



Haverhill Public Schools Level 3 District Review

October 2010



This document was prepared on behalf of the Center for District and School Accountability of the
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
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Overview of Level 3 District Reviews

Purpose

The Center for District and School Accountability (DSA) in the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE) conducts district reviews under Chapter 15, Section 55A of the Massachusetts General Laws. This review is focused on “districts whose students achieve at low levels either in absolute terms or relative to districts that educate similar populations.” Districts subject to review in the 2009-2010 school year were districts in Level 3 of ESE’s framework for district accountability and assistance¹ in each of the state’s six regions: Greater Boston, Berkshires, Northeast, Southeast, Central, and Pioneer Valley. The eight districts with the lowest aggregate performance and least movement in Composite Performance Index (CPI) in their regions were chosen from among those districts that were not exempt under Chapter 15, Section 55A, because another comprehensive review had been completed or was scheduled to take place within nine months of the planned reviews.

Methodology

To focus the analysis, reviews collect evidence for each of the six standards: Leadership and Governance, Curriculum and Instruction, Assessment, Human Resources and Professional Development, Student Support, and Financial and Asset Management. The reviews seek to identify those systems and practices that may be impeding rapid improvement as well as those that are most likely to be contributing to positive results. Team members previewed selected district documents and ESE data and reports before conducting a two-day site visit in the district and a two-day site visit to schools. The teams consist of independent consultants with expertise in each of the standards.

¹ In other words, as Level 3 was defined at the time of district selection, districts with schools in corrective action or restructuring.

Haverhill Public Schools

The site visit to the Haverhill Public Schools was conducted from May 3-6, 2010, and included visits to the following ten of the district's 15 schools: Bradford Elementary School (K-5), Golden Hill Elementary School (K-4), Pentucket Lake Elementary School (K-4), Tilton Elementary School (K-4), Consentino Middle School (5-8), Hunking Middle School (6-8), Nettle Middle School (5-8), Whittier Middle School (5-8), Haverhill High School (9-12+), and Haverhill Alternative School (6-12+). Further information about the review and the site visit schedule can be found in Appendix B; information about review team members can be found in Appendix A.

District Profile²

Haverhill is a community of nearly 60,000 residents located along the banks of the Merrimack River in northeastern Massachusetts. Originally settled in 1640 as the farming colony of Pentucket, Haverhill evolved into an important ship-building and industrial center and, in the early 20th century, was a world leader in the shoe industry. When manufacturing declined in the years following the Great Depression of the 1930s and World War II, the city reached out to other businesses, light manufacturing, and eventually the technology sector. Three of its most famous citizens were the poet John Greenleaf Whittier, the merchant R. H. Macy, and the motion picture producer Louis B. Mayer of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Haverhill today incorporates an expanding commercial sector, suburban neighborhoods, and more rural areas where working farms ensure that the community remains true to its roots.

Community narratives often mention the Haverhill Public Schools. This academic year the school district provides educational programs and services for 6,845 pupils, 1000 fewer than five years ago. Eighty-eight percent of school-aged residents attend the public schools. There is a Horace Mann charter school for kindergarten through grade 5 students (the Silver Hill Horace Mann Charter School) and a Montessori charter school for students in kindergarten through grade 7 (the Hill View Montessori Charter Public School). The district also participates in the Whittier Regional Vocational Technical School.

Economic concerns, space limitations, and political crosscurrents have influenced the varied grade configurations in the district's schools. A preschool offers early childhood programs to young children. The seven elementary schools consist of three small open-enrollment schools for kindergarten through grade 2 (with 78, 152, and 264 pupils), three schools for kindergarten through grade 4, and one school for kindergarten through grade 5. Three of four middle schools

² Information about the City of Haverhill derived from the city's website at <http://www.ci.haverhill.ma.us/resources/history.htm>, and <http://www.haverhillusa.com/>. School financial data and student demographic data derived from ESE's website, ESE's Education Data Warehouse, or other ESE sources. Figures derived from ESE's website may differ slightly from figures derived from its Education Data Warehouse.

include grades 5 through 8 and one has grades 6 through 8. Haverhill High School, grades 9 through 12, also provides a fifth-year option for students not meeting graduation requirements in the four-year cycle. An alternative secondary school offers programs for about 60 high-risk students in grades 6 through 12 as well as for older students who require specialized academic and support services. The district also maintains a special education site for students in grades 2 through 12 and up to age 21 from Haverhill and from outside the district. In 2008, less than half (47.3 percent) of the district's 1156 special education students were enrolled in full inclusion classrooms, below the state rate of 55.7 percent at that time. There are a number of substantially separate special education classes located in several of the schools. English Language Learners (ELLs) are enrolled in each of the district's 15 schools.

In interviews, school leaders and town officials frequently mentioned the drain on the city's finances brought about by the sale of the city-owned Hale Hospital to a private healthcare provider in 2001. As a condition of the sale, Haverhill assumed the hospital's \$95 million debt and must pay \$7 million a year until 2023 to cover the debt service. Hospital debt payments, combined with a relatively low tax rate, weaken the city's capacity to fund local budgets. Although parents of school-aged children advocate for additional resources for the schools, they do not constitute enough of a critical mass to secure them through an override, given community demographics and the city leaders' reluctance to seek increased property taxes beyond the growth limit.

The local appropriation to the Haverhill Public Schools budget for fiscal year 2010 is \$54,727,257, down from the appropriation for fiscal year 2009 of \$56,896,817. In addition to the district budget, school-related expenditures by the city are estimated at \$34,489,601 for fiscal year 2010, up slightly from the estimate for fiscal year 2009 of \$33,800,399. In fiscal year 2009, the total amount of actual school-related expenditures, including expenditures by the district of \$56,596,821, expenditures by the city of \$33,489,902,³ and expenditures from other sources such as grants of \$17,244,255, was \$107,330,978.

³ This includes employer retirement contributions, health insurance for active and retired school employees, school construction debt, choice and charter school tuitions, and the regional vocational technical school assessment.

Table 1: Comparison of Haverhill Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity & Selected Populations, 1999-2000 and 2009-2010

Race/Ethnicity	Percent of Total		Selected Populations	Percent of Total	
	1999-2000	2009-2010		1999-2000	2009-2010
African-American	3.1	4.1	First Language not English	11.8	15.6
Asian	1.6	1.7	Limited English Proficient	2.6	6.7
Hispanic or Latino	14.2	22.7	Low-income	26.8	42.4
Native American	0.1	0.0	Special Education	19.8	20.8
White	81.1	71.1	Free Lunch	-	35.3
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	-	0.3	Reduced-price lunch	-	7.2

Source: School/District Profiles on ESE website

Educators, parents, and city officials point to changes in the community’s demographic profile as having stretched the district’s limited resources even more thinly. Table 1 shows changes in the percentages of students from various racial and ethnic groups and selected other populations since 2000.

As in many small Massachusetts cities, Haverhill’s increasingly diverse population characterizes the shifting demographics of the state and region. Hispanic and Latino families originally settled in nearby Lawrence and Lowell have moved to smaller neighboring communities such as Haverhill along with other recent arrivals. This movement is now reflected in the cultural and linguistic heritage of Haverhill’s student body. Currently, 15.6 percent of students first learned to speak a language other than English (FLNE). In ten years, the district has experienced almost a three-fold increase in the percentage of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students, referred to in Haverhill as ELL students. These are students unable to perform ordinary classroom work in English. Although the district’s ELL students constitute only 6.7 percent of the student population, in a district of 6845 students they represent a significant number of young people who require intensive language and other specialized services. The district struggles to allocate its limited resources to competing needs and to provide sufficient certified staff to serve this subgroup and others needing essential services.

As the review team prepared this report, yet another challenge emerged, related to the district’s senior leadership. Within a week of the May site visit, the superintendent, who has served in that role since 2006, announced he would assume another position, as superintendent in a nearby community, on July 1. This was revealed days after the team learned that the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, who is also the Title I director, had likewise

accepted a position in another district, as an assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, to begin on July 1.

Student Performance⁴

Table 2 below describes Haverhill's 2009 AYP status. The district did not make AYP in either ELA or mathematics for subgroups or in the aggregate and is in corrective action for subgroups in both subjects. In ELA, four schools made AYP in the aggregate, and two made AYP for subgroups. In mathematics, one school made AYP in the aggregate and none for subgroups. In ELA or mathematics or both, nine schools are identified for improvement, in restructuring, or in corrective action, all but one with attention called to subgroups.

⁴ Data derived from ESE's website, ESE's Education Data Warehouse, or other ESE sources. Figures derived from ESE's website may differ slightly from figures derived from its Education Data Warehouse.

Table 2: 2009 District and School AYP Status

District/School	ELA					Math				
	Status 09	CPI 09	CPI Chg 08-09	AYP Agg	AYP Sub	Status 09	CPI 09	CPI Chg 08-09	AYP Agg	AYP Sub
Haverhill	CA Sub	81.5	0.8	No	No	CA Sub	71.3	-0.4	No	No
Bradford (K-5)	II2 Sub	83.7	4.9	Yes	Yes	None	79.6	-2.1	No	No
Consentino (5-8)	RST2 Sub	82.8	-0.7	No	No	RST2 Sub	65.9	2.7	No	No
Crowell (K-2)	None	79.8	-6.1	No	-	None	73.8	-13.2	No	-
Golden Hill (K-4)	RST1 Sub	78.2	3.4	Yes	No	CA Sub	73.3	-0.9	No	No
Greenleaf (K-2)	None	80.1	4.4	Yes	Yes	None	81.6	-2.8	No	No
Haverhill High (9-12)	RST2 Sub	91.2	2.7	No	No	RST2 Sub	85.4	2.8	No	No
Hunking (6-8)	None	87.1	-2.3	No	No	CA Sub	73.7	-4.0	No	No
Nettle (5-8)	CA	77.4	-2.5	No	No	CA Sub	63.6	0.4	No	No
Pentucket Lake (K-4)	CA Sub	78.6	-1.9	No	No	None	74.8	-2.2	No	No
Tilton (K-4)	RST1 Sub	66.5	-2.0	No	No	II2 Sub	62.5	-2.0	No	No
Walnut Square (K-2)	None	92.5	6.0	Yes	-	None	91.7	4.2	Yes	-
Whittier (5-8)	None	87.1	-1.8	No	No	RST1 Sub	74.2	-0.8	No	No

Notes: Agg = Aggregate; CA = Corrective Action; CPI = Composite Performance Index; II1 = Identified for Improvement year 1; II2 = Identified for Improvement year 2; RST1 = Restructuring year 1; RST2 = Restructuring year 2; Sub = Subgroup.

Federally-approved accountability rules require AYP determinations for all schools serving approved grades, including schools ending in grades 1 and 2, as long as a minimum of 20 students are assessed in the schools. Therefore, ESE attributes the grade 3 MCAS scores of the “graduates” of Haverhill’s K-2 schools back to those schools ending in grade 2.

Source: School/District Profiles on ESE website.

Depending on the grade level, Table 3 below shows that Haverhill students' 2009 MCAS proficiency rates (i.e., the percentages of students who attained Advanced or Proficient on MCAS tests) were between 6 and 16 percentage points lower than state proficiency rates for ELA; between 10 and 16 percentage points lower than state proficiency rates for mathematics, and between 10 and 19 percentage points lower than the state proficiency rates for science and technology. In ELA and mathematics, Haverhill's overall proficiency rates were 12 and 13 points lower than the state proficiency rates.

**Table 3: Haverhill MCAS Proficiency Rates
Compared to State MCAS Proficiency Rates, 2009**

Grade and Subject	Haverhill Percentage Proficient/Advanced	State Percentage Proficient/Advanced	Difference, in Percentage Points
All Grades—ELA	55	67	12
All Grades—Math	42	55	13
Grade 10 ELA	75	81	-6
Grade 10 Math	64	75	-11
Grade 10 Sci/Tech	42	61	-19
Grade 8 ELA	72	78	-6
Grade 8 Math	38	48	-10
Grade 8 Sci/Tech	29	39	-10
Grade 7 ELA	55	70	-15
Grade 7 Math	37	49	-12
Grade 6 ELA	50	66	-16
Grade 6 Math	41	57	-16
Grade 5 ELA	48	63	-15
Grade 5 Math	38	54	-16
Grade 5 Sci/Tech	39	49	-10
Grade 4 ELA	40	53	-13
Grade 4 Math	38	48	-10
Grade 3 ELA	46	57	-11
Grade 3 Math	46	60	-14
Source: School/District Profiles on ESE website			

As shown by Table 4, Haverhill’s special education and ELL students lag similarly far behind when compared to their peers in these subgroups statewide.

Table 4: Haverhill Special Education and ELL MCAS Proficiency Rates Compared to State MCAS Proficiency Rates for those Subgroups, 2009

Grade and Subject	Haverhill Percentage Proficient/Advanced	State Percentage Proficient/Advanced	Difference, in Percentage Points
Special Education Students			
All Grades—ELA	16	28	-12
All Grades—Math	10	20	-10
LEP Students			
All Grades—ELA	10	19	-9
All Grades—Math	4	22	-18
Source: School/District Profiles on ESE website			

Another way to examine student achievement is to look at student growth percentiles (SGP), a measure of student progress that compares changes in a student’s MCAS scores to changes in MCAS scores of other students with similar achievement profiles.⁵ A median SGP reports median growth for a group, or the middle score if the group’s individual student growth percentiles are ranked from highest to lowest. Table 5 below displays median SGPs and proficiency percentages for each school in the district that includes classrooms beyond grade 2. Table 6 presents median SGPs and proficiency percentages in those nine schools for the district’s subgroups.

⁵ MCAS Student Growth Percentiles: State Report, Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, October 2009, p. 2.

