

District Review Report

Salem Public Schools

Comprehensive review conducted
November 5–8, 2018



Office of District Reviews and Monitoring

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary
Education

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Executive Summary

In July 2015, the current superintendent assumed leadership. During her second year (2016–2017), the superintendent spearheaded a collaborative planning process to develop a District Improvement Plan. Six work teams composed of district leaders, teachers, parents, students, and community members developed the plan. The plan enjoyed widespread input from stakeholders: approximately 385 community members attended three citywide conversations; 80 teachers participated in focus groups; and 338 teachers and 284 community members responded to surveys. By 2017, the district had a five-year strategic plan to chart a course of improvement. Four pillars anchor this plan. The plan seeks to create a vibrant K–12 teaching and learning eco-system; to reimagine the high-school learning experience; to nurture staff leadership and empowerment; and to strengthen family and community engagement.

At the time of the onsite review in November 2018, the team saw elements of the strategic plan being realized. Coaches in every school played a critical role in improving core instruction, the high school was developing a redesign plan, every school had a full-time parent engagement facilitator, and the district was in the second year of implementing City Connects, a systemic way of engaging community-based partners in supporting the academic and non-academic needs of students K–8.

While the district’s strategic plan is promising, the district has not developed sufficient structures and practices to monitor and ensure continuous improvement. In observed classrooms, high-quality rigorous instruction was not consistently implemented. Chronic absence was prevalent, and the district was challenged by a high turnover of school leaders. Some turnover was related to performance.

Salem High School, which is rated among the lowest performing high schools in Massachusetts, is classified by DESE as in need of focused/targeted support. The rest of the district’s schools are meeting or partially meeting targets.

Instruction

The team observed 63 classes throughout the district: 25 at the high schools, 12 at the middle schools, and 26 at 4 elementary schools. The team observed 28 ELA classes, 17 mathematics classes, and 18 classes in other subject areas. Among the classes observed were one special education class, and three career, vocational, technical education classes. 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 and rigor of instruction was inconsistent districtwide. Instruction did not consistently engage students in challenging tasks and support their varied learning needs through inclusive practices.

Strengths

- In June 2018, the district closed the Nathaniel Bowditch School, formerly a K–8 school, to “open the door to equity and access.”
- The district has established a K–8 instructional coaching model with structures and practices that support the effective implementation and alignment of standards-based curricula.
- The district has strategically identified four instructional priorities intended to enhance the achievement of diverse learners, and provided all stakeholders with ongoing professional development to ensure implementation.
- The district has established a system and expectation for collecting, using, and sharing district and school data.
- The district has implemented several innovative professional development practices.
- The district is proactive in promoting safe, supportive, and welcoming school climates across the district.
- The district strategically supports all students’ growth and development by implementing a tiered system of support and engaging family and community partners.

Challenges and Areas for Growth

- The district has not developed structures, practices, and procedures that support a cycle of continuous improvement.
- In observed classrooms, the quality and rigor of instruction was inconsistent districtwide. Instruction did not consistently engage students in challenging tasks and support their varied learning needs through inclusive practices.
- All students do not have equitable access to a range of rigorous course work and high-quality learning, including advanced placement classes and rigorous career, vocational, technical education programs.

- The district does not have interoperability between multiple student information systems or in-house support staff to manage and support the collection, use, and sharing of data in the district.
- The district’s educator evaluation system does not ensure that all educators receive high-quality feedback¹ that helps them to improve their practice.
- In recent years, the district has had high leadership turnover; some turnover was related to performance.
- The district has not identified effective strategies to improve chronic absence rates, which have been consistently higher than state rates in recent years.
- The district’s budget documents do not provide trend data or sufficient detail about the current year’s resource allocations.
- Six of the district’s seven schools are underutilized. The district does not have a long-term capital plan.

Recommendations

- The district should create an annual action plan that contains clear progress benchmarks and procedures for regular review of progress toward goals.
- The district should ensure that all teachers provide effective instruction that challenges and supports all students.
 - The district should ensure that students of color, English learners, students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged students have equitable access to a range of rigorous coursework and equitable access to rigorous career, vocational, technical education programs and pathways at the high school.
 - The district should take concrete steps to develop a dedicated data system for the whole district and add dedicated data support personnel to manage and support the district’s efforts to collect, use, and share data as well as to coordinate efforts with the city’s IT department.

¹ High-quality feedback is specific, timely, and actionable.

- The district should fully and effectively implement all components of the state’s Educator Evaluation Framework to promote educators’ growth, with a particular emphasis on ensuring that all educators receive high-quality feedback.
- The district should enhance its efforts to improve student attendance.
- The district should develop a budget document that is clear, comprehensive, and details how much schools and programs cost, and how outside funds are used.
- The district should develop a long-term capital plan for upgrading, renovating, and maintaining its schools and a plan for funding the projects.

Salem Public Schools District Review Overview

Purpose

Conducted under Chapter 15, Section 55A of the Massachusetts General Laws, comprehensive 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 the six district standards used by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE): Leadership and Governance, Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment, Human Resources and Professional Development, Student Support, and Financial and Asset Management. Reviews identify systems and practices that may be impeding improvement as well as those most likely to be contributing to positive results. 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.

Methodology

Reviews collect evidence for each of the six district standards above. A district review team consisting of independent consultants with expertise in each of the district standards reviews documentation, data, and reports for two days before conducting a four-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. Team members also observe classroom instruction. 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 Salem Public Schools was conducted from November 5–8, 2018. The site visit included 32.5 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 107 stakeholders, including school committee members, district administrators, school staff, students, students' families, and teachers' association representatives. The review team conducted three focus groups with three elementary-school teachers, two middle-school teachers, and four 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 63 classrooms in 8 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

Salem has a mayor-council form of government and the mayor chairs the school committee. The seven members of the school committee meet two times each month.

The superintendent has been in the position since July 2015. The district leadership team includes the assistant superintendent, the business manager, and the acting executive director of pupil personnel services. Central office positions have been mostly stable in number over the past three years. The district has 8 principals leading 10 schools; directors lead 2 smaller schools. There are approximately 40 other school administrators, including executive directors, directors, managers, supervisors, chiefs, and assistant principals. In the 2017–2018 school year, there were 357.3 teachers in the district. At the time of the review in November 2018, Nathaniel Bowditch, formerly a K–8 school, was closed.

In the 2017–2018 school year, 3,694 students were enrolled in the district’s 11 schools:

**Table 1: Salem Public Schools
Schools, Type, Grades Served, and Enrollment*, 2017–2018**

School	Type	Grades Served	Enrollment
Salem Early Childhood	ESS	Pre-K–K	93
Bates Elementary School	ES	K–5	342
Carlton Innovation Elementary School	ES	K–5	252
Horace Mann Laboratory School	ES	K–5	272
Witchcraft Heights Elementary	ES	K–5	458
Nathaniel Bowditch (closed June 2018)	ESMS	K–8	378
Saltonstall	ESMS	K–8	372
Collins Middle School	MS	6–8	536
Salem High School	HS	9–12	920

School	Type	Grades Served	Enrollment
Salem Prep High School	HS	10–12	26
New Liberty Innovation	HS	9–12	45
Totals	11 schools	Pre-K–12	3,694
*As of October 1, 2017			

Between 2015 and 2018 overall student enrollment decreased by 12 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) as compared with the state are provided in Tables B1a and B1b in Appendix B.

The total in-district per-pupil expenditure was higher than the median in-district per-pupil expenditure for 31 K–12 districts of similar size (3,000–3,999 students) in fiscal year 2017: \$18,759 as compared with \$14,644 (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

Note: The Next-Generation MCAS assessment is administered to grades 3–8 in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics; it was administered for the first time in 2017. (For more information, see <http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/parents/results-faq.html>.) The MCAS is administered to grades 5 and 8 in science and to grade 10 in ELA, math, and science. Data from the two assessments are presented separately because the tests are different and cannot be compared.

**Table 2: Salem Public Schools
Accountability Percentile, Criterion Reference Target (CRT) Percentage, Reason for Classification**

School	Accountability Percentile	CRT Percentage	Overall Classification	Reason For Classification
Salem Early Childhood	--	--	--	--
Salem Prep High School	--	--	--	--
New Liberty Innovation School	--	--	--	--
Bates	18	54%	Not requiring assistance or intervention	Partially meeting targets

Carlton	54	78%	Not requiring assistance or intervention	Meeting targets
Mann Laboratory	36	78%	Not requiring assistance or intervention	Meeting targets
Witchcraft Heights	28	19%	Not requiring assistance or intervention	Partially meeting targets
Nathaniel Bowditch	17	83%	Not requiring assistance or intervention	Meeting targets
Saltonstall	44	82%	Not requiring assistance or intervention	Meeting targets
Collins Middle	24	43%	Not requiring assistance or intervention	Partially meeting targets
Salem High	9	44%	Requiring assistance or intervention	In need of focused/targeted support: Among the lowest performing 10% of schools
District	--	59%	Not requiring assistance or intervention	Partially meeting targets

**Table 3: Salem Public Schools
Next-Generation MCAS ELA Scaled Scores Grades 3–8, 2017–2018**

Group	N (2018)	2017	2018	Change	State (2018)	Above/Below
African American/Black	107	484.8	489.9	5.1	490.3	-0.4
Asian	53	502.9	505.4	2.5	511.6	-6.2
Hispanic or Latino	655	484.7	486.5	1.8	489.7	-3.2
Multi-Race	79	498.1	502.2	4.1	502.8	-0.6
White	833	498.3	500.4	2.1	504.2	-3.8
High Needs	1,130	484.8	487.2	2.4	490.1	-2.9
Econ. Dis.	928	485.8	487.6	1.8	490.2	-2.6
SWD	428	475.5	476.6	1.1	480.8	-4.2
EL	342	477.5	481.3	3.8	488.4	-7.1
All	1,729	492.7	494.7	2.0	500.5	-5.8

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: Salem Public Schools
Next-Generation MCAS Math Scaled Scores Grades 3–8, 2017–2018**

Group	N (2018)	2017	2018	Change	State (2018)	Above/Below
African American/Black	107	483.8	483.5	-0.3	486.9	-3.4
Asian	54	507.0	507.8	0.8	514.3	-6.5
Hispanic or Latino	657	481.9	482.8	0.9	487.4	-4.6
Multi-Race	80	493.7	494.8	1.1	499.7	-4.9
White	838	497.3	496.9	-0.4	501.8	-4.9

High Needs	1,138	482.9	484.1	1.2	488.2	-4.1
Econ. Dis.	936	483.7	483.9	0.2	487.7	-3.8
SWD	432	474.2	474.5	0.3	479.2	-4.7
EL	344	475.8	479.8	4.0	488.5	-8.7
All	1,741	491.1	491.0	-0.1	498.4	-7.4

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

**Table 5: Salem Public Schools
Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations Grades 3–8, 2017–2018**

Group	N (2018)	2017	2018	Change	State (2018)	Above/Below
African American/Black	107	23%	29%	6	31%	-2
Asian	53	64%	58%	-6	71%	-13
Hispanic or Latino	655	22%	24%	2	31%	-7
Multi-Race	79	47%	57%	10	54%	3
White	833	48%	51%	3	58%	-7
High Needs	1,130	22%	25%	3	31%	-6
Econ. Dis.	928	24%	27%	3	32%	-5
SWD	428	7%	9%	2	14%	-5
EL	342	13%	16%	3	30%	-14
All	1,729	38%	40%	2	51%	-11

**Table 6: Salem Public Schools
Next-Generation MCAS Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations Grades 3–8, 2017–2018**

Group	N (2018)	2017	2018	Change	State (2018)	Above/Below
African American/Black	107	21%	20%	-1	26%	-6
Asian	54	73%	74%	1	74%	0
Hispanic or Latino	657	18%	19%	1	27%	-8
Multi-Race	80	40%	35%	-5	49%	-14
White	838	45%	45%	0	55%	-10
High Needs	1,138	20%	21%	1	28%	-7
Econ. Dis.	936	21%	21%	0	27%	-6
SWD	432	9%	9%	0	14%	-5
EL	344	12%	15%	3	30%	-15
All	1,741	35%	34%	-1	48%	-14

**Table 7: Salem Public Schools
MCAS ELA Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grade 10, 2017–2018**

Group	N (2018)	2017	2018	Change	State (2018)	Above/Below
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African American/Black	24	68%	79%	11	85%	-6
Asian	5	--	--	--	95%	--
Hispanic or Latino	86	65%	73%	8	78%	-5
Multi-Race	6	--	--	--	93%	--
White	113	86%	88%	2	94%	-6
High Needs	157	66%	73%	7	79%	-6
Econ. Dis.	120	62%	73%	11	81%	-8
SWD	68	52%	63%	11	69%	-6
EL	50	48%	66%	18	64%	2
All	234	76%	81%	5	91%	-10

**Table 8: Salem Public Schools
MCAS Math Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grade 10, 2017–2018**

Group	N (2018)	2017	2018	Change	State (2018)	Above/Below
African American/Black	23	52%	52%	0	60%	-8
Asian	5	--	--	--	91%	--
Hispanic or Latino	84	56%	32%	-24	56%	-24
Multi-Race	6	--	--	--	79%	--
White	114	69%	64%	-5	85%	-21
High Needs	154	50%	33%	-17	57%	-24
Econ. Dis.	117	51%	34%	-17	59%	-25
SWD	68	33%	19%	-14	40%	-21
EL	49	47%	16%	-31	44%	-28
All	232	63%	50%	-13	78%	-28

**Table 9: Salem Public Schools
MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grades 5, 8, and 10, 2015–2018**

Group	N (2018)	2015	2016	2017	2018	4-yr change	State (2018)
African American/Black	46	28%	21%	25%	26%	-2	30%
Asian	24	78%	58%	50%	58%	-20	68%
Hispanic or Latino	286	18%	19%	28%	19%	1	30%
Multi-Race	31	53%	41%	47%	42%	-11	54%
White	355	53%	42%	48%	48%	-5	60%
High Needs	493	23%	20%	25%	22%	-1	31%
Econ. Dis.	397	23%	22%	27%	22%	-1	32%
SWD	185	14%	9%	14%	15%	1	21%
EL	158	11%	7%	12%	12%	1	20%
All	744	38%	33%	39%	35%	-3	53%

**Table 10: Salem Public Schools
Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grades 3–8, 2017–2018**

Grade	N (2018)	2017	2018	Change	State (2018)	Above/Below
3	307	32%	34%	2	52%	-18
4	328	40%	40%	0	53%	-13
5	301	41%	43%	2	54%	-11
6	264	40%	42%	2	51%	-9
7	280	33%	43%	10	46%	-3
8	249	42%	39%	-3	51%	-12
3–8	1,729	38%	40%	2	51%	-11

