

# District Review Report

## Methuen Public Schools

Review conducted May 22-24, 2013

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Center for District and School Accountability  
Massachusetts Department of Elementary and  
Secondary Education

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# Methuen Public Schools District Review Overview

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## Purpose

Conducted under Chapter 15, Section 55A of the Massachusetts General Laws, district reviews support local school districts in establishing or strengthening a cycle of continuous improvement. Reviews consider carefully the effectiveness of system wide functions using the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (ESE) six district standards: leadership and governance, curriculum and instruction, assessment, human resources and professional development, student support, and financial and asset management. Reviews identify systems and practices that may be impeding improvement as well as those most likely to be contributing to positive results.

Districts reviewed in the 2012-2013 school year included those classified into Level 3<sup>1</sup> of ESE's framework for district accountability and assistance in each of the state's six regions: Greater Boston, Berkshires, Northeast, Southeast, Central, and Pioneer Valley. Review reports may be used by ESE and the district to establish priority for assistance and make resource allocation decisions.

## Methodology

Reviews collect evidence for each of the six district standards above. A district review team consisting of independent consultants with expertise in each of the district standards review documentation, data, and reports for two days before conducting a four-day district visit that includes visits to individual schools. The team conducts interviews and focus group sessions with such stakeholders as school committee members, teachers' association representatives, administrators, teachers, parents, and students. Team members also observe classroom instructional practice. Subsequent to the on-site review, the team meets for two days to develop findings and recommendations before submitting a draft report to ESE. *District review reports focus primarily on the system's most significant strengths and challenges, with an emphasis on identifying areas for improvement.*

## Site Visit

The site visit to the Methuen was conducted from May 22-24, 2013. The site visit included 47 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 70 stakeholders, including school committee members, district administrators, school staff, and teachers' association representatives. The review team conducted 3 focus groups with 11 elementary school teachers, 1 middle school teacher, and 15 high school teachers. There were no student or parent interviews on the three-day schedule.

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<sup>1</sup> Districts selected were in Level 3 in school year 2012-2013; all served one or more schools among the lowest 20 percent of schools statewide serving common grade levels pursuant to 603 CMR 2.05(2)(a). The districts with the lowest aggregate performance and least movement in Composite Performance Index (CPI) in their respective regions were selected for review from among those districts not exempt under Chapter 15, Section 55A. A district was exempt if another comprehensive review was completed or scheduled within nine months of the review window.

A list of review team members, information about review activities, and the site visit schedule are in Appendix A, and Appendix B provides information about enrollment, expenditures, and student performance. The team observed classroom instructional practice in 58 classrooms in 5 schools. The team collected data using an instructional inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards-based teaching. This data is contained in Appendix C.

## District Profile

Methuen has a mayor-council form of government and the chairman of the school committee is the mayor. There are seven members of the school committee and they meet monthly.

The current superintendent has been in the position since 2011 and has served in the district for 38 years, beginning as a teacher. The district leadership team includes: the superintendent; assistant superintendent of curriculum, instruction and assessment; business administrator; director of facilities; director of human resources; director of technology; director of special education; and director of grants management and program development. Central office positions were mostly stable in number over the three years before the site visit. The district has five principals leading five schools. The Pleasant Valley School houses pre-kindergarten classes and a before- and after-school program and is led by a director. The other school administrators include 4 upper and 4 lower associate principals at the 4 grammar schools and 4 full-time associate principals and 1 athletic director/assistant principal at the high school. There are 464 teachers in the district.

As of October 1, 2012, 7,055 students were enrolled in the district's 6 schools:

**Table 1: Methuen  
Schools, Type, Grades Served, and Enrollment**

School Name	School Type	Grades Served	Enrollment
Pleasant Valley School	Early Elementary School	PK	34
Marsh Grammar School	Elementary Middle School	PK-8	1,277
Comprehensive Grammar School	Elementary Middle School	PK-8	1,184
Tenney Grammar School	Elementary Middle School	PK-8	1,341
Donald P. Timony Grammar School	Elementary Middle School	PK-8	1,399
Methuen High School	High School	9-12	1,820
<b>Totals</b>	<b>6 schools</b>	<b>PK-12</b>	<b>7,055</b>
*As of October 1, 2012			

Between 2008 and 2012 overall student enrollment decreased by 5 percent, from 7,426 in 2008 to 7,387 in 2008 to 7,230 in 2009 to 7,112 in 2010 to 7,098 in 2011 to 7,055 in 2012. Enrollment figures by race/ethnicity and high needs populations (i.e., students with disabilities, students from low income families, and English language learners (ELLs) and former ELLs) compared with the state are provided in Tables B1a and B1b in Appendix B.

Total in-district per-pupil expenditures were lower than the median in-district per pupil expenditures for 28 urban districts of similar size (5,000-7,999 students): \$11,191 in fiscal year 2011 compared with a median of \$11,722. Actual net school spending has been well below what is required under state law, as shown in Table B2 in Appendix B.

## Student Performance

Information about student performance includes: (1) the accountability and assistance level of the district, including the reason for the district's level classification; (2) the progress the district and its schools are making toward narrowing proficiency gaps as measured by the Progress and Performance Index (PPI); (3) English language arts (ELA) performance and growth; (4) mathematics performance and growth; (5) science and technology/engineering (STE) performance; (6) annual dropout rates and cohort graduation rates; and (7) suspension rates. Data is reported for the district and for schools and student subgroups that have at least four years of sufficient data and are therefore eligible to be classified into an accountability and assistance level (1-5). "Sufficient data" means that at least 20 students in a district or school or at least 30 students in a subgroup were assessed on ELA and mathematics MCAS tests for the four years under review.