Table 5: Haverhill Median Student Growth Percentiles and Proficiency Rates for ELA and Mathematics: 2009, by School

School	ELA		Math	
	Median Student Growth Percentile	% At or Above Proficient	Median Student Growth Percentile	% At or Above Proficient
Bradford Elementary	53.5	57.0	35.0	52.0
Consentino Middle	53.0	61.0	57.0	39.0
Golden Hill Elementary	40.0	42.0	37.0	40.0
Haverhill High	44.5	75.0	41.0	64.0
Hunking Middle	41.0	65.0	37.0	42.0
Nettle Middle	35.0	45.0	42.0	29.0
Pentucket Lake Elementary	44.0	47.0	44.0	40.0
Tilton Elementary	36.0	34.0	34.0	33.0
Whittier Middle	39.5	68.0	56.0	51.0

Source: School/District Profiles on ESE website

Table 6: Haverhill Median Student Growth Percentiles and Proficiency Rates for ELA and Mathematics: 2009, by Subgroup

Subgroup	ELA		Math	
	Median Student Growth Percentile	% At or Above Proficient	Median Student Growth Percentile	% At or Above Proficient
LEP	43.5	10.0	41.0	4.0
FLEP	51.0	44.0	57.0	30.0
SPED	30.0	16	42.0	10.0
Low-Income	38.0	39.0	42.0	25.0
Non-Low-Income	49.0	69.0	47.0	57.0
Asian	46.5	71.0	51.0	59.0
Black	45.5	51.0	48.0	26.0
Hispanic/Latino	44.0	33.0	44.5	19.0
White	44.0	61.0	45.0	49.0
Source: ESE's Education Data Warehouse				

In summary, and with a few exceptions, both Table 5 and Table 6 paint a picture of median SGPs, first by school and then by subgroup, that in no case indicates more than moderate growth (SGP from 40 to 60), in the case of several schools shows relatively low growth (SGP less than 40) in ELA or mathematics or both, and in the case of special education students and low-income students shows relatively low growth in ELA. The district's ELL and special education subgroups had the lowest median SGPs in mathematics of any of its subgroups, though these median SGPs are still within the range considered to be moderate growth. In ELA, the ELL subgroup showed more growth, but the median SGP of the special education subgroup was, at 30.0, notably low. When these median SGPs are viewed with the very low proficiency rates in both ELA and mathematics for both of these subgroups—ranging from 4.0 percent to 16.0 percent, the lowest for any subgroups in the district—it becomes apparent just how much more improvement is needed for both of these subgroups.

In terms of proficiency, although results for Haverhill's high school (10th grade) students are significantly stronger than those of lower grade students, they still fall below the statewide percentages for grade 10 students of 81 percent for ELA and 75 percent for mathematics.

During the site visit, district leaders, parents, and teachers all claimed to understand the need to have systems and practices in place that would help students achieve better. Yet the evidence points to a weak academic infrastructure and uncertain leadership at a time when needs are becoming more exigent. There are common themes expanded in the findings and recommendations below. These can be summarized by the terms “clear,” “consistent,” “capable” and “communication.” There is a need for capable district and school-based leaders to define and consistently communicate clear priorities throughout the district and secure the resources—people, time, and funding—to address those priorities and sustain a system of continuous improvement. Haverhill’s young people deserve a stronger education than the system now, in most cases, provides for them.

Findings

Leadership and Governance

A District Improvement Plan and School Improvement Plans were developed for 2009-2010, but these documents have not guided district efforts.

The superintendent indicated that a representative group of administrators assists him with the development of a Haverhill District Improvement Plan (DIP) and that it is reviewed and updated each year. The document consists of thirty-two standards, each containing a varying number of district goals. Each district goal is accompanied by source(s) of evidence, time frame, person(s) conducting activity, and person ensuring implementation. Two central office administrators and some school committee members indicated that they had received a copy of the DIP from the superintendent. When questioned about the dissemination of the DIP, the superintendent stated that a copy was sent to each principal, with no indication that a discussion had taken place. There was no evidence of communications about the DIP, prioritizations, follow-up, or accountability.

Numerous interviewees, including teachers, parents, and a few district and school leaders, remarked that they had never seen or heard of the District Improvement Plan. They indicated that they had no idea of the improvement goals or priorities of the district. Some interviewees expressed the opinion that the district currently has no vision or direction.

A review of the documents made available to the review team showed that each school in the district has a School Improvement Plan for 2009-2010. The SIPs are prepared by the principals, usually with the assistance of school council members, and all have basically the same action plan template: student improvement objective, strategy, action(s), responsible person, needed resources, specific timetable, and implementation. According to the principals, the SIPs were submitted to the assistant superintendent for curriculum, who reviewed them to make certain that they were aligned with the DIP.

Comments from interviewees about the distribution of the SIPs were contradictory. Some teachers indicated that they were aware of the SIP for their school. However, a majority of teachers interviewed remarked that they had not seen a copy of the SIP, nor were they familiar with the contents of the SIP.

The superintendent stated that he usually provides the school committee with at least a yearly update on the progress made toward attainment of the goals in the DIP. A school committee member said that he thought the update was an informal one and that some goals are mentioned during the budget review process.

Most of the teachers who were interviewed were unable to recall any faculty meeting where the principal informed them about progress made toward attaining the goals in the SIP. Some principals stated that, on occasion, progress on particular goals is reported at school improvement council meetings.

A review of the evaluations of the principals and the superintendent indicated that, by and large, they do not refer to progress toward attaining the goals in the SIPs and DIP. The superintendent and other administrators agreed that they do not.

As a result of the limited distribution of the DIP and SIPs and the dearth of updated progress reports, the staff of the school district and the citizens of Haverhill have little knowledge not only about the goals and expectations for the school system, but also about those for the individual schools. This lack of knowledge has contributed to low expectations, poor morale, above-average student and teacher absenteeism, unconnected efforts by individual administrators and teachers, and poor community support for the school system.

School committee members stated that they understood their roles and responsibilities; however, other interviewees gave evidence to the contrary.

School committee members who were interviewed claimed that they understood their roles and responsibilities. However, a significant number of interviewed administrators, teachers, and parents expressed the opposite opinion. In response to inquiries about specific training in order to understand the roles and responsibilities of a school committee member, only three members cited attending Massachusetts Association of School Committees training sessions such as “On Board.” The superintendent mentioned that he had attempted to provide training sessions for all school committee members, but some members rejected those offers.

Of particular concern to many interviewees are the tone at school committee meetings and the demeanor of some members. They characterized meetings as “dysfunctional,” “unprofessional,” “political,” “contentious,” and “micromanaging the school system.” One committee member commented that the divisions on the school committee reflect the divisions in Haverhill. Parents who value education want money spent for the schools, whereas some residents are not interested in spending money. An example of a division in the committee that was mentioned by several interviewees was the development of a Haverhill Public Schools Strategic Plan in 2008 by a broad-based committee consisting of administrators, teachers, parents, community representatives, and two school committee members. According to interviewees, even though a proposed strategic plan was completed, the entire school committee never took action on it due to dissension between committee members.

It is noted that school committee members, district leaders, teachers, and parents remarked that since the January 2010 elections, the tone and demeanor at school committee meetings had begun to improve. They expressed hope that this improvement will continue.

Interviewees expressed numerous other concerns to the review team:

- Several interviewees informed review team members that there are instances when agenda items, some of them controversial, are added on the day of the school committee meeting, leaving administrators little or no time to prepare the information needed to adequately respond to the items. These last-minute additions to the agenda are contrary to school committee policy and protocol.

- Another concern was the relationship that some school committee members have with the local press. The superintendent mentioned that he was hesitant to email school committee members because of possible disclosure of information to third parties.
- Another concern shared with the review team was that four of the seven members of the school committee had close relatives employed by the school system.
- Interviewees raised as a concern the poor morale in the district due to the inability of the school committee to negotiate successor agreements with the various employee associations/unions, especially the teachers' association, whose members are working for the third year without a new contract.
- Concern was expressed that school committee members frequently make unannounced and unofficial visits to schools and get involved in day-to-day school operations.
- The final concern mentioned was that although school committee members may think that they are advocates for the schools and provide the necessary financial support for them, most of the interviewed administrators, teachers, and parents had a different perception.

It is essential for the school committee members to understand their roles and responsibilities as leaders overseeing education in Haverhill. Their demeanor and actions at school committee meetings not only reflect on themselves, but also affect the image that they project of the district and serve as indicators of the importance that they place on providing a quality education for all students in the Haverhill Public Schools.

Because of budget constraints, almost 50 percent of administrators serve in multiple roles and are unable to fulfill all of the associated duties and responsibilities effectively.

The superintendent informed members of the review team that the school department has gone from 43 administrators in 2004-2005 to the current total of 23 (not including the 5 assistant principals). According to a document entitled "Haverhill Public Schools, 2002-2009," the number of administrators in the district decreased from 48 to 31 (down 35 percent) during this time period while the student enrollment declined from 8,336 to 7,492 (down 10 percent). As the number of administrative positions decreased in the district, many of the roles and responsibilities of the unfilled positions were assigned to the remaining administrators. According to a list of members of the district leadership team, there are 10 administrators assigned to multiple roles, shown in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Primary and Additional Assigned Roles for Haverhill Administrators

Primary Role	Additional Assigned Role(s)
Superintendent of Schools	Principal, Crowell Elementary School
Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction	Director of Title I
Director of Special Education	Director of Therapeutic Education Assessment Center, K-12
Director of Integrated Preschool	Supervisor of Early Childhood Education
Principal, Whittier Middle School	Principal, Walnut Square Elementary School
Principal, Bradford Elementary School	Principal of Greenleaf Elementary School, Curriculum Supervisor, Science, K-5
Principal, Golden Hill Elementary School	Curriculum Supervisor, ELA, K-5
Principal, Pentucket Lake Elementary School	Curriculum Supervisor, Mathematics, K-5
Director of Classical Academy	Curriculum Supervisor, Foreign Languages, 9-12, Curriculum Supervisor, Social Studies, 6-12
Assistant Principal, Consentino Middle School	Director of English Language Learner Programs, 6-12
Source: Interviews with district administrators and documentation provided by the district	

Furthermore, the superintendent mentioned that he had also assumed the responsibilities of the position of director of human resources and of the part-time position of director of technology.

Among the documents provided to the review team were job descriptions for professional positions in the district. A review of the documents revealed no revised administrative job descriptions showing what, if any, responsibilities and duties were prioritized differently or eliminated when administrative positions were combined.

Interviewees commented about the added responsibilities held by some administrators. They stated that administrators are unable to give 100 percent to each of the multiple assignments, thus affecting their productivity and the outcomes for each assignment. For instance, multiple assignments have occasionally presented obstacles for horizontal and vertical articulation of curriculum. Other interviewees said that some administrators have had to postpone or cancel district-level or systemwide meetings because of emergencies in schools that needed their attention. Central office and school administrators, teachers, and parents who were interviewed expressed the opinion that one of the things the district needs to do to improve the quality of

education in Haverhill is to restore some of the administrative, teaching, and support positions that have been eliminated. The expansion of the roles of administrators who serve in multiple positions has resulted in these individuals being unable to successfully perform the excessive number of duties assigned to them.

Curriculum and Instruction

Haverhill has developed curriculum maps in all core subject areas. These maps provide for uniformity of instructional content and goals based on the state curriculum frameworks, consistency of program for mobile students, and a common basis for measuring student outcomes. It was unclear, however, how ELL students are supported in obtaining access to the general curriculum.

Administrators told the review team that Haverhill allocated local funds to address a finding by the 2006 Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA) review team that its curriculum documents varied in completeness by level and content area and did not contain all of the elements of a complete curriculum.⁶ In 2008-2009, teachers augmented existing or developed new curriculum maps in every core subject area by grade under the leadership of the district's curriculum supervisors. This work was initiated in the summer of 2008 and largely completed after school and on five early-release days during the 2008-2009 school year.

Organized by month or term to serve as pacing guides, the maps contain most of the required curricular components in at least minimal detail, including standards from the state curriculum frameworks, resources, and assessments. Some also provide suggested teaching strategies. The kindergarten through grade five science and social studies maps consist primarily of topics, concepts, and processes, since materials and resources are limited in these subject areas, and differ from school to school. The high school curriculum maps are amplified by comprehensive course syllabi in most subject areas.

Central office administrators told the review team that teachers access the maps through the district website or are provided paper copies. Principals stated that they expect teachers to use the maps to plan instruction, and monitor compliance through periodic reviews of teachers' plan books and informal classroom visits and observations. In interviews, teachers at each level stated that they had participated in developing the maps and use them regularly. In classroom observations, the review team confirmed that most lessons were timely in accordance with the appropriate curriculum map.

Both administrators and teachers told the team that since the development and implementation of the maps, students transferring between district schools during the school year experience change in the location but not the content of their academic programs. This consistency has helped the district deal with its high student mobility rate (in 2009, 17.3 percent for Haverhill as opposed to

⁶ The report of the EQA review is available at http://www.doe.mass.edu/sda/review/district/reports/technical/06_0128.pdf.

a statewide rate of 10.3 percent).⁷ They added that uniform instructional content and goals would increase the validity of comparisons of student performance between classes and schools at a grade level, and between high school classes in the same course, facilitating the district's growing systematic use of common formative and summative assessments.

Haverhill has made substantial progress in aligning the curriculum to the state frameworks in order to ensure student mastery of the standards. The district's maps identify and communicate essential content, sequence and organize it to facilitate learning, and ensure that instructional time is adequate and proportionate. One caveat, however, is that it was unclear to the review team how ELL students are being provided with access to the general curriculum, given the lack of staffing and services for these students (see second finding under Student Support, below) and the finding of the Department's 2007 Coordinated Program Review (CPR) Report that the district did not have an English as a Second Language (ESL) curriculum based on the Massachusetts curriculum framework for ESL, the *English Language Proficiency Benchmarks and Outcomes* (ELPBO).

Haverhill lacks a continuous cycle for curriculum revision and renewal, as well as the curriculum leadership necessary to implement one. The district relies heavily on external funding sources for curriculum development and does not have the capacity to address high priority areas of need such as an elementary mathematics curriculum that is not aligned with state standards, science curriculum that is inadequate, and many textbooks that are badly outdated and in short supply.