**Table 11: Salem Public Schools
Next-Generation MCAS Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations in Grades 3–8, 2017–2018**

Grade	N (2018)	2017	2018	Change	State (2018)	Above/Below
3	307	37%	33%	-4	50%	-17
4	332	37%	36%	-1	48%	-12
5	304	32%	31%	-1	46%	-15
6	265	30%	32%	2	47%	-15
7	281	32%	32%	0	46%	-14
8	252	40%	38%	-2	50%	-12
3–8	1,741	35%	34%	-1	48%	-14

**Table 12: Salem Public Schools
MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grades 5, 8, and 10, 2015–2018**

Grade	N (2018)	2015	2016	2017	2018	4-yr change	State
5	303	35%	34%	36%	40%	5	47%
8	245	28%	15%	30%	17%	-11	35%
10	196	61%	56%	55%	52%	-9	74%
All	744	38%	33%	39%	35%	-3	52%

**Table 13: Salem Public Schools
English Language Arts and Math Mean Student Growth Percentile, 2018**

Grade	ELA			Math		
	N	2018	State	N	2018	State
3	--	--	--	--	--	--
4	292	53.8	50.0	295	52.4	50.1
5	280	46.4	50.1	285	40.3	50.0
6	229	53.6	50.1	230	50.7	50.0
7	241	57.0	50.0	242	57.1	50.0
8	230	49.8	50.0	231	60.0	50.0
10	181	41.5	49.9	177	33.4	49.9

**Table 14: Salem Public Schools
Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations by School and Grade, 2018**

School	3	4	5	6	7	8	3–8
Salem Early Childhood	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Bates	24%	38%	34%	--	--	--	32%
Carlton	57%	48%	58%	--	--	--	54%
Mann Laboratory	33%	39%	57%	--	--	--	43%
Witchcraft Heights	40%	37%	43%	--	--	--	40%
Nathaniel Bowditch	16%	24%	22%	22%	21%	19%	21%
Saltonstall	50%	60%	68%	43%	63%	63%	58%
Collins Middle	--	--	--	48%	47%	38%	45%
District	34%	40%	43%	42%	43%	39%	40%
State	52%	53%	54%	51%	46%	51%	51%

**Table 15: Salem Public Schools
Next-Generation MCAS Math Percent Meeting or Exceeding Expectations by School and Grade, 2018**

School	3	4	5	6	7	8	3–8
Salem Early Childhood	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Bates	38%	42%	32%	--	--	--	37%
Carlton	71%	55%	48%	--	--	--	59%
Mann Laboratory	8%	35%	26%	--	--	--	24%
Witchcraft Heights	30%	35%	36%	--	--	--	34%
Nathaniel Bowditch	16%	14%	7%	19%	24%	13%	15%
Saltonstall	50%	44%	53%	40%	32%	46%	44%
Collins Middle	--	--	--	34%	36%	44%	38%
District	33%	36%	31%	32%	32%	38%	34%
State	50%	48%	46%	47%	46%	50%	48%

**Table 16: Salem Public Schools
MCAS ELA and Math Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grade 10, 2018**

School	ELA	Math
Salem Prep High School	--	--
New Liberty Innovation School	--	--
Salem High	84%	54%
State	91%	78%

**Table 17: Salem Public Schools
MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced by School and Grade, 2018**

School	3	4	5	6	7	8	10	Total
Salem Early Childhood	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Bates	--	--	46%	--	--	--	--	46%
Carlton	--	--	58%	--	--	--	--	58%
Mann Laboratory	--	--	42%	--	--	--	--	42%

Witchcraft Heights	--	--	40%	--	--	--	--	40%
Nathaniel Bowditch	--	--	16%	--	--	6%	--	12%
Saltonstall	--	--	58%	--	--	28%	--	43%
Collins Middle	--	--	--	--	--	17%	--	17%
Salem High	--	--	--	--	--	--	54%	54%
Salem Prep High School	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
New Liberty Innovation School	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
District	--	--	40%	--	--	17%	52%	35%
State	--	--	47%	--	--	35%	74%	52%

**Table 18: Salem Public Schools
Next-Generation MCAS ELA Percent Meeting and Exceeding Expectations by School, 2018**

School	All	High Needs	Econ. Dis.	SWD	EL	African American	Asian	Hispanic	Multi-race	White
Salem Early Childhood	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Bates	32%	18%	17%	5%	13%	--	--	21%	--	40%
Carlton	54%	39%	42%	25%	36%	--	--	39%	--	61%
Mann Laboratory	43%	32%	31%	20%	19%	--	--	38%	40%	49%
Witchcraft Heights	40%	18%	20%	8%	20%	36%	56%	21%	--	45%
Nathaniel Bowditch	21%	16%	17%	0%	4%	21%	--	16%	--	34%
Saltonstall	58%	36%	37%	6%	29%	46%	--	35%	92%	71%
Collins Middle	45%	32%	33%	9%	23%	44%	73%	26%	52%	55%
District	40%	25%	27%	9%	16%	29%	58%	24%	57%	51%
State	51%	31%	32%	14%	30%	31%	71%	31%	54%	58%

**Table 19: Salem Public Schools
Next-Generation MCAS Math Percent Meeting and Exceeding Expectations by School, 2018**

School	All	High Needs	Econ. Dis.	SWD	EL	African American	Asian	Hispanic	Multi-race	White
Salem Early Childhood	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Bates	37%	24%	22%	14%	20%	--	--	29%	--	44%
Carlton	59%	45%	46%	31%	45%	--	--	39%	--	70%
Mann Laboratory	24%	12%	11%	8%	10%	--	--	10%	40%	33%
Witchcraft Heights	34%	18%	20%	6%	27%	27%	78%	14%	--	39%
Nathaniel Bowditch	15%	11%	12%	3%	8%	14%	--	12%	--	20%
Saltonstall	44%	26%	27%	2%	18%	38%	--	22%	62%	54%
Collins Middle	38%	24%	24%	9%	17%	14%	73%	24%	39%	48%
District	34%	21%	21%	9%	15%	20%	74%	19%	35%	45%
State	48%	28%	27%	14%	30%	26%	74%	27%	49%	55%

**Table 20: Salem Public Schools
MCAS ELA and Math Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Grade 10, 2015–2018**

School/Group	ELA					Math				
	2015	2016	2017	2018	4-yr Change	2015	2016	2017	2018	4-yr Change
Salem High	85%	87%	78%	84%	-1	71%	57%	64%	54%	-17
African American/Black	80%	85%	74%	77%	-3	60%	58%	58%	52%	-8
Asian	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Hispanic	74%	87%	68%	78%	4	57%	46%	58%	34%	-23
Multi-race	--	83%	--	--	--	--	50%	--	--	--
White	92%	88%	86%	92%	0	82%	70%	70%	70%	-12
High Needs	73%	81%	68%	76%	3	55%	43%	50%	36%	-19
Econ. Dis.	74%	83%	64%	78%	4	60%	47%	53%	38%	-22
SWD	43%	59%	56%	68%	25	31%	20%	33%	21%	-10
EL	44%	80%	49%	67%	23	47%	19%	48%	17%	-30

**Table 21: Salem Public Schools
MCAS Science Percent Scoring Proficient or Advanced in Science by School and Student Group, 2015–2018**

School/Group	N (2018)	2015	2016	2017	2018	4-yr Change
Bates	50	55%	33%	48%	46%	-9
African American/Black	4	--	--	--	--	--
Asian	1	--	--	--	--	--
Hispanic	13	--	21%	33%	31%	--
Multi-race	2	--	--	--	--	--
White	30	70%	41%	55%	53%	-17
High Needs	29	44%	24%	31%	17%	-27
Econ. Dis.	27	36%	22%	35%	19%	-17
SWD	9	--	--	21%	--	--
EL	8	--	--	--	--	--
Carlton	31	33%	48%	50%	58%	25
African American/Black	1	--	--	--	--	--
Asian	--	--	--	--	--	--
Hispanic	7	25%	--	--	--	--
Multi-race	3	--	--	--	--	--
White	20	47%	65%	55%	70%	23
High Needs	24	29%	30%	30%	54%	25
Econ. Dis.	21	25%	28%	35%	52%	27
SWD	6	20%	--	15%	--	--
EL	4	--	--	--	--	--
Mann Laboratory	43	30%	45%	34%	42%	12
African American/Black	3	--	--	--	--	--
Asian	--	--	--	--	--	--
Hispanic	17	20%	30%	0%	29%	9
Multi-race	2	--	--	--	--	--
White	21	39%	55%	62%	57%	18
High Needs	28	16%	38%	30%	29%	13
Econ. Dis.	24	19%	39%	33%	25%	6
SWD	7	0%	--	--	--	--
EL	6	--	--	--	--	--
Witchcraft Heights	81	48%	27%	45%	40%	-8
African American/Black	7	--	--	--	--	--
Asian	10	--	--	--	50%	--
Hispanic	22	19%	--	31%	23%	4
Multi-race	2	--	--	--	--	--

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White	40	55%	24%	47%	55%	0
High Needs	43	31%	13%	22%	16%	-15
Econ. Dis.	35	35%	8%	20%	20%	-15
SWD	13	15%	7%	9%	8%	-7
EL	15	--	--	--	13%	--
Nathaniel Bowditch	77	19%	16%	15%	12%	-7
African American/Black	3	--	--	--	--	--
Asian	--	--	--	--	--	--
Hispanic	54	9%	7%	14%	4%	-5
Multi-race	3	--	--	--	--	--
White	17	35%	39%	13%	29%	-6
High Needs	65	10%	5%	10%	6%	-4
Econ. Dis.	57	11%	7%	12%	7%	-4
SWD	16	5%	0%	0%	0%	-5
EL	37	6%	2%	5%	5%	-1
Saltonstall	74	49%	33%	32%	43%	-6
African American/Black	3	--	--	--	--	--
Asian	2	--	--	--	--	--
Hispanic	25	25%	18%	20%	28%	3
Multi-race	3	--	--	--	--	--
White	41	61%	44%	38%	51%	-10
High Needs	35	24%	19%	14%	23%	-1
Econ. Dis.	29	14%	22%	13%	21%	7
SWD	13	24%	5%	10%	0%	-24
EL	11	--	8%	--	27%	--
Collins Middle	168	30%	17%	34%	17%	-13
African American/Black	5	12%	8%	--	--	--
Asian	7	--	--	--	--	--
Hispanic	68	17%	6%	25%	3%	-14
Multi-race	9	55%	--	--	--	--
White	77	38%	28%	43%	27%	-11
High Needs	116	20%	10%	21%	11%	-9
Econ. Dis.	88	21%	11%	24%	10%	-11
SWD	49	6%	4%	6%	8%	2
EL	30	17%	0%	5%	3%	-14
Salem High	181	63%	57%	56%	54%	-9
African American/Black	17	53%	40%	44%	53%	0
Asian	3	--	--	--	--	--
Hispanic	68	37%	43%	46%	40%	3

Multi-race	6	--	80%	--	--	--
White	87	80%	68%	66%	67%	-13
High Needs	117	39%	39%	40%	40%	1
Econ. Dis.	86	39%	42%	47%	42%	3
SWD	45	25%	14%	22%	33%	8
EL	41	19%	9%	23%	17%	-2

**Table 22: Salem Public Schools
Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates, 2014–2017**

Group	N (2017)	2014	2015	2016	2017	4-yr Change	State (2017)
African American/Black	22	100.0	100.0	60.0	81.8	-18.2	80.0
Asian	5	100.0	100.0	100.0	--	--	94.1
Hispanic or Latino	100	87.5	82.1	88.3	82.0	-5.5	74.4
Multi-Race, non-Hisp./Lat.	8	88.9	93.3	92.3	75.0	-13.9	85.2
White	125	82.0	91.7	80.6	80.8	-1.2	92.6
High needs	193	81.2	84.9	78.3	76.2	-5.0	80.0
Economically Disadvantaged*	176	82.7	84.7	77.9	75.6	-7.1	79.0
SWD	74	69.1	79.3	75.9	74.3	5.2	72.8
EL	37	80.0	65.6	70.6	64.9	-15.1	63.4
All	261	85.4	89.2	83.1	81.6	-3.8	88.3

* Four-year cohort graduation rate for students from low-income families used for 2014 and 2015 rates.

**Table 23: Salem Public Schools
Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates, 2013–2016**

Group	N (2016)	2013	2014	2015	2016	4-yr Change	State (2016)
African American/Black	15	100.0	100.0	100.0	60.0	-40.0	83.4
Asian	6	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	0.0	94.8
Hispanic or Latino	94	87.2	92.3	84.9	92.6	5.4	76.8
Multi-Race, non-Hisp./Lat.	13	66.7	88.9	93.3	92.3	25.6	87.4
White	144	88.2	86.3	94.1	85.4	-2.8	93.5
High needs	207	85.5	86.3	88.0	83.6	-1.9	82.9
Economically Disadvantaged*	190	85.1	87.0	87.7	83.2	-1.9	82.1
SWD	87	80.8	77.8	85.1	81.6	0.8	76.5
EL	34	81.3	86.7	68.8	79.4	-1.9	70.9
All	272	88.1	89.4	91.4	87.1	-1.0	89.8

* Five-year cohort graduation rate for students from low-income families used for 2014 rates.

**Table 24: Salem Public Schools
In-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2015–2018**

Group	2015	2016	2017	2018	4-yr Change	State (2018)
African American/Black	1.8	0.8	0.0	0.0	-1.8	3.4
Asian	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6
Hispanic or Latino	3.1	2.2	0.9	0.5	-2.6	2.4
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic or Latino	2.9	1.1	0.0	0.5	-2.4	2.3
White	1.1	1.1	0.6	0.4	-0.7	1.4
High Needs	2.6	2.0	0.9	0.6	-2	2.7
Economically disadvantaged*	2.8	1.8	0.9	0.5	-2.3	2.9
SWD	3.9	3.1	1.8	1.4	-2.5	3.3
EL	1.9	2.7	0.9	0.7	-1.2	1.8
All	1.9	1.5	0.7	0.4	-1.5	1.8

**Table 25: Salem Public Schools
Out-of-School Suspension Rates by Student Group, 2015–2018**

Group	2015	2016	2017	2018	4-yr Change	State (2018)
African American/Black	6.8	3.7	0.0	2.3	-4.5	6.0
Asian	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7
Hispanic or Latino	5.0	7.7	1.2	3.3	-1.7	5.1
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic or Latino	5.2	3.7	0.0	3.1	-2.1	3.3
White	2.9	2.2	1.0	1.4	-1.5	1.9
High Needs	5.3	6.3	1.4	3.2	-2.1	4.6
Economically disadvantaged*	5.4	6.3	1.6	3.3	-2.1	5.4
SWD	8.6	8.3	2.1	4.9	-3.7	5.8
EL	3.3	10.5	0.9	4.0	0.7	3.7
All	3.9	4.4	1.1	2.2	-1.7	6.0

**Table 26: Salem Public Schools
Dropout Rates by Student Group, 2014–2017**

Group	2014	2015	2016	2017	4-yr Change	State (2017)
African American/Black	0.0	1.8	0.0	5.3	5.3	2.9
Asian	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6
Hispanic or Latino	1.2	1.0	1.6	3.6	2.4	4.2
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic or Latino	1.9	0.0	4.9	2.8	0.9	1.7
White	1.4	1.4	1.8	4.7	3.3	1.1
High Needs	1.5	1.8	2.7	5.2	3.7	3.5
Economically disadvantaged*	1.6	1.5	3.3	5.8	4.2	3.6
SWD	1.6	1.7	2.6	5.2	3.6	3.3

EL	1.0	3.0	2.7	6.1	5.1	6.5
All	1.3	1.2	1.7	4.2	2.9	1.8

*Dropout rates for students from low-income families used for 2014 rates.

