools which share one building and one principal.

- In 2018, the middle school was found to need focused/targeted support for low performance for White students; the middle school was in the 12<sup>th</sup> percentile of grades 3-8 schools in the state. As a result, with guidance and funding from DESE's Statewide System of Support, the middle school developed a Turnaround Plan in June 2019, which addressed an absence of organizational structures, insufficient stakeholder collaboration, the absence of coherent assessment practices, and the need for implementation of behavioral health strategies. At the time of the onsite review in February 2020, the middle school had begun to initiate some of the turnaround strategies such as the formation of an instructional leadership team in math, the formation of a data team consisting of teachers and administrators, a systematic review of the mathematics curriculum in grades 5-8, and the implementation of a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) system. Although the turnaround efforts were directed to middle school, school leaders and staff anticipated that improvement efforts at the middle school would be extended gradually to the full district.
- In 2013, one town withdrew from the seven-town district. While the superintendent and school committee members stated that there were several factors that influenced the financial health of the district, including tight local budgets, the departure left the district with significant concerns about ongoing financial challenges.

In 2013 the district underwent a DESE Comprehensive District Review and has made some progress since that review in some areas, such as long-range planning and the development of a systematic plan to build trust around finances and to better inform residents and garner support for the schools. However, the district has not made satisfactory progress to address curricular, instructional, assessment, and student support needs, including establishing systems for use and analysis of data to make improvements. Among the recommendations in the 2013 report were the need to establish consistent expectations of high-quality instruction that would meet the needs of all learners, the need to establish districtwide expectations for the use of data to inform instruction and monitor student learning, and the need to implement a unified system of tiered instruction and supports. Similar recommendations were made in the 2018 high-school NEASC report.

### *Instruction*

The team observed 45 classes throughout the district: 16 at the one high school, 15 at the one middle school, and 14 at the two elementary schools. The team observed 14 ELA classes, 13 mathematics classes, and 18 classes in other subject areas including science, social studies, and reading. Among the classes observed were one special education class and one career/technical education class. The observations were approximately 20 minutes in length. All review team members collected data using

DESE's Instructional Inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching. This data is presented in Appendix C.

In observed classrooms, the quality of instruction in each of the schools varied. Instruction was stronger at the elementary and middle schools than at the high school, with teachers at the elementary level using the widest variety of instructional strategies to meet the needs of varied learners. High-school students were the least engaged in activities that required higher-order thinking. Instructional strategies used at the middle and elementary schools enabled students to communicate their ideas and thinking better than those used at the high school. Teachers at the elementary level were most likely to conduct checks for understanding, while checking for understanding took place in fewer than half of high-school classrooms.

## **Strengths**

- The district supported focused curriculum development initiatives in English language arts in kindergarten through grade 5 and mathematics in kindergarten through grade 9.
- The use of technology in the district to enhance instruction involves a one-to-one program, providing laptops to all students in grades 3-12 as well as laptop carts in kindergarten and grade 1.
- District leaders and staff ensure that schools equitably support all students' safety, well-being, and sense of belonging.

## **Challenges and Areas for Growth**

- The district does not have a coherent, comprehensive K-12 curriculum that is easily accessible to all educators and aligned with the current standards. The district does not have a rigorous, regular, and consistent centralized curriculum review process.
- The district does not have sufficient inclusive professional supports for teachers to implement a high-quality curriculum that challenges and supports all students.
- In observed classrooms, the quality of instruction was inconsistent and frequently was missing rigor. While the number of students per class was relatively small, the main instructional approach except in some elementary classes was whole-class rather than small-group instruction.
- The district does not have a systemwide approach for efficient and purposeful collection and analysis of data from student assessments and other sources to guide decision-making, and to improve all students' performance, opportunities, and outcomes.

- The district has not established a culture that values and uses data at all levels to improve teaching and learning, including classroom-level decision making.
- The district has not articulated clear expectations or identified best practices to share progress monitoring and assessment results with families and students districtwide, and to use these data to help families to support their children to perform at a high level.
- The district has not established an integrated system of supports to address the academic needs of all students.

## **Recommendations**

- The district should complete as soon as possible its K-12 curricula in all content areas. It should ensure that curricula are high-quality, comprehensive, aligned with the current Massachusetts frameworks, and aligned vertically and horizontally. The district should develop and implement an ongoing process for reviewing and revising K-12 curricula.
- The district should develop complementary district and school-based professional development that provides sustained and cohesive structures, supports, and experiences to help educators implement a comprehensive, aligned, and standards-based curriculum with fidelity.
- The district should ensure that all teachers provide effective instruction that challenges and supports all students.
- The district should identify and put into place a common data platform for all district schools which ensures that administrators and educators have timely and efficient access to student, classroom, and school-related data.
- The district should take concrete steps to ensure that educators have the necessary time and resources to use data consistently to inform instruction and adjust practice.
- The district should ensure that all parents/guardians have clear, timely, personalized information about students' progress toward achieving mastery in grade-level standards and readiness for college and careers.
- The district should develop and implement a multi-tiered system of academic supports for all learners.
- The district should strengthen its efforts to improve student attendance.

# Gateway Public Schools 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 systemwide functions, with reference to three district standards used by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Targeted reviews address one of the following sets of three standards: **Governance and Administrative Systems** (Leadership and Governance, Human Resources and Professional Development, and Financial and Asset Management standards) or **Student-Centered Systems** (Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment, and Student Support standards). All targeted reviews include finding(s) about instruction based on classroom observations. A targeted review identifies systems and practices that may be impeding improvement as well as those most likely to be contributing to positive results. In addition, the targeted district review is designed to promote district reflection on its own performance and potential next steps. In addition to providing information to each district reviewed, DESE uses review reports to identify resources and/or technical assistance to provide to the district.

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

## Methodology

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

## Site Visit

The site visit to the Gateway Public Schools was conducted from February 25-27, 2020. The site visit included 24 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 80 stakeholders, including school committee members, district administrators, school staff, students, students' families, and teachers'

association representatives. The review team held three focus groups with 16 elementary-school teachers, 4 middle-school teachers, and 4 high-school teachers.

A list of review team members, information about review activities, and the site visit schedule are in Appendix A, and Appendix B provides information about enrollment, attendance, and expenditures. The team observed classroom instruction in 45 classrooms in 4 schools. The team collected data using DESE’s Instructional Inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching. This data is contained in Appendix C.

## District Profile

The Gateway Regional School district consists of members from six towns: Blandford, Chester, Huntington, Middlefield, Montgomery, and Russell. The chair of the school committee is elected by the members. The 13 members of the school committee meet monthly, with occasional additional meetings.

The superintendent has been in the position since 2003. The district leadership team includes the superintendent, the pupil services director, the curriculum director, and the assistant superintendent of finance and operations. Central office positions generally remained stable in number over the five years before the onsite, although the curriculum director position remained vacant for three years following a retirement in 2016. The curriculum director position was filled again in 2019. The district has two principals leading four schools. There are two assistant principals. In 2018–2019, there were 77 teachers in the district.

In the 2018–2019 school year, 825 students were enrolled in the district’s schools:

**Table 1: Gateway Public Schools  
Schools, Type, Grades Served, and Enrollment\*, 2018–2019**

School	Type	Grades Served	Enrollment
Chester	ES	Pre-K-4	118
Littleville	ES	Pre-K-4	307
Gateway Regional Middle	MS	6-8	202
Gateway Regional High School	HS	9-12	198
<b>Totals</b>	<b>4 schools</b>	<b>Pre-K-12</b>	<b>825</b>
*As of October 1, 2018			

Between 2014 and 2019 overall student enrollment decreased by 16.6 percent. Enrollment figures by race/ethnicity and high needs populations (i.e., students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged)

students, and English learners (ELs) and former ELs compared with the state are provided in Tables B1a and B1b in Appendix B.

The total in-district per-pupil expenditure was similar to the median in-district per-pupil expenditure for 17 districts of similar size (<1,000 students) in fiscal year 2018; \$18,192 as compared with \$17,880 (see [District Analysis and Review Tool Detail: Staffing & Finance](#)). Actual net school spending has been above what is required by the Chapter 70 state education aid program, as shown in Table B3 in Appendix B.

## Student Performance

**Table 2: Gateway Regional School District  
Accountability Percentile, Criterion Reference Target (CRT) Percentage, Reason for Classification**

School	Accountability Percentile	Cumulative CRT Percentage	Overall Classification	Reason for Classification
Chester	29	41%	Not requiring assistance or intervention	Moderate progress toward targets
Littleville	46	50%	Not requiring assistance or intervention	Substantial progress toward targets
Gateway Regional Middle	12	51%	Requiring assistance or intervention	In need of focused/targeted support: Low subgroup performance for White students
Gateway Regional High	40	56%	Not requiring assistance or intervention	Substantial progress toward targets
District	--	47%	Not requiring assistance or intervention	Moderate progress toward targets

**Table 3: Gateway Regional School District  
Next-Generation MCAS ELA Scaled Scores in Grades 3--8, 2017--2019**

Group	N (2019)	2017	2018	2019	Change	State (2019)	Above/Below
African American/Black	5	--	--	--	--	491.2	--
Asian	--	--	--	--	--	512.8	--
Hispanic or Latino	21	491.9	494.8	493.1	1.2	490.6	2.5
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	7	--	--	--	--	503.6	--
White	375	496.7	499.6	498.0	1.3	504.9	-6.9
High Needs	203	487.9	491.4	490.2	2.3	490.7	-0.5
Econ. Disadvantaged	165	491.3	494.3	491.7	0.4	490.6	1.1
Students w/ Disabilities	82	478.9	481.0	481.6	2.7	481.1	0.5
English Learners	14	474.9	483.1	481.8	6.9	489.3	-7.5
All	411	496.3	499.5	497.8	1.5	501.2	-3.4

Next Generation MCAS Achievement Levels: 440-470 Not Meeting Expectations; 470-500 Partially Meeting Expectations; 500-530 Meeting Expectations; 530-560 Exceeding Expectations

**Table 4: Gateway Regional School District  
Next-Generation MCAS Math Scaled Scores in Grades 3--8, 2017--2019**

Group	N (2019)	2017	2018	2019	Change	State (2019)	Above/Below
African American/Black	5	--	--	--	--	487.8	--
Asian	--	--	--	--	--	516.4	--
Hispanic or Latino	21	487.3	491.8	489.6	2.3	488.2	1.4
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	7	--	--	--	--	500.8	--
White	376	494.6	495.7	494.5	-0.1	502.7	-8.2
High Needs	204	485.8	488.5	487.1	1.3	488.8	-1.7
Econ. Disadvantaged	165	488.2	490.4	488.3	0.1	488.1	0.2
Students w/ Disabilities	83	476.5	480.4	477.9	1.4	479.5	-1.6
English Learners	14	480.8	487.9	487.8	7.0	489.3	-1.5
All	412	494.1	495.6	494.2	0.1	499.2	-5.0

Next Generation MCAS Achievement Levels: 440-470 Not Meeting Expectations; 470-500 Partially Meeting Expectations; 500-530 Meeting Expectations; 530-560 Exceeding Expectations

**Table 5: Gateway Regional School District  
Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grades 3--8, 2017--2019**

Group	N (2019)	2017	2018	2019	Change	State (2019)	Above/Below
African American/Black	5	--	--	--	--	33%	--
Asian	--	--	--	--	--	72%	--
Hispanic or Latino	21	41%	33%	43%	2	33%	10
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	7	--	--	--	--	56%	--
White	375	41%	48%	46%	5	59%	-13
High Needs	203	25%	30%	32%	7	32%	0
Econ. Disadvantaged	165	32%	34%	33%	1	33%	0
Students w/ Disabilities	82	8%	15%	13%	5	16%	-3
English Learners	14	10%	21%	14%	4	32%	-18
All	411	40%	47%	46%	6	52%	-6

**Table 6: Gateway Regional School District  
Next-Generation MCAS Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grades 3--8, 2017--2019**

Group	N (2019)	2017	2018	2019	Change	State (2019)	Above/Below
African American/Black	5	--	--	--	--	28%	--
Asian	--	--	--	--	--	76%	--
Hispanic or Latino	21	23%	22%	19%	-4	29%	-10
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	7	--	--	--	--	51%	--
White	376	39%	40%	38%	-1	56%	-18
High Needs	204	21%	22%	24%	3	29%	-5
Econ. Disadvantaged	165	23%	24%	25%	2	29%	-4
Students w/ Disabilities	83	10%	10%	12%	2	15%	-3
English Learners	14	20%	29%	29%	9	32%	-3
All	412	38%	40%	36%	-2	49%	-13