Four-and two-year trend data are provided when possible, in addition to areas in the district and/or its schools demonstrating potentially meaningful gains or declines over these periods. Data on student performance is also available in Appendix B. In both this section and Appendix B, the data reported is the most recent available.

### 1. The district is Level 3 because Methuen High is Level 3.<sup>2</sup>

- A. Methuen High is among the lowest performing 20 percent of high schools.<sup>3</sup>
- B. The district's five schools place between the 13<sup>th</sup> percentile and the 46<sup>th</sup> percentile based on each school's four-year (2009-2012) achievement and improvement trends relative to other schools serving the same or similar grades: Marsh Grammar School (46<sup>th</sup> percentile of elementary/middle schools); Comprehensive Grammar School (42<sup>nd</sup> percentile of elementary/middle schools); Tenney Grammar School School (34<sup>th</sup> percentile of elementary/middle schools); Donald P. Timony Grammar School (30<sup>th</sup> percentile of elementary/middle schools);and Methuen High (13<sup>th</sup> percentile of high schools).

### 2. The district is not sufficiently narrowing proficiency gaps.

- A. The district as a whole is not considered to be making sufficient progress toward narrowing proficiency gaps. This is because the 2012 cumulative PPI for all students and for high needs<sup>4</sup> students is less than 75 for the

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<sup>2</sup> Due to the district's Level 3 classification, it received a concurrent determination of need for special education technical assistance or intervention of "Needs Technical Assistance (NTA)." This serves as an indication that while areas of the district's performance may be positive, one or more schools (or, in the case of a single school district, the district as a whole) may be experiencing poor outcomes for students with disabilities and/or are having compliance issues.

<sup>3</sup> A district is classified into the level of its lowest-performing school unless it has been placed in Level 4 or 5 by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education independent of the level of its schools.

district. The district's cumulative PPI<sup>56</sup> is 50 for all students and 44 for high needs students. The district's cumulative PPI for reportable subgroups are: 45 (low income students), 45 (ELL and former ELL students), 34 (students with disabilities), 54 (Asian students), 59 ([African American/Black] students), 45 ([Hispanic/Latino students), 70 ([Multi-race, non-Hispanic/Latino students), and 56 ([White students).

**3. The district's English language arts (ELA) performance is very low<sup>7</sup> relative to other districts and its growth<sup>8</sup> is low.<sup>9</sup>**

- A.** The district met its annual proficiency gap narrowing targets for African-American/Black students; the district did not meet its annual improvement targets for all students, high needs students, low income students, ELL and

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<sup>4</sup>The high needs group is an unduplicated count of all students in a school or district belonging to at least one of the following individual subgroups: students with disabilities, English language learners (ELL) and Former ELL students, or low income students (eligible for free/reduced price school lunch).

<sup>5</sup>The PPI combines multiple measures of performance data (achievement, improvement, and graduation and dropout rates) over multiple years into a single number. All districts, schools, and student subgroups receive an *annual PPI* based on improvement from one year to the next and a *cumulative PPI* between 0 and 100 based on four years of data. A district's, school's or subgroup's cumulative PPI is the average of its annual Progress and Performance Index scores over the four most recent MCAS administrations, weighting recent years the most (1-2-3-4). A cumulative PPI is calculated for a group if it has at least three annual PPIs. If a group is missing an annual PPI for one year, that year is left out of the weighting (e.g., 1-X-3-4). While a group's annual PPI can exceed 100 points, the cumulative PPI is always reported on a 100-point scale.

<sup>6</sup>The cumulative PPI is a *criterion-referenced* measure of a district or school's performance relative to its own targets, irrespective of the performance of other districts or schools. Conversely, school percentiles are *norm-referenced* because schools are being compared to other schools across the state that serve the same or similar grades.

<sup>7</sup>All districts, schools, and subgroups are expected to halve the gap between their level of performance in the year 2011 and 100 percent proficient by the 2016-17 school year in ELA, mathematics, and STE. The Composite Performance Index (CPI), a measure of the extent to which a group of students has progressed towards proficiency, is the state's measure of progress towards this goal. In this report the 2012 CPI is used to compare the performance of districts, schools, and grades in a particular subject for a given year. For districts, for each level of school, and for each grade the CPIs are ordered from lowest to highest and then divided into five equal groups (quintiles) with the corresponding descriptions: "very high", "high", "moderate", "low" or "very low". In their assignment to quintiles single-school districts are treated as schools rather than districts. Quintiles for grades are calculated two ways: using a ranking of all districts' CPIs for a particular grade, and using a ranking of all schools' CPIs for a particular grade. CPI figures derive from the MCAS Report on the Department's School and District Profiles website: [http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/state\\_report/mcas.aspx](http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/state_report/mcas.aspx).

<sup>8</sup>Massachusetts uses student growth percentiles (SGP) to measure how much a student's or group of students' achievement has grown or changed over time. At the student level, student growth percentiles measure progress by comparing changes in a student's MCAS scores to changes in MCAS scores of other students with similar achievement profiles ("academic peers"). Growth at the district, school, and subgroup levels are reported as median SGPs - the middle score when the individual SGPs in a group are ranked from highest to lowest. Median SGPs are reported for ELA and mathematics. In contrast to the CPI, which describes a group's progress toward proficiency based on the group's current level of achievement, the median SGP describes a group's progress in terms of how the achievement of the students in the group changed relative to the prior year as compared to their academic peers. A group demonstrates "moderate" or "typical" growth if the group's median SGP is between the 41st and 60th percentiles.