**Table 27: Salem Public Schools
Advanced Coursework Completion, 2017–2018**

Group	N (2-18)	2017	2018	Change	Target
African American/Black	37	42.9	29.7	-13.2	51.3
Asian	14	--	--	--	--
Hispanic or Latino	220	30.7	32.7	2.0	39.3
Multi-Race, non-Hispanic or Latino	25	--	--	--	--
White	198	57.3	55.6	-1.7	62.4
High Needs	318	27.2	25.2	-2.0	34.2
Economically disadvantaged	238	29.6	27.3	-2.3	38.7
SWD	133	10.1	13.5	3.4	15.6
EL	101	25.6	20.8	-4.8	31.2

**Table 28: Salem Public Schools
Progress toward Attaining English Language Proficiency, 2017–2018**

Group	Non-high school					High school				
	N (2018)	2017	2018	Change	Target	N (2018)	2017	2018	Change	Target
EL	243	43.0	54.3	11.3	57.1	98	33.3	29.6	-3.7	33.9
All	243	43.0	54.3	11.3	57.1	98	33.3	29.6	-3.7	33.9

**Table 29: Salem Public Schools
Chronic Absence Rates,* 2017–2018**

Group	Non-high school					High school				
	N (2018)	2017	2018	Change	Target	N (2018)	2017	2018	Change	Target
African American/Black	175	13.4	16.0	-2.6	10.5	75	30.3	41.3	-11.0	27.4
Asian	80	--	--	--	--	31	--	--	--	--
Hispanic or Latino	959	19.2	20.6	-1.4	16.4	470	37.0	40.9	-3.9	34.2
Multi-Race, non-Hisp./Lat.	124	--	--	--	--	44	--	--	--	--
White	1,175	16.3	17.1	-0.8	15.3	455	34.5	33.2	1.3	33.5
High needs	1,648	23.1	23.7	-0.6	21.2	733	41.9	44.5	-2.6	40.0
Economically Disadvantaged	1,221	26.0	26.8	-0.8	23.4	502	43.3	46.6	-3.3	40.7

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SWD	585	27.1	28.7	-1.6	24.7	291	47.0	48.5	-1.5	44.6
EL	533	17.5	18.8	-1.3	14.1	254	33.6	35.8	-2.2	30.2
All	2,515	17.1	17.9	-0.8	16.0	1,075	35.4	36.7	-1.3	34.3

* The percentage of students absent 10 percent or more of their total number of student days of membership in a school

Leadership and Governance

Contextual Background

Salem has a seven-member school committee chaired by the mayor. The committee, composed of both veteran and new members, welcomed three new members in January 2018. The school committee typically meets twice each month in regular session but often adds additional meetings to consider the budget. Committee of the Whole meetings are also convened as needed throughout the year to conduct non-routine business such as the evaluation of the superintendent. The school committee has five standing subcommittees: policy, business and finance, curriculum, personnel, and buildings and grounds.

The school committee conducts its business publicly; the committee's meeting schedule, along with agendas and minutes, is posted prominently on the district's website. The committee upholds its responsibilities under Massachusetts laws and regulations. The committee conducts frequent policy review; approves budget transfers regularly; evaluates the superintendent annually; and approves the annual budget.

The district enjoys a positive and productive relationship with the city. The superintendent and the mayor confer regularly, especially with respect to the development of the annual budget. Moreover, the district's business manager interacts as necessary with her counterpart in the city as they try to streamline the issues related to such matters as purchasing and capital improvement.

A principal and an assistant principal lead eight schools in the district; directors lead two schools. The high school has three assistant principals. The district emphasizes instructional coaching and assigns coaches to schools based upon enrollment and student need.

The superintendent meets weekly with a leadership team consisting of the assistant superintendent, the acting executive director of pupil personnel services, and the business manager. The principals meet with the superintendent, the assistant superintendent, and the business manager twice each month. In the 2018–2019 school year, the district streamlined these meetings to provide principals with greater access to the superintendent and to each other as they collaborate to solve problems and share information. District leaders attend these meetings as necessary to provide technical information to principals and to assist principals in solving problems.

Strength Finding

1. In June 2018, the district closed the Nathaniel Bowditch School, formerly a K–8 school, to “open the door to equity and access.”

- A.** District leaders told the review team that district staff worked with the mindset that “all students are our responsibility.”
 - 1. The district’s school assignment policy keeps a balance of economically disadvantaged students and non-economically disadvantaged students in each school.
- B.** District leaders said that in the past Salem had a school choice assignment system, which did not “effectively balance” the proportions of student groups in each school.² All new families were assigned to the Nathaniel Bowditch School.
 - 1. The superintendent noted that the students at the Bowditch School had the highest needs but were served by the least experienced teachers with limited supports.
 - 2. The superintendent told the team that students, many of whom were Hispanic and/or English learners, were “underserved” at the Bowditch.
 - 3. In 2017–2018, the Bowditch School was classified by DESE as “low performing.”
- C.** In June 2018, the Nathaniel Bowditch School, formerly a K–8 school, was closed.
 - 1. The superintendent said the district closed the school to “undo this disparity” and to provide hundreds of students with greater access to high-quality programs.

Impact: By closing the Nathaniel Bowditch School, the district demonstrated its commitment to access and equity for all students, and to developing staff capacity to examine and dismantle implicit biases

² According to DESE data, in 2017–2018, the proportion of Hispanic students in the Bowditch School was 69.9 percent, compared with 38.4 percent in the district. The proportion of Hispanic students at the Bates, Carlton, and Witchcraft elementary schools ranged from 27.1 percent to 28.2 percent. The proportion of English learners (ELs) in the Bowditch School was 37.3 percent, compared with 12.9 percent in the district. The proportion of ELs at the Bates, Carlton, and Witchcraft elementary schools ranged from 5.6 percent to 8.1 percent. The proportion of students whose first language was not English (FLNEs) was 56.9 percent, compared with 28.8 percent in the district. The proportion of FLNEs at the Bates, Carlton, and Witchcraft elementary schools ranged from 15.8 percent to 20.5 percent. The proportion of economically disadvantaged students was 73.0 percent, compared with 48.9 percent in the district. The proportion of economically disadvantaged students at the Bates, Carlton, and Witchcraft elementary schools ranged from 40.0 percent to 47.7 percent.

and systemic inequalities and to create environments in which all students can deeply learn, grow, and thrive.

Challenges and Areas for Growth

2. The district has not developed structures, practices, and procedures that support a cycle of continuous improvement.

- A.** A review of school committee meeting minutes indicated that the school committee approved the *Salem Public Schools Strategic Plan 2017–2022* at its meeting on May 15, 2017.
- B.** The strategic plan calls for the formation of a Continuous Improvement Advisory Board.
 - 1. The purpose of this board is to monitor the implementation of the plan and to advise the district leadership team and the school committee.
 - 2. At its meeting on May 15, 2017, the school committee stressed the importance of this accountability structure.
 - 3. The superintendent stated that the district has not formed a Continuous Improvement Advisory Board.
- C.** The strategic plan specifies the development of specific goals and indicators to measure progress on an ongoing basis.
 - 1. The strategic plan does not identify measurable goals based on an analysis of historical, longitudinal, and current disaggregated student data.
 - 2. The superintendent said that the district has not established progress indicators for the outcomes it established in the Outcomes and Indicators Dashboard in the strategic plan.
 - a. When asked about progress in the development of accountability measures, the superintendent said that the significant issues associated with the closing of the Nathaniel Bowditch School have occupied the district and noted that the district has placed this project on hold.
 - 3. The strategic plan does not include timelines for completing priorities; resources, including budgetary considerations; and staff responsible for planning and implementing priorities.

- D.** The school committee has not made the monitoring of the progress toward the priorities of the strategic plan a part of its regular practice.
 - 1. The school committee evaluates the superintendent annually using the superintendent’s student achievement goals.
 - 2. The superintendent and the school committee reported that the strategic plan was often referenced at committee meetings and in annual reports. However, committee members said that the school committee did not have a regular and structured report of strategic progress, and the school committee did not hold the superintendent accountable for the implementation of the strategic plan through specific policy or practice.

- E.** An exclusive reliance on state accountability data to set planning targets has contributed to the inability of the district to develop planning cycles that support annual improvement.
 - 1. School committee members reported that the superintendent’s goals were based upon state accountability data that is released in October. Committee members stated that the superintendent’s evaluation for the 2017–2018 school year would be completed in November 2018—five months after the end of the school year.
 - 2. Committee members said that the evaluation targets for the 2018–2019 year would not be established until December 2018, approximately four months after schools have opened.
 - 3. Principals reported that School Improvement Plans (SIPs) were not developed until October because of their reliance on state assessment data.
 - 4. Principals said that while the SIPs included key district initiatives, the district did not have a systematic process to evaluate these initiatives.

Impact: Without planning documents with measurable goals based on an analysis of historical, longitudinal, and current disaggregated student achievement data, the district cannot ensure that its improvement plans drive the development, implementation, monitoring, and refinement of educational programs and practices and the district cannot ensure accountability for meeting improvement priorities.

Recommendation

- 1. The district should create an annual action plan that contains clear progress benchmarks and procedures for regular review of progress toward goals.**
 - A.** The annual action plan should include the planned action steps for achieving the district’s strategic initiatives and the indicators of effective implementation of strategic initiatives.
 1. The goals should be based on an analysis of historical, longitudinal, and current disaggregated student data.
 2. The goals should be SMART (Specific and Strategic; Measurable; Action-Oriented; Rigorous, Realistic, and Results-Focused; and Timed and Tracked).
 3. The district should move forward with its plan to establish progress indicators in the Outcomes and Indicators Dashboard in the strategic plan.
 - B.** The action plan should include clear action steps and specify responsible staff and needed resources.
 - C.** The development of the action plan should inform the district’s budget priorities.
 - D.** Principals, in collaboration with school councils, should ensure that each School Improvement Plan includes specific measures to determine the progress of school-based initiatives.
 1. Similar to the DIP, these measures should be SMART.
 - E.** The district should establish procedures to regularly review progress toward goals. Adjustments should be made to action steps and timelines based upon the review.
 1. The district might convene the Continuous Improvement Advisory Board called for in the strategic plan, but it should also consider using its existing meeting structure to review and to evaluate progress.
 - F.** District and school leaders should provide frequent, timely, and thorough information to the school committee, staff, students, families, and community on progress toward the achievement of plan goals.

Benefits: By implementing this recommendation, the district will develop measurable, data-based goals and a plan that drives the development, implementation, and modification of educational programs and practices. This will mean a clearer path to continuous improvement and more coherent and effective district systems.

Recommended resources:

- *What Makes a Goal Smarter?*
(<http://www.doe.mass.edu/eval/resources/presentations/SMARTGoals/Handout5.pdf>) is a description of SMART goals with accompanying examples. The handout was designed to support educators in developing goals as part of the educator evaluation system, but could also be a useful reference for the district as it develops or refines its DIP and SIPs
- DESE's *Planning for Success* tools (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/success/>) support the improvement planning process by spotlighting practices, characteristics, and behaviors that support effective planning and implementation and meet existing state requirements for improvement planning.
 - *Selecting Outcome Measures and Setting Targets*
(<http://www.doe.mass.edu/research/success/setting-outcomes-targets.docx>) is a Planning for Success resource that describes a recommended process for using data to inform and define an improvement plan's expected results.
- *District Accelerated Improvement Planning - Guiding Principles for Effective Benchmarks*
(<http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/turnaround/level-4-guiding-principles-effective-benchmarks.pdf>) provides information about different types of benchmarks to guide and measure district improvement efforts.

Curriculum and Instruction

The assistant superintendent oversees all aspects of curriculum, instruction, and assessment in the district. The assistant superintendent is assisted by the director of the office of curriculum, instruction, and assessment who works with teachers and coaches developing curriculum and professional development. An academic dean oversees curriculum, instruction, and assessment at Salem High School. Along with a cadre of coaches K–8 (literacy, math and science), principals take an active role in supporting standards-based curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices at the school level. The district also has K–8 coaches for special education, English learners, and social studies. At the high school, the coaching model is more limited. The high school has two English coaches (for grades 9 and 10) and a science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) coach.³

Teachers have easy access to updated standards-aligned curricular materials and a rich variety of state-of-the-art curricular resources, including culturally relevant texts. Curriculum maps (on the Atlas Rubicon platform) include for all content areas current standards, priority standards specific to units, unit planners (scope and sequence), and units of study. Overall K–8, curriculum maps in all content areas are well developed. At the time of the review in November 2018, curriculum development was a work in progress with stronger evidence of curriculum mapping in grades 9 and 10 where teachers had common planning time.

For K–5 literacy, the district follows a balanced literacy model and uses Readers and Writers Workshop (Teachers College, Columbia). For K–5 math, Eureka Math (EngageNY) is the primary resource. Updated K–8 science resources include hands-on experiences, reflecting the 2016 Massachusetts Science and Technology/Engineering Framework. At the time of the onsite, the district’s K–8 social studies coach was working with teams of teachers, addressing alignment with the newly adopted social studies/history framework. In addition, the use of standards-based report cards was being extended to the high school.

The district has established comprehensive processes and procedures for adopting new curriculum resources and conducting annual reviews and revisions of curriculum that include teams of teachers who are flexibly grouped to ensure inclusive representation. In addition, at the time of the review, the district was conducting a large-scale holistic review of its mathematics program across kindergarten and grades 4, 6, and 8, and a holistic review of its literacy program.

The district has maintained a K–12 music and arts program that all students can access. The high school has a newcomers’ theater program and beginning in grade 4, all interested students are able to take instrumental music lessons free of charge and participate in band.

³ At the time of the onsite review in November 2018, the STEM coach position was not filled.