**Table 7: Gateway Regional School District  
Next Generation MCAS ELA and Math Scaled Scores in Grade 10, 2019**

Group	ELA				Math			
	N (2019)	2019	State	Above/Below	N (2019)	2019	State	Above/Below
African American/Black	--	--	493.8	--	--	--	492.3	--
Asian	1	--	516.8	--	1	--	522.5	--
Hispanic or Latino	2	--	492.0	--	2	--	491.0	--
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	2	--	509.0	--	2	--	506.7	--
White	51	504.3	510.7	-6.4	51	502.5	509.0	-6.5
High Needs	21	496.7	492.6	4.1	21	496.2	491.6	4.6
Econ. Disadvantaged	13	504.7	493.4	11.3	13	499.3	492.1	7.2
Students w/ Disabilities	8	--	486.2	--	8	--	483.8	--
English Learners	2	--	480.6	--	2	--	485.4	--
All	56	503.6	506.2	-2.6	56	502.3	505.1	-2.8

**Table 8: Gateway Regional School District  
Next Generation MCAS ELA and Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grade 10, 2019**

Group	ELA				Math			
	N (2019)	2019	State	Above/Below	N (2019)	2019	State	Above/Below
African American/Black	--	--	38%	--	--	--	35%	--
Asian	1	--	78%	--	1	--	82%	--
Hispanic or Latino	2	--	37%	--	2	--	33%	--
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	2	--	65%	--	2	--	60%	--
White	51	69%	69%	0	51	57%	67%	-10
High Needs	21	57%	36%	21	21	48%	33%	15
Econ. Disadvantaged	13	85%	38%	47	13	69%	35%	34
Students w/ Disabilities	8	--	22%	--	8	--	18%	--
English Learners	2	--	18%	--	2	--	24%	--
All	56	68%	61%	7	56	55%	59%	-4

**Table 9: Gateway Regional School District  
Next Generation MCAS Science Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grades 5 and 8,  
and MCAS Science Proficient or Advanced in Grade 10, 2019**

Group	Next-Generation MCAS Science 5 and 8				MCAS Science Grade 10			
	N (2019)	2019	State	Above/ Below	N (2019)	2019	State	Above/ Below
African American/Black	1	--	24%	--	--	--	54%	--
Asian	--	--	67%	--	1	--	88%	--
Hispanic or Latino	11	18%	26%	--	2	--	53%	--
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	2	--	51%	--	2	--	76%	--
White	122	52%	56%	-5	48	79%	81%	-2
High Needs	67	33%	27%	6	19	63%	53%	10
Econ. Disadvantaged	56	39%	27%	13	12	92%	54%	38
English Learners	5	--	23%	--	2	--	39%	--
Students w/ Disabilities	23	13%	17%	-4	6	--	38%	--

**Table 10: Gateway Regional School District  
Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grades 3-8, 2017--2019**

Grade	N (2019)	2017	2018	2019	Change	State (2019)	Above/Below
3	65	48%	51%	51%	3	56%	-5
4	76	47%	64%	42%	-5	52%	-10
5	67	51%	49%	52%	1	52%	0
6	66	35%	47%	47%	12	53%	-6
7	65	40%	38%	49%	9	48%	1
8	72	24%	35%	35%	11	52%	-17
3--8	411	40%	47%	46%	6	52%	-6
10	56	--	--	68%	--	61%	7

**Table 11: Gateway Regional School District  
Next-Generation MCAS Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grades 3--8, 2017--2019**

Grade	N (2019)	2017	2018	2019	Change	State (2019)	Above/Below
3	65	46%	45%	38%	-8	49%	-11
4	76	41%	40%	36%	-5	50%	-14
5	67	46%	38%	43%	-3	48%	-5
6	67	48%	55%	43%	-5	52%	-9
7	65	32%	29%	37%	5	48%	-11
8	72	22%	30%	21%	-1	46%	-25
3--8	412	38%	40%	36%	-2	49%	-13
10	56	--	--	55%	--	59%	-4

**Table 12: Gateway Regional School District  
MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grades 5, 8, and 10, 2016--2019**

Grade	N (2019)	2016	2017	2018	2019	4-yr Change	State (2019)
5	--	37%	57%	44%	--	--	--
8	--	20%	30%	13%	--	--	--
10	53	75%	74%	74%	79%	4	74%

**Table 13: Gateway Regional School District  
English Language Arts and Math Mean Student Growth Percentile, 2018**

Grade	ELA				Math			
	N (2019)	2018	2019	State 2019	N (2019)	2018	2019	State (2019)
3	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
4	70	58.1	46.5	49.7	70	57.9	40.8	49.8
5	61	44.5	43.7	50.0	61	49.1	51.2	50.0
6	64	37.3	39.0	50.0	65	51.2	42.4	50.0
7	61	57.4	49.8	49.9	61	45.2	34.2	50.1
8	64	38.6	35.8	49.9	64	37.7	36.8	49.9
3--8	320	47.0	42.9	49.9	321	48.1	41.1	49.9
10	49	44.4	61.2	49.4	49	49.0	56.3	49.7

**Table 14: Gateway Regional School District  
Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations by School and Grade, 2019**

School	3	4	5	6	7	8	3--8	10
Chester	59%	47%	56%	--	--	--	55%	--
Littleville	49%	44%	52%	--	--	--	48%	--
Gateway Regional Middle	--	--	--	46%	52%	37%	45%	--
Gateway Regional High	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	72%
District	51%	42%	52%	47%	49%	35%	46%	68%
State	56%	52%	52%	53%	48%	52%	52%	61%

**Table 15: Gateway Regional School District  
Next-Generation MCAS Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations by School and Grade, 2019**

School	3	4	5	6	7	8	3--8	10
Chester	36%	33%	50%	--	--	--	40%	--
Littleville	46%	39%	43%	--	--	--	42%	--
Gateway Regional Middle	--	--	--	43%	39%	22%	35%	--
Gateway Regional High	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	57%
District	38%	36%	43%	43%	37%	21%	36%	55%
State	49%	50%	48%	52%	48%	46%	49%	59%

**Table 16: Gateway Regional School District  
Next-Generation MCAS Science Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grades 5 and 8,  
and MCAS Science Percent Proficient or Advanced by School and Grade, 2019**

School	Next-Generation MCAS Science			MCAS Science
	5	8	5 & 8	10
Chester	56%	--	56%	--
Littleville	53%	--	53%	--
Gateway Regional Middle	--	46%	46%	--
Gateway Regional High	--	--	--	79%
District	56%	43%	49%	79%
State	49%	46%	48%	74%

**Table 17: Gateway Regional School District  
3—8 Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percent Meeting and Exceeding Expectations by School, 2019**

School	All	High Needs	Econ. Dis.	SWD	English Learners	African American	Asian	Hispanic	Multi-race	White
Chester	55%	37%	39%	14%	--	--	--	--	--	55%
Littleville	48%	37%	42%	14%	--	--	--	--	--	47%
Gateway Regional Middle	45%	29%	30%	15%	--	--	--	--	--	46%
Gateway Regional High	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
District	46%	32%	33%	13%	14%	--	--	43%	--	46%
State	52%	32%	33%	16%	32%	33%	72%	33%	56%	59%

**Table 18: Gateway Regional School District  
3—8 Next-Generation MCAS Math Percent Meeting and Exceeding Expectations by School, 2019**

School	All	High Needs	Econ. Dis.	SWD	English Learners	African American	Asian	Hispanic	Multi-race	White
Chester	40%	33%	36%	21%	--	--	--	--	--	41%
Littleville	42%	22%	21%	7%	--	--	--	--	--	43%
Gateway Regional Middle	35%	26%	28%	12%	--	--	--	--	--	36%
Gateway Regional High	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
District	36%	24%	25%	12%	29%	--	--	19%	--	38%
State	49%	29%	29%	15%	32%	28%	76%	29%	51%	56%

**Table 19: Gateway Regional School District  
Next-Generation MCAS ELA Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grade 10, 2019**

School	All	High Needs	Econ. Dis.	SWD	English Learners	African American	Asian	Hispanic	Multi-race	White
Gateway Regional High	72%	63%	92%	--	--	--	--	--	--	73%
District	68%	57%	85%	--	--	--	--	--	--	69%
State	61%	36%	38%	22%	18%	38%	78%	37%	65%	69%

**Table 20: Gateway Regional School District  
Next-Generation MCAS Math Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grade 10, 2019**

School	All	High Needs	Econ. Dis.	SWD	English Learners	African American	Asian	Hispanic	Multi-race	White
Gateway Regional High	57%	53%	75%	--	--	--	--	--	--	58%
District	55%	48%	69%	--	--	--	--	--	--	57%
State	59%	33%	35%	18%	24%	35%	82%	33%	60%	67%

**Table 21: Gateway Regional School District  
Next-Generation MCAS Science Percent Meeting and Exceeding Expectations by School and Student Group, 2019**

School	All	High Needs	Econ. Dis.	SWD	English Learners	African American	Asian	Hispanic	Multi-race	White
Chester	56%	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	60%
Littleville	53%	30%	40%	--	--	--	--	--	--	51%
Gateway Regional Middle	46%	37%	46%	10%	--	--	--	--	--	48%
Gateway Regional High	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
District	49%	33%	39%	13%	--	--	--	18%	--	52%
State	48%	27%	27%	17%	23%	24%	67%	26%	51%	56%

**Table 22: Gateway Regional School District  
MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Science by School and Student Group, 2016--2019**

School	N (2019)	2016	2017	2018	2019	4-yr Change
Gateway Regional High	53	76%	74%	76%	79%	3
African American/Black	--	--	--	--	--	--
Asian	1	--	--	--	--	--
Hispanic	2	--	--	--	--	--
Multi-race, non-Hispanic/Latino	2	--	--	--	--	--
White	48	77%	77%	74%	79%	2
High Needs	19	53%	52%	48%	63%	10
Econ. Disadvantaged	12	--	56%	59%	92%	--
Students w/ Disabilities	6	--	--	--	--	--
English Learners	2	--	--	--	--	--

**Table 23: Gateway Regional School District  
Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates, 2016--2019**

Group	N (2019)	2016	2017	2018	2019	4-yr Change	State (2019)
African American/Black	--	--	--	--	--	--	79.9
Asian	--	--	--	--	--	--	95.2
Hispanic or Latino	3	--	--	--	--	--	74.4
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	--	--	--	--	--	--	87.6
White	49	88.4	89.3	82.6	77.6	-10.8	92.7
High Needs	28	80.0	75.0	66.7	64.3	-15.7	78.8
Economically Disadvantaged	22	84.0	76.0	70.6	77.3	-6.7	78.5
Students w/ Disabilities	12	68.8	45.5	50.0	25.0	-43.8	73.9
English Learners	--	--	--	--	--	--	64.6
All	53	88.7	88.3	83.0	77.4	-11.3	88.0

**Table 24: Gateway Regional School District  
Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates, 2015--2018**

Group	N (2018)	2015	2016	2017	2018	4-yr Change	State (2018)
African American/Black	1	--	--	--	--	--	84.5
Asian	--	--	--	--	--	--	95.5
Hispanic or Latino	--	--	--	--	--	--	77.6
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	--	--	--	--	--	--	88.7
White	46	93.4	88.4	89.3	82.6	-10.8	93.4
High Needs	21	82.8	80.0	75.0	66.7	-16.1	81.4
Economically Disadvantaged	17	87.5	84.0	76.0	70.6	-16.9	81.0
Students w/ Disabilities	10	50.0	68.8	45.5	50.0	0.0	76.4
English Learners	--	--	--	--	--	--	69.7
All	47	93.8	88.7	88.3	83.0	-10.8	89.7

**Table 25: Gateway Regional School District  
In-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2016–2019**

Group	2016	2017	2018	2019	4-yr Change	State (2019)
African American/Black	--	--	--	--	--	3.4
Asian	--	--	--	--	--	0.5
Hispanic or Latino	--	--	--	--	--	2.3
Multi-Race, non-Hisp./ Lat.	--	--	--	--	--	2.3
White	5.0	4.4	1.0	2.8	-2.2	1.6
High Needs	7.5	5.9	1.4	3.4	-4.1	2.7
Economically Disadvantaged	8.1	5.7	1.3	3.7	-4.4	2.9
Students w/ Disabilities	6.2	7.2	2.6	4.4	-1.8	3.3
English Learners	--	--	--	--	--	1.7
All	5.1	4.2	0.9	2.7	-2.4	1.9