Haverhill has either eliminated or consolidated many curriculum leadership positions (see Table 7 above and accompanying text), diminishing its internal capacity for continuous curriculum revision and renewal. Central office administrators told the team that the district has fewer resources and personnel now than in 2006 when the EQA review team found that it did not have an established process for the regular and timely review and revision of curricula. They went on to say that once the curriculum maps were completed, district funding of curriculum development ceased as if the need had been permanently and fully met.

Central office administrators told the review team that the district had eliminated or left unfilled certain curriculum leadership positions because of insufficient funding. For example, a full-time K-5 curriculum supervisor position was eliminated more than five years ago, and the K-5 social studies curriculum supervisor position has been vacant for two years. Teachers and principals told the team that the loss of the former position in particular had significantly hindered progress in curriculum development at the elementary level.

The current leadership for curriculum consists of the following staff: the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction, three part-time K-5 curriculum supervisors of English language arts, mathematics, and science, two full-time 6-12 English language arts and mathematics supervisors, a part-time 6-12 social studies and high school foreign languages supervisor, and a 9-12 science lead teacher. The responsibilities of the assistant superintendent for curriculum and

⁷ Data taken from the District Analysis and Review Tool on the ESE website.

instruction have grown with the loss of other central office positions, including that of the assistant superintendent for personnel and administrative services in 2008. The part-time K-5 curriculum supervisors also serve as elementary school principals. Stationed at the high school, the 6-12 supervisors are also responsible for supervising and evaluating the high school teachers in their respective departments, approving high school students' schedules and course changes, handling some aspects of student discipline, covering high school classes, and providing lunch and study hall supervision as needed. The 6-12 social studies and high school foreign languages supervisor also serves as director of the Classical Academy with supervisory responsibility for 30 high school teachers. The high school science lead teacher has a full-time teaching schedule. All of the curriculum supervisors interviewed by the review team said that they are unable to perform their jobs effectively because of their multiple competing responsibilities.

In interviews with the review team, the three elementary principals doubling as curriculum supervisors stated that they meet monthly for about an hour with the steering committees in their respective disciplines, consisting of teacher volunteers from kindergarten through grade five. They went on to say that these meetings are inadequate and that they rarely meet with their grade 6 through 12 counterparts in English language arts, mathematics, and science to develop a more systemwide perspective.

The three grade 6 through 12 supervisors told the review team that they have little time to devote to the middle schools given the scope of their high school responsibilities. The mathematics vertical team, consisting of teacher representatives from grades 6 through 12, meets monthly with the grade 6 through 12 mathematics supervisor and the assistant superintendent; however, the middle school members have to join the meeting when it is in progress, since the middle schools are dismissed 45 minutes later than the high school. The assistant superintendent is sometimes able to compensate the middle school representatives to stay later, but there is no reliable funding source for this purpose. The grades 6 through 12 vertical English language arts team no longer meets, although an *ad hoc* team is convened occasionally for special purposes.

Haverhill relies heavily on external funding to underwrite curricular initiatives. For example, half of the salary of the district's assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction is funded under the Title I allocation, and the activities of the district's mathematics vertical team are funded under a Title IIA grant. One administrator stated and the others agreed that most district curricular initiatives are entirely grant-funded and are discontinued once the funding ends.

In interviews with the review team, district curriculum supervisors identified a number of pressing and unaddressed curricular needs—in particular, revision of the kindergarten through grade five mathematics curriculum culminating in the selection of a new mathematics program to replace *Math Trailblazers*. This program was adopted by the district more than 10 years ago and is not based on the standards in the state curriculum frameworks. The curriculum supervisors went on to say that such a change is long overdue.

Prompted by concerns about low student performance on the MCAS science tests at all of the grade levels subject to testing, the supervisors stated the need for a more fully determined

science curriculum in kindergarten through grade five, because of too little consistency from class to class within a grade in instructional goals, materials, and allotted time. They added that revisions are also needed in the grades 6 through 8 science curriculum in order to increase laboratory experiences, replace outdated textbooks, and provide more hands-on instructional materials.

Principals, supervisors, and teachers all cited the need to re-establish a replacement cycle for outdated textbooks, especially in science and history, as part of continuous revision of the curriculum. They added that students now share textbooks and cannot bring them home because the number of copies available is too few. Many textbooks are decades old and out of date. Teachers and principals told the team that instructional supplies and consumable materials are also inadequate and that they often have to purchase them with their own money or rely on private benefactors such as the PTO and corporate partners.

The review team found that the lack of infrastructure for curriculum modification and renewal has hindered Haverhill's responsiveness to emergent curricular needs. This is a serious concern, especially given that Haverhill students have not made significant progress in achieving proficiency, and the proficiency rates for some of the district's subgroups are extremely low. The district did not make Adequate Yearly Progress for all of its subgroups or in the aggregate in either ELA or in mathematics in 2009. Without the ability to respond to the pressing curricular needs in the district, efforts to improve student achievement in Haverhill will be seriously impeded.

Because of the many competing roles and responsibilities of its instructional leaders, Haverhill is not able to provide active supervision of teachers' instruction. As a result, the district has been unable to raise expectations for student learning, a necessity for improving student performance. Many of the qualities of highly effective teaching and learning were not prevalent during the review team's observations of district classes.

Haverhill has limited capacity for improving teaching and learning under current conditions. In interviews, elementary and middle school principals told the review team that although they are the designated instructional leaders in their schools, they are unable to actively supervise teachers' instruction. They explained that with the dismantling of preventative and support programs in the district and the loss of assistive personnel such as adjustment counselors, they are largely on their own to resolve student attendance and behavior problems. They said that these problems are increasing in frequency and severity as the demographics of the community and the emergent needs of the student population change. Each of the elementary principals also has responsibility for an area of the curriculum, and one elementary and one middle school principal are principals of a second school.

The principals of schools housing the district's substantially separate classes are responsible for managing the integration of the students enrolled in these highly specialized programs. These principals told the review team that they engage in extensive problem-solving and planning sessions with teachers to accommodate these students. One stated, and the others agreed, that a

single playground incident involving a special education student may take a day of the principal's time to investigate and resolve.

In interviews, elementary and middle school teachers acknowledged that principals are the instructional leaders of their schools and went on to say that the principals often make informal and formal classroom visits. They told the review team that they do not always receive written or oral feedback from the informal visits. Teachers stated that they rely upon colleagues, mentors if they have one, and—in the schools operating programs under grant funding—coaches to help them to improve their instruction because the principals are too busy to provide consistent assistance. All of the teachers agreed that the district needs to provide more and better supervision.

The grades 6 through 12 ELA, mathematics, and social studies/foreign languages supervisors are the instructional leaders at the high school. The science/technology supervisor position was eliminated in 2009-2010 in favor of a lead teacher position with many of the same responsibilities. Since the lead teacher has full-time teaching responsibilities it is unclear how the other responsibilities associated with this role can be fulfilled.

The supervisors told the review team that with the constant reductions in support staff they had assumed the role of student counselors by default. They also function as high school department heads even though they have middle school responsibilities as well. The supervisors said that they provide support for struggling teachers and help their best teachers meet personal improvement goals, but that their departments number between 16 and 19 teachers and they are often “pulled in too many directions.”

The review team found that the district supervisors were well-versed in their disciplines, aware of district challenges, and prepared to make specific recommendations to improve teaching and learning in the district. This was clearly evident in their interviews with the review team and in the written status reports or overviews they has prepared for the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction.

The review team conducted 63 observations of district classes: 24 at the elementary level, 28 at the middle school level, and 11 at the high school. The classes included 15 ELA, 7 mathematics, and 2 other classes at the elementary level; 11 ELA, 14 mathematics, and 3 other at the middle school level; and 5 ELA, 4 mathematics and 2 other at the high school. Three of the observed classes were special education classes, and three were ELL classes. The observations ranged between 20 and 30 minutes in length. Observers used a standard record form containing 15 characteristics of effective teaching and learning grouped under two categories: Organization of the Classroom and Instructional Design and Delivery. Observers rated the prevalence of these characteristics on a three point scale indicating Solid Evidence, Partial Evidence, and No Evidence.

Under the category of Organization of the Classroom, the review team found solid evidence of a classroom climate characterized by respectful behaviors, routines, tone, and discourse in 88 percent of the elementary and 89 percent of the middle school classes observed, but these

characteristics were solidly evident in only 55 percent of the high school classes observed. For example, in one high school class, students roamed the room engaging in boisterous personal conversations and ignoring the teacher. In another class, the teacher read aloud to the students from a book while the students sat passively. Five had their heads down on their desks. The teacher continued to read aloud and did not attempt to engage the uninvolved students.

In slightly more than half (55 percent) of the middle school classes observed, the review team found solid evidence that the learning objective for the day's lesson was evident; the team found solid evidence of this characteristic in less than one quarter of the elementary and high school classes observed (17 percent and 18 percent respectively).

The review team found solid evidence that available class time was maximized for learning in 83 percent of the elementary, 64 percent of the middle school, and 55 percent of the high school classes observed. Most elementary teachers preserved instructional time by employing effective and efficient routines. For example, in one class, the teacher facilitated a rapid transition to the next activity by providing periodic notice of the time remaining for the current activity, reviewing the rules for moving from one area of the room to another, and telling students how to demonstrate readiness ("I'll know that you're ready when I see..."). In one middle school class, however, the teacher's instruction was constantly interrupted by students entering and leaving the room, fragmenting the learning activity. In another, the teacher played a video of a drama and sat at her desk without monitoring students' attention or stopping the tape periodically to pose questions and promote discussion. Many students appeared not to be watching the screen. Some quietly engaged in other activities, such as doing homework for another class. In one high school class, the teacher lectured the entire time, rendering the students passive rather than active in the learning process.

In the district classes observed by the review team, there were few instances of solid evidence of the characteristics of effective instruction grouped under Instructional Design and Delivery. Most classes were teacher-centered, and when students engaged in small-group learning, the tasks and materials were usually undifferentiated.

The review team found solid evidence of instruction including a range of techniques in only 32 percent of the middle school, 18 percent of the high school, and 13 percent of the elementary classes observed.

The review team found little emphasis on higher-order thinking skills in observed district classes. For example, the team found solid evidence of questions requiring students to engage in a process of application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation in 39 percent of the middle school, 36 percent of the high school and 25 percent of the elementary classes observed. In one elementary class, the teacher asked students to predict what a character in the story might do next, and the choices he might have made instead, but this approach was rare. In most of the observed classes, teachers posed comprehension questions at a literal level.

The review team found solid evidence of students articulating their thinking and reasoning in 33 percent of the elementary classes, 29 percent of the middle school classes, and 18 percent of the

high school classes observed. In one elementary class, the teacher asked students to explain their reasoning and their method for solving a multiplication problem, establishing the validity of a variety of approaches. In most classes, however, there was little opportunity for students to explain their thinking or hear what other students thought. The team found solid evidence of students inquiring, exploring, or problem solving together in pairs or in small groups in 27 percent of the high school, 25 percent of the middle school, and 8 percent of the elementary classes observed, and solid evidence of opportunities for students to apply new knowledge and content embedded in the lessons in 29 percent of the middle school, 21 percent of the elementary, and none of the high school classes observed. The review team found that high school teachers' questioning did not promote broad student involvement and that the students often appeared to be disengaged and uninvolved.

In classes observed by the review team, few teachers at any level checked for student understanding during instruction. In one elementary school class observed, the teacher requested the students to write the next number in a series on a card. After quickly walking around the room to scan the responses, the teacher reviewed a concept many students had apparently misunderstood. In most classes observed by the review team, however, checking for student understanding was rare. There was solid evidence of teachers checking for student understanding in only 9 percent of the middle school classes, 7 percent of the elementary school classes and 5 percent of the high school classes observed.

Haverhill has been unable to provide active supervision to help teachers improve their instruction because the district's supervisors are serving in multiple roles. As a result, the quality of instruction in classes observed by the review team was weak, especially in promoting student engagement and fostering higher-order thinking. Teachers also taught presumptively and did not check regularly for student understanding. The quality of instruction must improve in order for Haverhill students to make expected and necessary gains in proficiency.

Assessment

The district is developing its assessment system, but the system still lacks key components and is implemented inconsistently across schools. Progress in developing the assessment system is impeded by a lack of common teaching materials in some core subjects at specific grade levels; limited time for teachers and leaders to meet to review and analyze assessment data; and the lack of clear communication of assessment priorities by district leaders.

Although the District Improvement Plan contains goals related to student assessment, only a few teachers and administrators, when interviewed, knew about the plan and its assessment goals. In addition, while some teachers expressed awareness of school improvement goals targeting improved MCAS results, it was mainly teachers who participated in committees who knew about progress in achieving these MCAS assessment goals.

Nevertheless, various committees and teams have taken steps to move the assessment agenda forward. A cross-discipline and cross-grade Assessment Committee of a dozen people including teachers, supervisors, and the assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction meets every other month to review the district's assessment practices and MCAS results. The core of this year's work was to produce an Assessment Template identifying all externally produced formative and summative assessments in use in English language arts (ELA), mathematics, and English language education (ELE, the district's ELL program). The committee also reviewed assessment data and discussed the need to broaden assessment formats to include district-designed formative and benchmark assessments, especially in mathematics.

An AP mathematics vertical team and a newly-created K-12 literacy team also meet monthly, led by full-time supervisors for grades 6 through 12. Each committee's charge is to improve curriculum and instruction, analyze assessment data, support the development of new assessments, and communicate and monitor new instructional practices in the schools. One current goal for the mathematics team is to help develop the new and common formative and benchmark assessments, also discussed by the Assessment Committee. At the time of the review, few new mathematics benchmarks had been developed and few common formative assessments were evident in use. In addition to monitoring ELA assessments, the literacy team is also considering common writing assessments to use three times a year to support the district's Writing with Colors curriculum.