The district's closure of the Bowditch school (see Executive Summary) was an important step toward providing equitable access to high-quality teaching and learning. However, the district continues to face challenges related to access and equity. At the time of the onsite review, the district's recently created Office of Equity and Engagement had met several times. In addition, the district was starting a major high-school re-design initiative to address these challenges. To ensure that the district provided programs that represented the district's diverse student populations, the district in collaboration with principals recently created an accelerated math pathway and STEM pathway (Project Lead the Way) at the middle school and in grade 9 at the high school. However, all students do not have access to rigorous coursework and career, vocational, technical education (CVTE) programs that lead to economically viable pathways. In addition, the district faces a key challenge to ensure that high-quality instructional practices are consistently implemented districtwide. In observed classrooms, instruction did not consistently set objectives, engage students, provide opportunities for higher-order thinking, and provide learners with access to grade-level content.

Strength Findings

- 1. The district has established K–8 an instructional coaching model with structures and practices that support the effective implementation and alignment of standards-based curricula.**
 - A.** The district has developed an instructional coaching model K-8 in literacy, mathematics, and science focused on building teachers' capacity with standards-based curriculum and instruction.
 1. Each elementary and middle school has a full-time literacy coach.⁴ Schools may share math and science coaches. The Carlton Innovation Elementary School's math teacher is the school's math coach.
 2. The review team was told that coaches interacted with teachers in a variety of ways during common planning time to support curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices.
 - a. While all K–8 teachers have weekly common planning time, the frequency varies from school to school.
 3. Coaches help teachers with the district's four instructional priorities (see the finding below), district curriculum maps, scope and sequence documents, curriculum resources, and assessments. Coaches ensure that curriculum materials are aligned with the standard at the

⁴ In addition, the district has coaches for special education and ELL teachers and a K–8 social studies coach.

grade level. Coaches also facilitate grade-level data meetings and provide embedded professional development (PD) to teachers.

- a. Coaches address vertical and horizontal alignment as issues arise. For example, math coaches may ensure that equations are written in the same way in all grades. They lead discussions with teachers on how the curriculum in one grade affects the next in the continuum of teaching.
4. Coaches offer non-evaluative instructional feedback to teachers. In addition, coaches deliver coaching cycles (2–6 weeks), teach and model lessons, and work with new teachers on rituals, routines, and building relationships.
 - a. The review team was told that full-time coaches team taught one period a day. District leaders said that the goal was to make these classes model or lab classes.
 5. English learner coaches support ESL teachers to develop thematic units, modify texts, and use resources aligned with WIDA⁵ standards. In addition, the district’s K–8 social studies coach meets with teams of teachers to address alignment of curricula with the 2018 history and social studies standards.
- B.** Coaches work closely with principals and are an integral part of each school’s instructional leadership team (ILT).
1. Interviewees told the review team that coaches met with principals in weekly one-on-one meetings where they reviewed what was happening in the school and focused on how they could help teachers deliver better instruction.
 2. As part of each school’s ILT, coaches help principals plan school-based PD.
 3. Coaches participate in instructional rounds with principals and the ILT.
- C.** Under the direction of the assistant superintendent and the office of curriculum, instruction, and assessment, monthly coaches’ meetings provide coaches with PD and opportunities for cross-district collaboration and alignment of coaches’ work with district priorities.
1. The review team was told that along with formal PD on coaching cycles and district instructional priorities, including making content accessible to diverse learners, meetings provide opportunities for coaches to share with each other and collect evidence.

⁵ World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment

2. Interviewees said that in these meetings coaches discussed issues specific to the content disciplines including the vertical and horizontal alignment of the content disciplines districtwide.

Impact: By establishing an instructional coaching model designed to improve teachers' capacity to deliver effective core instruction, the district is poised to have a positive impact on teachers' practice and student learning outcomes K–8.

2. The district has strategically identified four instructional priorities intended to enhance the achievement of diverse learners, and provided all stakeholders with ongoing professional development to ensure implementation.

- A. For the 2018–2019 school year, the district identified four instructional priorities to help ensure all students' access to learning: welcoming environment, comprehensible input, adapting texts, and meaningful interactions.
 1. The team was told that the district directors in collaboration with the assistant superintendent identified the district's instructional vision and the four instructional priorities during in-district PD days in the 2018–2019 school year, teachers are participating in ongoing training in the instructional priorities.
 - a. During the onsite review, review team members attended several district PD offerings focused on meaningful interactions.
 2. The team was told that instructional coaches received monthly PD from a nonprofit organization about specific strategies on accessibility and meeting the needs of diverse learners.
 - a. The organization provided coaches with several tools to use in collaboration with teachers focused on making learning accessible to all learners.
 3. Interviewees said that coaches ensured that the instructional priorities were being implemented. Coaches observe teaching and provide teachers with feedback on implementation.
- B. The district uses instructional rounds and principals' walkthroughs to monitor the implementation of the four instructional priorities in its schools.
 1. Interviewees told the team that principals conducted walkthroughs to monitor implementation of the four instructional priorities and provide teachers with non-evaluative feedback.

2. Teachers told the team that walkthroughs were the vehicle to determine how well each school was doing with goals and priorities.
3. Principals conduct instructional rounds with assistant principals, the instructional leadership team, and representatives from the central office to look at and rate the degree to which district instructional priorities being implemented. Ratings included “fully implemented,” “partial,” or “not observed.”

Impact: By strategically selecting instructional priorities designed to make learning accessible to all students, and by ensuring that teachers are receiving ongoing and meaningful professional development to implement the priorities, the district is setting a foundation to prepare all students for college, careers, and civic participation.

Challenges and Areas for Growth

3. **In observed classrooms, the quality and rigor of instruction was inconsistent districtwide. Instruction did not consistently engage students in challenging tasks and support their varied learning needs through inclusive practices.**
 - A. **Focus Area #1: Learning Objectives & Expectations** Although teachers used learning objectives and set expectations for students to achieve learning outcomes in most observed elementary classrooms, the team noted a wide variation in the effective use of these practices in middle- and high-school classrooms.
 1. In observed classrooms, the team found sufficient and compelling evidence that the teacher ensures that students understand what they should be learning and why (characteristic #2) in 70 percent of elementary classes, in 58 percent of middle -school classes, and in only 36 percent of high-school classes.
 - a. In a grade 3 writing lesson, a clear learning objective was posted and reinforced during the class. The objective stated, “I can analyze a prompt and create a note plan to help me write a response.” All learning activities supported the objective.
 - b. An additional example of a clear learning objective posted and referred to during the lesson was seen in a grade 7 science lesson. The objective read: “SWBAT differentiate between physical and chemical changes” and the activities in lesson reinforced the learning objective.

- c. In contrast, in most observed high-school classes, the team noted that an agenda, rather than an objective, was posted. For example, in one grade 9 science class, the teacher reviewed the agenda for the day, but did not clearly articulate the objective or state how the lesson's activities supported students' understanding of the objective.
 2. Review team members observed sufficient and compelling evidence of teachers using appropriate classroom activities well matched to the learning objectives (characteristic #3) in 82 percent of elementary classes, in 50 percent of middle-school classes, and in 52 percent of high-school classes.
 3. The team noted sufficient and compelling evidence that teachers consistently checked for student understanding, provided feedback, and adjusted instruction (characteristic #4) in 84 percent of observed elementary classes, in 42 percent of middle-school classes, and in only 36 percent of high-school classes.
 - a. In elementary classes, the team noted that while conferring one-on-one with students and in small groups, teachers frequently checked for student understanding. For example, in a grade 4/5 math class, the teacher used students' Do Now responses to immediately adjust instruction.
 - b. Although in middle- and high school classes the team saw some teachers checking for understanding through effective questioning or through students' use of Chromebooks to share their immediate responses to questions with the teacher, in the majority of observed classes at the middle- and high-school levels, checking for understanding was not sufficiently implemented.
 - i. In these classes, teachers accepted unison responses, did not move around the room as students worked, asked few probing questions, and did not follow up using strategies to determine students' understanding.
- B. Focus Area #2: Student Engagement & Higher-Order Thinking** Overall, team members found this focus area to be the least developed of effective instructional practices districtwide with one exception. The team found that in most elementary classes, students were actively engaged with the content and objectives of the lesson.
 1. Review team members observed sufficient and compelling evidence that students assume responsibility to learn and are engaged in the lesson (characteristic #5) in 77 percent of elementary classes but in only 33 percent of middle- school classes and 44 percent of high-school classes.

- a. The team noted that most elementary lessons were student centered so that students could engage with the content independently, in pairs, or one-on-one or in small groups with teacher(s).
 - b. In many observed middle- and high-school classes, teacher-dominated lessons diminished students' engagement opportunities. The team noted that rather than being engaged in the lesson, students often used cell phones, wore earbuds, or engaged in non-academic conversations. In addition, the team found low levels of engagement in a majority of college prep classes.
 2. The review team found sufficient and compelling evidence of students engaging in higher-order thinking such as analysis, synthesis, problem-solving, evaluation, or application of new knowledge (characteristic #6) in 46 percent of observed elementary classes, in 42 percent of middle-school classes, and in only 32 percent of high-school classes.
 - a. Although the team noted examples at all levels of students engaging in higher-order thinking, in most observed lessons, students tasks were geared to lower-level thinking skills, such as recalling facts and basic concepts.
 3. Review team members observed sufficient and compelling evidence of students communicating their ideas and thinking with each other (characteristic #7) in 46 percent of elementary classes, in 33 percent of middle-school classes, and in 28 percent of high-school classes.
 - a. In observed classrooms, elementary students had more opportunities to work in pairs or in small groups where they shared their thinking with one another than middle- and high-school students had.
 - b. Although the review team observed examples of middle- and high- school students communicating their ideas about content with each other in pairs or small groups, in a majority of observed classrooms at these levels, students had limited opportunities to communicate their ideas and thinking with each other. In these classrooms, students responded to the teachers' questions directed at the whole class.
- C. Focus Area #3: Inclusive Practice & Classroom Culture** Although the district's instructional priorities for 2018–2019 are focused on meeting the needs of all students, the review team found a wide variation in the use of effective inclusive practices among levels. Although in most classrooms districtwide classroom routines and positive supports were in place to ensure appropriate student behavior, in a significant number of middle- and high-school classes classroom routines and positive responses were not consistently implemented.

1. The review team found sufficient and compelling evidence that the teacher ensures that students are engaging in challenging tasks regardless of learning needs (characteristic #9) in 50 percent of observed elementary classes, in only 17 percent of middle-school classes, and in only 36 percent of high-school classes.
 - a. The team found that elementary lessons especially in literacy, where the Workshop Model was being implemented, were often differentiated to meet students' learning needs in small groups or one-on-one with teachers. In addition, in most elementary classrooms additional support staff (special education teachers and paraprofessionals) were present to ensure that all learners had access to lesson content.
 - b. Although in observed classrooms at the middle- and high-school levels additional staff (other content teachers, special education teachers, and paraprofessionals) were assisting students in classes, lessons were minimally designed to support students.
 - i. For example, in most observed classes at the middle- and high-school levels all students were given the same task to complete.
 - ii. In addition, in some observed classes, support staff were not effectively used; these staff did not remain in the classroom or stayed at the side or back of class while teachers directed lessons.
2. Review team members found sufficient and compelling evidence that classroom routines and positive supports were in place to ensure that students behaved appropriately (characteristic #11) in 85 percent of observed elementary classes, in 66 percent of middle-school classes, and in 56 percent of high-school classes.
 - a. In many observed middle-school and high-school classes, teachers did not effectively establish expectations, routines, and responses needed to positively re-direct and refocus students. In these classes, students often had non-academic conversations throughout the observation, used cellphones, or wore earbuds.

Impact: Without consistently sharing learning objectives with students, designing instruction to ensure that all students are engaged in rigorous classroom activities, and consistently providing support for students with varied learning needs, the district is compromising student learning outcomes.

4. All students do not have equitable access to a range of rigorous course work and high-quality learning, including advanced placement classes and rigorous career, vocational, technical education programs.

A. District stakeholders, including the superintendent, district leaders, principals, teachers, and students, recognized that equity of access for students of color in the district was an issue.

1. When the team asked district leaders about invisible barriers to access and equity to rigorous course work and high-quality learning, they listed the following:

- mindsets about who is capable and who is not
- an entrance exam for certain courses
- a heavy reliance on teachers' recommendations for placement which may leave out students who would be successful
- a tracking system in which students of color are predominately assigned to college prep classes and white students form the majority of higher-level courses

2. In observed instruction at the high school, the review team found sufficient and compelling evidence of students having challenging, rigorous learning opportunities in only two of nine college prep classes.

3. District leaders and teachers said that equitable access at the high school was a major issue. They noted that as courses accelerated their composition became increasingly white which did not reflect the demographics of the high school. District leaders stated that white students made up 80 percent of advanced placement (AP) course enrollment while Latino students represented 20 percent of AP course enrollment. According to 2017–2018 DESE data, of 182 students who took AP tests in the district, 106 (58.2 percent of AP test takers) were white and 49 were Hispanic/Latino (26.9 percent of AP test takers).

a. According to DESE data, in 2017–2018, 47 percent of the district's students were white, 38.4 percent Hispanic/Latino, 6.8 percent African-American/Black, 4.9 percent multi-race, and 2.9 percent Asian.

b. Interviewees stated that there were more white students than other student groups in honors classes. Further, college prep classes are populated with a disproportionate number of students with disabilities and English learners. While the program of studies has an accelerated math pathway and STEM pathway (Project Lead the Way) at the

middle school and in grade 9 at the high school, some students are directed to less rigorous courses.

4. Students stated that Latino students and economically disadvantaged students were underrepresented in AP courses. They stated that only certain students were encouraged to take AP courses. One senior student told the team that she had written a paper outlining the issues of inequitable access that she had observed at the high school.
 - a. Although some students said that they were able to select the AP classes that they wanted to enroll in, other interviewees stated that there was a heavy reliance on teachers' recommendations for student placement in AP courses.
5. When the review team asked district leaders about equity of access to the high school's career, vocational, technical education (CVTE) programs, district leaders stated that the quality of some of the programs was an issue and they expressed concern about enrollment and opportunities in higher-level courses. The team was told that an analysis of CVTE programs found that the programs were not effectively preparing all students for college, career, and civic participation.

Impact: By not ensuring that all students, including students of color, English learners, those receiving special education services, and economically disadvantaged students, consistently have equitable access to rigorous coursework and high-quality teaching and learning experiences, the district is not effectively preparing all students for college, career, and civic participation.

Recommendations

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

A. The district should convene a representative group of teachers and instructional leaders to identify key instructional practices.

1. Using the district's current instructional priorities as a starting point, the group should articulate specific instructional expectations that challenge and engage all learners regardless of their learning needs.
 - a. At all levels, particular attention should be paid to how teachers can meaningfully incorporate higher-order thinking tasks throughout lessons and give students sustained opportunities to share their thinking about content with one another.