**Table 26: Gateway Regional School District  
Out-of-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2016–2019**

Group	2016	2017	2018	2019	4-yr Change	State (2019)
African American/Black	--	--	--	--	--	6.2
Asian	--	--	--	--	--	0.8
Hispanic or Latino	--	--	--	--	--	5.0
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	--	--	--	--	--	3.5
White	1.8	1.4	1.0	2.0	0.2	2.0
High Needs	2.9	2.2	1.4	2.8	-0.1	4.7
Economically Disadvantaged	3.5	2.7	1.3	3.0	-0.5	5.4
Students w/ Disabilities	2.6	2.1	2.6	4.4	1.8	5.7
English Learners	--	--	--	--	--	3.6
All	1.7	1.4	0.9	1.9	0.2	3.0

**Table 27: Gateway Regional School District  
Dropout Rates by Student Group, 2016–2019**

Group	2016	2017	2018	2019	4-yr Change	State (2019)
African American/Black	--	--	--	--	--	2.6
Asian	--	--	--	--	--	0.5
Hispanic or Latino	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.3
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	--	--	--	--	--	1.8
White	0.5	3.4	3.6	2.2	1.7	1.0
High Needs	2.5	3.8	4.9	3.0	0.5	3.5
Economically Disadvantaged	2.0	3.3	4.9	0.0	-2.0	3.8
Students w/ Disabilities	2.6	6.1	11.4	7.1	4.5	3.1
English Learners	--	--	--	--	--	7.1
All	0.9	3.2	3.3	2.1	1.2	1.8

**Table 28: Gateway Regional School District  
Advanced Coursework Completion by Student Group, 2018--2019**

Group	N (2019)	2018	2019	Change	Target
African American/Black	--	--	--	--	--
Asian	--	--	--	--	--
Hispanic or Latino	4	--	--	--	--
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	2	--	--	--	--
White	94	65.8	71.3	5.5	70.0
High Needs	37	41.9	70.3	28.4	49.2
Economically Disadvantaged	31	--	--	--	--
Students w/ Disabilities	14	--	--	--	--
English Learners	--	--	--	--	--
All	100	64.7	72.0	7.3	69.0

**Table 29: Gateway Regional School District  
Progress toward Attaining English Language Proficiency, 2018--2019**

Group	Non-high school					High school				
	N (2019)	2018	2019	Change	Target	N (2019)	2018	2019	Change	Target
English Learners	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
All	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

**Table 30: Gateway Regional School District  
Chronic Absence Rates\*by Student Group, 2018--2019**

Group	Non-high school					High school				
	N (2019)	2018	2019	Change	Target	N (2019)	2018	2019	Change	Target
African American/Black	6	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Asian	--	--	--	--	--	2	--	--	--	--
Hispanic or Latino	32	--	--	--	--	8	--	--	--	--
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic/Latino	13	--	--	--	--	5	--	--	--	--
White	507	11.2	12.0	0.8	10	189	13.5	9.5	-4.0	11.7
High Needs	276	16.0	19.2	3.2	14.2	79	21.1	13.9	-7.2	18.2
Economically Disadvantaged	186	--	--	--	--	45	--	--	--	--
Students w/ Disabilities	114	--	--	--	--	32	--	--	--	--
English Learners	20	--	--	--	--	6	--	--	--	--
All	562	10.7	12.3	1.6	9.7	204	13.4	8.8	-4.6	11.8

\* Chronic absence is defined as the percentage of students absent 10 percent or more of their total number of student days of membership in a school.

## Curriculum and Instruction

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### Contextual Background

#### *Curriculum Selection and Use*

In 2013, at the time of DESE's last review of Gateway, the district had begun to align its curriculum with the 2011 ELA curriculum frameworks. However, in 2016 the director of academics/curriculum director retired; the position remained vacant for three years. Districtwide instructional leadership was diminished by this vacancy. Between 2016 and 2019, school administrators and teachers were responsible for the selection, use, documentation, and oversight of taught curriculum and instruction, and curricular material purchases. The district supported focused curriculum development initiatives in English language arts in kindergarten through grade 5 and mathematics in kindergarten through grade 9. During this period, grants supported some middle-school and high-school curriculum development in partnership with an area college. However, those efforts did not keep pace with the updates to the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks and the breadth of research that informed specific content standards and practices. Budgetary constraints also compromised the district's ability to regain a solid footing in curriculum.

In 2018, DESE identified the middle school as needing focused targeted support based on low student performance for White students. The middle school performed in the 12<sup>th</sup> percentile of grades 3-8 schools across the state. By the end of June 2019, the middle school had developed the required turnaround plan, which was designed in part to facilitate the review and revision of middle-school curriculum along with the identification of instructional strategies that would challenge and engage all students while meeting the needs of diverse learners.

In July 2019, the district reinstated the position of curriculum director with oversight of curriculum, instruction, assessment, supervision, academic support, professional development, academic coaching, home education, mentoring, and guidance. At the time of the onsite in February 2020, the regional support team from DESE's Statewide System of Support had implemented ongoing support and improvement efforts with the middle-school principal and faculty.

A review of the district's organizational chart indicated that the curriculum director shared responsibilities with principals for assessments, academic support, academic coaching, professional development, guidance, and supervision, while principals shared responsibilities with assistant principals for teaching, learning, student performance, MCAS assessments, and planning. District and school leaders expressed various views about decision-making about and oversight of curriculum in the district. The superintendent told the team that decision-making for the selection and purchase of curricular materials resided at the school and classroom level. The curriculum director and the principals said that they shared decisions about curricular materials and development of curricula. The curriculum director stated that funds for curriculum came from individual school budgets and were determined by principals, noting that she did not have resources to support professional development and other professional supports. At the time of the onsite review, no one in the district had clear decision-making

authority for curriculum development, renewal, and oversight. The new curriculum director, a former assistant principal at the middle school, said that she was focused on centralizing the work of the curriculum director.

### *Instruction*

The district has not defined a vision for high-quality, evidence-based instruction for kindergarten through grade 12. During focus groups and interviews, the consensus was that instructional leadership was the responsibility of the principals; however, principals have not set consistent expectations about instructional practices. At the elementary-school level, there are some examples of evidence-based approaches to instruction, including Orton-Gillingham, Schoolhouse® Mathematics Laboratory (an SRA<sup>4</sup> math lab), and Project READ. At the middle and high schools, there are no defined expectations for high-quality instructional practices.

District and school leaders have identified the quality of instruction as an area for improvement. The middle schools have been working with the regional support team from DESE's Statewide System of Support and outside consultants to introduce and strengthen instructional strategies in the classroom. The goal is to move from front-of-the-room teaching to a balance that includes student discourse as well as higher-order thinking. While this initiative was in its early stages at the time of the onsite, there was evidence of this balance in some of the observed middle-school classrooms.

## **Strength Findings**

### **1. The district supported focused curriculum development initiatives in English language arts in kindergarten through grade 5 and mathematics in kindergarten through grade 9.**

- A. Between 2016 and 2018, the district identified curricular needs in ELA, committed to support ongoing school efforts, and funded the district's K-5 literacy initiative. Before this, the district's documented elements of reading standards were missing coherency and alignment.
  - 1. A literacy consultant conducted a K-8 literacy audit in 2017-2018 as part of a five-year contract. In 2018-2019, the district focused improvement efforts on the district's literacy curriculum in phonics and linguistics.
  - 2. As a result of the audit, in 2018 the district implemented a twice monthly coaching/consultant model at the elementary schools. Teachers received professional development through in-district and embedded professional support at the schools, and training off-site in *Project Read* phonics and linguistics curriculum.

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<sup>4</sup> SRA stands for School Readiness Assessment.

3. The elementary schools documented a scope and sequence for K-5 ELA curriculum in phonics and linguistics based on *Project Read*.
- B.** In 2018 the district contracted an outside consultant to work with middle-school educators to review student performance data and curricular needs in mathematics. Before this, mathematics curriculum was not aligned within and across schools.
1. The consultant collected data from classroom observations.
    - a. The consultant, with input from the leadership team and middle-school math teachers, developed the middle-school turnaround action plan that identified the need for improvement in mathematics.
- C.** In 2019, the district’s curriculum director assumed oversight of the K-9 initiative to align mathematics curriculum.
1. The curriculum director extended the middle-school mathematics initiative to the elementary schools and formed the Gateway Regional Elementary School professional learning community (PLC).
    - a. The Gateway Regional Elementary School PLC focuses on review and analysis of current programs and student performance, identifies supports needed to implement the mathematics curriculum, and makes enhancements and adjustments to align the district’s K-9 mathematics curricular materials with the Massachusetts frameworks to meet the range of student learning needs.
    - b. District and school leaders and teachers told the team that decisions to implement new grades 6-8 mathematics curriculum or to enhance the rigor of curriculum would be done collaboratively with this PLC, supported by the curriculum director.
  2. In 2019, the middle school recently formed an instructional leadership team (ILT), including a grade 9 math teacher, which focuses on a review of mathematics. Middle-school math teachers identified the need to increase understanding of learning targets and outcomes to ensure vertical alignment of curricula.
  3. Current K-8 math curricular materials, *Go Math* in K-6 and *Big Ideas* in grade 8, partially met standards for focus and coherence and rigor and mathematical practices on EdReports.<sup>5</sup> *Open Up Resources* in grade 7 met standards for focus and coherence and rigor and mathematical practices on EdReports.

**Impact:** Deliberate analysis of student performance data and current content practices likely creates high-leverage opportunities to document, align, and create greater fidelity of implementation to the

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<sup>5</sup> EdReports.org (<http://www.edreports.org/>) provides free, independent reviews of K-12 education materials. The reviews focus on alignment to college and career ready standards and other indicators of high quality as recommended by educators.

taught curriculum. Students are more likely to access coherent aligned learning experiences in K-5 phonics/linguistics and K-9 mathematics.

**2. The use of technology in the district to enhance instruction involves a one-to-one program, providing laptops to all students in grades 3-12 as well as laptop carts in kindergarten and grade 1.**

- A.** The district's laptop program began in school year 2016-2017 with Chromebooks assigned to all students in grades 3-9. In school year 2017-2018, the program was expanded to include grade 10, with juniors and seniors added in 2019-2020. Students in grades 6-12 have the option of taking their devices home.
- B.** The technology committee has provided professional development in technology in support of the Chromebook initiative.
  - 1. The members of the technology committee are certified as Google educator trainers and provide Google training to all teachers. District and school leaders reported that the majority of teachers in the district have passed the Google Educator Level 1 exam. Three comprehensive week-long trainings were provided, and technology options were included on professional development days. The committee's goal is that all teachers will complete this level of training.
  - 2. Google Educator Training includes many videos from classroom teachers sharing their best practices that teachers can use in their classrooms.
  - 3. Teachers noted that they were able to set up their classroom and student binders in Google Docs and several noted that they were moving all of their testing data to their Google Drive.
- C.** In observed instruction, students used their Chromebooks to access their coursework and remain on task. The review team noted several examples of students using technology in the classroom or accessing learning opportunities.
  - 1. In observed classrooms across the district, students seemed comfortable using Google Classroom to access assignments, quizzes, and other information.
  - 2. Students in an observed 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classroom accessed mathematics software that adjusts instruction based on student responses. If students struggle at a level, they are given more work at this level until they are successful and move on.
  - 3. In other classrooms, students used online classes to work on mathematics skills.
  - 4. In an observed middle-school classroom, students worked to answer a question about biodiversity using data collection and analysis on their laptops, then discussed it and presented their findings.

**Impact:** The use of technology in the classroom provides all students with access to coursework and supports all students to take ownership of their learning. In addition, by teaching students to use

technology in the classroom from an early age, it is not necessary to hold special classes for computer training, allowing for increased time on learning.