Other elementary and secondary steering committees meet monthly and are charged with improving ELA, mathematics, social studies, science, and foreign language instruction and assessment. Supervisors are subject-certified and all also hold full-time roles such as principals or assistant principals; one is also a full-time classroom teacher. Interviewees commented that meetings are sometimes canceled and often not rescheduled because of conflicting priorities and that therefore most communication is handled through email. This makes it extremely difficult to maintain momentum in developing new assessments and in analyzing and strategizing about MCAS results and other assessment data. Therefore most initiatives related to assessment are shaped and implemented at the school level rather than at the district level. This explains the variability across schools, especially for grades K through 8, in what assessments are administered, how assessments are administered, and how data is used.

Evidence from interviews and documents indicates that there are some positive signs as well as pervasive inconsistencies in administering assessments. For example, in grades 1 through 5, the *Trophies* skills tests, holistic assessments, and end-of-selection tests are administered across the district, and teachers discuss results in grade-level meetings and sometimes one-on-one with a colleague. An initiative in its initial stages is the training of all elementary teachers to use the Fountas and Pinnell benchmark assessment system through their work with the Lesley Literacy Collaborative. Once the training is completed, elementary teachers will be more able to understand students' reading strengths and weaknesses and to identify students for interventions and extra help.

Also at the elementary schools, the district recently began to administer Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) tests three times a year in ELA and mathematics. The MAP tests are well-aligned with the skills needed for success in MCAS testing, and teachers are enthusiastic about the information MAP tests give them about students' progress in mastering these skills. Yet there are inconsistencies and inequities related to the MAP tests since they are not yet implemented in a parallel fashion in grades 2 through 5 at all schools. The three small K-2 elementary schools do not administer MAP tests. Teachers reported that this is due to a lack of technology at those sites. Also, it was reported that in one elementary school, MAP tests are administered twice a year instead of three times. Middle school grade 5 classes do not administer MAP tests although they use the elementary curriculum and literacy program. Interviewees noted that when grade 5 classes moved to the middle schools, the expectations for the curriculum were maintained, but the resources to support curriculum delivery did not follow, including support for administering MAP tests. In addition to MAP tests and *Trophies* assessments, some elementary teachers reported using optional ELA assessments that are vestiges of expired grants, such as the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA), Dynamic Indicators of Basic Elementary Literacy Skills (DIBELS), and observation surveys.

Apart from MAP tests, other classroom-based mathematics assessments vary across elementary schools and even across classrooms. The Assessment Template highlights *Trailblazers Mathematics* unit assessments for grades one through five. However, *Trailblazers* is used erratically, if at all, across the district since it lacks alignment to the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks and few teachers have been trained to use it. Teachers and administrators reported that teachers are free to use whatever mathematics materials and assessments they choose, as long as they cover the topics on the mathematics curriculum map. With no common materials in use and no common benchmarks or assessments in place in mathematics aside from MAP, teachers create their own assessments. Some interviewees reported that grade-level teachers collaborate and share materials and assessments as a matter of practice. However, the lack of common teaching materials and common assessments makes it virtually impossible to discuss and track student progress across classrooms, grades, schools, and the district as a whole. The MAP tests have partially filled this void, but MAP results yield individual student data that is mainly kept and monitored by classroom teachers.

Evidence from interviews and a review of curriculum documents indicated that elementary science and social studies materials, classroom resources, and assessments also vary across classrooms and across schools. Although there are curriculum maps, no universal texts, assessments, or resources exist. For the most part, elementary teachers develop their own instructional materials and assessments for units and projects in science and social studies. Interviewees noted that they no longer analyze assessment results from science and social studies units because assessments are so diverse and occur at different times. In the past, when there was a full-time K-5 curriculum supervisor, teachers received more data on student progress in science and social studies.

At the secondary level, teachers for grades 6 through 12 often use common chapter and unit tests that accompany textbook series, and there are also many teacher-designed, classroom-based assessments. Some teachers share and analyze results; some do not.

The district is currently expanding the administration of common secondary exams in the middle schools and high school. In mathematics, the middle school and high school have common end-of-course tests and will have common mid-year exams next year. High school ELA, foreign language, and social studies courses now have common final exams and there are plans to have common midterms at some point in the future. Science teachers give common unit tests for topics and units; most of these accompany the textbook series, although some are teacher-designed. Interviewees stated, however, that at the end of the year, final exams are not analyzed or discussed by teachers since they leave for the summer shortly after grades are submitted. Teachers did comment that supervisors may review the results. In addition, interviewees stated that there is limited common in-depth analysis and discussion of AP and SAT results by high school departments. Without a consistent plan to collect and analyze assessment data, teachers and leaders at all school levels are at a disadvantage in planning and tailoring curriculum and instruction to meet the true educational needs of the students in their classes.

Supervisors at all levels are aware of the need to expand assessments for their subject areas and to collect and analyze student assessment data. However, a pervasive lack of resources—time, people, and funding—has slowed progress toward meeting those needs as well as the need to develop more common formative and benchmark assessments for most core subjects. While steps have been taken and gains have been made in assessment since the last EQA report in 2006, the district still lacks key components for success: limited, prioritized, and clearly communicated goals, common teaching materials, common formative and summative assessments, trained staff, and focused time for teachers to collaborate in the collection and analysis of assessment data.

In the judgment of the review team, the district is in the early stages of an ambitious agenda to implement multiple formative and summative assessments at all levels. If this agenda is accomplished, the assessment system will be able to contribute to improving how well teachers teach and how well students learn. However, given the district's limited resources, it will be difficult to achieve these goals within the 2012 timeframe cited in the not-too-widely-distributed District Improvement Plan.

The close analysis of assessment data is inconsistent across schools and therefore does not sufficiently inform decisions to improve curriculum and instruction.

Some school improvement plans array AYP and MCAS data and refer to analyzing data from MCAS as well as school-based assessments and using it as the foundation of decisions to improve curriculum and instruction. Yet administrators and teachers described varied and inconsistent expectations and processes across schools to implement plans to use assessment data as information to guide decision-making about instruction and curriculum.

The assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction and the MAP testing coordinator analyze MCAS scores for each school. Once the analyses are complete, they are shared with the principal and assistant principal(s) and also with the district's Assessment Committee. Either the principal or an assistant principal or a supervisor presents MCAS results at a faculty meeting. Teachers then discuss scores and review item analyses and subgroup analyses in meetings that vary depending on the school. Most school-based discussions focus on strengths and weaknesses, patterns and trends, and identifying topics in need of improvement. With no districtwide expectations, the intensity and frequency of these conversations range across schools; a school might have one large faculty meeting or several large-group and small-group meetings over time. After the initial MCAS presentation, interviewees agreed that it is up to the principal to develop a plan or work with teachers to develop a plan to address instructional and curricular needs indicated by MCAS results. This is a school-by-school activity with little guidance or priority-setting from the district level and little communication between the school leaders and district leaders. In fact, district leadership could not describe a priority, a sample plan, an instructional strategy, or a change in curriculum derived from an analysis of school-level MCAS results at any school.

The district is in the process of establishing data teams composed of teachers and the principal at each school. Now that these new teams exist at all but two schools, it is anticipated that they can better support data use and analysis in the future.

Evidence from school improvement plans and interviews and focus groups revealed that the depth with which MCAS results are addressed at the school level depends on the time available and the expertise and emphasis of principals. At the secondary level, teachers told the review team that lack of time is an obstacle to collaborative work to analyze results for MCAS and other assessments. However, secondary teachers reported making time informally at lunch or sometimes after school or one-on-one to discuss assessment results and student achievement.

At the elementary level, some interviewees reported that principals set high expectations for use of data and support teachers in faculty meetings and after school in their attempt to address weaknesses shown by MCAS results. They were able to cite examples of changes in classroom emphasis for topics and questions. Also, they could point to the district's implementation of MAP tests and, with the Lesley Literacy Collaborative, Fountas and Pinnell benchmark assessments as new strategies to improve literacy and mathematics achievement.

A three-tiered Response to Intervention (RTI) team has been organized to plan the implementation of a tiered mathematics intervention model using formative assessments and the iSucceed intervention software at tiers 2 and 3. This work is ongoing and at the time of the onsite review a plan was anticipated for June 2010. However, teachers interviewed reported a lack of support and input from principals and district leaders, resulting in a lack of time and resources for professional development to train teachers to use these mathematics strategies well, other than in some of the Title I schools where there are mathematics coaches to give support to teachers and help structure and monitor interventions.

As mentioned above, the absence of common teaching materials and formative and benchmark assessments in mathematics, science, and social studies at the elementary level makes it impossible to analyze comparable data and use it to improve instruction. Interviewees at both the elementary and secondary levels were firm in stating that although the potential exists to have useful discussions about assessment data in a number of disciplines and courses because classroom teachers now have data, there is wide variation across schools in how assessments are used by teachers and leaders to inform decision-making, and also in how frequently they are discussed. At some schools, according to interviewees, there is no time to reflect on and discuss data connected to student achievement, no such current discussion, and no plan in place to institute one.

Staff members in the district's ELE program administer the Massachusetts English Language Assessment – Oral (MELA-O) and the Massachusetts English Proficiency Assessment (MEPA) to place ELE students in appropriate Levels and to measure students' English language skill development in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Testing is also administered by ELE program staff to assess the appropriateness of students' exiting the ELE program as formerly limited English proficient (FLEP) students. The review team learned from documents and interviews that although students are tested and placed in MEPA Levels, record-keeping and the organization of these assessments are in disarray because of a lack of enough ELE staff.

Although there is good awareness on the part of some supervisors of what needs to be done to improve the design and use of assessments in Haverhill, and they are making a valiant effort to put systems in place, the district is still far from implementing a coherent and balanced assessment system. Several assessment and data pieces have come into place, especially at the elementary level, in literacy and with the use of MAP tests. However, the district still has no coherent districtwide vision, policies, or practices for an assessment system that uses the continuous collection and dissemination of formative, summative, and authentic assessment data to inform teachers and leaders about student achievement and progress and to guide teachers' and leaders' decisions about instruction and curriculum. Individual schools are held only minimally accountable for improvement in instruction demonstrated by the collection and analysis of assessment data.

In the review team's judgment, there is much work still left to be done before the district will have implemented a balanced system of formative and summative assessments that can guide instruction and the development of curriculum and help ensure improvement in student achievement.

Human Resources and Professional Development

The district’s professional development program lacks the financial support, scheduled release time, and content focus required to give teachers adequate assistance in increasing their curriculum area expertise; to expand research-based instructional practice; to articulate and promote overarching districtwide priorities and goals; and to advance student achievement.

The report of the EQA’s 2006 review of the Haverhill Public Schools stated that “neither sufficient time nor money was spent on professional development opportunities in the district.”⁸ Significant cuts to the professional development budget, a minimal connection between staff and district needs and professional development offerings, and inadequately scheduled in-service time were cited as the primary areas of deficiency in Haverhill’s professional development programming.

The present review of the district’s professional development program reveals that there has been little progress made in addressing these concerns. Indeed, the review team was presented with considerable evidence that the overall effectiveness of and support for professional development programming had continued to decline. For example, between 2005 and 2009, the district’s professional development budget shrank from \$1.5 million (\$2855 per teacher) to \$1.0 million (\$2180 per teacher); in 2009 the amount spent per teacher was approximately 20 percent below the statewide figure for professional development per teacher. Interviews with district and school leadership revealed that the district has been making annual cuts to the professional development budget as a way to supplement other underfunded programs and services. Administrators and teachers repeatedly expressed frustration with the lack of resources available to support professional development, both opportunities for individual staff and broader district initiatives.

The review team also learned that the district’s professional development calendar provided only one full day of in-service programming and no early release time during the 2009-2010 school year. Interviewees reported that in previous years some release time had been provided for professional development programming but that that was no longer the case. As a consequence, the district’s ability to support and sustain in-service initiatives was greatly diminished. This was compounded by a general lack of systematic linkage with district priorities and goals that resulted in a professional development curriculum that appeared to review team members to be fragmented, overly broad, and unfocused. A review of Haverhill’s professional development agenda from the November 3, 2009, in-service day revealed that well over two dozen different workshops, on generally unrelated topics, were available for faculty to choose from. Furthermore, review team members were informed that a lack of district funding has made it virtually impossible to contract with professional presenters or to supplement in-service needs by reimbursing staff for out-of-district seminars, workshops, and academic courses. With the

⁸ Office of Educational Quality and Accountability. 2007. *School District Examination Report: Haverhill Public Schools: Technical Report: 2002-2005*, p.12 (available at http://www.doe.mass.edu/sda/review/district/reports/technical/06_0128.pdf).

exception of an important and promising elementary level literacy initiative through the Lesley Literacy Collaborative that is grant-supported and thus able to provide the time, training, and technical expertise needed, administrators and faculty alike indicated that the present professional development program cannot adequately support the identified needs of teachers and students and, therefore, lacks the capacity to improve teaching and promote enhanced academic performance within the district.

Based on the information provided in multiple interviews and extensive evidence from district data and documents, the review team believes that Haverhill's professional development program fails to meet the identified needs of students, teachers, and administrators and is insufficiently focused on research-based practices and insufficiently informed by program assessment, staff evaluation, and student achievement data. Consequently, the district's professional development program is unable to support and improve the competencies of the district's professional staff in such a way as to support all learners and advance academic achievement for every student.

The district's policies and practices for evaluating the performance of both teachers and administrators are only minimally aligned with requirements under the Education Reform Act. In general, the evaluations reviewed were not informative, instructive, or used to promote individual growth and overall professional effectiveness.

Members of the review team examined the personnel files of all 28 school- and district-level administrators as well as those of 45 staff members randomly selected from all of the district's schools. Additionally, teachers and administrators expressed their views of the supervision and evaluation practices in place. In the case of administrators' evaluations, team members learned that although they are supposed to be completed by the superintendent annually, in the great majority of cases they are not. Very few administrators' summative evaluations could be found for 2008, for example. Further, several administrators informed the review team that the goals, process, and purpose of their evaluations had not been made clear to them. They indicated that compensation and continued employment appear at best only loosely linked to any formal measures of effectiveness, as identified by improvements in student academic performance or other relevant school data. Review team members learned from reviewing them that administrators' evaluations are not clearly aligned with the state's "Principles for Effective Administrative Leadership," that they lack supporting evidence and detail, are not, in the case of school administrators, linked in any apparent manner to progress in implementing the School Improvement Plan (SIP), and rarely contain any meaningful suggestions to promote professional growth, improve student achievement, or enhance overall administrative effectiveness.