<sup>9</sup>For ELA trends in the aggregate see Table B4a in Appendix B; for selected subgroups, see Table B5a.

former ELL students, students with disabilities, Asian students, Hispanic/Latino students, multi-race non-Hispanic/Latino students and White students.<sup>10</sup>

- B.** The district did not meet its annual growth targets for all students, high needs students, low income students, ELL and former ELL students, students with disabilities, Asian students, African-American/Black students, Hispanic/Latino students, multi-race non-Hispanic/Latino students, and White students.
- C.** The district earned extra credit toward its annual PPI for increasing the percentage of students scoring *Advanced* 10 percent or more between 2011 and 2012 for all students, Asian students, multi-race non-Hispanic students, and White students, and it did not earn extra credit for decreasing the percentage of students scoring *Warning/Failing* 10 percent or more over this period for any reportable group.
- D.** In 2012 the district demonstrated very low performance in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, overall relative to other districts.
- E.** In 2012 the district demonstrated moderate growth in grades 5, 6, and 7 and low growth in grades 4, 8, 10, and overall.
- F.** Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the district demonstrated potentially meaningful<sup>11</sup> declines in grades 3, 4, 5, 7, and overall. Most of the declines in grades 3, 4, 5, 7, and overall were attributed to its performance over both periods.
- G.** The 2012 performance of Marsh Grammar School (PK-8) is moderate relative to other elementary schools and its growth is moderate. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated potentially meaningful declines in grade 4 in the percentage of students scoring Proficient or Advanced, CPI, and SGP. Most of the declines in grades 4 were attributed to its performance over both periods.
- H.** The 2012 performance of Comprehensive Grammar School (PK-8) is low relative to other elementary schools and its growth is moderate. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated potentially meaningful gains in grade 8 and potentially meaningful declines in grades 3, 4, 7,

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<sup>10</sup> A district, school, or subgroup is considered to have met its target when its CPI is within 1.5 CPI points of the target.

<sup>11</sup> The following changes in measures of achievement and growth, either positive or negative, are potentially meaningful, pending further inquiry: CPI (2.5 points); SGP (10 points); percent *Proficient* and *Advanced* (3 percentage points). Changes are more likely to be potentially meaningful for larger groups of students; higher performing groups tend to demonstrate fewer potentially meaningful changes than lower performing groups; and certain subjects and grade levels are more likely to demonstrate potentially meaningful changes than others. A consistent pattern of potentially meaningful change over several consecutive pairs of consecutive years is more likely to be meaningful than changes from one year to another, whether consecutive or not. In this report, a statement of potentially meaningful change is provided when a district, school, grade level, or subgroup demonstrates three or more instances of declines or gains of the amounts specified above in the CPI, SGP, and percent *Proficient* or *Advanced* over the last four years, the most recent two years, or both. Any instance of decline of one of the amounts specified above (or more) prevents three or more instances of gain from being considered potentially meaningful, and vice versa.

overall. Most of the gains in grade 8 were attributable to its performance over both periods, and most of the declines in grades 3, 4, 7, and overall were attributed to its performance over both periods.

- I. The 2012 performance of Tenney Grammar School (PK-8) is low relative to other elementary schools and its growth is low. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated potentially meaningful declines in grades 5, 7, and overall. Most of the declines in grades 5, 7, and overall were attributed to its performance over both periods.
- J. The 2012 performance of Donald P. Timony Grammar School (PK-8) is low relative to other elementary schools and its growth is moderate. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated potentially meaningful gains in grade 7 and potentially meaningful declines in grades 3, 4, and 8. Most of the gains in grade 7 were attributable to its performance over both periods, and most of the declines in grades 3, 4, and 8 were attributed to its performance over both periods.
- K. The 2012 performance of Methuen High (9-12) is very low relative to other high schools and its growth is low.

**4. The district's mathematics performance is very low relative to other districts and its growth is moderate.<sup>12</sup>**

- A. The district did not meet its annual improvement targets for all students, high needs students, low income students, ELL and former ELL students, students with disabilities, Asian students, African-American/Black students, Hispanic students, multi-race non-Hispanic/Latino students, and White students.
- B. The district met its annual growth for Asian students; the district did not meet its annual growth targets for all students, high needs students, low income students, ELL and former ELL students, students with disabilities, Asian students, African-American/Black students, Hispanic/Latino students, and White students.
- C. The district earned extra credit toward its annual PPI for increasing the percentage of students scoring *Advanced* 10 percent or more between 2011 and 2012 for ELL and former ELL students, African American/Black students, Hispanic/Latino students, and White students, and it earned extra credit for decreasing the percentage of students scoring *Warning/Failing* 10 percent or more over this period for African American/Black students.
- D. In 2012 the district demonstrated very low performance in grades 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, and overall relative to other districts.
- E. In 2012 the district demonstrated moderate growth in grades 5, 6, 7, 8, and overall, and low growth in grades 4 and 10.
- F. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the district demonstrated potentially meaningful declines in grades 3 and 6 in the percentage of students scoring Proficient or Advanced and CPI. Most of the declines in grades 3 and 6 were attributed to its performance over both periods.

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<sup>12</sup> For mathematics trends in the aggregate see Table B4b in Appendix B; for selected subgroups, see Table B5b.