## Challenges and Areas for Growth

### **3. The district does not have a coherent, comprehensive K-12 curriculum that is easily accessible to all educators and aligned with the current standards. The district does not have a rigorous, regular, and consistent centralized curriculum review process.**

- A.** At the time of the onsite in February 2020, the district did not have a comprehensive K-12 curriculum aligned with current Massachusetts curriculum frameworks in English language arts, mathematics, science and technology, or history/social science.
1. District curricula reviewed by the team were dated January 2009 and were aligned with 2001 standards in all content areas.
  2. Principals and teachers reported that previous electronically documented district curricula could not be recovered after a technology glitch.
  3. Other documented curricular materials, primarily unit plans reviewed during the onsite, were not aligned with current Massachusetts frameworks across and within schools, except in elementary phonics and linguistics.
  4. District and school leaders and teachers told the team that documented curricular materials were not stored in one central place and were not easily accessible to all educators.
  5. The team reviewed K-5 science curricular materials and *Mystery Science* pacing guides. *Mystery Science* was reported to be aligned with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS) and the Common Core State Standards.<sup>6</sup> *Mystery Science* is not rated by EdReports.<sup>7</sup>
- B.** The curriculum director noted the absence of uniformity in documented curriculum. The team confirmed that the district schools did not have a consistent approach to documenting a standards-based curriculum with appropriate adjustments to challenge and support all learners.

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<sup>6</sup> The Massachusetts 2016 Science and Technology/Engineering (STE) Standards are based on NGSS but Massachusetts has adapted them in a number of ways. The Massachusetts curriculum frameworks include the Common Core State Standards as well as unique Massachusetts standards and features.

<sup>7</sup> EdReports.org (<http://www.edreports.org/>) provides free, independent reviews of K-12 education materials. The reviews focus on alignment to college and career ready standards and other indicators of high quality as recommended by educators.

1. Elementary ELA, mathematics, and science curricula were completed on spreadsheets, or as unit plans and pacing guides primarily created in Google Docs.
  2. Some middle and high-school curriculum documents were partially developed using the district's unit plan template. High-school teachers reported a history of shifting expectations for the format and timely submission of curriculum unit plans to the principal.
- C.** At the time of this review, the control of curriculum materials' selection, use, and budgets resided at the schools. In the absence of a curriculum director between 2016 and 2019, principals and some staff made decisions about the selection and purchase of curricular materials.
1. The superintendent told the team that decision making for the selection and purchase of curricular materials resided at the school and classroom level.
  2. Middle and high-school teachers said that they made selection decisions individually with little attention to a process to ensure coherency and alignment within and across content areas.
- D.** District and school leaders and teachers said that decisions about curricular materials were not transparent and did not consider specific district needs and relevant evidence.
- E.** The district does not have a process in place to ensure transparent and inclusive decision-making.
- F.** In 2019-2020, the new curriculum director revived the district's curriculum review cycle plan. The plan requires district oversight and a coherent sequence of actions to regularly revise and update curricula.
1. The plan's review process requires ongoing scheduled review of K-12 curriculum, and analysis of student data, curriculum content needs, and controlled budgeting.

**Impact:** The absence of a systematic process to document and monitor curricula ,a data-driven approach to guide the mapping and alignment of curricula with the current Massachusetts frameworks, clear lines of oversight and accountability for curriculum, and effective collaboration between district and school leaders related to curriculum prevents students from accessing high-quality teaching as part of a coherent sequence of learning experiences.

**4. The district does not have sufficient inclusive professional supports for teachers to implement a high-quality curriculum that challenges and supports all students.**

- A.** The district does not have a fully developed vision or process for professional development (PD) aligned with a coherent PD plan.
1. The curriculum director, charged with oversight of PD and supports, does not have a budget. Instead, school-based budgets reflect line items for professional supports.

- B.** The current approach to implementation of curriculum varies across schools and at times across classes within the same grade level.
  - 1. The curriculum director identified as priority needs in the district the development of educator competencies in using scope and sequence and Understanding by Design (UbD) planning tools for curriculum.
  - 2. At the middle school, district professional supports for implementing curriculum 6-8 were reported to be in development to ensure a coherent approach to educator engagement. The middle school's turnaround status required explicit professional supports to address underperformance.
- C.** Structures for professional support vary across the district. Faculty meetings, common planning time (CPT), and team time were all described as opportunities for professional supports. There was not a shared understanding of what teachers needed to provide a curriculum with understanding and fidelity.
  - 1. The elementary schools schedule common planning time (CPT) for all grade levels during two blocks daily in addition to bi-weekly time on Tuesdays during "principal late time."
  - 2. The middle school schedules team times to focus on pacing and lesson planning, assessments, or discussing field trips. Middle-school teachers reported that the 50-minute block, either once or twice a week, was not sufficient to accomplish tasks.
  - 3. High-school teachers and administrators reported that most faculty meeting time in the year before the onsite review was used to prepare their documentation for the NEASC review.
- D.** Principals stated that high-school schedules and the absence of department chairs mitigated against establishing CPT across content areas for teachers. The high school does not have established structures to ensure horizontal articulation across content areas or vertical articulation within content areas.
- E.** Between 2016 and 2019, without district oversight, professional supports were designed and delivered at the school level only. In 2019-2020 the district saw the introduction of professional supports administered through the office of the curriculum director. The 2019-2020 professional development calendar listed specific curriculum initiatives offered during six scheduled early release days throughout the school year.
  - 1. Teachers stated that professional supports were not relevant, sufficiently differentiated, or based on their interests. The curriculum director acknowledged the shortcomings in the 2019-2020 plan. The curriculum director and principals told the team that decisions for offerings informed by the multiple initiatives underway in the district were not designed collaboratively with teachers.

2. Sessions with an outside consultant supported *Project Read* curriculum implementation at the elementary grades. Sessions on literacy modeling and sharing practices, and one-time sessions on essential questions and backwards design unit planning for the middle and high schools were also provided.
3. Other curriculum-related supports included two sessions on writing across the curriculum, and one session on curricular materials bias.

**Impact:** The absence of centralized oversight in curriculum and the absence of a program budget contribute to shortcomings in professional supports. Without clearly defined oversight of curriculum and sufficient resources to plan and deliver professional supports, the district cannot ensure that educators implement curriculum with fidelity and with increasing proficiencies over time. The district shortchanges educators and leaves them without a deep understanding of evidence that informs content frameworks and related practices. When the taught curriculum is compromised, students cannot experience the depth of rigor in learning opportunities regardless of their learning needs.

**5. In observed classrooms, the quality of instruction was inconsistent and frequently was missing rigor. While the number of students per class was relatively small, the main instructional approach except in some elementary classes was whole-class rather than small-group instruction.**

**A. Focus Area #1: Learning Objectives & Expectations** Instructional practices that reflected elements of effective instructional design---including articulated learning objectives and success criteria, activities that support and are adjusted to meet learning objectives and checks for understanding---varied across grade levels.

1. The review team observed sufficient and compelling evidence that students understood what they should be learning and why (characteristic #2) in 64 percent of observed elementary classrooms, in 26 percent of middle-school classes, and in 38 percent of high-school classes.
  - a. In one elementary classroom, the teacher gave a thorough explanation of the lesson, then moved around the classroom as students worked on different phases of writing, including writing, researching, and publishing. All students were focused on their work.
  - b. In contrast, at the middle school, students in a math class began a math quiz with insufficient directions, resulting in some having difficulty getting started. As soon as time was called, these students began to roam around the room.
2. Review team members observed sufficient and compelling evidence that teachers made frequent checks for understanding, provided feedback, and adjusted instruction (characteristic #4) in 57 percent of observed elementary classrooms, in 40 percent of middle-school classrooms, and in 31 percent of high-school classrooms.
  - a. In a grade 1 ELA class, the teacher walked around the classroom and helped students individually. Observers noted that feedback was relevant and skillful.

- b. In an example of less effective instruction, in a grade 10 history class there were some questions and answers, but the teacher did not probe for understanding.
- c. Often, at all levels, the teacher introduced a worksheet or project and walked around the room while students worked independently. Some teachers guided students' work, while others merely noted whether students were on task.

**B. Focus Area #2: Student Engagement & Higher-Order Thinking** The level of student engagement and higher-order thinking varied across the district. Opportunities for students to communicate ideas with one another, engage in higher-order thinking, and engage with real-world tasks were not consistently embedded in lessons.

1. Review team members saw sufficient and compelling evidence that students engaged in higher-order thinking (characteristic #6) in 36 percent of observed elementary classes, in 33 percent of middle-school classes, and in only 19 percent of high-school classes.
  - a. In one middle-school ELA class, students were working in groups reading primary sources such as a slave auction bill of sale or a wanted poster and developing questions about it. The teacher moved from one group to another facilitating the conversations and giving feedback. Students were engaged and focused. The readings were selected for students at different levels.
  - b. In contrast, in several middle-school mathematics classrooms, when students worked on solving problems involving fractions, multiplication, and addition, the discussion of how to choose a strategy to solve the problem was limited and the focus was on performing the operation.
  - c. In a high-school history class, the teacher read a selection about a topic that was ripe for rich discussion but did not provide opportunities for students to engage in higher-order thinking about this topic. While the teacher read the selection to the students, she told them that the main information was highlighted so they could find the answers to the comprehension questions.
2. Observers found sufficient and compelling evidence that students communicated their ideas and thinking with each other (characteristic #7) in just 14 percent of observed elementary classrooms, in 33 percent of middle-school classrooms, and in 25 percent of high-school classes.
  - a. In one grade 1 class, the teacher ensured that all students had an opportunity to participate through thoughtful pairing and small-group assignments. Some students did problem-solving and synthesis, while others focused on writing and publishing their work.

- b. In one middle-school classroom, students worked on individual projects where the work relied on gathering information from other students; many students were engaged in academic talk in small groups. Students easily explained what they were doing and why.
          - c. In contrast, in a high-school literature class, the teacher asked leading questions about a novel and provided students with much of the response, missing opportunities to push student thinking. The teacher also missed opportunities to connect the novel with real-world issues.
  3. The review team found sufficient and compelling evidence that students had opportunities to engage with meaningful tasks connected to their lives (characteristic #8) in 50 percent of observed elementary classes, in 40 percent of middle-school classes, and in only 19 percent of high-school classes.
    - a. In a grade 1 ELA class, observers noted that research and publishing were the students' favorite topics. Students worked in pairs and small groups.
    - b. In contrast, in another middle-school class, all students were busy copying algorithms such as  $a(b+c) = (ab) + (ac)$ . Students used notebooks to record all mathematics equations but did not have opportunities to explain their thinking or suggest alternative approaches to solving these equations.
- C. Focus Area #3: Inclusive Practices & Classroom Culture** In observed classrooms, the team members found limited evidence of differentiation by content or product, but some differentiation of process.
1. Team members found sufficient and compelling evidence of students engaged in challenging tasks regardless of learning needs (characteristic #9) in 64 percent of observed elementary classrooms, in 33 percent of middle-school classrooms, and in only 19 percent of high-school classes.
    - a. In a grade 5 class, the teacher reviewed a mathematics concept by introducing it on the board, showing a BrainPOP video, and then assigning a worksheet so that students could practice. This lesson was consistent with another grade 5 math lesson but included more challenging problems. Two students worked with an assistant.
    - b. In another grade 5 class, where the instruction was less effective, the observer noted that the lesson was "highly rote with limited cognitive demand."
  2. The review team found sufficient and compelling evidence that teachers used a variety of instructional strategies (characteristic #10) in 57 percent of observed elementary classes, in just 26 percent of middle-school classes, and in only 13 percent of high-school classrooms.
    - a. In a grade 3 elementary classroom, the teacher used a range of instructional approaches to ensure that all learners could access the curriculum. The teacher used direct

instruction, partner work, and paraprofessional support. Students had reference guides, and the teacher directed students to anchor charts and the responses of other students to build understanding.

- b. In contrast, in most observed high-school classes, students worked on the same task, with teachers conducting whole-class instruction. Small-group learning activities were not typically observed in high-school classes.
3. Team members saw sufficient and compelling evidence that classroom supports were in place to ensure that students behaved appropriately (characteristic #11) in 86 percent of observed elementary classrooms, in 47 percent of middle-school classes, and in 75 percent of high-school classrooms.
  - a. In most classrooms, routines were in place and students behaved appropriately. However, evidence of the newly introduced Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework was not apparent in most of the classrooms observed.
4. The review team found sufficient and compelling evidence that the classroom climate was conducive to teaching and learning (characteristic #12) in 86 percent of observed elementary classes, in 47 percent of middle-school classes, and in 50 percent of high-school classrooms.