From its review of the randomly selected personnel files, review team members learned that many of these characteristics are also true of teacher evaluations. Although improvements were noted in timeliness since the last EQA review in 2006, teacher evaluations are still often lacking in descriptions of instructional details, such as pedagogy and subject-based knowledge. Teacher evaluations seldom contain specific recommendations for improving instruction or suggestions

for professional growth. In fact, all of the 45 teacher evaluations examined contained a “Satisfactory” performance rating for every indicator.

Haverhill’s teacher contract requires teachers with professional teacher status (PTS) who receive a summative rating of “Improvement Recommended” to repeat the year 2 evaluation cycle. Additionally, the contract stipulates that any PTS teacher who receives a summative rating of “Unsatisfactory” be placed on a Performance Improvement Plan (PIP). When questioned about this, district administrators told the review team that records of teachers placed on a PIP were not maintained at the central office and that they were not aware of any teachers on these plans. In subsequent interviews, principals indicated that they did not know of any current or previous use of PIPs within the district. Their statements were supported by the fact that not a single “Improvement Recommended” or “Unsatisfactory” rating was recorded in any of the 45 staff folders examined by the review team.

Review team members also believe that these uniformly “Satisfactory” teacher performance ratings are inconsistent with the very uneven quality of instruction observed by team members in classrooms across the district, as well as with low achievement on MCAS. When asked about this phenomenon, interviewees offered team members a variety of responses. Some principals said that the district had not provided them with formal training in implementing the state’s “Principles of Effective Teaching” or in the use of research-based supervision processes to monitor and support teachers in order to help them meet instructional and program expectations. They also indicated that as supervisors they feel constrained by contract language, even though the contract has expired, and by the evaluation tools, in particular the summative evaluation instrument that in their view impedes their ability to supervise and evaluate staff effectively. They noted, for example, that when conducting a class period evaluation, administrators are limited to announced visits only. Both teachers and principals alluded to past practice and a “culture” that discourages focusing on teachers’ pedagogical deficiencies or other shortcomings or on their accountability for improved student learning. Several principals said that the effective evaluation of professional staff did not appear to be a priority in the district.

In the judgment of the review team, the evaluation program, procedures, and instruments currently in use in the Haverhill Public Schools fail to meet the goals and requirements of the regulations promulgated under Education Reform Act (at 603 CMR 35.00). Although the evaluation system that is in place is loosely aligned with the Massachusetts “Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership” and the “Principles of Effective Teaching,” referred to in those regulations, there was little evidence that it is designed to enhance administrators’ and teachers’ competencies, to assist and support them, or to hold them accountable for student achievement. The district lacks a rigorous and comprehensive evaluative process for its teachers and administrators that identifies their strengths and needs, assesses their application of skills and practices acquired through professional development, provides guidance and targeted support for improving performance, encourages continuous professional growth, and is focused clearly on improving student learning.

Student Support

Continual reductions in the school budget in recent years have resulted in an extremely serious shortage of special education teachers and aides at a time when the number of special education students is increasing and the achievement of special education students is very low. The H-Alt alternative program for special education students, however, continues to be successful.

In interviews with school leaders, focus groups with teachers, and discussions with the teachers' union leadership team, most interviewees agreed that student support services have deteriorated in the last few years. Cuts in the school department budget for nine years in a row have had a drastic effect on the employment of needed personnel. There are not enough special education staff members to be able to use effectively the inclusion model of educating students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). These students most often receive the services that they need and that are required by their IEPs either by being placed in substantially separate classrooms or by being "pulled out" of their regular classrooms. Furthermore, the number of instructional aides in the district has decreased in recent years. It was agreed by all interviewees throughout the four days the review team was in the district that the shortage of teachers and aides in this critical area was extremely serious.

Special education referrals have increased recently, according to interviewees, while resources and personnel have diminished. The district has lost its full-time reading and mathematics specialists at the elementary level, while the high school has lost many electives, including industrial arts, and Whittier Vocational Technical High School (the district's vocational partner) has become much more selective, leaving fewer choices for students at the high school level.

Administrators, principals, and teachers saw what they perceived as the lack of an adequate response to the increase in the number of special education students by the district's governing and leadership team as contributing to the problem of very low achievement for special education students in recent years. In 2009, 16 percent of district special education students were proficient or better in ELA, as opposed to 55 percent of all district students; 10 percent of district special education students were proficient in mathematics, as opposed to 42 percent of all district students. Regular education teachers throughout the district informed review team members at teacher focus groups that they felt ill-equipped to deal with the large numbers of students with IEPs that they have in their classrooms because they have not been properly trained and do not have adequate support from special education staff.

The inadequacy of services for special education students is compounded by the district's decision to double the roles of many principals and supervisors. For example, one of the two high school assistant principals is also the special needs coordinator for grades 9 through 12. When asked in interviews how they manage with multiple roles, administrators all expressed concern that each new role and responsibility requires them to cut back on their previous roles and responsibilities; they indicated that they are uncomfortable with that fact.

The shining star in the otherwise bleak state of services for special education students is the grade 6 through 12 alternative school, called H-Alt, which the report of the 2006 EQA review also indicated to be successful. This off-campus alternative program is housed in a former parochial elementary school. It offers an active, hands-on learning environment with a small-group instructional format. Currently, H-Alt has 53 special needs students enrolled and maintains a four-to-one student-to-staff ratio. According to interviews with a program director and teachers, most of its students complete their work and earn a high school diploma, but without this program it is likely that they would have dropped out of school. The program director informed the review team that the program is limited to the number of students it has now because of its nature and philosophy, even though in his view there are many other students in the Haverhill Public Schools who could find success in the program if it could open its doors to more students. The city and the school district are proud of the success that the program has achieved in recent years, and rightfully so. It is imperative, however, to improve the services provided to special education students in other schools within the Haverhill Public Schools.

The district has another very serious deficiency in staffing for the growing population of English language learner (ELL) students, and its services for these students are often limited or lacking.

The 2007 CPR report cited the district for insufficiencies in the ELL instructional program, curriculum, and use of assessments. In 2010, at the time of this district review, the review team found that the learning needs of ELL students are still not well addressed, with causes including insufficient staffing and provision of services and delays to recording and filing assessment data.

The statistics furnished by the district identify the ELL population at the time of the review as 615 ELL students who cannot perform ordinary classroom work in English; interviewees noted that “new students are arriving weekly.” Although these students are enrolled in all schools in the district, there are only 19 qualified ESL teachers on the roster, and because of their extensive duties, they are available to provide services to children in only 10 of the district’s 15 schools.⁹

The seriousness of the ELL understaffing and the resultant insufficiency of services provided to ELL students is emphasized by how much ELL students underperform the general population of students in the Haverhill Public Schools. In 2009, 10 percent of the district’s ELL students were proficient or better in English Language Arts, as opposed to 55 percent of all district students; 4 percent of the district’s ELL students were proficient or better in mathematics, as opposed to 42 percent of all district students. In addition, the percentage of the district’s ELL students who met or exceeded the Annual Measurable Attainment Outcome (AMAO) target for English language proficiency has declined from 49 percent in 2006 to 32 percent in 2009, after an increase to 54 percent in 2007. The percentage of ELL students moving two or more steps on the Massachusetts

⁹ The district listed its teachers as ESL/TBE certified. The district was cited in the 2007 CPR report for having teachers with TBE licenses teaching what were supposed to be ESL classes at the elementary and middle school levels. Any teachers with only a TBE license who are still teaching ESL classes should not be: only a teacher with an ESL license is qualified to teach ESL.

English Proficiency Assessment (MEPA) within the same grade span, or moving one or more steps between grade spans, has also declined, from 66 percent in 2006 to 62 percent in 2009.

The lack of adequate qualified staffing to provide services to ELL students can be illustrated by the following examples. At the time of the review, the Tilton Elementary School had 88 identified ELL students, and there were three certified ESL teachers to provide services to them. At the Consentino Middle School, there were 71 identified ELL students with three certified ESL teachers, and at Haverhill High there were 142 ELL students with only two certified ESL teachers.¹⁰

Leadership for the ELL program is also stretched. The ELL program is administered by two part-time supervisors (one for kindergarten through grade 5 and one for grades 6 through 12). One is a licensed ESL teacher. The other has other major leadership responsibilities as a middle school assistant principal. In addition, the ELL office lacks the clerical staff needed to properly file and maintain the necessary student records and assessment data. During the course of its interviews the review team was informed that several years ago the lack of support for the ELL program prompted a staff member to file a civil rights complaint against the district with the Office for Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education so that immediate action would be taken.

The district is not providing enough enrichment programs for its gifted and talented students in kindergarten through grade 8; however, the high school has programmatic opportunities for enrichment.

Interviewees informed review team members that, due to financial constraints, very few enrichment or supplemental programs exist in the district for gifted and talented students. They agreed that the district is not providing enough enrichment programs for these students, particularly in kindergarten through grade 8. For many years the district has been unable to offer gifted and talented enrichment activities for its elementary and middle school students, the districtwide instrumental music program was eliminated in 2007, and the mathematics specialist position was eliminated in 2008.

There are a few exceptions to this trend at the high school level. In its third year, the highly regarded Classical Academy at Haverhill High School, entrance to which is by examination, has more than 150 students enrolled in its rigorous academic program. Four new Advanced Placement courses have been added to the high school's course of studies since the 2006 EQA report (psychology, politics and government, art history, and Chinese), and gifted high school students now have the opportunity to take courses online through the Virtual High School (VHS). Still, only 17 percent of Haverhill High School juniors and seniors are enrolled in at least one Advanced Placement course, as opposed to 23 percent statewide. Because services offered to many students in the district are limited, students cannot make the educational progress that they otherwise could. The review team agrees that the district should look more closely at providing all of its students with the best possible programs available.

¹⁰ See previous footnote.

Rates of student absence are well above the state rates; these rates, which the district lacks the personnel to monitor, contribute to the high dropout rate at the high school.

An analysis of ESE attendance data showed that the attendance rates of Haverhill's public school students do not compare well to state rates. For instance, in 2008-2009 approximately 67 percent of students in the state were absent fewer than 10 days per year. The percentage of Haverhill students absent fewer than 10 days that year was 56 percent.

The percentage of chronically absent students (those absent more than 10 percent of school days enrolled) in the Haverhill Public Schools is very high—23 percent in 2008-2009, or nearly one in four students. At the high school level, in 2008-2009, each grade had a chronic absence rate in excess of 40 percent. It should also be noted that other racial or ethnic groups, including African American students (27.6 percent chronically absent) and Hispanic students (37.7 percent) had much higher rates of chronic absence in 2008-2009 than Asian students (12.3 percent) or white students (18.5 percent).

When asked about attendance rates, administrators and teachers alike stated that attendance “has always been a problem in Haverhill” and cited the loss of an attendance officer at the high school in 2008-2009 and cuts in the administrative staff in recent years as contributing factors in not being able to monitor absenteeism in the district closely. The attendance rate at Haverhill High School fell steadily over the five school years from 2004-2005 to 2008-2009, from 89.2 percent attendance to 87.0 percent. Two administrators said that other contributing factors are the difficulties associated with trying to communicate with non-English-speaking parents and the lack of support that school officials receive from the local court system when Child in Need of Services (CHINS) petitions are filed.

Absenteeism is believed by many in the district to be a major contributing factor to the high dropout rate that the district has experienced for several years. The annual dropout rate reported by the district in the last five years has varied from a low of 4.8 percent to a high of 7.5 percent, ranging during these years from 1 to 4 percentage points higher than the state dropout rate. The four-year cohort graduation rate has been in the 64.0 to 69.4 percent range over the last four years (64.0 percent in 2009). This means that approximately one of every three students who enter the 9th grade at Haverhill High does not graduate with his or her class. Unlike many districts, Haverhill High School has had a practice of bringing a number of students back as full-time students for a fifth year, and most of these students graduate at the end of that fifth year. In 2009, about 25 students graduated after a fifth year, and that figure raised the 4-year cohort graduation rate of 68.5 percent for the Class of 2008 to a five-year graduation rate of 72.6 percent. The district does not, however, have a system for early identification of potential dropouts.

The district does have the successful H-Alt alternative program for special education students described earlier, as well as an evening GED program and a program called “Learning for Life” that has a vocational component. Other attempts have been made to address the dropout problem. For example, during the 2009 school year a Success Academy for 90 at-risk ninth graders was

initiated with federal Smaller Learning Communities funds, but when the funding ended after only one year, the program was discontinued.

According to several administrators, other factors contributing to the high rate of student absenteeism and the high dropout rate at the high school are the district's high teacher turnover rate (17.3 percent in the 2009 school year, compared to the state rate of 12.2 percent) and the high rate of teacher absenteeism that they reported. Several interviewees indicated that they believe that a major reason for the high rates of teacher turnover and teacher absenteeism, with the resulting lack of continuity in learning, is that class sizes have steadily increased during the last few years and teachers have not been given adequate support staff to assist them. This has resulted in morale issues for the district's teacher force, compounded by the fact that the district has not had a signed teacher contract for the last two years and teachers have received no raises other than step and advanced degree increases.

The judgment of the review team is that the district's high absence and dropout rates will continue unless it more closely monitors student attendance at all levels, identifies potential dropouts at an early age, and provides appropriate support for these and other at-risk students.

Financial and Asset Management

The district budget continues to be less than adequate for the district to design and deliver quality instructional programs and services for all students.

According to interviews with school and city leaders, resources in the city are inadequate due primarily to the city's payment on the Hale Hospital debt, which has been described as "an albatross." The sale of the debt-ridden hospital in 2001 has had a negative, long-range impact on funding. Left with more than 20 years during which to meet not only the principal and interest bond costs but also the health insurance and retirements benefit costs of hospital employees, the city must appropriate approximately \$7,000,000 annually to pay this obligation before department budgets can be addressed. Efforts made by city officials to obtain state and federal assistance to alleviate the situation have been unsuccessful.