- G. The 2012 performance of Marsh Grammar School (PK-8) is moderate relative to other elementary schools and its growth is low. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated potentially meaningful gains in grade 5 and potentially meaningful declines in grades 3, 4, and 8. Most of the gains in grade 5 were attributable to its performance over both periods, and most of the declines in grades 3, 4, and 8 were attributed to its performance over both periods.
  - H. The 2012 performance of Comprehensive Grammar School (PK-8) is moderate relative to other elementary schools and its growth is moderate. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated potentially meaningful gains in grade 8 and potentially meaningful declines in grades 3, 4, 6, 7, and overall. Most of the gains in grade 8 were attributable to its performance over both periods, and most of the declines in grades 3, 4, 6, 7, and overall were attributed to its performance over both periods.
  - I. The 2012 performance of Tenney Grammar School (PK-8) is low relative to other elementary schools and its growth is low. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated potentially meaningful declines in grade 3. Most of the declines in grade 3 were attributed to its performance over both periods.
  - J. The 2012 performance of Donald P. Timony Grammar School (PK--8) is low relative to other elementary schools and its growth is moderate. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated potentially meaningful gains in grade 8 and potentially meaningful declines in grades 3 and 4. Most of the gains in grade 8 were attributable to its performance between 2009 and 2012, and most of the declines in grades 3 and 4 were attributed to its performance over both periods.
  - K. The 2012 performance of Methuen High (9-12) is very low relative to other high schools and its growth is low.
- 5. The district's science and technology/engineering (STE) performance is very low relative to other districts.<sup>13</sup>**
- A. The district did not meet its annual improvement targets for all students, high needs students, low income students, ELL and former ELL students, students with disabilities, Asian students, African-American/Black students, Hispanic/Latino students, and White students.
  - B. The district earned extra credit toward its annual PPI for increasing the percentage of students scoring *Advanced* 10 percent or more between 2011 and 2012 for all students, ELL and former ELL students, Hispanic students, and White students, and it earned extra credit for decreasing the percentage of students scoring *Warning/Failing* 10 percent or more over this period for ELL and former ELL students.
  - C. In 2012 the district demonstrated very low performance in grades 5, 8, 10, and overall relative to other districts.
  - D. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the district did not demonstrated potentially meaningful gains or declines.

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<sup>13</sup> For STE trends in the aggregate see Table B4c in Appendix B; for selected subgroups, see Table B5c.

- E. The 2012 performance of Marsh Grammar School (PK-8) is moderate relative to other elementary schools. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated potentially meaningful gains in grade 5 in the percentage of students scoring Proficient or Advanced, and CPI. Most of the gains in grade 5 were attributable to its performance over both periods.
  - F. The 2012 performance of Comprehensive Grammar School (PK-8) is moderate relative to other elementary schools. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated potentially meaningful gains in grade 8 in the percentage of students scoring Proficient or High and CPI. Most of the gains in grade 8 were attributable to its performance over both periods.
  - G. The 2012 performance of Tenney Grammar School (PK-8) is moderate relative to other elementary schools.
  - H. The 2012 performance of Donald P. Timony Grammar School (PK-8) is moderate relative to other elementary schools.
  - I. The 2012 performance of Methuen High (9-12) is low relative to other high schools.
6. **In 2012, the district met its annual improvement targets for all students for the four-year cohort graduation rate, the five-year cohort graduation rate, and the annual grade 9-12 dropout rate.<sup>14</sup> Over the most recent three-year period for which data is available<sup>15</sup>, the four-year cohort graduation rate increased, the five-year cohort graduation rate increased, and the annual grade 9-12 dropout rate declined. Over the most recent one-year period for which data is available, the four-year cohort graduation rate declined, the five-year cohort graduation rate increased, and the annual grade 9-12 dropout rate increased.<sup>16</sup>**
- A. Between 2009 and 2012 the four-year cohort graduation rate increased 1.7 percentage points, from 77.0% to 78.7%, an increase of 2.2 percent. Between 2011 and 2012 it declined 1.9 percentage points, from 80.6% to 78.7%, a decrease of 2.4 percent.

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<sup>14</sup> All groups (districts, schools, and subgroups) are expected to make steady progress toward a goal of 90 percent for the four-year cohort graduation rate and 95 percent for the five-year rate by the 2016-17 school year. For accountability determinations in any given year, the cohort graduation rate from the prior school year is used. For example, 2012 accountability determinations for the four-year rate use data from 2011; determinations for the five-year rate use data from 2010. Districts, schools, and subgroups are considered to be on target if they meet the state's federally-approved annual targets in a given year for either the four-or five-year cohort graduation rate, whichever is higher.

<sup>15</sup> Note that the 2012 four-year graduation and dropout rates and the 2011 five-year graduation rate will be used in the 2013 accountability determination; the 2011 four-year graduation and dropout rates and the 2010 five-year graduation rate were used in the 2012 determination. See previous footnote.

<sup>16</sup> For annual dropout rate trends from 2009 to 2012 see Table B6 in Appendix B. For cohort graduation rate trends for the last three years available, see Tables B7a and B7b.

- B. Between 2008 and 2011 the five-year cohort graduation rate increased 3.3 percentage points, from 80.4% to 83.7%, an increase of 4.1 percent. Between 2010 and 2011 it increased 2.2 percentage points, from 81.5% to 83.7%, an increase of 2.7 percent.
  - C. Between 2009 and 2012 the annual grade 9-12 dropout rate declined 0.6 percentage points, from 3.4% to 2.8%, a decrease of 17.6 percent. Between 2011 and 2012 it increased 0.6 percentage points, from 2.2% to 2.8%, an increase of 27.3 percent.
- 7. The district's rates of in-school and out-of-school suspensions in 2011-2012 were significantly higher than the statewide rate.<sup>17</sup>**
- A. The rate of in-school suspensions for Methuen was 6.0 percent, compared to the state rate of 3.4 percent. The rate of out-of-school suspensions for Methuen was 10.3 percent, almost twice the state rate of 5.4 percent.
  - B. There was a significant difference among racial/ethnic groups for in-school suspensions<sup>18</sup>. The in-school-suspension rate was 7.8 percent for African-American/Black students, 2.4 percent for Asian students, 8.3 percent for Hispanic/Latino students, 5.7 percent for Multi-race (not Hispanic or Latino) students, 10.5 percent for Native American students, and 5.1 percent for White students.
  - C. There was a significant difference among racial/ethnic groups for out-of-school suspensions. The out-of-school-suspension rate was 11.1 percent for African-American/Black students, 2.4 percent for Asian students, 15.4 percent for Hispanic/Latino students, 8.6 percent for Multi-race (not Hispanic or Latino) students, 26.3 percent for Native American students, and 8.4 percent for White students.
  - D. There was a significant difference between the in-school suspension rates of high needs students and non high needs students (10.0 percent compared to 3.2 percent), low income students and non low income students (13.3 percent compared to 3.2 percent), students with disabilities and students without disabilities (10.6 percent compared to 5.3 percent), and English language learners and non English language learners (9.5 percent compared to 5.6 percent).
  - E. There was a significant difference between the rates of out-of-school suspensions for high needs students and non high needs students (16.6 percent compared to 5.9 percent), low income students and non low income students (22.0 percent compared to 5.8 percent), and students with disabilities and students without disabilities (15.8 percent compared to 9.5 percent).
  - F. On average students in the Methuen Public Schools missed 3.3 days per disciplinary action<sup>19</sup>, slightly higher than the state average of 3.1.