**Impact:** Without consistent delivery of effective, research-based instruction in all grades and subjects, the district cannot optimize all students' learning opportunities and prepare all students for college, careers, and civic involvement.

## Recommendations

1. **The district should complete as soon as possible its K-12 curricula in all content areas. It should ensure that curricula are high-quality, comprehensive, aligned with the current Massachusetts frameworks, and aligned vertically and horizontally. The district should develop and implement an ongoing process for reviewing and revising K-12 curricula.**
  - A. The district should create a more direct curriculum leadership structure.
    1. The district should strengthen central office direction for curriculum development and renewal by giving the position of curriculum director clear authority on curricular matters and amending the organizational chart to reflect this change.
  - B. The district should ensure that the curriculum selection and use decision making process is transparent and used with fidelity. The process should account for the breadth of curriculum alignment that needs to occur.

1. Under the guidance of the curriculum director, the district should develop a three-to-five-year curriculum action plan by content area. The plan should be aligned with the district's vision and core values articulated in the strategic plan and set bold expectations for 21st century outcomes for all learners.
  2. The plan should be informed by a thorough analysis of student performance summative and formative data, consideration of curriculum content needs, current curriculum initiatives, the district's strategic plan, and findings from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) review.
  3. The plan should include expected results in the form of SMART goals<sup>8</sup> that identify the desired timeline of curricular materials development and alignment with the frameworks. It should also identify the human and financial resources needed to support this work, including explicit roles for educator engagement in the process of selection or development of curriculum materials and financial projections over a 3-5year period to fund the work.
  4. As part of the planning process, the district should consider specifying the roles that central office staff, principals, and school-based staff will perform.
  5. The curriculum director and district leadership team should plan a mechanism to continually and consistently communicate with stakeholders about the plan to select and review curriculum.
- C.** The district should support the recommendation of the curriculum director and use a common format (such as Understanding by Design) to document and align all curriculum.
1. The district should ensure that all documented curricula provide adapted and supplemental materials based on individual student needs and strengths, as appropriate.
- D.** The district should commit to securely storing all district documented K-12 curricula in one system, so that curricula are readily available to appropriate staff and feasible to implement. A storage system should allow for updates and adjustments in documents as needed.
- E.** District leaders should develop a process for the regular review and revision of curriculum.
1. District leaders should develop and implement a formal cyclical planning process to review and revise curriculum.
  2. As part of the planning process, the district should consider specifying the roles that central office staff, principals, and school-based staff will perform.

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<sup>8</sup> SMART goals are specific and strategic; measurable; action-oriented; rigorous, realistic, and results- focused; and timed and tracked.

3. The plan should provide a timeline for when K-12 curricula in each content area will be reviewed and updated. It should also identify the human and financial resources needed to support this work.

**Benefits:** Strong central office direction for curriculum will facilitate curricular coherence and ensure that decisions about programs and initiatives serve the entire district. A centralized, consistent process to review curriculum will ensure that teachers and students have access to an updated, comprehensive, and clearly articulated curriculum that is informed by student needs and other data and that prepares students for success in high school, college, careers, and civic engagement.

**2. The district should develop complementary district and school-based professional development that provides sustained and cohesive structures, supports, and experiences to help educators implement a comprehensive, aligned, and standards-based curriculum with fidelity.**

- A. The district should formally involve teachers in the planning, oversight, and implementation of professional development (PD) activities, programs, and activities in order to enhance professional growth and practice and better meet district needs for curriculum development and revision.
- B. Curriculum PD programs and services should be built around district priorities and informed by systematically identified staff needs, student achievement data, and assessments of curricula and instruction.
  1. The district should review the extensive job description for the director of curriculum. Given the specific tasks listed, district and building leaders should reframe and align responsibilities and set priorities.
  2. The district capacity to lead and manage professional learning communities, curriculum targeted walkthroughs, embedded professional support, and other open education resources (OER) should be included in the examination of capacity.
- C. Time for embedded professional development, such as structured department and grade-level common planning time, should be optimized to contribute to curriculum development and renewal.
- D. The district should review perceived and actual structural practices that create obstacles to providing high quality, aligned professional supports.
  1. The district should review and adjust middle-school and high-school scheduling and educator assignments and roles, as necessary, in order to use time effectively to provide high-quality professional supports.

- E. The district should ensure that professional support goals are SMART<sup>9</sup> and are aligned with the district's improvement planning.

**Benefits:** By implementing this recommendation, the district will likely ensure that educators implement curricula with fidelity and with increasing proficiency over time. When the district provides inclusive opportunities, educators develop deeper content and related practice knowledge, skills, and dispositions to implement curriculum that is accessible to all learners. Educators are better able to focus on delivering curriculum based on explicit learning targets and outcomes with fidelity.

**Recommended resources:**

- DESE's Curriculum and Instruction *Quick Reference Guide: Assessing Your Curriculum Landscape* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/impd/qrg-assessing-curriculum.pdf>) is a brief guide to decision—making about curriculum and to rethink practices for developing curriculum. Developing curricular materials from scratch should not be the burden of individual teachers. Providing every teacher with high-quality curricular materials is a system-level condition for success that depends on administrators and teachers playing their parts. School and district administrators set up the structures to make decisions about curricular materials and support teachers to evaluate and use them effectively.
- *Aligning Curriculum to Massachusetts Standards* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/impd/qrg-aligning-curriculum.pdf>) is a “quick reference guide” designed to support teachers, coaches, administrators, and curriculum developers in adopting or adapting curricular materials for use with Massachusetts standards.
- DESE's Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks web page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/current.html>) provides information about the current Frameworks.
- EdReports.org (<http://www.edreports.org/>) provides free, independent reviews of K-12 education materials. The reviews focus on alignment to college and career ready standards and other indicators of high quality as recommended by educators.
- DESE's CURATE webpage (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/curate/>) provides reports of various curricula's alignment to state standards and application in the classroom. CURATE reports are authored by panels of current Massachusetts teachers. The CURATE rubrics are useful tools for local curricula evaluation and selection processes.

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<sup>9</sup> SMART goals are specific and strategic; measurable; action-oriented; rigorous, realistic, and results- focused; and timed and tracked.

**3. The district should ensure that all teachers provide effective instruction that challenges and supports all students.**

- A.** The district should convene a cross-section of teachers and instructional leaders, working closely with principals, to identify the district’s instructional strengths and challenges.
  - 1. This process should be informed by student outcomes and other data, including academic performance, attendance and discipline, and result in a set of instructional expectations that challenges and engages all students regardless of learning needs. Areas of focus should include differentiating instruction, engaging students in higher-order thinking, promoting student discourse about content and ideas, and using a variety of instructional strategies.
  - 2. The district should prioritize these instructional practices as its “non-negotiables.”
  - 3. Professional development should focus on instructional areas that need strengthening as applied to the specific curricula that students and teachers work with every day.
  - 4. The group described above should work with teachers at each school to identify the school’s instructional strengths and challenges and develop strategies for implementation of exemplary practices.
- B.** The district should provide opportunities for educators to discuss ideas and strategies for improvement of instruction.
  - 1. These opportunities might include grade-level, department meetings, common planning time, faculty meetings, and professional days.
  - 2. Opportunities should be provided by level for exemplary teachers to share best practices, with a particular emphasis on opportunities for high-school educators to observe exemplary peers in high-performing districts.
- C.** The district should take steps to ensure that teachers receive appropriate guidance and high-quality feedback<sup>10</sup> so that their instruction challenges and supports all students.
- D.** The review team recommends that evaluators consider aggregating their walkthrough data to identify district and school instructional trends in practice, calibrate ratings, and generalize feedback from these walkthroughs.
  - 1. The district should share trends in practice (strengths and areas for growth) with staff and use these trends to further discussions of best practice.

**Benefits:** A strong instructional leadership team will drive the selection and dissemination of evidence-based, consistent instructional strategies to ensure that teachers provide high-quality instruction that challenges and supports all learners. Implementing these recommendations will mean a deeper

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<sup>10</sup> High-quality feedback is specific, timely, and actionable.

understanding of instructional challenges and strengths across the district, a stronger culture of professional growth and improvement, and instruction that is more clearly aligned with district priorities. In addition, the district likely will be better informed to ensure that all teachers provide high-quality instruction that focuses on challenging and engaging tasks that effectively prepare them for college, careers, and civic engagement.

**Recommended resources:**

- *DESE's Instructional Leadership Teams (ILT)* (<http://ilt-maese.weebly.com/>) Distributed leadership is identified in the Massachusetts Turnaround Practices as an essential element of school improvement. Development and support for Instructional Leadership Teams (ILTs) is an efficient, high leverage means to build school and district capacity to engage sustainable continuous cycles of improvement. This strategy for building distributed leadership is a resource developed by and used strategically by the Massachusetts Statewide System of Support. The ILT project provides focus, resources and training to ensure that ILT development is supported in turnaround schools across the commonwealth.
- *DESE's Quick Reference Guide: The Case for Curricular Coherence* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/instruction/impd/qrg-ensuring-coherence.pdf>) is a "quick reference guide" to ensuring that instruction aligns across classrooms and tiers in ways that maximize student learning.
- *DESE's Online Calibration Training Tool* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/eval/resources/calibration/>) uses videos of classroom instruction from DESE's Calibration Video Library to simulate brief, unannounced observations. Groups of educators, such as a district leadership team, watch a video together and then individually assess the educator's practice related to specific elements from the Model Classroom Teacher Rubric and provide the educator with written feedback. Through real-time data displays, the group members can then see how their conclusions compare to each other, as well educators throughout the state.
- *DESE's "What to Look For" Observation Guides* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/frameworks/observation/>) describe what observers should expect to see in a classroom at a particular grade level in a specific subject area. This includes the knowledge and skills students should be learning and using (as reflected in state learning standards) and best practices related to classroom curriculum, instruction, and assessment for each subject area. The guides are not designed to replace any evaluation system or tools districts currently use but are a resource to help classroom observers efficiently identify what teachers and students should be experiencing in specific subjects and grade levels.

## Assessment

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### Contextual Background

#### *Data Collection System*

The district's elementary schools use a range of standardized assessments (for example, DIBELS Next, Running Records, and GoMath), but the middle and high schools rely almost exclusively on MCAS, SAT, advanced placement exams, and teacher-developed assessments. The middle school has begun using the Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE) and Group Mathematics Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GMADE) as universal screening tools for additional data points. In the district's self-assessment submitted in advance of the onsite review, district leaders reported that the district did little at the middle and high schools in terms of common assessments because the same teachers often taught all sections of a subject for a given year and then taught many of these students in the following years.

#### *Data Use and Sharing Results*

The superintendent analyzes MCAS assessment performance data yearly as he and his team review the district's strategic plan and begin planning the next year's budget. The district's two school principals oversee the management of student assessments at their respective schools, as well as other strategies concerning data collection, data use, and sharing of key data sources. The responsibilities of the district's new curriculum director include analysis and reporting of all local, state, and national educational testing results; assisting instructional staff in the use of instructional strategies that include ongoing assessment of student progress; providing data in formats useable by administrators and teaching staff for making informed decisions for instruction; and assisting schools with data teams and analysis.

Strategies for administering student assessments and monitoring students' academic progress vary considerably among school levels, with the strongest and most consistent practices taking place at the elementary level. Elementary teachers administer a variety of benchmark and progress monitoring assessments at all grade levels, following a common calendar and consistent process of administration up to three times per school year. Elementary teachers also benefit from support provided by a literacy specialist who meets with teachers to review student data.

With support from DESE's Statewide System of Support regional support team, a data team was established at the middle school and the high school and had its first meeting in December 2019. Data team members identify data sets of interest to the data team and explore tools available to review data. Members are being trained on using the ATLAS Looking at Data and Data Inquiry Info protocols to help guide conversations about data and to make recommendations for changes to practice.

School committee members reported that they received MCAS assessment performance reports from the superintendent and have at times used data about the performance of student groups to support new positions and programs within the district. For example, after noticing reading scores had begun to decrease in some grades, the committee committed funding to hire a literacy specialist and voted to adopt a new literacy initiative.

Important areas of growth remain. District administrators recognized that there was room for improvement in the overall collection, analysis, and decision-making processes involving student assessment data, and acknowledged that this would take time, money, resources, and training of professional staff.