- b. At the middle- and high-school levels, particular attention should be paid to developing a common understanding of what constitutes a well-structured lesson that includes frequent checks for student understanding and consistent engagement of students with the content and objectives of the lesson.
 - c. At the middle- and high-school levels, principals, assistant principals, deans, and coaches should redouble their efforts to ensure that all teachers develop effective classroom rituals, routines, and responses needed to engage students.
2. The district should prioritize these instructional strategies as its “non-negotiables.”
- B.** Once a set of instructional expectations has been defined, district leaders should develop a plan for communicating these expectations with staff.
1. The district is encouraged to provide opportunities for educators to discuss ideas and strategies from the set of instructional expectations. These opportunities might include collaborative walkthroughs, common planning time with coaches, grade-level meetings with coaches, and professional development opportunities.
- C.** The district should continue to pursue its goal to have model or lab classrooms in which coaches teach.
1. The district should consider expanding and enhancing the coaching model at the high school to include additional content areas and to provide more instructional support.
- D.** Teachers should receive appropriate guidance and feedback as they implement the district’s instructional expectations.
1. Professional development should focus on elements of the instructional expectations as applied to the specific criteria that teachers and students work with every day.
 2. Principals and other instructional leaders should ensure that teachers have the information and support necessary to meet the district’s expectations for instruction.
 3. The district should continue to provide teachers with frequent and high-quality feedback⁶ that helps them to improve instruction.

Benefits: Implementing this recommendation will mean clear and articulated expectations for teachers and instructional leaders for best instruction. A district that provides high-quality instruction that

⁶ High-quality feedback is specific, timely, and actionable.

challenges and supports all students and ongoing professional supports for teachers and administrators creates and sustains a culture of continuous improvement, resulting in professional growth and increased student achievement.

Recommended resources:

- DESE's "What to Look For" Observation Guides (Updated August 2017) (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/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.
- DESE's Learning Walkthrough Implementation Guide (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/dart/walkthrough/implementation-guide.docx>) is a resource to support instructional leaders in establishing a Learning Walkthrough process in a school or district. It is designed to provide guidance to those working in an established culture of collaboration as well as those who are just beginning to observe classrooms and discuss teaching and learning in a focused and actionable manner. (The link above includes a presentation to introduce Learning Walkthroughs.)

Appendix 4, Characteristics of Standards-Based Teaching and Learning: Continuum of Practice (<http://www.mass.gov/edu/docs/ese/accountability/dart/walkthrough/continuum-practice.pdf>) is a framework that provides a common language or reference point for looking at teaching and learning.
- DESE's Calibration Video Library (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/eval/resources/calibration/>) is a collection of professionally created videos of classroom instruction produced by the School Improvement Network. These videos depict a range of practice (this is NOT a collection of exemplars) to support within-district calibration activities that promote a shared understanding of instructional quality and rigor.
- DESE's Online Calibration Training Platform (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/eval/resources/calibration/>) uses videos of classroom instruction 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.

- 2. The district should ensure that students of color, English learners, students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged students have equitable access to a range of rigorous coursework and equitable access to rigorous career, vocational, technical education programs and pathways at the high school.**
 - A.** At all levels, the district should ensure that the rigorous standards reflected in the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks are effectively implemented in classrooms at every level so that as they move through the district all students are prepared for rigorous coursework and economically viable career pathways.
 1. The district should ensure that the accelerated mathematics pathway and STEM pathway (Project Lead the Way) at the middle school and in grade 9 at the high school continue to be supported and to reflect the demographics of the district's student population.
 2. Beginning in middle school, the district should conduct outreach to students and families of underrepresented groups so that they are aware of the benefits of taking more rigorous coursework as early as possible.
 - B.** The district should systematically identify, acknowledge, and correct the barriers in the district and in its schools that have led to disparities in learning opportunities for students of historically marginalized groups, including students of color, English learners, students with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged students.
 1. The district could use its newly formed Office of Equity and Engagement or develop an ongoing taskforce to monitor the composition of accelerated courses, including AP courses and more rigorous career, vocational, technical education (CVTE) programs, to ensure that they reflect the demographics of the school and/or the district.
 2. The district should ensure that sufficient structures and academic supports are in place to ensure positive outcomes for historically marginalized students in rigorous coursework and CVTE programs and pathways.
 - C.** As the district proceeds with its high-school redesign initiative, it should ensure that its CVTE programs and pathways are designed with rigorous academic as well as rigorous CVTE standards and that their enrollment consistently reflects the demographics of the school.

1. The district should ensure that rigorous high-quality instructional practices, aligned with academic standards and standards CVTE programs, are consistently implemented in CVTE programs and pathways.

Benefits from implementing this recommendation will include equitable access of historically marginalized student groups to rigorous academic coursework and career pathways that will better prepare them for college, careers, and civic involvement.

Recommended resources:

- *Accessing and Using the Student Learning Experience Report in Edwin Analytics* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edwin/gateway/slereport-supp.html>) The Student Learning Experience Report provides insights about patterns in student assignment to teachers and the extent to which those patterns reflect inequities for one or more student groups.
- *Equity Roadmap: Potential Next Steps after the Student Learning Experience Report* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/educators/equitableaccess/resources/>) provides resources on how to navigate the Student Learning Experience Report and suggested protocols for how to engage and improve the data.

Assessment

Contextual Background

The district has a system to collect, use, and share data for improving teaching, learning, and decision-making. Common assessments and universal screeners are administered three times during the school year to students K–12. The assessment results guide the decisions at the district, school, and classroom levels.

Data from various assessments give a broad picture of student, school, and district performance. Student data is housed within multiple student information systems. All common assessments, for example, are entered into a system called School City. Special education data, however, is entered into a system called Esped. District leaders expressed the belief that interoperability between systems was important in collecting real time data from different data sources. Yet, at the time of the onsite in November 2018, the district did not have interoperability between systems.

The district's IT department is part of the city's IT department, under the oversight of the city's chief information officer.

There is a culture of data use in the district to make decisions about teaching and learning. The review team found evidence that in most schools, K–8 data results informed student placement results, grouping, interventions, and progress monitoring.

Teachers and school leaders serve on instructional leadership teams (ILTs) and review school data to gauge growth within schools. ILTs also serve as data teams and use data results to develop School Improvement Plans. K–8 instructional coaches serve on the ILTs and provide information to classroom teachers.

Instructional coaches work with teachers to make data-driven decisions to plan and monitor student progress. They also lead data meetings with grade-level teachers. To ensure consistency across the district, coaches meet monthly to discuss curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices.

Data results are shared with teachers, students, and families. The district provides opportunities for families to access student information through progress reports, report cards, parent portals, and during school committee meetings.

Strength Finding

1. The district has established a system and expectation for collecting, using, and sharing district and school data.

- A.** The district administers student assessments strategically across the district to collect information about student achievement. Data is analyzed and used to monitor student progress, inform large- or small-group instruction, and pinpoint areas of strength and need.
1. Common assessments for K–12 math, 3–12 ELA, and 9–12 science and unit assessments (for K–8 science) are administered three times per year.
 2. Universal screeners, such as the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark (reading) Assessment System (BAS) for K–5 and the Phonemic Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS) for K–2, are periodically administered to students depending upon readiness and grade level.
 3. The WIDA Model (Measure of Developing English Language) assessments for English learners are administered several times a year: three times a year for the writing assessment and twice a year for the oral language assessment. The district is working to gather additional measures of data to gauge English learner achievement.
 4. The district collects and analyzes MCAS assessment results, attendance data, school culture and climate (Panorama Survey) data, SWIS (schoolwide information system) data, and AP enrollment data to inform decisions across the district. In addition, some schools collect daily behavior and attendance data about their students.
 5. Data collection and assessment methods are consistent across the schools for the administration of the district common assessments.⁷ Administrators told the team that they have begun to address whether the assessments are fair and reliable for all students.
 6. The School City student information system houses data for common assessments.
- B.** The district expects school administrators to assist their staff to use data results to guide instructional practice and accelerate students' progress.
1. The district has established a promising practice of using performance data to make decisions.

⁷ District assessments are administered three times each year in kindergarten through grade 2 (Phonemic Awareness Literacy Screening), in grades 3–8 (ELA benchmark), and in kindergarten through grade 8 (math).

- a. Interviews and a documents review indicated that data analysis took place during instructional leadership team (ILT), common planning, and coaches' meetings.
 - b. In an October 2018 memo to all district leaders, the superintendent set expectations by scheduling a meeting with each school leader to review goals and actions to address student performance.
- C.** The superintendent wanted to meet with each school leader to discuss the highlights and challenges about student performance data and sequential steps for accelerating student progress. The school-based ILTs serve as data teams and analyze data to make decisions for the school. School Improvement Plans (SIPs) are informed by data. School teams monitor grade-level, content-area responses to data, and provide teachers with feedback on their reteach action plans.
 1. A review of 2017–2018 SIPs indicated that school teams reviewed achievement data and created actions steps to accelerate student performance. Assessment results were scheduled to be reviewed periodically to gauge growth toward meeting district priorities.
 2. All SIPs use data to make decisions.
 - a. For example, at one school the ILT conducted data meetings and developed targeted action plans that focused on differentiated instruction and small-group instruction for high needs students and English learners. At another school, teams of teachers met every six weeks to develop action plans for their neediest students.
 - b. One middle school used a master tracker program to monitor standard-based data. At another school, vertical teams analyzed student-writing tasks.
 3. Interviews and a document review indicated that school staff used data to inform their decisions about instruction. Some teachers meet during six-week data cycles, monitor intervention plans, and discuss how to adjust instruction. One school monitors students' progress by maintaining a data wall, a visual representations of which students are below, on, or above grade level and what services they are receiving.
- D.** All K–8 schools have coaches who work with teachers to use data to make instructional decisions and provide teachers with tiered support.
 1. School leaders told the team that every school had a coach but that K–8 coaches, especially, helped teachers to use data cycles to guide instruction, develop reteach plans, and help with general lesson planning. The coach reviews data with teachers to identify students who are at risk, plan intervention strategies, and provide remediation.

2. The district has coaches in the following areas: math, science, literacy, ESL, and special education. Coaches work primarily in one school but a few schools share a coach. Coaches who work full time in one school teach a lab class within the school. Lab classes are used as demonstration sites for high-quality instruction.
3. All teachers have common planning time. The amount of time and frequency varies from school to school. Coaches support lesson planning and assessment development during this time.

E. Assessment data is shared with families across the district.

1. Interviewees said that student data was presented at most school committee meetings. School committee members told the review team that the superintendent usually presented information to them such as the MCAS assessment, climate survey, and enrollment results. This information is included in the minutes of school committee meetings and available on the district's website.
2. Families may be invited to meetings of school support teams to discuss students' progress.
3. High-school students and families have access to student grades on the Aspen portal.
4. Report cards are sent home to families quarterly at the high school and by trimester at K–8 schools.

Impact: When a district has a system for collecting, using, and sharing data, district leaders and teachers likely make data-driven decisions that have a positive impact on student achievement.

Challenges and Areas for Growth

2. The district does not have interoperability between multiple student information systems or in-house support staff to manage and support the collection, use, and sharing of data in the district.

- A.** The district does not have a dedicated instructional technology (IT) department or in-house staff to manage and support the district's collection, use, and sharing of data.
1. Administrators told the team that the district's IT department was consolidated with the city's IT department. IT support staff report to and are supervised by the city/mayor.
 2. Administrators said that the district's IT department was "outsourced," noting, "We have no one here who can sit beside principals to support their learning in-house."

3. One administrator expressed three concerns about IT in the district:
 - a. The district does not have a data support person on staff.
 - b. Several student information systems are being used in the district and there is no interoperability between systems:
 - i. The English learner department uses Ellevation;
 - ii. The special education department uses eSped;
 - iii. Teachers enter grades in SIS/Aspen; and
 - iv. Common assessments are housed in School City.
 - c. The district is late sending student information management system (SIMS) data to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.
 4. The superintendent told the review team that she would like to get a dedicated data system for the whole district and would also like to add dedicated data support personnel.
 5. One administrator told the team that the district did not have one person who has access to all the data and noted “You have to go to multiple sources. There is no one here who can run a data report.”
- B.** In its self-assessment submitted in advance of the onsite review, the district rated its data collection system as “Somewhat Well” described by the following indicators (possible ratings are “Very Well,” “Well,” “Somewhat Well,” and “Not at All Well”):
- “The district ensures that multiple sources of data are collected and that the data provides a comprehensive picture of student, school, and district performance.”
 - “The district ensures that educators use a variety of informal and formal assessment methods, including formative assessments and common interim assessments. The assessments are aligned across grades and subjects and provide actionable information.”
 - “The district ensures consistency in the administration of district assessments. It investigates the validity of current assessment and data uses.”
1. In its self-assessment, the district noted, “Our ability to carry out an agenda involving the strategic use of data at the district level is hampered by the number of technical challenges that have proven more difficult than anticipated.”

2. Further, the district wrote, “As a result of the consolidation [of the district’s and the city’s IT departments], the degree and quality of ongoing (IT) support for the student information system (SIS/Aspen) has decreased.”
3. One district administrator told the review team, “The superintendent does not control the district technology program, which is generally controlled by the city. This...is challenging.”
4. One city official stated, “The SIS system has been a challenge and there is work to be done.”

Impact: When district administrators, school leaders, and teachers do not have easy access to all student data as well as technical support, the district is challenged to make decisions that lead to improved student performance, opportunities, and outcomes.

Recommendation

1. **The district should take concrete steps to develop a dedicated data system for the whole district and add dedicated data support personnel to manage and support the district’s efforts to collect, use, and share data as well as to coordinate efforts with the city’s IT department.**
 - A. The data support personnel should oversee systems and structures that support the regular collection, use, and sharing of all educational data.
 - B. The district and the data support personnel should develop a plan of action to unite the district’s technological efforts with those of the city’s IT department.
 1. The district and the data support personnel should identify areas in which the district and the city’s IT department work well together and areas in which the coordination between the district and the city’s IT department needs improvement.
 2. The superintendent should meet with the city’s mayor to collaborate on uniting the district’s technological efforts with those of the city’s IT department.
 3. The district and the data support personnel should schedule regular meetings with the chief information officer of the city’s IT department to celebrate and sustain positive areas of development and collaborate to solve issues that the district and the city face.

Benefits: Implementing this recommendation will help district administrators, school leaders, and educators to have easier access to data and to help them make data driven decisions that likely have a positive impact on student performance, opportunities, and outcomes.

Human Resources and Professional Development

Contextual Background

The district recently restructured the human resources department and renamed it the human capital department, with a director who is responsible for the hiring and recruiting process and procedures. Under the office of curriculum, instruction, and assessment, the director of teacher/leader development focuses on professional development (PD), induction, and mentoring of new teachers and partnerships intended to recruit qualified educators for the district.