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<sup>17</sup> Statistical significance based on one sample T test.  $P \leq .05$

<sup>18</sup> Statistical significance for racial/ethnic groups and other subgroups based on Chi Square.  $P \leq .05$

<sup>19</sup> Disciplinary action refers to in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, permanent expulsion, removal by an impartial hearing officer to an alternative setting, or removal by school personnel to an alternative setting.

# Methuen Public Schools District Review Findings

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## Strengths

### *Leadership and Governance*

- 1. Constituency groups, including teachers, city officials, teachers' association representatives, and school committee members, expressed high regard for the superintendent and assistant superintendent describing them as accessible, visible, and committed and loyal to the district and larger community.**
  - A.** Many interviewees throughout the district told the review team that they respected the superintendent because of her assumption of increasingly more responsible roles in the district and proven dedication to both the district and larger community.
    1. The superintendent has served in the district for 38 years, beginning as a kindergarten teacher. She is a life-long Methuen resident whose children attended the Methuen schools. Many interviewees commented on her dedication and capacity. For example, during her tenure as a principal, she agreed to serve as principal of the Timony and Tenney grammar schools simultaneously to help the district conserve in a period of severe financial austerity. Interviewees described these schools as the "two most urban" in the district and challenging to manage effectively. She was asked to assume the role of interim superintendent by the departing superintendent because of her knowledge of the district and familiarity with the requirements of the role. The school committee confirmed her as interim superintendent and subsequently appointed her as the permanent superintendent.
    2. A school committee member said that the superintendent was supported and appreciated by the larger community.
    3. City officials said that they had a good relationship with the superintendent.
    4. Teachers' association representatives said that the superintendent came to know the schools through assumption of positions of increasing responsibility in the district, and most of the students and parents because she was a life-long city resident.
  - B.** Teachers' association leaders said that the assistant superintendent was approachable, candid, and did a great job. As a prime example of her leadership style they cited her successful leadership of a committee whose deliberations resulted in acceptance of an adapted educator evaluation model agreement by the teachers' association and school committee.
  - C.** When members of the teachers' association were asked who the educational leaders in the district were, they identified the superintendent and assistant superintendent and said that they worked very well together.

1. Many interviewees said that the superintendent and the assistant superintendent visited all of the schools regularly and were familiar with their operations, successes, and problems. They said that prior superintendents had not been as visibly active in the schools.

**Impact:** Because the superintendent and assistant superintendent are respected and trusted by teachers, city officials, and community members, the central leadership team has the opportunity to provide the vision and direction to create a District Improvement Plan (DIP) that will be supported by all constituency groups and to make the often difficult decisions it takes to improve student achievement. Based on the good working relationships built by the superintendent and assistant superintendent, the leadership team is positioned to develop a DIP collaboratively that will guide the development of School Improvement Plans (SIPs) and all of the decisions made in the district. The school committee will then be able to base all of its decisions on DIP goals and relevant data.

### ***Curriculum and Instruction***

#### **2. Methuen values the role of instructional coaches in improving teaching and learning, with central office administrators defending the allocation for instructional coaches in the budget. Methuen's instructional coaches work to improve instruction in each of the district's four K-8 grammar schools.**

- A. The position of instructional coach in the Methuen Public Schools was instituted in 2007. In 2012-2013, there were 3 ELA, 4 mathematics and 3 ELL instructional coaches serving Methuen's 4 grammar schools. A full-time ELL coach served 2 schools, another full-time ELL coach hired in January 2013 served 1 school, and a part-time ELL coach served 1 school. The proposed staffing for 2013-2014 includes an additional ELA coach and 2 additional ELL coaches.
  1. The review team was told that instructional coaches have been in the district since 2007, and that they were directed by the principals.
  2. Coaches help to ensure instructional consistency, provide professional development at the schools, model best practices, and in the case of ELL coaches assist with the organization of language testing.
    - a. The superintendent told the review team that she "could not live without the instructional coaches" and described how central office administrators and principals had defended and explained the allocation for them in the budget. She noted that strong advocacy was necessary because the school committee and community were not familiar with the role and contribution of the instructional coaches and placed highest value on maintaining class sizes.
- B. According to teachers, coaches assist in aligning the curriculum to the Common Core, examining student performance data, developing standards-based report cards, and improving teachers' lessons. One middle school teacher said the coach provided her with a "great lesson" on prejudice.
- C. Methuen's instructional coaches provide job-embedded professional development for teachers. One teacher told the review team that her school's coach modeled a "book pass" lesson for her, observed her when she attempted to use the strategy, and provided subsequent feedback.