## Challenges and Areas for Growth

### **1. The district does not have a systemwide approach for efficient and purposeful collection and analysis of data from student assessments and other sources to guide decision-making, and to improve all students' performance, opportunities, and outcomes.**

- A.** In contrast to the elementary schools, the middle and high schools have not established standard practices for the administration, collection, or review of district or school-level assessment and outcome data.
  - 1. In the district's self-assessment submitted in advance of the onsite review, district leaders noted that the collection and analysis of student assessment data in grades 6-12 were focused almost exclusively on summative standardized tests and assessments such as MCAS, SAT, and advanced placement (AP).
  - 2. Benchmark assessments are not administered at the secondary level on a regular, common, or systematic basis, except for WIDA assessments with English learners (ELs).
  - 3. In school year 2019-2020, the middle school began using the nationally normed Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE) and Group Mathematics Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GMADE) as universal screening tools in reading and math. At the time of the review, these data were used exclusively for grouping students in reading and/or math intervention blocks. Teachers reported that these data "have not made their way into their school's student support team process," and that it was too soon "to tell how useful it is."
- B.** The district does not have a data management system in place, thus preventing educators and school leaders from being able to acquire data efficiently, or to run analyses on their school's performance.
  - 1. Educators at Littleville Elementary School said they were benefitting from using a data collection spreadsheet that a teacher created in Google Sheets, developed, and maintained.

While interviewees said that they appreciated having this spreadsheet, they noted that it did have efficiency and capability limitations. For example, classroom teachers must manually enter student assessment data, running reports and analysis of data is not possible, and the spreadsheet is only used at the Littleville Elementary School.

2. The secondary level does not have a schoolwide data management system in place where educators can store, analyze, access and use data.
  - a. During interviews, when asked about the greatest assessment need in the district, one leader responded, “Resources for a progress monitoring tool, some way to house the data, and resources for teams to dig into it.” Another stressed the need for “... a tool to run all of the data to then tease out trends.”

**Impact:** The absence of coordinated policies, structures, and practices for the continuous collection of student assessment and performance data hinders the district’s and schools’ ability to make appropriate and timely adjustments to programs, curriculum, instruction, and professional development. Without a comprehensive set of assessments, teachers do not have sufficient information to improve instruction and respond effectively to the diverse learning needs of all students. Without efficient access and support for reviewing data, district educators are missing important information about student learning successes and challenges, which is necessary for making timely and meaningful instructional decisions.

**2. The district has not established a culture that values and uses data at all levels to improve teaching and learning, including classroom-level decision making.**

- A. The district is at the preliminary stage in the development and implementation of a comprehensive system for using student assessment results to support all students in making progress toward achieving state and local standards.
  1. Educators said that while they sometimes used data in discussions about student performance, classroom grouping, and identification of individual students needing interventions, moving these conversations into actionable changes in instructional practice at the classroom level did not happen often or consistently.
  2. In observed classrooms, teachers did not consistently use student assessment data to adjust and differentiate instructional practice.
    - a. The team saw sufficient and compelling evidence of teachers conducting checks for student understanding, providing feedback, and adjusting instruction (characteristic #4) in 57 percent of observed elementary school classrooms, but in only 40 percent of middle-school and 31 percent of high-school classrooms.
- B. Despite plans and recommendations presented in previous school and district reports, evidence suggests that only limited strides have been made in fostering a culture of data collection and data-driven decision-making.

1. Recommendations in the Gateway Regional High School New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) report published in October 2018 include: (1) Develop and implement a formal plan to ensure that professional staff collects, disaggregates, and analyzes data to identify and respond to inequities in student achievement; and (2) Develop and implement a plan to ensure that teachers collaborate regularly in formal ways on the creation, analysis, and revision of formative and summative assessments, including common assessments.
2. The previous review of the Gateway Regional School District conducted by DESE in April 2012 recommended that the district prioritize and accelerate its efforts to create a comprehensive assessment system with the capacity to effectively support and monitor the implementation of coordinated programs and aligned practices K-12. In addition, the report stated that policies and procedures for the collection, analysis, and application of student performance data should be clear, uniform, and include appropriate strategies and expectations for all schools and grade levels.
3. Both the middle- and high-school 2018-2021 School Improvement Plans contain a goal (Goal 1.3) which states that the school's teachers, student assistance teams, and administrators will collaboratively analyze summative and formative assessment data to adjust instructional practices and provide tiered supports to meet students' needs.

**Impact:** Without adequate development and implementation of a system for using student assessment and other progress monitoring data, the district is missing a critical opportunity for teachers to act on timely information to adjust their instructional practices to ensure that all students attain maximum academic growth.

**3. The district has not articulated clear expectations or identified best practices to share progress monitoring and assessment results with families and students districtwide, and to use these data to help families to support their children to perform at a high level.**

- A. Practices vary substantially at the school and classroom level for sharing clear, timely, and easily understood information to families about their children's progress toward attaining grade-level standards, and whether students are on track to being college and career ready.
  1. Teachers and administrators reported that individual schools led the efforts around family engagement, and while family engagement was identified as a strategic action in the District Improvement Plan, there was little evidence of district leadership for this work.
    - a. Teachers said that the focus on family engagement came from schools, and that it tended to be one-directional.
  2. Several teachers told the review team about practices in place such as sending home report cards, sharing information during parent conferences, and providing parents access to the Power School portal to see grades and monitor student progress.
- B. While parents identified instances of one-way communication from the schools, parents and

district and school leaders did not cite examples of two-way communication between the schools and families.

1. Parents expressed concern about limited communication from the district about students' progress.<sup>12</sup> For example, one parent said that a number grade on the Power School portal "doesn't tell me anything."
2. Parents of elementary students said that the elementary schools provided information on how they could help their children succeed "usually on the back of the lunch menu."
3. In the middle- and high-school improvement plans, evidence of family and parent engagement is limited to attendance lists and home visit logs.

**Impact:** The absence of clear, consistent, and meaningful communications with parents and guardians can prevent families from understanding their children's progress toward attaining grade-level standards. It may also hinder educators' ability to involve families and leverage their expertise in supporting children to achieve at higher levels.

## Recommendations

1. **The district should identify and put into place a common data platform for all district schools which ensures that administrators and educators have timely and efficient access to student, classroom, and school-related data.**
  - A. A single data platform with a single point of entry can facilitate educator access, help to support teacher use, and improve student performance through data-based decision-making.
  - B. The district should ensure that its data platform can produce reports that clearly display the information most desired by users. At a minimum, these reports should present disaggregated information about student groups, which is vital to identifying opportunity and achievement gaps and barriers to student success.
  - C. The district should prioritize collecting, entering, and analyzing the most essential data---those that can be used to improve student learning, identify gaps in curriculum, and measure school and district progress toward goals.
  - D. Development of the data platform should take into consideration educators' skillsets and time availability. This will require that the district provide substantial and ongoing professional development opportunities to ensure that all educators and administrators can effectively use the data platform functions.

**Benefits:** By implementing this recommendation, the district will help inform major decisions that affect teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes.

**Recommended resources:**

- DESE’s *Assessment Literacy Self-Assessment and Gap Analysis Tool* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/assessment/continuum.pdf>) is intended to support districts in understanding where their educators fit overall on a continuum of assessment literacy. After determining where the district as a whole generally falls on the continuum, districts can determine potential next steps.
- 2. The district should take concrete steps to ensure that educators have the necessary time and resources to use data consistently to inform instruction and adjust practice.**
- A.** District leaders should develop and implement a comprehensive assessment system that balances multiple assessment formats: universal screeners and diagnostics, formative assessments, progress monitoring, interim assessments, curriculum-embedded summative and performance assessments, and statewide summative assessments (MCAS) for use with all students, pre- kindergarten through grade 12.
  - B.** Teachers in all grade levels should receive ongoing professional development and support in using data and assessments to inform and enhance their instructional practice.
    - 1. The district should encourage its grade-level and content-level teams to take advantage of the full range of materials available (e.g., online resources, conferences, and educational journals) for effective ways of turning data analysis findings into action.
    - 2. This work includes using standard protocols for reviewing data. At the time of the onsite, the middle school had just begun using the ATLAS Looking at Data protocol which should be considered for use at the elementary and high schools. A variety of other excellent and popular data protocols are also available.

**Benefits:** Implementing this recommendation will mean that all educators will likely become better informed about students’ progress as well as their own instructional strengths, challenges, and necessary adjustments to practice. Furthermore, the district stands to benefit from greater pre-kindergarten through grade 12 coordination among curriculum, assessment, and instructional practice which will help maximize the impact of educators’ efforts to improve the academic achievement of all students.

**Recommended resources:**

- Educational Testing Service White Paper, *Measuring the Power of Learning*, 2018. (<https://www.ets.org/s/k12/pdf/ets-k-12-understanding-measurement-white-paper.pdf>) is a reader-friendly document that can help educators better understand different types of assessments, their various and specific uses in teaching and learning, and how they can enable a district to implement best practices in assessment.

- DESE's *District Data Team Toolkit* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/accountability/toolkit/>) is a set of resources to help a district establish, grow, and maintain a culture of inquiry and data use through a District Data Team.
- 3. The district should ensure that all parents/guardians have clear, timely, personalized information about students' progress toward achieving mastery in grade-level standards and readiness for college and careers.**
  - A.** The district should convene a representative group of families and educators to review information provide to families and to identify areas for improvement.
  - B.** Well supported and consistent practices for sharing information with families related to student learning should take place at each school.

**Benefits:** Implementing this recommendation will result in stronger collaborative relationships between classroom teachers and parents/guardians, leading to a greater shared understanding of each child's academic progress, and increasing the involvement of families in supporting their children's learning at home, in the community, and at school.

**Recommended resources:**

- *The Communicating Student Learning Progress project* ([https://research.acer.edu.au/ar\\_misc/34](https://research.acer.edu.au/ar_misc/34)) investigated questions relating to the effectiveness of current methods of communicating student progress, the extent to which they are valued by stakeholders, whether they are considered to provide quality information about student learning, and whether there are alternative designs for these activities that might be more effective.
- *Parents' Guides to Student Success* (<https://www.pta.org/search-results?keywords=Parents%20Guide%20to%20Student%20Success>) are grade-specific guides from the National PTA (available in English and Spanish) with specific descriptions for parents of what children should be learning once Common Core standards are fully implemented, along with suggestions for helping students at home and communicating with teachers.
- DESE's *Family and Community Involvement* web page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/families/>) provides several resources, including ESE's *Guide to Parent, Family, and Community Involvement*.
- Massachusetts Executive Office of Education's Parent Engagement and Family Support web page (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/birth-grade-12/early-education-and-care/parent-and-family-support/>) provides links to resources for families related to education and learning, food and diet, and health and safety, as well as parent and family support publications.

## Student Support

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### Contextual Background

The district faces considerable challenges in its efforts to provide high-quality academic instruction and systemwide targeted supports to improve learner outcomes. Among these are the absence of fully developed and articulated instructional standards at each level and the skills needed to ensure that all students have access to high-quality content. A number of Gateway students arrive to school with unique programmatic and support needs. In the 2019-2020 school year, 44.2 percent of students were part of the high needs student group because they were in one or more of the following student groups: students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, and English learners (ELs) or former ELs. Students with disabilities made up 20.6 percent of the student population, compared with 18.4 percent statewide; economically disadvantaged students represented 32.3 percent of district students, compared with 32.8 percent statewide; and 1.9 percent of Gateway students were ELs, less than the statewide percentage of 10.8 percent. Between 2016 and 2019 the district saw an increase in the number of English learners in the district, mostly speakers of Ukrainian and Russian.<sup>11</sup>

The district has focused recent efforts on improving support for students' social-emotional health and has staff to address a range of students' needs. The district has taken steps to ensure the physical safety and wellbeing of students and staff: all schools have upgraded security systems for entry into the buildings through two-level buzzer and entry systems, and cameras are installed at all entrances, as are door-blocking devices to block entry into classrooms and shades to cover interior windows. There are routine lockdown drills at all schools.

The district has not established an integrated, tiered system of supports for all learners across academic, social, and behavioral domains, nor has it communicated a vision and expectations for such a system. At the time of the onsite in February 2020, the district was in its first year of implementing a districtwide positive behavioral management system.

Chronic absence<sup>12</sup> rates are a concern in the district and are especially high in the middle school.<sup>13</sup> The chronic absence rates for some student groups are high. In 2019, the student groups in the district with the highest chronic absence rates were as follows: 30.0 percent for English learners, 20.5 percent for economically disadvantaged students, and 18.3 percent for students with disabilities.