Haverhill is a Title I district. However, the district has not supported the sharing of good practices learned at the Title I schools with other schools. Three elementary and two middle schools that are lower-achieving receive Title I funds to supplement the delivery of services and to provide coaches and other support. The other elementary schools, the other two middle schools, and the high school are ineligible for Title I funds and resort to other means to raise non-appropriated funds to support the school.

Administrators and parents use fundraisers and auctions to raise additional funds for basic education expenses and to support educational programs. Funds are raised for targeted purchases, such as classroom supplies, textbooks, and building maintenance. The practice of holding fundraisers is common in all schools; however, it has increased inequities among schools because not all have parent-teacher organizations that are equally skilled in fundraising. Local

businesses are frequently solicited for donations and grants. No incorporated education foundation exists across the district to raise supplementary funds for all the schools.

The school district relies heavily on grants and other supplemental funding sources to provide normal educational programs and services. The grants received have primarily been “entitlement” grants. There is no grant writer. The grants are managed by the budget and grant analyst, who is located in the district’s business office. The ESE document entitled “FY09 End of Year Grants” indicates that the district received \$8,499,004 in federal and state grants last year. The district also received a federally-funded state fiscal stabilization fund (SFSF) grant in fiscal year 2009 totaling \$2,258,641. In fiscal year 2010 the district’s SFSF grant entitlement is \$1,050,318. The district used the fiscal year 2009 SFSF grant to fund computer labs in an elementary school, two middle schools, and the Silver Hill Horace Mann Charter School. Technology was a high priority because of a survey conducted by the technology committee in which teachers indicated a strong need. Federal stimulus money also restored five technology positions. There are no apparent plans for how the district intends to address technology needs once the stimulus money is gone.

The district did respond to the indication in the 2006 EQA report of the lack of a documented curriculum. In 2008, it sponsored an initiative underwritten by local funds to design and document curriculum maps for each discipline at each grade level; there were some revisions and additions in 2009. The school committee evidently believed curriculum to be a one-time event and has not allocated any other local funds for either revision or further development of curriculum documents. Maintenance and revision of curriculum maps are basically funded by Title IIA funds, which totaled \$446,710 in fiscal year 2009.

Since 2002, student enrollment has declined 10 percent, the number of administrators has declined 36 percent, and the number of classroom and specialist teachers, specialists, counselors, and psychologists has been cut by 21 percent. Class sizes have increased. Compared to the prior fiscal year, in fiscal year 2009 the district reported spending \$164,555 less in administration; \$240,404 less in instructional leadership; \$3,056,779 less in classroom and specialist teachers; and \$208,689 less in guidance, counseling, and testing.

The impact of the last ten years of budget reductions has been dramatic. Curriculum is better organized; however, there is little consistency in how well it is implemented. The district does not have full-time supervisors for academic disciplines from kindergarten to grade 12. There are no funds for textbooks and materials. Textbooks are outdated, and the replacement plan is inoperable because of lack of funds. Teachers often fund their own basic classroom supplies. Mathematics intervention exists only in the Title I schools. Foreign languages, computer technology classes, media specialists/librarians, band, and industrial arts have been eliminated in kindergarten through grade 8. The high school eliminated an attendance officer in fiscal year 2009. The Success Academy that worked with at-risk students to prevent dropout was eliminated after its first year of operation due to financial constraints. The ELL population is increasing and is underserved due to a lack of sufficient teacher and support staff. The gifted and talented programs have all been eliminated for students in grades K through 8. The needs of subgroups

are met primarily through grant funds. There are not enough librarians at the high school level. MCAS tutoring at all levels was eliminated when state funding ended even though students were in need of assistance.

There is not enough time or money for professional development. There is minimal professional development for instructional improvements such as differentiated instruction. Teachers receive only one professional day a year, Election Day. Stipends for any development activities beyond the normal workday or for any required summer work are paid through grants. If there are no grants, the work does not get done. There is no teacher course reimbursement.

Administrators, teachers, and parents interviewed cited poor teacher morale in the district due to the inability of the school committee and the teachers' association to negotiate an agreement. The contract with the teachers' association expired on June 30, 2008. Agreements with the other bargaining units expired on June 30, 2010. According to interviews with school committee members and city officials, health insurance benefits have become the stumbling block to reaching any settlement.

There are no multi-year plans in place for budget, maintenance, or capital improvements. Coordination and funding for future maintenance and capital needs projects is lacking. Interviewees stated that there is no formal maintenance plan and that maintenance is reactive rather than pro-active. The approach to maintenance is to fix what is broken when it breaks. The absence of a preventive maintenance plan could result in crises that further exacerbate the financial situation.

A committee of 10 to 15 people is preparing a facilities report. Team members were told that when it is completed it will include recommendations to improve school facilities. There are buildings that are 100 years old; however, the administrators, principals, and teachers interviewed for the most part did not see the conditions of the buildings as being an issue.

The district is heavily dependent on grants, perhaps too dependent. Work on curriculum development and instructional improvement is basically funded by grants, not local appropriation, a factor that contributes greatly to Haverhill's lack of a continuous cycle for curriculum revision and renewal. The district cannot sustain grant-funded programs when the grants end. There is no local capacity to sustain work, and no apparent priority to do so. Fundraisers and donations are commonplace to pay for many "nuts and bolts" that should be included in the budget. For example, parents raised money for new textbooks at one elementary school.

Overall, the district budget is inadequate. The district can be described as surviving and existing on a day-to-day basis. The school committee and administration have had to reduce budget requests for the past ten years. The district has attempted to make these reductions without impacting direct educational services; however, it has become increasingly more difficult and unrealistic to do so. School committee members voiced pride in the fact that there are roughly the same number of classroom teachers in the schools this year as last year, but they do not recognize that the infrastructure that supports good educational processes and progress has been

pulled out from underneath instruction. Reductions have been made in maintenance and utilities solely to balance the budget proposal and not with any actual analysis of the impact of these reductions on operations.

It is the responsibility of the superintendent and the school committee to advocate for the schools and to clearly present the impact additional reductions will make on direct educational services. When the administration does not prepare and bring forward a budget that truly reflects what is necessary to adequately provide the resources to deliver effective instruction, all stakeholders are short-changed.

The district budget is developed without an apparent analysis of student achievement data. Resources are allocated based on the city's contribution.

The development of the district's budget is an allocation of funds to which the analysis of student achievement data does not appear to contribute as a decision-making factor. No evidence was presented by any interviewed administrator that student achievement was used in the preparation and presentation of the fiscal year 2010 budget. Except for the school committee's priority to maintain class size, particularly in kindergarten through grade 3, there does not appear to be any student achievement rationale—or any systemwide priorities—for making decisions.

During the budget development process this year, the superintendent prepared four budgets: level-funded, with a 5 percent decrease, with a 10 percent decrease, and with a 15 percent decrease. Principals submitted a brief descriptive narrative of how they will manage the reductions in each budget scenario. The mayor ultimately informs the school department of the amount of money the city is able to contribute. School administrators hold additional meetings to revise the budget to meet the amount provided by the city. After known contractual obligations for personnel, pupil transportation, tuitions, and utilities are allocated, the remainder is made available for principals to purchase supplies, materials, and textbooks. This discretionary amount has shrunk each fiscal year.

Interviewees stated that the mayor directed all city departments to prepare level-funded budgets minus three percent for fiscal year 2011. The district is faced with reducing the budget by another \$2,000,000, while the superintendent indicates that the school department needs \$4,000,000 more than in the fiscal year 2010 budget not only to maintain services but also to restore ELL support positions, guidance counselors, an assistant principal at the high school, an attendance officer, and a human resource position. The superintendent has assumed the human resources leadership role for the past two years since the previous director left the district.

The city has consistently provided the schools with the required minimum local contribution. Net school spending requirements have been exceeded each year; however, the overage has decreased from \$598,624 in fiscal year 2008 to an estimated \$263,285 in fiscal year 2010. City officials interviewed indicated that education is funded at approximately 38 percent of the total \$144,000,000 city budget. The amount does not include expenditures for health insurance and retirement benefits.

The city does give all Medicaid receipts to the school district. In fiscal year 2009, the district received \$703,805 in Medicaid reimbursements, which it used to supplement the appropriation. The district also received \$1,231,000 in circuit breaker reimbursements, which it used to pay special education tuitions.

Haverhill participates in the school choice program; however, it does not reap any financial harvest. The cost to Haverhill in fiscal year 2009 was \$952,998 for those students who left Haverhill. Haverhill received \$323,015 for those students who opted to attend the Haverhill Public Schools under the choice program. Tuition costs to Haverhill for those students who opted to attend Commonwealth charter schools in fiscal year 2009 amounted to \$2,174,609, while the district received \$779,016 in charter school reimbursement.

The city also pays the highest portion of the member districts' assessment to Whittier Vocational Technical High School for students who are residents of Haverhill. Administrators, school committee members, and city officials expressed displeasure with the relationship. They indicated that Whittier has become more restrictive and that students are refused admittance if they have records of poor attendance or bad behavior. There were 695 students from Haverhill enrolled in Whittier Vocational Technical High School in fiscal year 2010, an increase of 20 from the previous fiscal year. In fiscal year 2010, the city's regional school assessment paid to Whittier is \$7,621,385, an \$871,256 decrease from the \$8,492,641 paid in fiscal year 2009. There have been discussions among some school committee members and portions of the community about withdrawing from the regional school and starting a vocational technical program in the city.

The cost-effectiveness of continued operation of the Crowell, Greenleaf, and Walnut Square schools, all small elementary schools for kindergarten through grade 2, is in question. They had enrollments in 2009-2010 of 78, 264, and 152 respectively, and each has unused space. Some parents as well as some school committee members have been vocal in arguing for keeping the schools open and available as a choice for students who "need a small school environment." No evidence was presented showing that the students in these schools need a smaller school environment than other students in the Haverhill Public Schools.

Everyone values education; however, the question remains as to how much money the community is willing to spend to support it. The tax levy is at the maximum allowable. Residential property is taxed at \$12.76 per thousand and commercial, industrial, and personal property is taxed at \$21.31 per thousand. Information available from the department of revenue, verified by city officials, indicates that the average fiscal year 2010 single-family tax bill in Haverhill is \$3,474. The state average single-family tax bill for fiscal year 2009 was \$4,250.

There has not been a successful override in Haverhill. Even when the voters were told the high school would lose its accreditation, they rejected a debt exclusion override. In interviews with team members, parents who are new to the city and some elected officials attributed the lack of support to changing demographics, a transient population, and the number of retirees in the community. The mayor is not in support of an override and has proposed the idea of a meal tax,

which he claims will result in an additional \$500,000 yearly in revenue. The proposal does not appear to have garnered much support.

The district has been surviving on less and less each year and has demonstrated that it can function with fewer resources, although it is not functioning well. Dramatic cuts have resulted in reductions in staff, the assumption of multiple roles by administrators, the elimination of programs, insufficient professional development, a lack of support services, deferred maintenance, limited supplies, and outdated textbooks. The district's budget development process needs to include an analysis of student achievement data, a prioritization of the goals defined in the district improvement plan, and a rationale for how the resources available will be used.

The school district's business office has sound procedures and internal controls and regularly uses forecast mechanisms to ensure that expenditures are within fiscal limits.

The accounting technology used by both the district and the city is Budget Sense, a web-based financial program. According to district administrators, the school committee receives the first detailed financial report in October and then at least three or four more during the year. The report includes a cover memo explaining any highlights or budget concerns with projected overages or surpluses, a statement of vacant positions, and detailed salary and expense line items. Grants and revolving accounts are also maintained on the system, and reports of their status are provided to the school committee if requested.

The system is able to report expenditures for each school and program. Central office administrators indicated that principals have access to the accounting system and are able to track their individual school budget. Transfers between accounts do not require central office approval if the bottom line is not affected. If requested, the business office also provides principals with reports on the status of their budget.

Due to the limited resources available, the district has for a number of years instituted budget freezes. According to a central office administrator, exceptions are made for safety reasons and emergencies. The district's control procedures include encumbering salaries, transportation costs, tuitions, utility expenses, and other known contractual obligations. The assistant superintendent for business and operations regularly forecasts payroll, utility, and maintenance expenditures.

No written agreement exists between the district and the city detailing the manner for calculating and the amounts to be used in calculating charges levied on the school district by the city. Health insurance and retiree insurance and assessment costs are actual costs, while the city charges the district a percentage for administrative costs. The absence of a written agreement does not appear to pose a problem, though it is recommended by the Department. In separate interviews with review team members, central office administrators and city officials referred to the excellent relationship that exists between the two financial offices. Any differences that have arisen have been easily resolved.

Technology, maintenance, and purchasing are consolidated and shared by the school department and the city. The technology consolidation took place in fiscal year 2010. The district shares a maintenance staff of five employees with the city. The employees are responsible for maintaining all city and school facilities. The city's purchasing director is the school department's purchasing agent. According to school and city officials, the purchasing director complies with all provisions of G.L. c. 30B when preparing all the bids for the city, including the school department.

In connection with the schools' need for a new human resource director, the city is in the process of examining the possibility of consolidating of the city and district human resource positions. The city council favors consolidation as a means to save money; however, the idea has met with some resistance from the school department. The human resource position for the school department requires a person knowledgeable in school law and regulations who will be able to oversee the complex human resources processes for the schools, including hiring, recruiting, and keeping up to date on teacher re-certifications and evaluations. The district uses efficient accounting technology to facilitate tracking, forecasting, and the use of control procedures to ensure spending is within budget limits. The city and school department staff interviewed both possess the necessary qualifications to manage their fiscal responsibilities. The necessary pieces are in place for the continued monitoring of all expenditures in order to attain the most efficient and effective use of scarce resources.

Recommendations

The school committee and superintendent should collaborate to develop a written agreement about superintendent and school committee roles and responsibilities that is consistent with the Education Reform Act of 1993, and should implement a process for ongoing self-assessment and public reporting of how consistently the school committee is meeting the terms of the agreement.