The district has systems in place to recruit, hire, and retain staff and has established partnerships with Salem State University, Endicott College, Lesley College, Tufts University, and Springfield College to create a pipeline of educators. In spite of these efforts, attracting a highly qualified teaching staff that reflects the composition of the student body has been difficult. In addition, DESE data indicated that in recent years the district has had high leadership turnover.⁸ District leaders reported that some leadership turnover was related to performance.

The district's educator evaluation system is modeled on the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework. In addition to formal evaluations as part of that system, a team of district leaders, coaches, and teachers performs instructional rounds and provides informal feedback after those observations. Several administrators and teacher leaders are responsible for the supervision and evaluation of educators. Generally, the principal is the primary evaluator at the school level, but other evaluators include assistant principals, deans, and supervisors. The district uses TeachPoint as its educator evaluation management system.

Although the district does not have a documented PD plan with clear goals and objectives related to desired student outcomes that is shared districtwide, the district offers a wide range of PD and training sessions, some of which the team observed, to improve educators' skills and competencies. In addition, the district tracks PD costs in a spreadsheet. Educators can access descriptions of upcoming PD sessions and track their PD history on TeachPoint. Grant funding has often enhanced the district's PD offerings. For example, a grant with Project Lead the Way provides PD in biomed and engineering curriculum. In addition, a Nellie Mae grant provides PD to principals to help improve teacher retention and hiring practices.

⁸ According to DESE data, between 2014 and 2018 the district's principal retention rate fluctuated with an overall decrease, from 90 percent in 2014 to 45.5 percent in 2015 to 54.5 percent in 2016 to 80 percent in 2017 to 72.7 percent in 2018.

The district provides five full-days and eight half-days of PD, as well as regularly scheduled collaborative time at all levels. Scheduled collaborative time differs from school to school. Collaborative time includes faculty and job-alike meetings for staff in the same or similar positions, and staffing structures such as coaches provide embedded PD.

The district has an induction and mentoring program. New teachers are assigned to a team with one coach serving as a mentor to the teachers on the team. District leaders reported that this innovation appeared to be effective. In August 2018, the district provided a four-day induction program for 100 new staff, introducing them to various elements of curriculum and instruction, including the district's four instructional priorities. The district recognized that the mentoring program needed improvement and made some changes to it in 2018–2019. The district also provides course reimbursement, which enables educators to pursue their own professional growth and to take courses in priority areas identified by the superintendent.

Strength Finding

1. The district has implemented several innovative professional development practices.

- A.** District leaders stated that professional development (PD) was aligned with the district's strategic plan and the four instructional focus areas for the year.
- B.** The district has sponsored six leaders to participate in the Lynch Leadership Fellowship. Two of those who attended as assistant principals now are sitting principals in the district.
- C.** The district initiated a principals' cabinet structure in 2018–2019. Principals share best practices from their schools, engage in "consultancies," collaborate around district concerns about practice such as student attendance, and receive professional development (PD) from district leaders.
 - 1. In 2018–2019, the district provided PD on meeting the needs of English learners, as well as a 2-part series on master scheduling, and a 3-part series on employing a competency-based hiring model.
- D.** The district has partnered with Salem State University to develop a Teacher Leadership certificate program. Teachers take four courses, including Facilitating Adult Learning and Using Data to Drive Improvement.
 - 1. The district subsidizes teacher participation, and at the completion of the four courses teachers receive a Teacher Leadership certificate.

2. District leaders said that 40 teachers participated in this program in the 2 years before the onsite in November 2018. Participants can continue for a second year for a certificate of graduate studies (CAGS) which involves receiving a principal certification by completing performance assessment for leaders (PALS) tasks. This is an effort to bolster the district's leadership pipeline.
- E.** Interviews and a document review indicated that the district hosted an annual Summer Leadership Institute, which includes all principals, assistant principals, team chairs, directors, and district leaders.
1. Content has focused on equity, data-driven instruction, and culturally responsive teaching. The district provides this PD for leaders in order to build leadership coherence and a leadership pipeline.
 2. The 2018 Summer Workshops were designed to support district priorities: meeting the needs of diverse learners, early literacy, rigorous content, safe and supportive schools, and digital learning.
- F.** The district has 25 instructional coaches, teacher leaders who “lead from and within the classroom.” Coaches engage with teachers in data-driven coaching cycles that start with an area of a teacher's or teachers' practice identified by data analysis as needing improvement. These cycles end with evidence of the effect that coaching has had on the practice.
1. Coaches receive annual coaching to develop their coaching competencies, including executing a coaching cycle, providing non-evaluative feedback, and making content accessible to diverse learners. In the 2018–2109 school year, coaches participate in 32 hours of training on culturally responsive teaching.
- G.** Much of the district's PD is teacher-led, giving teachers an opportunity to plan and facilitate the learning of their peers.
1. For example, in 2017–2018 teachers designed and facilitated 30 3-part mini-lessons held during 3 release days. Teachers across the district could self-select into these sessions.
- H.** The district provided a 4-day New Teacher Orientation in August 2018 to 100 first- and second-year teachers. District teacher leaders and coaches facilitated this program.
- I.** Job-alike educators, including reading specialists, special education teachers, ESL teachers, behavior specialists, instructional coaches, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and engagement facilitators convene routinely throughout the year in Job-Alike meetings. This PD is

linked to the specific role of the educator and designed to improve educator capacity to work more effectively with targeted student groups.

1. District leaders said that the agendas for this PD were driven by student data.

Impact: With PD that is aligned with the district’s strategic plan and the four instructional focus areas for the year, educators’ skills likely are improved, thus fostering the improvement of student achievement. Furthermore, teacher-led, job-embedded, content-based and individually pursued learning with structures for collaboration fosters respect for educators’ ability to identify and pursue their PD needs and ensures that educators and administrators share the responsibility for improvement of educators’ practice and student learning. This collaborative approach to district improvement provides the conditions for improved student achievement.

Challenges and Areas for Growth

2. **The district’s educator evaluation system does not ensure that all educators receive high-quality feedback⁹ that helps them to improve their practice.**

A. The quality and consistency of the district’s implementation of its educator evaluation system has been uneven.

1. The team reviewed the 2017–2019 evaluative documentation of 30 teachers randomly selected from across the district in TeachPoint, the district’s educator evaluation management system.
2. Most teacher files were complete and included a self-assessment that was grounded in data, an educator plan, and goals and evidence of progress toward meeting goals. Formative assessments/evaluations and summative evaluations were generally evidence based and evaluated teacher performance in the four state Standards and Indicators of Effective Teaching Practice. However, some teachers’ goals were not specific and measurable.
3. Some principals told the review team that they generally were able to get into classrooms frequently, but they found it difficult to do formal observations as frequently.

⁹ High-quality feedback is specific, timely, and actionable.

4. The team also reviewed the evaluative documentation of 14 administrators randomly selected from across the district; the team did not find evaluative documentation for 8 of the 14 in the TeachPoint system.
- B.** Interviews and a document review indicated that feedback provided as part of the district’s educator evaluation system was not consistently high quality (specific, timely, and actionable).
1. Although some teachers’ evaluations contained instructive¹⁰ feedback that was specific, timely, and actionable, much of the feedback was vague and did not promote a specific action or concrete recommendation.
 2. Some teachers said that they have received useful feedback from their evaluator, such as the mention of a resource to add to a unit or lesson; others said that they did not receive feedback that contributed to professional growth.
 3. Despite the district providing a consultant to assist administrators with providing useful feedback, feedback to teachers is limited. Teachers told reviewers that informal feedback provided during instructional rounds was more useful.
 4. Administrator evaluations more often contained feedback that was congratulatory and validating, than actionable and growth promoting.
- C.** While school leaders said that the district used the educator evaluation system to help identify and move out ineffective teachers, the district has not effectively used the educator evaluation system as a tool for professional growth and development.
1. District administrators expressed concern about the quality of feedback offered by some evaluators. They added that evaluation has not reached its potential to improve student achievement.
- D.** The district has not formalized collection and use of student and staff feedback as part of its educator evaluation system.
1. As of the 2015–2016 school year, state educator evaluation regulations (603 CMR 35.07) call for districts to collect and use student feedback in the teacher evaluation process and staff feedback as evidence in the administrator evaluation process. This feedback can also be

¹⁰ An informative evaluation is factual and cites instructional details such as methodology, pedagogy, Standards and Indicators of Effective Teaching Practice or instruction of subject-based knowledge that is aligned with the state curriculum frameworks. It does not commit to improvement strategies. An instructive evaluation includes comments intended to improve instruction.

used to promote educator reflection as part of self-assessment and goal setting as well as to demonstrate professional growth.

2. District administrators said that the district has surveyed students and teachers about school culture and climate for the four years before the onsite review in November 2018. However, reviewers were told that student and staff feedback were not required components of the district's educator evaluation system.
- E. The district has not formalized collection and use of multiple measures of student learning as part of its educator evaluation system.
1. In 2017, state educator evaluation regulations (603 CMR 35.07) were amended to eliminate a separate student impact rating and add a new Student Learning Indicator. Under these [amended regulations](#), evaluators do not have to make a separate judgment about an educator's impact on student learning. Instead, student learning is embedded as an indicator within one of the Massachusetts Educator Evaluation Framework's four standards, and evaluators are required to take into account evidence of impact from multiple measures of student learning when determining performance ratings.
 2. The review team did not find evidence that the district used multiple measures of student learning as part of its educator evaluator evaluation system.

Impact: Without implementing the components of the Educator Evaluation Framework that call for the collection and use of multiple sources of evaluative evidence, and ensuring that all educators' evaluations include specific, timely, and actionable feedback based on that evidence of student learning, the district cannot effectively improve educators' ability to meet the needs of all their students and advance all students' performance, opportunities, and outcomes.

3. In recent years, the district has had high leadership turnover; some turnover was related to performance.

- A. The superintendent told the review team that in 2018–2019 the district had four new principals and noted that in the five years before the onsite review in November 2018 three schools had multiple principals.¹¹ The superintendent said that some of this turnover was "intentional."

¹¹ According to DESE data, between 2014 and 2018 the district's principal retention rate fluctuated with an overall decrease, from 90 percent in 2014 to 45.5 percent in 2015 to 54.5 percent in 2016 to 80 percent in 2017 to 72.7 percent in 2018.

1. The superintendent pointed out that recent turnover of leaders in the district has made orienting new principals to the district's strategic objectives an annual challenge.
 2. Principals acknowledged that it has been difficult for the district to make strategic progress given the high rate of leadership turnover. Principals, however, did point to two potentially positive developments:
 - a. The superintendent was beginning her fourth year, which has provided a measure of consistency and may contribute to progress.
 - b. Several recently hired principals have been promoted from within leading to a level of stability in the district; however, principals also suggested that the district did not have a systematic approach to build the capacity of leaders from within the district.
- B.** Teachers said that frequent change in leadership has slowed progress and in some schools had contributed to a decline in morale.

Impact: The district's high rate of leadership turnover compromises its efforts to implement the strategic plan in a sustained manner. Without a systematic approach to build the capacity of leaders from within the district, the district is challenged to build leadership stability in the district.

Recommendations

- 1. The district should fully and effectively implement all components of the state's Educator Evaluation Framework to promote educators' growth, with a particular emphasis on ensuring that all educators receive high-quality feedback.**
 - A.** The district should implement systems to ensure that all educators develop a self-assessment using data and set student learning and professional practice goals that are SMART (Specific and Strategic; Measureable; Action-Oriented; Rigorous, Realistic, and Results- Focused; and Timed and Tracked).
 - B.** The district should support and monitor the skills and practices of evaluators to ensure that the feedback that they provide is specific, timely, and actionable, and relevant to professional growth and student outcomes.
 - C.** The district should collaboratively develop standardized policies and procedures for the collection and use of all required types of evidence, including student and staff feedback as evidence components of teacher and administrator evaluations, respectively, as well as multiple

measures of student learning to assess educator impact. Feedback can be included in an educator's self-assessment, goal setting, and/or used to demonstrate improvements in processes.

Benefits: By improving the quality and consistency of evaluative feedback, the district will improve educators' practice. This will likely lead to improved student performance and student outcomes. By adopting the components of the state's Educational Evaluation Framework that require the collection and use of multiple sources of evidence, the district will help educators to reflect on their effectiveness and be better able to identify areas of strength and opportunities for growth.

Recommended resources:

- *A Protocol for developing S.M.A.R.T Goal Statements* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/eeval/resources/>) is designed to support educators in developing S.M.A.R.T. goal statements using the appropriate evaluation rubric and an ESE-developed protocol.
- *The Evidence Collection Toolkit* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/eeval/resources/>) is designed to help districts establish clear and consistent expectations for evidence collection and promote a meaningful process for the collection, analysis, and sharing of high-quality artifacts. The toolkit Includes: brief guidance, examples of district strategies, a worksheet for district decision-making, and a handout of Evidence Collection Tips for Educators.
- *On Track with Evaluator Capacity* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/eeval/resources/pln/OnTrack-EvaluatorCapacity.pdf>) is an interactive document that provides specific strategies, lessons learned, and links to district-created resources. It was produced by eight districts that were part of a Professional Learning Network for Supporting Evaluator Capacity.
- *Quick Reference Guide: Opportunities to Streamline the Evaluation Process* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/eeval/resources/QRG-Streamline.pdf>) is designed to help districts reflect on and continuously improve their evaluation systems:
 - What's working? What are the bright spots?
 - How can we streamline the process to stay focused on professional growth and development?
 - What do we need to adjust to ensure our system is valuable to educators and students?
- DESE's Educator Evaluation Training Workshops (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/eeval/training/teachers/default.html>) provide a general overview to the educator evaluation framework as well as opportunities to engage in activities associated with

the first three steps of the 5-Step Cycle. This is a particularly helpful resource for educators new to the educator evaluation framework.

- DESE's Evaluator Calibration Training resources (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/eval/resources/calibration/>) include tools, protocols, and videos to support evaluator calibration around perceptions of practice aligned to ESE's model rubrics as well as high quality feedback.
- *Quick Reference Guide: Student and Staff Feedback* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/eval/resources/QRG-Feedback.pdf>) provides information about how to select feedback instruments and use feedback as part of the educator evaluation system, along with links to relevant resources.

Student Support

Contextual Background

Salem is a small urban district with declining student enrollment. Between 2014 and 2018, enrollment dropped 5.8 percent, from 4,336 in 2014 to 3,694 in 2018. In fiscal year 2018, the district’s foundation enrollment was 4,537.¹² Many students come to school each day with unique programmatic and support needs. In 2017–2018, 62.2 percent of the district’s students were part of the high needs student group because they were in one or more of the following groups: economically disadvantaged students, students with disabilities, and English learners (ELs) or former ELs, compared with 46.6 percent of statewide enrollment. Economically disadvantaged students represented 49 percent of the student population, compared with 32 percent across the state. In addition, students with disabilities made up 22.5 percent of enrollment, compared with 17.7 percent statewide, and English learners represented 13 percent of the total student population, compared with the state average of 10.2 percent.