- D. Instructional coaches play a key role in Methuen’s teacher supervision and evaluation process.
  - 1. At the principals’ direction, instructional coaches provide support to teachers based on the outcomes of the supervision and evaluation process. According to teachers, coaches are trusted by teachers because they are not evaluators.
- E. Methuen’s instructional coaches help to ensure instructional and curricula consistency horizontally across grade levels and schools and vertical coherency of curriculum in the district’s four grammar schools.
- F. According to teachers, the assistant superintendent and the coaches drive improvement in the district.
  - 1. Instructional coaches help teachers discuss and understand student performance data. The coaches disseminate the data within the school. Teachers have the data within a couple of weeks after assessments have been completed. Coaches assist the teachers in graphing the data for the purpose of sharing the information with the grade level team in order to improve instruction. Coaches attend grade level meetings and discuss performance data with the teachers.

**Impact:** The instructional coaches are an investment in improving instruction, curricula alignment, and learning. Coaches are modeling instruction, aligning curriculum, and beginning to help teachers look at and understand data to improve instruction. Without instructional coaches there would be less support for effective instruction and less attention paid to the use of student performance data.

### ***Assessment***

- 3. **In fulfillment of its 2013 DIP goal to improve assessment practices, Methuen is beginning to implement systematic procedures for collecting, distributing, analyzing, and reporting data.**
  - A. The 2013 DIP contains a goal to improve classroom standards-based assessment practices and the use of assessment data for formative and summative purposes. The MCAS tests are the only summative measures administered in the district and the results are used to inform the student learning objectives in School Improvement Plans (SIPs).
    - 1. Administrators and teachers told the review team that the five schools developed their SIPs in the fall through the Performance Improvement Mapping process (PIM). The student-centered goals are based primarily on the student needs identified by the MCAS tests achievement and growth results. Following an initial analysis of district and school MCAS tests results by district administrators, the assistant superintendent of curriculum, instruction, and assessment provides each school with its performance and accountability data. The review team examined a binder prepared by the assistant superintendent containing these data for each school based on the 2012 MCAS tests results.
    - 2. At the four grammar schools, the supervising principals, assistant principals, and instructional coaches meet with grade level teams, and at the high school, the assistant principals, coordinators, and department heads

meet with teachers by department to consider the implications of the MCAS tests results. Special educators, remedial instructors, and English language learner specialists also participate in these discussions. According to district administrators, teachers identify student strengths and weaknesses using three-year trends rather than an item analysis for the most recent year.

3. The school PIM teams develop student learning objectives based on the findings of the grade level or department teachers. The assistant superintendent subsequently reviews these learning objectives with the PIM teams to ensure that they are narrowly focused, clear, and attainable.

a. For example in 2013, the Comprehensive Grammar School had an ELA student learning objective to identify the purpose, structure, and features of written text with various genres to deepen their understanding when accessing more complex texts and the high school had a mathematics student learning objective to build and analyze functions that model a relationship between quantities using multiple representations (link sheet/rule of four) and graphing technology. According to district administrators, each PIM team was to meet with the assistant superintendent in late May 2013 to assess the school's progress toward the accomplishment of SIP goals.

**B.** Methuen has developed an interim formative assessment battery consisting of commercial and local measures. The district considers the battery interim because it intends to use Edwin Teaching and Learning which will provide a flexible tool to create standards-based assessments that can be delivered online or on paper.

1. Methuen administers the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) in kindergarten through grade 2 and the DRA-2 (Developmental Reading Assessment) in kindergarten through grade 4. According to interviewees, these commercial instruments have been administered in the district since 2003-2004.

2. The district also administers locally developed benchmark assessments in English Language Arts (ELA) in grades 3 through 10 and in mathematics in grades 1 through 10. Methuen began development of these formative measures in 2010. The district intends to administer writing prompts in kindergarten through grade 8 in 2013-2014 and score them with rubrics. These writing prompts and rubrics were created by teachers and administrators from 21 school districts in the region, but have not yet been thoroughly reviewed and discussed by district teachers.

**C.** Methuen composed its benchmark assessments from an item bank correlated with the standards of the Frameworks and Common Core. The district created a database which teachers can access to sort the results by multiple fields.

1. Through a vendor, the district accessed a bank consisting of 65,000 test items correlated with the Frameworks and Common Core to compose its benchmark assessments. Also through this vendor, the district created a database for storing and sorting its benchmark assessment results. The results of the DIBELS and DRA-2 assessments will eventually be added to this database. In 2013, Methuen chose a new vendor to provide these services. The new vendor offered more options for the design of the database and greater ease of access.

D. Methuen has developed and implemented standards-based report cards standards for students in kindergarten through grade 6.

1. According to administrators and documentation, a report card task force composed of administrators, teachers, and parents developed standards-based report cards beginning in 2008-2009. The district offered orientation and training sessions for both teachers and parents and revised the report cards in 2010-2011 based on their comments during these sessions and on formal surveys.
2. Methuen phased introduction of the standards-based report cards beginning with kindergarten in 2009-2010, followed by grades 1 and 2 in 2010-2011, grades 3 and 4 in 2011-2012, and grades 5 and 6 in 2012-2013. According to the superintendent, the standards-based report cards were supplemented by letter grade report cards at parental request.

E. Methuen has developed a coherent and comprehensive structure for data management and interpretation.

1. According to the organizational chart and job description, the assistant superintendent of curriculum, instruction, and assessment has overall responsibility for data management and interpretation in the district. The review team was told in interviews that the current and former assistant superintendents were highly regarded as data specialists who provided leadership and direction. Interviewees added that the district director of special education and supervisors of Title I and language acquisition provided particular expertise in interpreting subgroup data.
2. Interviewees told the review team that there was a clear and consistent message from the superintendent and assistant superintendent that data management and analysis were priorities and it was evident that the district had “committed time, personnel, and other resources to these functions.”
3. According to interviewees, the instructional coaches and department heads in the schools helped teachers interpret and use student assessment results. One interviewee said and others agreed that “data functions start[ed] at the top with the superintendent, assistant superintendent and program directors and [went] right down to the individual schools through the principals, coordinators, department heads, and instructional coaches in a clear and direct manner.”
4. Teachers gave numerous examples of how student achievement data coming from the central office was discussed at grade level and department meetings led by the instructional coaches, coordinators, and department heads.