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<sup>11</sup> According to DESE data, between 2016 and 2019 student enrollment in the district decreased from 874 in 2016 to 841 in 2017 to 831 in 2018 to 825 in 2019. The proportion of ELs in the district increased from 1.3 percent in 2016 to 2.4 percent in 2017 to 2.8 percent in 2018 to 2.7 percent in 2019.

<sup>12</sup> Chronic absence is defined as the percentage of students absent 10 percent or more of their total number of student days of membership in a school. See Table 30 in the Student Performance section of this report for chronic absence rates over time, disaggregated by student group.

<sup>13</sup> Between 2017 and 2019, the district's chronic absence rate dropped from 13.3 percent to 12.6 percent. In 2019, however, the grade levels with the highest chronic absence rates were as follows: 17.6 percent for grade 3, 20.8 percent for grade 6, 20.6 percent for grade 7, and 15 percent for grade 9.

## Strength Findings

### 1. District leaders and staff ensure that schools equitably support all students' safety, well-being, and sense of belonging.

**A.** In 2018 the district adopted its five-year Safe and Supportive Schools Action Plan (2019-2024) which addresses numerous goals, including staff cultural competencies, understanding and managing the impact of behaviors on learning, improving Tier 1 systems of support, and training to implement the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) framework K-12.

1. In its self-evaluation submitted in advance of the onsite, district leaders said that they had comprehensive plans to support the safety and well-being of students and staff.
2. An interview with the superintendent and a review of the district's website indicated that the Safe and Supportive Schools Action Plan provided guidance to staff, students, and families in offering physical and emotional support in times of crisis.

**B.** School leaders and student support staff described relationships with area agencies such as the police to provide organized community support for students.

1. The district provides a health clinic, dental services, and vision screening at the high school; these services are available to all students in the district.
2. At the elementary level the district offers before- and after-school programming which the district calls "wrap-around" services, including breakfast, help with homework, and social activities.

**C.** Although the district only implemented the PBIS framework in 2019-2020, it has developed a comprehensive set of guidelines that clearly and explicitly state schoolwide behavioral expectations at each level. In addition, the district has developed an "acknowledgement" grid that delineates the types of rewards and persons responsible for acknowledging appropriate behavior, and how the community will celebrate successes.

**D.** Staff, parents, and students described an inclusive culture, with increased participation seen in groups such as the special education parent advisory council and the gay student alliance group. Teachers stated that the small size of the schools and classes meant that "everyone knows each other," noting that training about trauma had influenced teachers' attitudes about meeting the emotional needs of students. Students told the team that they saw their guidance counselors and teachers as sources for support and that they felt safe in school.

**Impact:** When a district focuses on ensuring student safety and well-being, it helps to ensure that students are better able to focus on learning.

## Challenges and Areas for Growth

### 2. The district has not established an integrated system of supports to address the academic needs of all students.

A. Interviews and a document review indicated that academic support services differed in breadth and quality from level to level. The elementary level had the most integrated services available; the middle school had just begun an academic intervention program; and the high school did not have a formal program of tiered academic support.

1. At the two elementary schools, literacy support is well-established, integrated, and informed by data. Support staff told the team that each grade level had a daily 30-minute block for students who needed additional instruction. Two programs supplement the reading curriculum: Orton Gillingham and Leveled Literacy Instruction. For students who do not require literacy support, the block is used for math, enrichment, or other activities.
2. In 2019-2020, the middle school introduced a once every third day intervention block, using data from the Group Mathematics Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GMADE) and Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE) assessments to identify students in need of support. At the time of the site visit, grade 6 was using the School Readiness Assessment (SRA) math materials, grade 7 was using Marilyn Burns materials, and grade 8 was using teacher-developed materials to supplement classroom curriculum. It was not clear to the team what supports the district provided in the intervention blocks.
3. The high school does not have a formal system of tiered academic support. School leaders stated that differentiated instruction for students with diverse learning needs was not taking place and that they have identified this as an area of need.
  - a. Although students have a 35-minute weekly advisory period, it is not currently used for academic support. Staff and students reported that students participated in clubs, library, or some tutoring during this advisory period rather than after school because of limited after-school transportation availability.
  - b. Staff reported that the high school did not have a formal system of support for students not passing the MCAS assessment, although there once had been a grant-supported program.
  - c. Students reported that teachers provided academic help if students sought it during directed study periods.
4. In the self-assessment that the district completed before the onsite visit, district leaders rated tiered systems of supports as “Somewhat Well” described by the following indicators (possible ratings were “Very Well,” “Well,” “Somewhat Well,” or “Not at All

Well”).

- a. The district provides evidence-based practices, programs and systems to students by tier. Schedules and resource allocation are designed to ensure that Tier 2 and 3 supports supplement, and don't supplant, Tier I instruction.
  - b. The district utilizes summative and formative evaluation procedures to make decisions about student intervention/instruction using scientifically-validated assessments for screening, diagnostic and progress monitoring purposes.
- B.** The school leadership team has a process to determine whether interventions are structured and assigned equitably. The team ensures that student outcomes are assessed and uses that data to determine whether initiatives and efforts are resulting in achievement gains. There is no systematic process for assigning, evaluating, adjusting and monitoring existing supports for students or to ensure alignment between student supports.
1. When asked about such a process, staff described a reliance on personal relationships with students rather than a systematic, data-informed approach.
  2. The superintendent stated that at one time teachers used computer-based testing, but not effectively, and budget concerns eventually led to its discontinuation. The superintendent said that he recognized that “ideally, we would have a way of assessing students’ skills and abilities and intervene when necessary to help students grow.”
- C.** The district is at the beginning stage of implementing the Massachusetts Tiered System of Supports (MTSS).
1. The district’s strategic plan calls for establishing a tiered system of support, but many action steps have not been completed.
  2. Teachers reported different understandings of MTSS.
  3. District and school staff stated that at the elementary level the district was building upon the existing Response to Intervention approach.
  4. It was not clear to the team what support was provided to students at the middle school.
  5. Some high-school teachers said that they viewed differentiated instruction as the responsibility of special education teachers and paraprofessionals, rather than as part of Tier 1 instruction for all students.
  6. District and school leaders stated that a gradual shift to a special education inclusion model has challenged some teachers in providing differentiated approaches to learning.
  7. Although the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan emphasizes support for diverse learning styles and differentiation, the district’s professional development plan does not

include a focus on these topics.

- a. In observed classrooms, the review team found sufficient and compelling evidence that teachers ensured students were engaged in challenging tasks regardless of learning needs (characteristic # 9) in 64 percent of elementary classes, in only 33 percent of middle-school classes, and in just 19 percent of observed high-school classes.
- b. The team found sufficient and compelling evidence that teachers used a variety of instructional strategies (characteristic #10) in 57 percent of observed elementary classrooms, in only 26 percent of middle-school classrooms, and in only 13 percent of high-school classrooms.

**Impact:** Without a continuum of targeted academic services and supports, the district cannot provide all students with the academic support that they need to succeed in college, careers, and civic involvement.

## ***Recommendations***

### **1. The district should develop and implement a multi-tiered system of academic supports for all learners.**

- A. Using a process of its own design that includes a range of stakeholders, the district should develop a coordinated districtwide tiered approach to supporting all students.
  1. It should use formative student performance and outcome data, especially in the middle and high schools, to determine additional interventions required to address student needs.
  2. The district should continue to work toward a shared understanding of flexible tiers and define instructional interventions and supports for each tier.
- B. The district should systematically evaluate the effectiveness of its tiered system of support using data to inform planning and adjustments to practice.

**Benefits:** A tiered system of supports will ensure that all students receive high-quality core instruction, using a variety of instructional strategies and targeted interventions. As a result, the district will be better able to improve all students' performance, opportunities, and outcomes.

#### **Recommended resources:**

- DESE's *Early Warning Indicator System* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/ccte/ccr/ewis/>) is a tool to provide information to districts about the likelihood that their students will reach key academic goals. Districts can use the tool in conjunction with other data and sources of information to better

target student supports and interventions and to examine school-level patterns over time in order to address systemic issues that may impede students' ability to meet academic goals.

- The *Early Warning Implementation Guide* ([http://www.doe.mass.edu/ccte/ccr/ewis/implementation-guide.pdf#search=%22Early Warning Implementation Guide%22](http://www.doe.mass.edu/ccte/ccr/ewis/implementation-guide.pdf#search=%22Early%20Warning%20Implementation%20Guide%22)) provides information on how to use early warning data, including the Massachusetts Early Warning Indicator System (EWIS), to identify, diagnose, support and monitor students in grades 1-12. It offers educators an overview of EWIS and how to effectively use these data in conjunction with local data by following a six-step implementation cycle.
- The *Massachusetts Tiered System of Support* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfss/mtss/blueprint.pdf>) is a blueprint for school improvement that focuses on systems, structures and supports across the district, school, and classroom to meet the academic and non-academic needs of all students. The MTSS website includes links to a self-assessment and a variety of helpful resources.
- The *Massachusetts Systems for Student Success (SfSS)* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfss/>) is a blueprint for school improvement that focuses on systems, structures and supports across the district, school, and classroom to meet the academic and non-academic needs of all students. The SfSS website includes links to a self-assessment and a variety of helpful resources.
- *Supporting and Responding to Behavior: Evidence-Based Classroom Strategies for Teachers* (<https://www.osepideasthatwork.org/evidencebasedclassroomstrategies/>) summarizes evidence-based, positive, proactive, and responsive classroom behavior intervention and support strategies that can help teachers capitalize on instructional time and decrease disruptions.
- *Every Student, Every Day: A Community Toolkit to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism* (<http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/chronicabsenteeism/toolkit.pdf>) is a set of Action Guides that provide information and resources to help ensure that all young people are in school every day and benefitting from coordinated systems of support.

## **2. The district should strengthen its efforts to improve student attendance.**

- A.** The district should analyze attendance data and determine the root cause(s) of chronic absence.
  1. The district should use disaggregated data to examine attendance rates and analyze the extent to which specific student groups have disproportionate rates of chronic absence.
  2. The district should gather input from students and families—for example, through focus groups and surveys—about the reasons for high absence rates and possible ways to address the challenge of students missing too much instruction.
  3. The district should ensure that schools support two-way communication and access for all students' families, including providing interpretation and translation services to families, as appropriate.

4. The district should determine the root causes of high and disproportionate absence rates and take steps to address them, including reviewing current initiatives to improve attendance and adjusting efforts as needed.
- B.** The district should consider that addressing attendance may involve a range of wider initiatives such as improving instruction and its relevance to post-graduation goals and building or strengthening relationships with students and their families.
1. The district might consider ways to increase students' agency, personalize their learning, and increase their understanding of the connections and relevance of their current coursework to their future success.

**Benefits:** The primary benefit of implementing this recommendation is that if students are in school, they are more likely to succeed. Engaging students and families in identifying the causes of student absence and in suggesting ways to improve attendance likely will help raise attendance and promote students' growth and development.

**Recommended resources:**

- *Every Student, Every Day: A Community Toolkit to Address and Eliminate Chronic Absenteeism* (<http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/chronicabsenteeism/toolkit.pdf>) is a set of Action Guides that provide information and resources to help ensure that all young people are in school every day and benefitting from coordinated systems of support.
- The Attendance Works website (<https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/>) provides several resources to help address chronic absenteeism, including district- and school-level self-assessments and planning tools, webinars, and toolkits.
- *My Career and Academic Plan (MyCAP)* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/ccte/ccr/initiatives/>) is a student-directed, multi-year planning tool and process that allows students to map academic plans, document personal/social growth, and engage in career development activities consistent with the student's unique, self-identified interests, needs, and goals for the attainment of post-secondary success.

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

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### Review Team Members

The review was conducted from February 25–27, 2020, by the following team of independent DESE consultants.

1. Marilynne Smith-Quarcoo, Curriculum and Instruction
2. Laurie Keating, Curriculum and Instruction
3. Lonnie Kaufman, Assessment
4. Jamel Adkins-Sharif, Student Support
5. Christine Brandt, *review team coordinator*

### District Review Activities

The following activities were conducted during the review:

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

The review team conducted interviews with the following representatives of the teachers' association: the president, the treasurer, and the second vice-president.

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

The team visited the following schools: Chester (K-5), Littlevale (K-5), Gateway Regional Middle School (grades 6-8), and Gateway Regional High School (grades 9-12).