The district has promoted and provided resources for safe and supportive school climates. District and school-based teams have convened to ensure supportive climates districtwide. The director of safe and supportive schools is a resource to principals. The director has conducted trainings, most recently on gender equity.

While the district is focused on safe and supportive school climates, the review team found areas that could be more tightly secured. Multiple doors of the Collins School, which is also used to house the district’s administrative offices, were accessible in the morning during arrivals. Access to the high school was also without security at the entrances during morning arrival. Furthermore, in several schools, hallways appeared deserted with few teachers or students and some rooms were vacant. The review team was told that the district had a limited number of security cameras.

The district has a system in place to support students. Most notable is the adoption of City Connects, a systemic way of engaging community-based partners in supporting the academic and non-academic needs of students K–8. In its second year in Salem in 2018–2019, City Connects has served over 3,000 students and lists over 200 participating community partners.

¹² Foundation enrollment is a count of the number of pupils for whom a school district is financial responsible on October 1st of any given year. It is composed primarily of local resident schoolchildren attending their community’s local or regional school district. However, it also includes students for whom the district is paying tuition, such as those at Commonwealth charter schools, other school districts, special education schools, and other settings. In fiscal year 2018, 8 FTE students from other towns enrolled in Salem (“choice-in”), while 81.5 FTE students enrolled in other districts (“choice-out”). In fiscal year 2018, 453.9 students left the district to enroll in charter schools. In 2017–2018, the Bentley Academy Charter School, which is part of the Salem Public Schools, served 296 students.

City Connects coordinators (one for each school) consult with teachers, review the class roster at the beginning of the school year, and identify students for support in four domains (academic, health, social emotional/behavior, and family). Student needs are tiered, and supports are identified and put in place. In addition, City Connects coordinates student support teams in each school. Educators can refer students throughout the school year.

Other resources are available to teachers and students. Teachers have ongoing support from instructional coaches, embedded professional development, common planning time, and student support teams. The district provides students with a range of specialized staff and interventions including reading specialists, math tutors, school adjustment counselors, behavior specialists, intervention blocks, and after-school and small-group instruction. The district includes two alternative high schools located off-site for students who need a smaller, more customized learning environment.

An ongoing challenge in the district is chronic absence, especially at the high school. Leaders, including district administrators, principals, and the school committee, are beginning to review attendance data and identify resources to help improve attendance.

Strength Findings

1. The district has begun to be proactive in its work to promote safe, supportive, and welcoming school climates across the district.

- A.** Interviews and a document review indicated that in 2018–2019 structured teams were focused on regularly collecting data, and were designating positions to support safe and supportive environments in the district.
 - 1. The district’s Salem Response Team meets regularly with Salem police, fire department, and emergency medical services. Each school has a safety team composed of a principal, an assistant principal, and other key staff members who participate in Alert, Lockdown, Inform, Counter, Evacuate (ALICE) training.
 - 2. Interviewees from multiple interviews stated that ALICE training took place in every school.
 - 3. Administrators reported that each school was expected to have a climate and culture team. Interviewees concurred that school culture teams were in place in some schools and functioned differently in each of these schools. A particular exemplar is one school where the culture team plans fun activities for students. In other schools, the culture teams monitor behavior referrals, and plan assemblies and other activities.

4. The review team was told that in two schools behavioral specialists collected schoolwide information system (SWIS) discipline data and shared the data with assistant principals. In one school, the culture team looks at SWIS data and plans positive behavior supports.
 5. The district conducts annual surveys through Panorama focused on school climate with students in grades 3 to 5 and shares survey results at the district and school levels. The district shared survey results with the review team.
 - a. Survey questions addressed broad topics such as belonging, school climate, school engagement, and school safety.
 6. The district's director of safe and supportive schools conducts trainings and is a resource to schools on many issues including gender equity.
- B.** Interviews and a document review indicated that practices and programs were in place across the district to nurture and support safe school climates.
1. In 2017–2018, culture was a focus during instructional rounds, a time when educators observe each other's schools with the goal of providing feedback on a specific topic. In 2018–2019, the focus is maintaining a welcoming environment.
 2. In August 2018, the district convened a New Teacher Institute for over 100 new teachers. The Institute's focus was how to welcome all students into classrooms and how to make learning accessible to all students.
 3. Schools across the district use various programs and models to support the safety and well-being of students, including Caring School Community, a social-emotional learning program, PBIS (positive behavior interventions and supports), and the Responsive Classroom.

Impact: Promoting safe and supportive environments with central and school-based teams, authentic data from surveys to plan positive behavior responses, and programming designed to boost social-emotional learning likely cultivate safe environments for students to learn, grow, and thrive.

2. The district strategically supports all students' growth and development by implementing a tiered system of support and engaging family and community partners.

- A.** Interviews and a document review indicated that the district clearly delineated services across tiers to support students' academic growth and development.
1. Core instruction is the first course of action to support students' academic growth and development.

- a. Tier 1/core instruction is supported through instructional coaching, embedded professional development, common planning time, and small-group instruction.
 - b. Tier 2 supports include reading specialists (including a bilingual reading specialist), math tutors, and intervention blocks built into some school schedules. The high school provides “day back” opportunities where students can stay after school to receive additional help.
 - c. The district provides a range of Tier 3 supports, including specialized instruction for students with disabilities from special education teachers as well as modified instruction from general education teachers in general education classes. Students with disabilities may also receive services in separate classrooms as indicated on their Individualized Education Programs (IEPs).
 - d. The district operates two alternative high schools to support students who otherwise may not complete high school. Salem Prep and New Liberty Innovation School provide students with customized instruction in small-group settings.
- B.** The district strategically supports the academic and non-academic needs of students.
1. Interviews and a document review indicated that the district has adopted the City Connects model to identify and support students’ academic and non-academic needs K–8.
 2. A school-based City Connects coordinator meets with every classroom teacher to review each student’s strengths and needs across four domains: health, family, social emotional/behavior, and academics. Student needs are tiered, and some students are identified for individualized support. Support may be district based or community based.
 3. The district’s school adjustment counselors and behavior specialists provide Tier 2 services to students, including counseling, behavior plans, and the check in check out (CICO)¹³ intervention for students in grades 6–12.
- C.** The district has made family and community engagement a priority.
1. The district’s Strategic Plan 2017–2022 includes strengthening family and community engagement as one of its four pillars. Interviews and a document review indicated that family engagement was a goal in each School Improvement Plan.

¹³ The teacher checks in with the student to set behavioral goals at the start of the period, then checks out with the student at the close of the period to rate that student’s conduct and award points or other incentives earned for attaining behavioral goal(s).

2. Beginning in school year 2018–2019, the district employed full-time bilingual family engagement facilitators in each school. One of their responsibilities is to help the principal develop programs and activities to engage parents and the community in order to improve student achievement.
3. City Connects has identified and matched more than 200 community partners to students needs in the district.
4. Salem High School has begun partnering with nearby community organizations to provide internships for seniors. At the time of the review in November 2018, 25 seniors were placed in internships with a plan to have 50 students participate by the end of 2018–2019.
5. Interviews and a document review indicated that the Salem Education Foundation, a 15-member board of volunteers, supports student achievement with privately raised funds from community agencies, non-profits, and local businesses. Salem educators can access funds through an RFP (request for proposal) process. Each year approximately \$20,000 in grants are distributed to teachers.

Impact: When a clear system of support is present districtwide, teachers and students benefit. Teachers have access to resources and partners to expand support and identify appropriate interventions. Students likely receive the instruction and support they need to sustain their academic, behavioral, and social-emotional growth.

Challenges and Areas for Growth

3. **The district has not identified effective strategies to improve chronic absence rates, which have been consistently higher than state rates in recent years.**
 - A. According to DESE data, the district’s chronic absence rate has fluctuated with an overall increase in recent years and has been consistently higher than state rates.

**Table 30 Salem Public Schools
Chronic Absence Rates,* 2014–2018**

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Salem	19.6%	20.9%	20.6%	23.9%	23.4%
State	12.3%	12.9%	12.3%	13.5%	13.2%

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

1. In 2018, 23.4 percent of the district's students were chronically absent, compared with 13.2 percent statewide.
 2. In 2017–2018, high-school students had the highest rates of chronic absence in the district. The percentages of chronically absent students were as follows: 42.0 percent for grade 9; 33.3 percent for grade 10; 42.2 percent for grade 11; and 49.4 percent for grade 12.
 3. In 2018, 25.5 percent of students in grade 8 were chronically absent.
- B.** The superintendent told the team that chronic absence was “a problem” in the district.
- C.** Members of the school committee told the review team and a document review confirmed that they were beginning to look at monthly attendance data and analyze “what is contributing to that data.”
- D.** Principals told the team that the deadlines for new School Improvement Plans (SIPs) were extended so they could all add attendance goals to the SIPs.

Impact: In a district with consistently high chronic absence, a significant number of students miss instructional time. Students who miss instructional time likely experience gaps in their learning and low achievement. Students who are not on track to move ahead to the next grade with their class are at risk of not completing high school.

Recommendation

- 1. The district should enhance its efforts to improve student attendance.**
 - A.** The district should conduct a study of attendance data.
 1. The district should consider gathering input from students and families about the reasons for high absence rates and possible ways to address the challenge of students missing too much instruction.
 - B.** The district should review its initiatives to improve attendance and adjust efforts as needed.
 1. The district should collaborate with similar districts to identify successes and determine the extent to which they can be replicated.

2. The district should consider that addressing attendance issues might involve a range of wider initiatives such as improving instruction and its relevance to post-graduation goals, strengthening school climate, and building relationships with students' families.

Benefits: By implementing this recommendation, the district will improve attendance, enhance learning, and better prepare students for college, careers, and civic participation.

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.
- *Ninth Grade Counts* (<http://www.greatschoolspartnership.org/resources/ninth-grade-counts/>) is a resource to help high schools identify weaknesses in their ninth-grade programs, and then develop a purposeful, proactive plan to strengthen this critical educational transition. The guide is divided into three areas of focus:
 - Strengthening the Transition into High School
 - Strengthening the High School Transition for English Language Learners
 - Using Summer Bridge Programs to Strengthen the High School Transition
- *Family, School, and Community Partnership Fundamentals* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/sfs/fscp-fundamentals.docx>) provide a framework for family engagement, along with a self-assessment tool.
- DESE's Title I Program Design web page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/federalgrants/>) includes links to policies, toolkits, research, presentations, and other resources related to family engagement.

Financial and Asset Management

Contextual Background

The Salem Public Schools have a municipal budget appropriation of \$57,628,890 for fiscal year 2019 to support a K–12 district of 3,694 students in the 2017–2018 school year. There is an additional budget for the Bentley Academy Charter School, which is not part of this review. The budget is developed over the school year beginning with budget requests from the principals and directors in the fall. In consultation with those administrators, the central office develops a budget to be submitted to the school committee’s finance sub-committee. From that point, the budget progresses to a public hearing and school committee approval. Finally, the school committee budget is reviewed by the mayor and city council and funded.

At the time of the onsite review in November 2018, the district had developed a budget document aligned with the district’s strategic plan. The budget document contained narratives that tied budget decisions to the district’s goals and the four pillars of the strategic plan.

The city’s financial support of schools has allowed the district to exceed the foundation and required net school spending levels. The district was 34 percent above its foundation budget. In fiscal year 2018, the percentage amount over the required minimum contribution was 28.8 percent, compared with a state average of 25.3 percent above the requirement. The city is \$5 million below its tax levy limit and has a \$27 million override capacity.

The district has 11 schools serving students in prekindergarten through grade 12, including a K–5 Horace Mann charter school that is not part of this review. The four elementary schools were built or renovated in the 20 years before the onsite review in November 2018. The K–8 school was renovated in 1995, the middle school in 1994, and the high school in 2006. The city has submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) a statement of interest to further renovate Salem High School.

Challenges and Areas for Growth

1. The district's budget documents do not provide trend data or sufficient detail about the current year's resource allocations.

- A.** The public budget document shows the budget for the next fiscal year. However, it does not include an actual expenditure history for comparisons.
- B.** The public budget document has full-time equivalent (FTE) data in the personnel sections. The document does not include an FTE history.
- C.** Except for staffing changes in the highlights section, the budget documents do not include detail about staffing levels.
 - 1. For example, the districtwide supports budget lists nine administrators without descriptions of the nine positions.
 - 2. The high-school budget lists 66.5 teachers without a description of what those teachers teach.
- D.** Interviews and a document review indicated that the non-personnel sections of the budget documents contained general categories of expenditures.
 - 1. For example, the high-school budget includes a line item for contracted services and the amount of the expenditure without explanation.
 - 2. The budget documents contain some similarly labelled line items without explanation. For example, in the transportation budget three line items are labeled: transportation-pps, transportation, and pupil transportation.
 - 3. City officials told the team that it was hard to pinpoint specific expenditures and costs based upon the budget document. They also stated that the schools were attempting to provide more budget detail and the amount of detail should improve in the future.
- E.** While grants and revolving funds appear in an appendix to the budget, there is no connection to school and department budgets showing the impact of the grants and revolving funds on schools and departments.

Impact: Without including historical data and detailed information about allocation of resources, the district cannot ensure a transparent budget process and effective use of funds to improve all students' performance, opportunities, and outcomes.

2. Six of the district's seven schools are underutilized. The district does not have a long-term capital plan.

A. The 2016 Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) School Survey Report rated six of seven Salem schools as underutilized.

1. Salem High School enrolled 1,384 students in 2006 and 920 students in 2018.
2. Collins Middle School enrolled 536 students in 2018 and 1,176 in 2002.
3. Witchcraft Heights enrolled 590 students in 2000 and 458 students in 2018.

B. Interviews and a document review indicated that the district did not have a long-term capital plan.

1. The district has a one-year capital budget.
2. Interviewees said that the district has conducted a needs study with the hope of creating a long-term capital plan.¹⁴

Impact: Without well-maintained and efficiently utilized schools, the district cannot ensure that educational and program facilities are conducive to teaching and learning and that resources are being used efficiently. The absence of a long-term plan for renovating or replacing the district's aging schools delays efforts to prolong the effective life of the district's capital assets.

Recommendations

1. The district should develop a budget document that is clear, comprehensive, and details how much schools and programs cost, and how outside funds are used.

A. The district should produce a budget document that contains all essential information about the financial operations of the district.

1. All funding sources should be included with detailed spending plans.

¹⁴ After the onsite review, district leaders reported that the district was in the process of developing a long-term capital plan.