**Impact:** Methuen has infrastructure for data management and analysis including an interim formative assessment battery, technology tools, and personnel with well-defined roles in data management and interpretation at both the district and school levels. This creates capacity for increasingly more effective use of data to improve teaching and

learning. Methuen is positioning itself to use the power of data to plan and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction, improve programs and services, and guide budget development and resource allocation.

### ***Student Support***

#### **4. Methuen High School teachers have maintained excellent attendance despite many disruptions during the renovation of the building.**

- A. High school teachers averaged slightly over 3 days of absence during the 2011-2012 school year. The next closest schools, the Timony and Comprehensive Grammar Schools, averaged a little over six days of teacher absences.
- B. The high school has been undergoing renovation with disruptions from noise, displacement, and a large communal office space in an area originally devoted to maintenance.

**Impact:** During building renovations, Methuen High School teachers have continued to report to school regularly and carry on with the work of instructing students. As a result, the district has been able to provide students the best educational experience possible during construction. In addition, the regular presence of teachers ensures continuity of instruction for students and sets a good example.

### ***Finance and Asset Management***

#### **5. The district's four grammar school buildings are clean, well maintained, and appropriate for their educational purposes. The city and school district collaborated on a renovation of the high school, which was underway during the onsite review.**

- A. The review team visited all school buildings in the district and found the grammar schools to be educationally appropriate facilities, clean, and well maintained. Classrooms had space for varied learning activities and were equipped with SmartBoards and computers, and the buildings had adequate media centers, gyms, playgrounds, and cafeteria spaces.
- B. The school committee has placed a priority on the maintenance of its buildings.
  - 1. School committee minutes indicated that members participated in a walkthrough of schools before they opened in the fall, and members received monthly reports on maintenance issues and projects.
  - 2. Although the city does not have a capital plan that includes school buildings, the district maintains a list of projects such as roofs, chillers for the ice rink, flooring, and equipment. The district completes as many projects as it can afford annually.

3. School and city officials said that they were currently considering \$3.7 million in energy improvements, including insulated roof replacements, to be paid for through savings in utility costs.

**D.** A substantial renovation of the high school was underway during the review team visit.

1. According to documents and interviews, the MSBA approved a \$98,843,630 renovation of the high school, which the review team observed under construction. The building was scheduled to open in 2014.

**Impact:** Because the school committee and city officials have made facilities a priority, the elementary school buildings are up-to-date and well-equipped, and the high school will soon have a fully renovated and modernized facility, with substantial aid from the state.

#### **6. The district and the city have worked together to save on costs in positive ways.**

1. A committee of school and city officials is working on a proposal to consolidate more services.
2. The schools have created some special education programs in house in order to bring back out-of-district special education students and reduce tuition costs.
3. Solar panels are being installed at the new high school to reduce utility costs.

**Impact:** Collaboration among district and city officials can improve understanding between the school side and city side in addition to resulting in cost savings.

## **Challenges and Areas for Growth**

It is important to note that district review reports prioritize identifying challenges and areas for growth in order to promote a cycle of continuous improvement; the report deliberately describes the district's challenges and concerns in greater detail than the strengths identified during the review.

### ***Leadership and Governance***

#### **7. Central office administrators have not created a common definition of effective instruction.**

- A.** Both teachers and administrators said that the district had a common definition of effective instruction referred to as observation "look-fors"; however, the elements they cited in interviews with the review team did not have commonality.
  1. In an interview with the review team, each principal stated different "look-fors" in classroom observations.

- a. The high school principal mentioned “use of time, engagement of students, and “teacher/student discussions.”
  - b. The principal at one grammar school spoke of “mastery objectives posted and stated in kid friendly language, assessment, and smooth transitions.”
  - c. The principal at another grammar school mentioned “small groups/pairs, objectives, and individual work,” while the principal at a third grammar school spoke of “evidence of pre- and post-testing, engagement, and evidence of a plan.”
2. In focus groups, teachers told the review team that observers expected to see certain “look-fors” in every classroom, but the elements they cited varied by school.
  3. When the superintendent was asked about expected instructional practices, she mentioned “objectives, assessments, and posting of student work.”
- B.** The quality of instruction observed by the review team was inconsistent and the quality of feedback to teachers on improving their instruction varied.
1. According to the review team’s classroom observations, the quality of instruction was inconsistent from class to class within a school and from school to school.
  2. In a review of teachers’ evaluations the review team found that feedback to teachers from administrators varied widely in the extent, nature, quality, and focus of the written content.

**Impact:** Because there is no commonly articulated and applied model of effective instruction, teachers and leaders do not have a shared definition for discussing the elements of high quality instruction. Consequently, providing robust feedback to teachers on their instruction and how to improve it is problematic. The quality of instruction varies when administrators and teachers do not have a clear set of expectations for teaching and learning. Feedback to teachers from administrators also varies and professional development cannot be informed by common pedagogical needs identified through classroom observations and walkthroughs.

**8. The district has not developed a systematic approach to align planning and decision-making with the goals and priorities of the DIP.**

- A.** The review team found that the SIPs were not always aligned with the DIP, in part because the SIPs were developed before rather than after the DIP.
1. For example, the high school SIP addresses only the DIP goal on intervention. It does not contain any reference to any other goal in the DIP such as assessment and use of formative assessment results to improve student learning.
  2. The superintendent described the process for development of the SIPs and DIP: After the SIPs have been developed in each school, the assistant superintendent convenes a meeting of all of principals to review and discuss their plans. The SIPs are subsequently used to develop the DIP.