During interviews, administrators, teachers, and parents stated that school committee members do not understand their roles and responsibilities and mentioned several concerns. The most repeated was the committee's conduct, behavior, and demeanor at school committee meetings, which are open to the public and televised on local cable television. Other concerns included what many described as "micromanaging" and not adhering to school committee policies. The review team noted an improvement in school committee practice over several months prior to the site visit.

Developing a written agreement about appropriate roles and responsibilities, including specific agreements about conduct at committee meetings, adherence to policies, and superintendent-committee communication, is critically important. So, too, is periodically assessing each person's adherence to the agreement. Both actions will help ensure that the time and energy of everyone working on behalf of Haverhill schools can be focused on achieving the district's improvement plan, an essential focus if the district is to address effectively its widespread mediocre performance.

The committee should consider securing the assistance of the state associations of school committees (MASC) and superintendents (M.A.S.S.) to assist in developing and monitoring its agreement. It is recommended that ESE provide the resources needed to secure MASC/MASS assistance. It is also recommended that ESE return to Haverhill in fall 2011 to conduct a focused review of leadership and governance practices to document progress in this critical area.

It is key for the district to conduct a wide, open, and comprehensive search to cull strong, talented, and experienced leadership for the important position of school superintendent.

Strong leadership moving forward is critical given district challenges such as the lack of successor employment agreements, the need to improve student achievement, an ELL program that has been grossly out of compliance, multiple administrative role assignments, and annual budgets that are inadequate for additional personnel, supplies, textbooks, and equipment. Therefore, it would be helpful for ESE to offer support in the recruitment, screening, and selection of a new superintendent.

The new superintendent, with input from the administrative team, should develop and share his or her vision for the Haverhill Public Schools. In accordance with that vision, district leaders should revise and prioritize the annual goals in the DIP. School leaders should revise the annual goals in the SIPs, which, in turn, should align with the priorities of the district. All plans should be publicized, distributed, and made the focus of discussion, and the superintendent should be held accountable for attaining the goals in the DIP and the principals for attaining the goals in the SIPs.

The review team received no evidence of communications from district leadership about the DIP, or of prioritizations, follow-up, or accountability. Numerous interviewees had never seen or heard of the DIP and had no idea of the improvement goals or priorities of the district. Similarly, a majority of teachers interviewed had not seen a copy of their school's SIP and were unfamiliar with its contents. Progress toward meeting SIP goals is not usually discussed in faculty meetings, and evaluations of principals and the superintendent do not by and large refer to progress toward attaining the goals in the SIPs and DIP. Consequently, to the detriment of the school district, district staff and the wider community have little knowledge about the goals and expectations for the school system.

The new superintendent should provide the district with his or her vision for the future. The superintendent, aided by key educational personnel, should review and revise the current District Improvement Plan and prioritize the annual goals in the plan, especially for improving student achievement. Each of the goals should be attainable and measurable and include deadlines, implementation strategies, the resources needed to attain the goal, and identification of the person(s) accountable for achieving the goal. After the DIP has been revised and prioritized, it should be presented to the school committee for its approval and direction. It should then be presented and discussed at faculty meetings, placed on the district website, and distributed to the press, and copies should be made available to the public. It is further recommended that the superintendent and the other central office administrators visit the schools regularly to observe teaching and learning and to gain information firsthand on progress being made toward the goals.

Furthermore, the new superintendent should obtain periodic feedback at administrative council meetings about movement toward attainment of the DIP goals. The superintendent should report on progress made toward attainment of the DIP goals at school committee meetings at the beginning, middle, and end of the school year. Finally, it is suggested that the school committee consider incorporating progress on attainment of the goals in the DIP as one factor in the yearly evaluation of the superintendent.

It is further recommended that a similar process and procedure be used with the School Improvement Plans. The superintendent, or a designee, needs to make certain that the goals in the SIPs are aligned with the goals in the DIP. Each principal should give regular updates to the superintendent, the school's staff, the school site council, and the parents about progress made toward attaining the SIP goals. Also, the superintendent should hold the principals accountable

for attaining the SIP goals by detailing the progress made toward each goal in the yearly evaluation of every principal.

By setting and prioritizing goals for the district and aligned goals for the schools, publicizing those goals, monitoring and reporting progress toward them, and holding administrators accountable for attaining them, the district will ensure that all district staff are working in a coordinated fashion toward the same ends and that the school committee and larger community are informed of what the priorities in the district are and what still needs to be done to accomplish them. This will benefit the district both by accelerating improvement of student achievement and by gaining support for improvement initiatives from the community at large.

The district should establish a continuous cycle for curriculum development and revision, redefine the roles of Haverhill’s curriculum leaders in conducting this process, and create the conditions to enable them to fulfill their responsibilities.

Haverhill has not yet implemented a continuous cycle of curriculum development and revision. The district remains in the design phase, a significant issue given that proficiency rates in the district lag considerably behind those for the state and given that the district did not make Adequate Yearly Progress for all of its subgroups or in the aggregate in ELA or in mathematics in 2009. The review team identified two constraints on the district’s progress in this area: 1) a misconception by the larger community, including the school committee, that the production of the curriculum maps had completely satisfied the need for curriculum development and 2) erosion of capacity by the elimination and consolidation of key curriculum leadership roles: a full-time K-5 curriculum supervisor position has been eliminated, a K-5 social studies curriculum supervisor position has been vacant for two years, and all of the remaining curriculum leaders have multiple responsibilities. The team found compelling evidence in district documents, district results, and interviews with those in curriculum leadership roles that those roles cannot be performed as currently constituted. Most of the current leaders have neither the time nor the resources to perform effectively in their roles.

At the same time, district curriculum supervisors identified a number of pressing and unaddressed curricular needs—for instance, revision of the kindergarten through grade five mathematics curriculum culminating in the replacement of a mathematics program that is not based on the standards in the state curriculum frameworks; revisions in both the elementary and middle school science curriculums, in part to increase laboratory experiences and provide more hands-on instructional materials at the middle school level; and establishment of a replacement cycle for textbooks that are often badly outdated and in such short supply that students have to share them and cannot bring them home.

Central office leaders should help educate the community about the primacy of curriculum development and revision in improving student achievement through presentations to the school committee and other groups. Haverhill’s curriculum leaders demonstrated understanding of their content areas in interviews with the review team and in their written proposals and plans for the

district. The review team encourages Haverhill to make the fullest use of their knowledge and strengths. The district should strongly consider redefining their roles in order to calibrate them for success. For example, extending their responsibilities to K-12 and providing them with adequate time to address needs at all three levels are two steps that should be given serious consideration. It should also consider enhancing overall support and resources—including time—for curriculum development and review in order to ensure their quality and effectiveness.

In sum, Haverhill should enable the district's capable curriculum leaders to create and conduct a systematic curriculum development and renewal process. This process will result in definitive student learning expectations and a consistent progression in each subject area, within and across grade levels and schools. The continuous review cycle will facilitate improvement of teaching and learning, while helping the district to meet emergent student needs and changing educational requirements with the most strategic and responsible use of resources.

The district should increase capacity for active classroom supervision in order to raise the level of teachers' instruction and the expectations for students' learning.

Haverhill's elementary and middle school principals and the district's curriculum supervisors told the review team that their multiple responsibilities limit the time available for helping teachers to improve their instruction and make it difficult to focus on methodical supervision of professional staff. Teachers confirmed that they rely more on collegial than supervisory support because their supervisors are often too busy. Although Haverhill's classrooms were generally well-managed and orderly, especially at the elementary and middle school levels, in the team's observations of district classroom instruction it was often teacher-dominant, with an accompanying low level of student participation and engagement.

Teachers typically did not promote broad involvement with their questioning, and students were rarely requested to explain their reasoning or engage in higher-order thinking such as applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating. Instruction was often whole-class with little differentiation of activities, materials, methods, and outcomes. Although the review team observed a smaller number of classes at the high school than at the elementary and middle school levels, in the sample of high school classes observed there was strikingly little evidence of rigor, challenge, and high expectations for student learning.

Haverhill needs to increase district-level staffing so that its principals, supervisors, and coaches have the support and time they need to help teachers develop a wider repertoire of skills and strategies. Many teachers told the review team that they were receptive to learning promising practices and techniques and had regard for their principals and supervisors. They regretted that the opportunities to work directly with them to improve teaching and learning were limited.

The district might also consider facilitating informal collegial support by arranging for teachers to observe in each others' classrooms. This would allow a teacher attempting to learn a new technique or promising practice to observe a teacher with mastery.

Finally, the district might consider providing teachers with common planning time, although this will be a challenge given the loss of art, music, and other specialist subjects at the elementary and middle school levels.

Active supervision by the district's instructional leaders will help Haverhill's teachers provide for a wider range of learning needs and differences in their classrooms, while raising the learning expectations and outcomes for all students. It will also enable the district to accommodate and increase the number of its accelerated learners.

The Haverhill Public Schools should develop a benchmarked, formative, and summative assessment system for all core subjects districtwide and use multiple sources of assessment data to inform decision-making about curriculum and instruction.

While steps have been taken and gains have been made in assessment since the last EQA report in 2006, the district still lacks key components for success: limited, prioritized, and clearly communicated goals, common teaching materials, common formative and summative assessments, trained staff, and focused time for teachers to collaborate in the collection and analysis of assessment data. Both the use of assessments and the analysis of assessment data are inconsistent across schools.

The district is advised to use the model found in its elementary literacy program to develop a more complete and balanced assessment system in other core content areas. A more coherent and consistent assessment system for Haverhill should include the following components:

- Common teaching materials aligned to state frameworks and implemented appropriately across schools, grade levels, and/or courses;
- Common benchmark, formative, and summative assessments aligned to teaching materials and state frameworks;
- Needed professional development for teachers and leaders to gain expertise in analyzing assessment data and using it (and the X2 database) to guide curriculum revisions and inform instructional improvement;
- Analysis of student assessment data in order to better understand students' strengths and weaknesses, to provide appropriate and adequate learning supports to students, and to compose flexible learning groups so that class work and assignments meet students' class time, remedial, and enrichment needs;
- Time for teachers and leaders to meet in grade-level and subject-level teams to discuss student achievement data and student needs;
- Adequate and appropriate assessment of the district's growing subgroup of ELL students; and

- More authentic forms of assessment such as culminating projects, portfolios, and performances in order for students to demonstrate integration and application of knowledge and skills.

Haverhill's development of new assessment systems can help initiate and ensure a cycle of continuous improvement in the district if they are used consistently. New assessment systems are most likely to be developed and then used consistently if assessment becomes a multi-year priority, linked to curriculum and instruction, and supported by adequate resources.

The district should make professional development a priority, supported by adequate financial resources and scheduled during appropriate release time. In order to advance student achievement, it should prioritize topics focused on supporting and sustaining the District and School Improvement Plans, data-based instructional improvement and curriculum development, and the implementation of research-based instructional practice.

Support for and the effectiveness of professional development in Haverhill have continued to decline since the 2006 EQA review. In 2009 the amount spent per teacher on professional development was approximately 20 percent below the statewide per-teacher figure. The district's professional development calendar provided only one full day of in-service programming and no early release time during the 2009-2010 school year, and funding is lacking to reimburse staff for out-of-district offerings. The absence of systematic linkage with district priorities and goals has resulted in a district professional development program that is fragmented, overly broad, and unfocused. In addition, it is insufficiently focused on research-based practices and insufficiently informed by program assessment, staff evaluation, and student achievement data. Both administrators and teachers indicated that the present professional development program, with the exception of training for all elementary teachers in the Fountas and Pinnell benchmark assessment system, cannot adequately support the needs of teachers and students.

The review team recommends that the district provide significant additional resources, including financial support and regularly scheduled time for in-service opportunities, to promote the core professional development goals of the district. Furthermore, the district should narrow the professional development program's current fragmented, overly broad scope of topics by concentrating attention and resources on fewer and more clearly defined initiatives closely aligned with and supportive of the district's prioritized and documented goals. Annual districtwide professional development goals, objectives, and topics and related implementation strategies should be clearly articulated in the District Improvement Plan (DIP), and each School Improvement Plan should be carefully aligned with the DIP. Each individual staff member's professional development plan should, in turn, be aligned with district and school goals. Progress in achieving professional development goals should be closely monitored and assessed at both the district and school levels. Also, Haverhill's professional development program should be more directly linked to regular and systematic program assessments, research-based professional practices, the staff evaluation process, and student achievement data.

Once the professional development program has been narrowed and aligned with district priorities and provided with needed additional resources, it will significantly enhance the knowledge and skills of the professional staff and promote improved academic achievement for all learners across the district.

The district’s teacher and administrator evaluation policies and practices should be redesigned to fully align with regulatory requirements and to promote individual professional growth, improved overall staff effectiveness, and enhanced learning outcomes for all students.

In the great majority of cases, administrators’ evaluations are not completed annually, as required by state regulations at 603 CMR 35.06. They are not clearly aligned with the “Principles for Effective Administrative Leadership” as is also required by those regulations, lack supporting evidence and detail, and rarely contain any meaningful suggestions to promote professional growth or improve student achievement. Compensation and continued employment are at best only loosely linked to formal measures of effectiveness such as improvements in students’ academic performance or other relevant school data. Principals’ evaluations are not apparently linked to progress in implementing the School Improvement Plan.

Similarly, teacher evaluations only loosely aligned with the “Principles of Effective Teaching” in state regulations, are often lacking in descriptions of instructional details, and seldom contain specific suggestions for professional growth or recommendations for improving instruction. All 45 teacher evaluations reviewed, randomly selected from all of the district’s schools, had a “Satisfactory” rating for every indicator. The review team found no evidence of any current or previous use of a Performance Improvement Plan, as required under the (now expired) teacher contract for any teacher with professional teacher status who receives a summative rating of “Unsatisfactory.”