- B.** The budget document should include descriptions and subtotals for school and program staffing and costs.

Benefits: By implementing this recommendation, the district will have a transparent and comprehensive budget document that clearly presents the district’s education efforts. In addition, the budget document and the process used to create it will inform budget development and likely create trust and confidence among stakeholders that the public’s funds are being soundly used to support the needs of the district’s students.

Recommended resources:

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

2. The district should develop a long-term capital plan for upgrading, renovating, and maintaining its schools and a plan for funding the projects.

- A.** The district should develop a long-term capital plan for its schools.
 - 1. The plan should include an assessment of the educational and building needs of all the schools along with recommended repairs, renovations, and replacement of the schools, estimated costs, and a reasonable schedule for them.
- B.** City officials and school committee members should be involved in the development of a long-range funding plan for school needs.
- C.** The district and the city might consider consolidating their building departments to use resources more effectively.

Benefits: Implementing this recommendation will mean sound planning practices that will ensure well-utilized and well-maintained facilities.

Recommended resources:

- In *Spending Money Wisely: Getting the Most from School District Budgets* (<https://dmgroupk12.com/> ; scroll down to Research section), authors Nathan Levenson, Karla Baehr, James C. Smith, and Claire Sullivan identify and discuss the top ten opportunities for districts to realign resources and free up funds to support strategic priorities. Drawing on the wisdom of leading thinkers, district leaders, and education researchers from across the country, the authors gathered a long list of opportunities for resource reallocation. To distill these down to the ten most high-impact opportunities, each opportunity was assessed based on its financial benefit, its impact on student achievement, its political feasibility, and its likelihood of success relative to the complexity of implementation.
- DESE's *School Building Issues* web page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/sbuilding/>) includes funding opportunities, guidelines, and resources related to school buildings.
- *Planning Guide for Maintaining School Facilities* (<http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2003347>), from the National Center for Education Statistics, is intended to help school districts plan for efficient and effective operations. It addresses various topics, including conducting a facilities audit, planning and evaluating maintenance, and managing staff and contractors.
- *The Massachusetts School Checklist* (<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/environmental-health/exposure-topics/iaq/iaq-methods/the-mass-school-checklist.html>) is a list of the most important environmental health and safety issues for schools to address. It includes regulations and industry standards/guidelines related to elements on the checklist, as well as additional resources.
- The Green Ribbon Schools Award honors schools that are exemplary in reducing environmental impact and costs, improving the health and wellness of students and staff, and delivering effective environmental and sustainability education. The district might find several related resources useful, including Massachusetts' *Green Ribbon Schools Award Resource Guide* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/sbuilding/GreenRibbon/ResourcesGuide.pdf>) and the US Department of Education's *Green Strides* resource list (<http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/green-strides/resources.html>).

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

Review Team Members

The review was conducted from November 5–8, 2018, by the following team of independent DESE consultants.

1. Tom Pandiscio, Leadership and Governance
2. Sue Kelly, Curriculum and Instruction
3. Marc Kerble, Ed. D., Assessment
4. Maureen Murray Adamson, Ed. D., Human Resources and Professional Development
5. Lenora Jennings, Student Support and *review team coordinator*
6. David King, Financial and Asset Management

District Review Activities

The following activities were conducted during the review:

The team conducted interviews with the following financial personnel: the business manager, the grants manager, the payroll manager, the administrative assistant to business manager, the mayor, and the city director of finance.

The team conducted interviews with the following members of the school committee: chair, vice chair, and four members.

The review team conducted interviews with the following representatives of the teachers' association: four members of the executive board and three representatives.

The team conducted interviews/focus groups with the superintendent; the assistant superintendent; the business manager; the executive director of pupil personnel services; the chief of communication; the chief of system strategy; the supervisor of City Connects; the supervisor of Safe and Supportive Schools; and multiple directors (curriculum instruction and assessment, teacher and leader development, nursing, ELL, family and community engagement and human capital).

The team visited the following schools: Bates Elementary School (K–5), Carlton Innovation School (K–5), Saltonstall School (K–8), Witchcraft Heights Elementary (K–5), Collins Middle School (grades 6–8), New

Liberty Innovation School (grades 9–12), Salem High School (grades 9–12), and Salem Prep High School (grades 9–12).

During school visits, the team conducted interviews/focus groups with students, students' families, and eight principals, as well as focus groups with three elementary-school teachers, two middle-school teachers, and four high-school teachers.

The team observed 63 classes in the district: 25 at the high schools, 12 at the middle schools, and 26 at the 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.
- District documents such as district and school improvement plans, school committee policies, curriculum documents, summaries of student assessments, job descriptions, collective bargaining agreements, evaluation tools for staff, handbooks, school schedules, and the district's end-of-year financial reports.
- All completed program and administrator evaluations, and a random selection of completed teacher evaluations.

Site Visit Schedule

Monday 11/05/2018	Tuesday 11/06/2018	Wednesday 11/07/2018	Thursday 11/08/2018
Orientation with district leaders and principals; interviews with district staff and principals; document reviews; interview with the superintendent, assistant superintendent, district administrators, teachers' association; and visits to Carlton and Witchcraft, elementary schools and Collins Middle School for classroom observations.	Interviews with the superintendent's leadership team, district staff, teachers' association and town officials; review of personnel files; teacher focus groups; and visits to Collins Middle School and Salem High School for professional development observations.	Interviews with district administrators, school leaders; interviews with school committee members; parent focus group and visits to Salem High School, Saltonstall, and Witchcraft Heights for classroom observations.	Interview with high school student focus group, district review team meeting; visits to Salem High School, Bates, Elementary, Carlton Innovation, and Saltonstall for classroom observations; district wrap-up meeting with the superintendent.

Appendix B: Enrollment, Attendance, Expenditures

**Table B1a: Salem Public Schools
2017–2018 Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity**

Group	District	Percent of Total	State	Percent of Total
African-American	251	6.8%	86,305	9.0%
Asian	106	2.9%	65,667	6.9%
Hispanic	1,420	38.4%	191,201	20.0%
Native American	2	0.1%	2,103	0.2%
White	1,735	47.0%	573,335	60.1%
Native Hawaiian	--	--	818	0.1%
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	180	4.9%	34,605	3.6%
All	3,694	100.0%	954,034	100.0%

Note: As of October 1, 2017

**Table B1b: Salem Public Schools
2017–2018 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	848	36.2%	22.5%	171,061	38.0%	17.7%
Econ. Dis.	1,808	77.2%	48.9%	305,203	67.9%	32.0%
EL and Former EL	477	20.4%	12.9%	97,334	21.6%	10.2%
All high needs students	2,341	100.0%	62.2%	449,584	100.0%	46.6%

Notes: As of October 1, 2017. 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 3,761; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 964,806.

**Table B2a: Salem Public Schools
Attendance Rates, 2015–2018**

Group	N (2018)	2015	2016	2017	2018	4-yr Change	State (2018)
African American/Black	305	94.5	93.6	93.5	93.1	-1.4	94.1
Asian	128	96.1	96.8	95.7	95.8	-0.3	96.2
Hispanic or Latino	1,613	93.0	93.1	92.2	91.9	-1.1	92.7
Multi-Race	196	91.9	93.0	92.3	92.9	1.0	94.4
White	1,900	93.6	93.9	93.2	93.4	-0.2	95.1
High Needs	2,217	92.2	92.3	91.4	91.4	-0.8	93.2
Econ. Dis.	2,005	92.1	92.1	91.2	91.2	-0.9	92.5
SWD	1,016	90.9	90.7	90.1	90.6	-0.3	92.9
EL	569	93.5	93.5	92.4	91.8	-1.7	93.3
All	4,145	93.4	93.6	92.8	92.9	-0.5	94.5

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: Salem Public Schools
Chronic Absence Rates,* 2015–2018**

Group	N (2018)	2015	2016	2017	2018	4-yr Change	State (2018)
African American/Black	289	17.5	19.0	20.6	23.9	6.4	16.4
Asian	124	10.1	10.3	14.7	9.7	-0.4	7.6
Hispanic or Latino	1,578	23.1	23.0	27.2	26.8	3.7	22.5
Multi-Race	195	30.2	24.3	27.0	21.0	-9.2	14.2
White	1,868	19.4	19.1	21.8	21.6	2.2	10.0
High Needs	2,679	26.8	26.9	31.0	30.0	3.2	20.1
Econ. Dis.	2,205	27.7	28.1	32.3	31.7	4.0	22.9
SWD	988	31.9	31.8	34.3	34.7	2.8	20.7
EL	557	21.6	21.7	28.0	28.4	6.8	20.4
All	4,056	20.9	20.6	23.9	23.4	2.5	13.2

* The percentage of students absent 10 percent or more of their total number of student days of membership in a school

**Table B3: Salem Public Schools
Expenditures, Chapter 70 State Aid, and Net School Spending Fiscal Years 2016–2018**

	FY16		FY17		FY18	
	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual
Expenditures						
From local appropriations for schools:						
By school committee	\$53,145,269	\$53,227,664	\$55,681,847	\$55,773,431	\$56,807,832	\$56,984,362
By municipality	\$28,622,227	\$28,757,587	\$29,810,911	\$29,176,667	\$27,277,079	\$23,930,824
Total from local appropriations	\$81,767,496	\$81,985,251	\$85,492,758	\$84,950,098	\$84,084,911	\$80,915,186
From revolving funds and grants	--	\$11,132,402	--	\$10,223,878	--	\$10,982,331
Total expenditures	--	\$93,117,654	--	\$95,173,977	--	\$91,897,517
Chapter 70 aid to education program						
Chapter 70 state aid*	--	\$21,348,402	--	\$21,600,632	--	\$21,736,742
Required local contribution	--	\$31,669,846	--	\$31,386,760	--	\$32,317,455
Required net school spending**	--	\$53,018,248	--	\$52,987,392	--	\$54,054,197
Actual net school spending	--	\$70,517,855	--	\$70,083,229	--	\$70,581,883
Over/under required (\$)	--	\$17,499,607	--	\$17,095,837	--	\$16,527,686
Over/under required (%)	--	33%	--	32.3%	--	30.6%

*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 ESE website

Data retrieved 11/13/18 and 1/16/19

**Table B4: Salem Public Schools
Expenditures Per In-District Pupil
Fiscal Years 2015–2017**

Expenditure Category	2015	2016	2017
Administration	\$700	\$936	\$720
Instructional leadership (district and school)	\$1,557	\$1,063	\$1,354
Teachers	\$7,237	\$8,405	\$8,537
Other teaching services	\$1,188	\$871	\$969
Professional development	\$268	\$331	\$138
Instructional materials, equipment and technology	\$512	\$675	\$739
Guidance, counseling and testing services	\$910	\$721	\$614
Pupil services	\$1,128	\$1,490	\$1,593
Operations and maintenance	\$880	\$952	\$1,033
Insurance, retirement and other fixed costs	\$3,191	\$3,765	\$3,061
Total expenditures per in-district pupil	\$17,572	\$19,208	\$18,759

Sources: [Per-pupil expenditure reports on ESE website](#)

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%	15%	69%	15%	3.0
	MS	0%	33%	50%	17%	2.8
	HS	12%	24%	60%	4%	2.6
	Total #	3	14	39	7	2.8
	Total %	5%	22%	62%	11%	
2. The teacher ensures that students understand what they should be learning in the lesson and why.	ES	0%	31%	58%	12%	2.8
	MS	17%	25%	50%	8%	2.5
	HS	20%	44%	36%	0%	2.2
	Total #	7	22	30	4	2.5
	Total %	11%	35%	48%	6%	
3. The teacher uses appropriate classroom activities well matched to the learning objective(s).	ES	0%	19%	65%	15%	3.0
	MS	17%	33%	50%	0%	2.3
	HS	12%	36%	48%	4%	2.4
	Total #	5	18	35	5	2.6
	Total %	8%	29%	56%	8%	
4. The teacher conducts frequent checks for student understanding, provides feedback, and adjusts instruction.	ES	0%	15%	69%	15%	3.0
	MS	25%	33%	42%	0%	2.2
	HS	12%	52%	36%	0%	2.2
	Total #	6	21	32	4	2.5
	Total %	10%	33%	51%	6%	
Total Score For Focus Area #1	ES					11.8
	MS					9.8
	HS					9.4
	Total					10.5

Focus Area #2: Student Engagement & Higher-Order Thinking		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.	ES	4%	19%	62%	15%	2.9
	MS	25%	42%	33%	0%	2.1
	HS	20%	36%	44%	0%	2.2
	Total #	9	19	31	4	2.5
	Total %	14%	30%	49%	6%	
6. Students engage in higher-order thinking.	ES	4%	50%	46%	0%	2.4
	MS	25%	33%	42%	0%	2.2
	HS	24%	44%	32%	0%	2.1
	Total #	10	28	25	0	2.2
	Total %	16%	44%	40%	0%	
7. Students communicate their ideas and thinking with each other.	ES	12%	42%	38%	8%	2.4
	MS	25%	42%	25%	8%	2.2
	HS	24%	48%	28%	0%	2.0
	Total #	12	28	20	3	2.2
	Total %	19%	44%	32%	5%	
8. Students engage with meaningful, real-world tasks.	ES	8%	35%	46%	12%	2.6
	MS	25%	42%	17%	17%	2.3
	HS	12%	56%	32%	0%	2.2
	Total #	8	28	22	5	2.4
	Total %	13%	44%	35%	8%	
Total Score For Focus Area #2	ES					10.3
	MS					8.7
	HS					8.6
	Total					9.3

Focus Area #3: Inclusive Practice & Classroom Culture		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.	ES	8%	42%	42%	8%	2.5
	MS	33%	50%	17%	0%	1.8
	HS	12%	52%	36%	0%	2.2
	Total #	9	30	22	2	2.3
	Total %	14%	48%	35%	3%	
10. The teacher uses a variety of instructional strategies.	ES	8%	27%	58%	8%	2.7
	MS	25%	42%	33%	0%	2.1
	HS	16%	52%	32%	0%	2.2
	Total #	9	25	27	2	2.3
	Total %	14%	40%	43%	3%	
11. Classroom routines and positive supports are in place to ensure that students behave appropriately.	ES	4%	12%	58%	27%	3.1
	MS	33%	0%	58%	8%	2.4
	HS	24%	20%	44%	12%	2.4
	Total #	11	8	33	11	2.7
	Total %	17%	13%	52%	17%	
12. The classroom climate is conducive to teaching and learning.	ES	0%	12%	62%	27%	3.2
	MS	25%	8%	58%	8%	2.5
	HS	20%	20%	48%	12%	2.5
	Total #	8	9	35	11	2.8
	Total %	13%	14%	56%	17%	
Total Score For Focus Area #3	ES					11.4
	MS					8.8
	HS					9.4
	Total					10.1