During school visits, the team conducted interviews with students, students' families, and 2 principals, and focus groups with 16 elementary-school teachers, 4 middle-school teachers, and 4 high-school teachers.

The team observed 45 classes in the district: 16 at the high school, 15 at the middle school, and 14 at the 2 elementary schools.

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

- Student and school performance data, including achievement and growth, enrollment, graduation, dropout, retention, suspension, and attendance rates.
- Data on the district's staffing and finances.

- Published educational reports on the district by DESE, and the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC).
- District documents such as district and school improvement plans, school committee policies, curriculum documents, summaries of student assessments, job descriptions, handbooks, school schedules, and the district’s end-of-year financial reports.

**Site Visit Schedule**

<p><b>Tuesday</b> 2/25/2020</p>	<p><b>Wednesday</b> 2/26/2020</p>	<p><b>Thursday</b> 2/27/2020</p>	
<p>Orientation with district leaders and principals; interviews with district staff and principals; document reviews; interview with teachers’ association; and visits to Littleville Elementary School and the high school for classroom observations.</p>	<p>Interviews with district staff and principals; teacher focus groups; students’ families’ focus groups; interviews with school committee members; and visits to the Chester and Littleville elementary schools, and the middle and high schools for classroom observations.</p>	<p>Interviews with school leaders; student focus group; visits to Littleville Elementary School and the middle and high schools for classroom observations.</p> <p>District wrap-up meeting with the superintendent.</p>	

## Appendix B: Enrollment, Attendance, Expenditures

**Table B1a: Gateway Regional School District  
2019–2020 Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity**

Group	District	Percent of Total	State	Percent of Total
African-American	6	0.7%	87,053	9.2%
Asian	5	0.6%	67,527	7.1%
Hispanic	39	4.7%	205,136	21.6%
Native American	2	0.2%	2,081	0.2%
White	757	91.5%	549,006	57.9%
Native Hawaiian	1	0.1%	781	0.1%
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic/Latino	17	2.1%	37,244	3.9%
All	827	100.0%	948,828	100.0%

Note: As of October 1, 2019

**Table B1b: Gateway Regional School District  
2019–2020 Student Enrollment by High Needs Populations**

Group	District			State		
	N	Percent of High Needs	Percent of District	N	Percent of High Needs	Percent of State
Students w/ Disabilities	171	46.6%	20.6%	176,741	37.9%	18.4%
Econ. Disadvantaged	267	72.8%	32.3%	310,873	66.6%	32.8%
EL and former EL	16	4.4%	1.9%	102,861	22.0%	10.8%
All high needs students	367	100.0%	44.2%	466,930	100.0%	48.7%

Notes: As of October 1, 2019. 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 830; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 959,394.

**Table B2a: Gateway Regional School District  
Attendance Rates by Student Group, 2016–2019**

Group	N (2019)	2016	2017	2018	2019	4-yr Change	State (2019)
African American/Black	7	98.1	95.2	97.1	97.2	-0.9	94.1
Asian	2	--	--	--	--	--	96.2
Hispanic or Latino	49	95.1	94.9	95.3	94.3	-0.8	92.7
Multi-Race, non- Hispanic/Latino	19	93.3	94.1	94.8	95.9	2.6	94.4
White	802	95.3	94.0	94.7	94.6	-0.7	95.1
High Needs	417	93.7	92.5	93.3	93.8	0.1	93.3
Econ. Disadvantaged	322	93.5	92.4	93.1	93.4	-0.1	92.7
Students w/ Disabilities	180	93.3	92.2	92.9	93.8	0.5	93.0
English Learners	20	91.2	93.7	95.1	93.1	1.9	93.2
All	883	95.2	94.1	94.8	94.6	-0.6	94.6

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

**Table B2b: Gateway Regional School District  
Chronic Absence\* Rates by Student Group, 2016–2019**

Group	N (2019)	2016	2017	2018	2019	4-yr Change	State (2019)
African American/Black	7	0.0	14.3	0.0	14.3	14.3	16.2
Asian	2	--	--	--	--	--	7.5
Hispanic or Latino	49	5.1	13.5	8.3	14.3	9.2	21.7
Multi-Race, non- Hispanic/Latino	19	21.1	15.0	10.0	10.5	-10.6	13.7
White	802	10.4	13.4	12.4	12.6	2.2	9.7
High Needs	417	17.7	21.1	18.8	18.7	1.0	19.4
Econ. Disadvantaged	322	19.5	22.7	20.8	20.5	1.0	22.5
Students w/ Disabilities	180	17.4	21.8	22.3	18.3	0.9	20.3
English Learners	20	45.5	17.4	8.7	30.0	-15.5	20.3
All	883	10.5	13.3	12.0	12.6	2.1	12.9

\* Chronic absence is defined as the percentage of students absent 10 percent or more of their total number of student days of membership in a school.

**Table B3: Gateway Regional School District  
Expenditures, Chapter 70 State Aid, and Net School Spending Fiscal Years 2017–2019**

	FY17		FY18		FY19	
	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual
Expenditures						
From local appropriations for schools:						
By school committee	\$15,945,632	\$15,362,946	\$15,851,028	\$15,444,774	\$15,945,632	\$15,398,106
From revolving funds and grants	--	\$1,432,129	--	\$1,308,284	--	\$1,595,983
Total expenditures	--	\$16,795,075	--	\$16,753,058	--	\$16,994,089
Chapter 70 aid to education program						
Chapter 70 state aid*	--	\$5,580,489	--	\$5,606,889	--	\$5,632,899
Required local contribution	--	\$5,435,268	--	\$5,185,242	--	\$5,155,696
Required net school spending**	--	\$11,015,757	--	\$10,792,131	--	\$10,788,595
Actual net school spending	--	\$11,987,460	--	\$12,392,798	--	\$12,931,968
Over/under required (\$)	--	\$971,703	--	\$1,600,667	--	\$2,143,373
Over/under required (%)	--	8.8%	--	14.8%	--	19.9%

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

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

Sources: FY16, FY17, and FY18 District End-of-Year Reports, Chapter 70 Program information on DESE website

Data retrieved 1/13/20

**Table B4: Gateway Regional School District  
Expenditures Per In-District Pupil  
Fiscal Years 2017–2019**

<b>Expenditure Category</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2019</b>
Administration	\$891	\$904	\$1,128
Instructional leadership (district and school)	\$1,231	\$1,191	\$1,183
Teachers	\$5,685	\$5,824	\$7,848
Other teaching services	\$1,504	\$1,716	\$2,264
Professional development	\$25	\$37	\$37
Instructional materials, equipment and technology	\$288	\$325	\$513
Guidance, counseling and testing services	\$596	\$575	\$706
Pupil services	\$2,502	\$2,396	\$3,241
Operations and maintenance	\$1,257	\$1,397	\$2,011
Insurance, retirement and other fixed costs	\$3,329	\$3,515	\$4,502
<b>Total expenditures per in-district pupil</b>	<b>\$17,308</b>	<b>\$17,880</b>	<b>\$23,433</b>

Sources: <http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/statistics/per-pupil-exp.html>

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

## Appendix C: Instructional Inventory

Focus Area #1: Learning Objectives & Expectations		Insufficient Evidence	Limited Evidence	Sufficient Evidence	Compelling Evidence	Avg Number of points
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(1 to 4)
1. The teacher demonstrates knowledge of the subject matter.	ES	0%	36%	57%	7%	2.7
	MS	0%	40%	40%	20%	2.8
	HS	0%	50%	50%	0%	2.5
	<b>Total #</b>	0	19	22	4	2.7
	<b>Total %</b>	0%	42%	49%	9%	
2. The teacher ensures that students understand what they should be learning in the lesson and why.	ES	0%	36%	57%	7%	2.7
	MS	13%	60%	13%	13%	2.3
	HS	25%	38%	38%	0%	2.1
	<b>Total #</b>	6	20	16	3	2.4
	<b>Total %</b>	13%	44%	36%	7%	
3. The teacher uses appropriate classroom activities well matched to the learning objective(s).	ES	14%	29%	43%	14%	2.6
	MS	13%	53%	13%	20%	2.4
	HS	13%	50%	38%	0%	2.3
	<b>Total #</b>	6	20	14	5	2.4
	<b>Total %</b>	13%	44%	31%	11%	
4. The teacher conducts frequent checks for student understanding, provides feedback, and adjusts instruction.	ES	14%	29%	36%	21%	2.6
	MS	13%	47%	20%	20%	2.5
	HS	25%	44%	31%	0%	2.1
	<b>Total #</b>	8	18	13	6	2.4
	<b>Total %</b>	18%	40%	29%	13%	
<b>Total Score For Focus Area #1</b>	ES					10.6
	MS					9.9
	HS					8.9
	<b>Total</b>					9.8

<b>Focus Area #2: Student Engagement &amp; Higher-Order Thinking</b>		Insufficient Evidence	Limited Evidence	Sufficient Evidence	Compelling Evidence	Avg Number of points
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(1 to 4)
5. Students assume responsibility to learn and are engaged in the lesson.	<b>ES</b>	0%	36%	43%	21%	2.9
	<b>MS</b>	20%	47%	20%	13%	2.3
	<b>HS</b>	13%	44%	44%	0%	2.3
	<b>Total #</b>	5	19	16	5	2.5
	<b>Total %</b>	11%	42%	36%	11%	
6. Students engage in higher-order thinking.	<b>ES</b>	21%	43%	36%	0%	2.1
	<b>MS</b>	27%	40%	20%	13%	2.2
	<b>HS</b>	31%	50%	19%	0%	1.9
	<b>Total #</b>	12	20	11	2	2.1
	<b>Total %</b>	27%	44%	24%	4%	
7. Students communicate their ideas and thinking with each other.	<b>ES</b>	14%	71%	7%	7%	2.1
	<b>MS</b>	40%	27%	20%	13%	2.1
	<b>HS</b>	44%	31%	25%	0%	1.8
	<b>Total #</b>	15	19	8	3	2.0
	<b>Total %</b>	33%	42%	18%	7%	
8. Students engage with meaningful, real-world tasks.	<b>ES</b>	7%	43%	36%	14%	2.6
	<b>MS</b>	20%	40%	20%	20%	2.4
	<b>HS</b>	31%	50%	19%	0%	1.9
	<b>Total #</b>	9	20	11	5	2.3
	<b>Total %</b>	20%	44%	24%	11%	
<b>Total Score For Focus Area #2</b>	<b>ES</b>					9.6
	<b>MS</b>					8.9
	<b>HS</b>					7.9
	<b>Total</b>					8.8

<b>Focus Area #3: Inclusive Practice &amp; Classroom Culture</b>		Insufficient Evidence	Limited Evidence	Sufficient Evidence	Compelling Evidence	Avg Number of points
		(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(1 to 4)
9. The teacher ensures that students are engaging in challenging tasks regardless of learning needs.	<b>ES</b>	21%	14%	57%	7%	2.5
	<b>MS</b>	13%	53%	13%	20%	2.4
	<b>HS</b>	19%	63%	19%	0%	2.0
	<b>Total #</b>	8	20	13	4	2.3
	<b>Total %</b>	18%	44%	29%	9%	
10. The teacher uses a variety of instructional strategies.	<b>ES</b>	0%	43%	50%	7%	2.6
	<b>MS</b>	20%	53%	13%	13%	2.2
	<b>HS</b>	25%	63%	13%	0%	1.9
	<b>Total #</b>	7	24	11	3	2.2
	<b>Total %</b>	16%	53%	24%	7%	
11. Classroom routines and positive supports are in place to ensure that students behave appropriately.	<b>ES</b>	0%	14%	57%	29%	3.1
	<b>MS</b>	7%	47%	27%	20%	2.6
	<b>HS</b>	0%	25%	75%	0%	2.8
	<b>Total #</b>	1	13	24	7	2.8
	<b>Total %</b>	2%	29%	53%	16%	
12. The classroom climate is conducive to teaching and learning.	<b>ES</b>	0%	14%	57%	29%	3.1
	<b>MS</b>	13%	40%	27%	20%	2.5
	<b>HS</b>	6%	44%	50%	0%	2.4
	<b>Total #</b>	3	15	20	7	2.7
	<b>Total %</b>	7%	33%	44%	16%	
<b>Total Score For Focus Area #3</b>	<b>ES</b>					11.4
	<b>MS</b>					9.7
	<b>HS</b>					9.1
	<b>Total</b>					10.0