Some principals indicated that they feel constrained by past contract language and by the evaluation tools, for instance in being limited to announced visits to classrooms. Both teachers and principals alluded to a culture that discourages focusing on teachers’ shortcomings or holding them accountable for improved student learning.

The district’s evaluation policies and practices should be reviewed and revised to more closely correspond with regulatory requirements as well as the goal of the Education Reform Act of 1993 of making evaluation processes more rigorous and comprehensive. According to 603 CMR 35.06(1)(c), the superintendent is responsible for ensuring that all evaluators have been trained in and practice the principles of supervision and evaluation. The review team recommends that this be made a priority in Haverhill in order to enhance the supervisory skills of administrators and make evaluations that are genuinely descriptive, informative, and instructive the norm in the district, instead of the exception. The district should implement a more rigorous, comprehensive, and professional staff evaluation process that will become an essential tool with which to

effectively monitor, accurately assess, and meaningfully improve teaching and learning across the district.

Steps should be taken to ensure that administrators' evaluations are written annually, that they include information that is detailed and instructive, and that they make clear and specific recommendations that can be used to promote administrators' professional growth and enhance their overall administrative proficiency. The Massachusetts "Principles of Effective Administrative Leadership" should serve as the comprehensive framework by which the district supervises and evaluates the performance of its administrators. Compensation and continued employment should be clearly linked to multiple kinds of evidence of effectiveness, including improvement(s) in student academic achievement, staff performance, and other relevant school data, including progress in implementing both School and District Improvement Plans.

The review team also recommends that the district undertake a thorough review of its current practices and policies for evaluating teachers in order to improve the evaluation system and enable it to better assist and support teachers, enhance their competencies, and hold them appropriately accountable for student achievement. Specifically, the review team recommends that the district consider the following: (a) changing previous contract language to allow supervisors to conduct both announced and unannounced classroom visits; (b) revising the summative evaluation instrument to enable evaluators to write comprehensive teacher assessments that include substantial information, supporting evidence, and specific recommendations that are clearly aligned with the state's "Principles for Effective Teaching"; and (c) expanding the three-category rating system (Satisfactory, Improvement Recommended, Unsatisfactory) that currently limits the ability of administrators to rate staff performance accurately and fairly.

The primary purpose of the regulations at 603 CMR 35.00 is to ensure that school districts implement a rigorous and comprehensive evaluation system that will enhance the professionalism and accountability of teachers and administrators and assist all students to perform at high levels. The review team believes that its recommendations will enable the district to establish a significantly enhanced evaluation process that will promote effective teaching and administrative leadership in the Haverhill Public Schools.

To raise the very low proficiency rates of the district's special education and ELL students, the district should prioritize restoring the appropriate number of staff to provide these students with the services necessary to comply with the law and meet their educational needs. The superintendent, assistant superintendent, and ELL program director should meet frequently with the appropriate ESE staff to work together to improve the education, programs, and services provided to English language learners.

The financial crisis that the district has faced for the last several years has resulted in inadequate service provision for its special education and ELL students. Staff positions have been eliminated regularly in the last few years, leaving a skeletal system of support for these students.

The lack of special education staff means that the district cannot effectively use the inclusion model for students with Individualized Education Programs. Because of lack of training and lack of support from special education staff, regular education teachers are ill-equipped to handle the large number of special education students in their classes. Because of another serious deficiency in staffing, ELL students in only 10 of the district's 15 schools receive ESL instruction, while at other schools there are not enough qualified ESL staff to serve the needs of all of the ELL students. Leadership and clerical support for the ELL program are also stretched or inadequate; in general, the scarcity of support services is compounded by the doubling of the roles of many principals and supervisors, including the co-supervisor of the ELL program and the special needs coordinator for grades 9-12.

The district finds itself in a situation where it is not providing essential and legally required services for these two groups of students. Meanwhile, the 2009 proficiency rates for Haverhill ELL and special education students on the ELA and mathematics MCAS tests ranged from 4 percent to 16 percent; these rates were markedly lower than the proficiency rates of their peers in these subgroups statewide. (See Table 4 above.)

Restoring the appropriate number of staff to be able to provide adequate services to special education and ELL students will allow the district to meet legal requirements and will also be the indispensable first step in improving the achievement of these students, who have a right to a better education than they are now receiving.

The district should develop and implement a plan to address its high rates of student absence, especially at the high school level, as well as the high dropout rate in grades 9-12. The plan should include close monitoring of student attendance, early identification of potential dropouts, and support for at-risk students. The district should also address issues of teacher attendance and teacher turnover that may be contributing to student attendance and dropout problems.

Close monitoring of student absence from school has been inconsistent or lacking because of the lack of appropriate personnel resulting from cuts in administrative staff in recent years and the loss of an attendance officer at the high school in 2008-2009. The attendance rate at Haverhill High School fell steadily over the five school years from 2004-2005 to 2008-2009, from 89.2 percent attendance to 87.0 percent. Furthermore, in 2008-2009 each of the four high school grades had a chronic absence rate in excess of 40 percent.

Students who are chronically absent are at higher risk of failing courses, performing poorly on high stakes testing, and dropping out of school. Haverhill's absentee rates, along with not having a system for early identification of potential dropouts and not having enough support programs in the district to serve all the students who could benefit from such programs, have contributed to a dropout rate that has varied in the last five years from 4.8 percent to 7.5 percent per year but that has been higher than the state dropout rate in every one of those years. According to several administrators, other factors contributing to the district's attendance and dropout problems have

been the district's high teacher turnover rate (17.3 percent in the 2009 school year, compared to the state rate of 12.2 percent) and the high rate of teacher absenteeism that they reported.

Lowering the district's high rates of absence and giving early support to students at risk of dropping out will reduce Haverhill's high dropout rate and increase the achievement of its students.

The district should develop and advocate for adequate multi-year plans for budget, maintenance, and capital improvements that prioritize goals and are based on student achievement needs. In addition, to secure the funding required to support an adequate budget, the district should explore additional strategies such as seeking additional grants, securing a community override of Proposition 2 ½ levy limits, and further consolidating school facilities.

According to interviews with school and city leaders, resources in the city are inadequate due primarily to the Hale Hospital debt; the city must appropriate approximately \$7,000,000 annually to pay this obligation before department budgets can be addressed. The school committee and administration have had to reduce budget requests for the past ten years. The mayor ultimately informs the school department of the amount of money the city is able to contribute, and school administrators revise the budget accordingly.

Overall, the district budget is inadequate, and the district can be described as barely surviving, existing on a day-to-day basis. There has not been a successful override in Haverhill. The voters rejected a debt exclusion override even when they were told that the high school would lose its accreditation. The district relies heavily on grants and other supplemental funding sources to provide normal educational programs and services, and fundraisers and donations are commonplace to pay for many "nuts and bolts" items that should be included in the budget.

There are no multi-year plans in place for budget, maintenance, or capital improvements. Coordination and funding for future maintenance and capital needs projects is lacking. Interviewees stated that there is no formal maintenance plan and that maintenance is reactive rather than pro-active.

Except for the school committee's priority to maintain class size, especially in kindergarten through grade 3, there does not seem to be any student achievement rationale—or any systemwide priorities—for making decisions about the budget.

The city's obligation to pay the Hale Hospital debt will continue for another decade and will continue to have an impact on what monies will be available to fund the operation of the schools. The district needs to look ahead, analyze student achievement data, prioritize its goals based on the needs of all students, and define how it will use the resources available. Prior proper planning allows the district to maximize the effectiveness for its students of a limited budget.

Multi-year plans for budget, maintenance, and capital improvements facilitate the budget development process. The district is able with such plans to be pro-active in allocating the

resources it has. Preventive maintenance and replacement of equipment are scheduled and reduce the necessity of reacting to unforeseen circumstances. Replacement of textbooks and replacement of instructional equipment can be scheduled pro-actively, according to a recommended cycle. Multi-year plans can guide the district not only in what to do and when to do it but also in what needs to be appropriated to do it. Annual enrollment projections and cost-effectiveness reviews of programs and activities make it easier when budgeting to accurately determine the level of funding needed to deliver quality education. The district should implement a review of the cost-effectiveness of its programs, initiatives, and activities, based in part on student performance data and student needs. The district needs to seriously study the cost-effectiveness of the continued operation of the Crowell, Greenleaf, and Walnut Square elementary schools.

The school committee is influenced by groups that come before it to advocate for certain schools, students, and programs. Faced with diminishing federal and state, as well as local revenues, the school committee and the administration need to make decisions based on what is best for all children and not based on what serves the interests of only a segment of the population. Using multi-year plans will assist them in doing so. However, the school committee and district leadership not only need to prepare and present a budget that truly reflects what resources are required to deliver effective instruction to all students, but also need to have a more visible, focused advocacy in support of the schools in order to obtain more funds for them. The children of Haverhill deserve to have an adequate budget for the schools.

Appendix A: Review Team Members

The review of the Haverhill Public Schools was conducted from May 3-6, 2010, by the following team of educators, independent consultants to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Dr. John Kulevich, Leadership and Governance

Dr. James McAuliffe, Curriculum and Instruction

Dr. Linda L. Greyser, Assessment

Dr. Frank Sambuceti, Human Resources and Professional Development

William Wassel, Student Support

Rose DiOrio, Financial and Asset Management

Linda Greyser also served as the review team coordinator.

Appendix B: Review Activities and Site Visit Schedule

Level 3 Review Activities

The following activities were conducted as part of the review of the Haverhill Public Schools.

- The review team conducted interviews with the following Haverhill financial personnel: assistant superintendent for finance and operations, budget and grant analyst, city auditor.
- The review team conducted interviews with the following Haverhill city personnel: mayor, city council president.
- The review team conducted interviews with the following members of the Haverhill School Committee: mayor/chairperson, committee president, four additional committee members.
- The review team conducted interviews with the following representatives of the Haverhill Education Association: president, secretary, first vice-president, second vice-president, clerical unit representative, instructional aide representative.
- The review team conducted interviews and focus groups with the following representatives from the Haverhill Public Schools central office administration: superintendent, assistant superintendent for curriculum and instruction (who is also Title I director), director of special education, human resources administrative assistant, director of technology, .
- The review team conducted interviews and focus groups with the additional following representatives from the Haverhill Public Schools: curriculum supervisor of English Language Arts, grades 6-12; curriculum supervisor of mathematics, grades 6-12.
- The review team interviewed personnel in the following positions, who all hold dual leadership or leadership and teaching roles in the district: curriculum supervisor of English Language Arts, grades K-5; curriculum supervisor for mathematics, grades K-5; director of the alternative school; curriculum supervisor of social studies, grades 6-12; curriculum supervisor of foreign languages, grades 9-12; curriculum supervisor of English Language Learners, grades K-5; director of ELL programs, grades 6-12; curriculum supervisor for science, grades K-5; curriculum supervisor for health and wellness, grades 9-12; supervisor of early childhood education; director of integrated preschool; special needs coordinator, grades 9-12; Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) coordinator; lead teacher science/technology, grades 6-12; ELL and ETF supervisor, grades K-5; co-directors of Reading Recovery; math specialist for grades K-4; middle school math specialist; elementary technology specialist.
- The review team visited the following schools in the Haverhill Public Schools: Bradford Elementary School (K-5), Golden Hill Elementary School (K-4), Pentucket Lake Elementary School (K-4), Tilton Elementary School (K-4), Consentino Middle School (5-8), Hunking Middle School (6-8), Nettle Middle School (5-8), Whittier Middle School (5-8), Haverhill High School (9-12+), and Haverhill Alternative School (6-12+).

- During school visits, the review team conducted interviews with school principals and with teachers in focus groups representing elementary, middle school, and high school teachers.
- The review team conducted 63 classroom visits for different grade levels and subjects across the 10 schools visited.
- The review team reviewed the following documents provided by ESE:
 - District profile data
 - District Analysis and Review Tool (DART)
 - District summary statistics
 - MCAS data, trends, and comparisons
 - AYP data and NCLB Report Card 2009-2010
 - School Growth Profile data and scatter plots
 - Latest Coordinated Program Review Report
 - District Accountability Report 2007 produced by the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA)
 - Staff contracts
 - Reports on licensure and highly qualified status
 - Long-term enrollment trends
 - End-of-year financial report for the district for 2009
 - List of the district's federal and state grants
 - Municipal profiles
- The review team reviewed the following documents at the district and school levels (provided by the district or schools)::
 - Organization chart
 - District Improvement Plan
 - Strategic Planning Draft
 - School Improvement Plans
 - Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP) 2010-2012
 - Three Year Technology Plan, revised January 2010
 - School committee policy manual
 - Curriculum guides

- High school program of studies
- NEASC Report, October 2008, and two special progress reports
- Calendar of formative and summative assessments
- Assessment Template
- Northwest Evaluation Association Information on Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) Assessments, data, and resources
- Copies of data analyses/reports used in schools
- Descriptions of student support programs
- Program descriptions and overviews, 2009-2010
- Student and Family Handbooks
- Faculty Handbook
- Professional Development Plan and program/schedule/courses
- Teacher planning time/meeting schedules
- Teacher evaluation tool
- Job descriptions (for central office and school administrators and instructional staff)
- Principal evaluations
- Randomly selected personnel files

Site Visit Schedule

The following is the schedule for the onsite portion of the Level 3 review of the Haverhill Public Schools, conducted from May 3-6, 2010.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
<p>May 3</p> <p>Introductory meeting with district leaders; interviews with district staff and principals; review of documents</p>	<p>May 4</p> <p>Interviews with district staff and principals; school visits (Tilton Elementary School, Nettle Middle School, Whittier Middle School); classroom observations; interview with union and focus group with parents; review of personnel files</p>	<p>May 5</p> <p>School visits (Golden Hill Elementary School, Consentino Middle School, Haverhill High School): interviews with school leaders; classroom observations; teacher team meetings; teacher focus groups; school committee interviews</p>	<p>May 6</p> <p>School visits (Bradford Elementary School, Pentucket Lake Elementary School, Hunking Middle School, Alternative School): interviews with school leaders; classroom observations; teacher team meetings; follow-up interviews; team meeting; closing meeting with district leaders</p>