3. Principals described the development of their SIPs as analyzing the data, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and developing goals. They said that they could not consider DIP goals and priorities in the process because the DIP had not yet been developed.
- B.** The school committee has not aligned goals with the DIP goals.
    1. According to interviewees, the school committee did not set goals for 2012-2013.
  - C.** The goals of the DIP and the SIPs do not guide the budgetary decisions of the school committee.
    1. When a school committee member was asked whether members thought larger than themselves in making budget decisions, the response was that each person looked for his or her own priorities in the budget.
    2. The superintendent said that the school committee understood the DIP in a general sense, but member had their own projects that they advocated for in the budget, such as foreign languages and enrichment.
  - D.** The superintendent does not make explicit and direct reference to the DIP in the budget document.
    1. DIP goals do not appear in the budget document.
    2. In the narrative introduction to the budget document, the superintendent does not explicitly describe the relationship between DIP goals and the budget.
  - E.** DIP goals are not considered by the school committee in the evaluation of the superintendent.

**Impact:** SIP goals, school committee goals, and budget decisions are not aligned with the goals of the DIP. Because the DIP does not drive all of the work in the district, much work is uncoordinated. Consequently, the district does not have a robust approach to inform decision-making and drive improvement of student achievement.

### ***Curriculum and Instruction***

The team observed 58 classes throughout the district: 17 at the high school, 17 at the middle or upper school level (grades 5 through 8) and 24 at the elementary or lower school level (kindergarten through grade 4) in the four grammar schools. The team observed 25 ELA classes, 23 mathematics classes, 3 special education classes, 2 ELL classes, and 5 other classes. The observations were approximately 20 minutes in length. All review team members collected data using ESE's instructional inventory, a tool for recording observed characteristics of standards based teaching. Overall data is presented in Appendix C.

- 9. The use of effective instructional practices such as promoting higher order thinking and varying strategies was inconsistent in observed classes.**
  - A.** Appropriate conditions for teaching and learning were observed in most visited Methuen classrooms. Clear and consistent evidence that interactions between teachers and students were positive and respectful was observed

in 95 percent of the classes and that classroom procedures were established to create safe physical environments was observed in 95 percent of the classes.

- B.** However, certain key instructional characteristics were low incident in observed classes.
1. For example, clear and consistent evidence of lessons reflecting rigor and high expectations and students engaged in challenging academic tasks was observed in only 53 percent of the classes.
  2. Clear and consistent evidence of teachers using appropriate and varied strategies that meet students' diverse learning needs and lessons requiring higher order thinking was observed in only 43 and 46 percent of the classes, respectively).
  3. Clear and consistent evidence of teachers conducting frequent formative assessments to check for understanding was observed in only 57 percent of the classes.
  4. Clear and consistent evidence of teachers using technology and students using technology was observed in only 16 percent and 3 percent of the classes, respectively.
  5. Clear and consistent evidence of the display of outstanding student work as exemplars for other students was observed in only 12 percent of the classes.
- C.** Although these instances were not common or typical, the review team did observe some instances of effective instructional practices exemplifying the characteristics described below.
1. *Academic tasks should be rigorous prompting students to evaluate and analyze content to deepen understanding.* In a grade 3 classroom, including 6 special education students and several English language learners, students constructed miniature paper houses. Working in groups of three or four, students measured the perimeters and heights of the structures. Subsequently each group visited a classroom store to purchase furnishings with their predetermined budgeted money.
  2. *Varied strategies are used to ensure access of all students to a lesson. Manipulatives, diagrams, and demonstrations are incorporated to ensure that all students' learning needs are met.* In a grade 4 classroom including some English language learners, students read a story and were asked to illustrate a passage. The students discussed their illustrations in small groups and responded in writing to teacher provided prompts, such as: "Would you want to live forever?" "Would you want to choose your life experiences?" "Why?" The teacher used a Smart Board to present and display model responses.
  3. *Instruction should require students to engage in higher level thinking. Assignments should require students to work collaboratively as well as individually evaluating and analyzing content.* In a grade 8 science class, students were engaged in an engineering project. Working in groups of three or four, students designed and created a car fueled by wind power. They were limited to the materials provided: 3 straws, 4 lifesavers, 1 piece of paper, 2 paper clips, and 50 centimeters of tape. They created a pre-design blueprint before constructing the car. The students were then asked to race their cars and measure the distance traveled by determining the distance the car moved with each puff and how many puffs it would take to make the car travel six feet.

4. *Frequent checks for understanding are used to establish each student's degree of comprehension. Information from the formative assessments is used to modify instruction.* In a grade 8 mathematics class, students graphed ordered pairs (e.g.,  $y = 3x + 2$ ) on a personal white board. The teacher checked for student understanding by occasionally asking all of the students to hold up their white boards so that she could scan and monitor individual student and group comprehension.
5. *Student work reflecting higher level thinking skills that provide insight into student learning of challenging content should be displayed for all to see. The high quality student products can be used as exemplars for students.* In a grade 2 class, student writing samples were displayed as models of the lesson's objectives: writing with a bold beginning, a fact filled middle paragraph, and an exciting conclusion.

**Impact:** Methuen's students present a broad range of learning needs. Diverse learning styles cannot be addressed without the use of varied high quality instructional methods. An instructional repertoire that does not have varied strategies, high expectations and challenging academic tasks, frequent checks for understanding, use of technology, and display of high quality exemplars of student work is sure to miss opportunities for enriched learning, particularly for groups of students who are underperforming.

**10. The use of effective instructional practices was observed to be particularly low in visited classrooms at Methuen High School, the district's Level 3 school.**

- A. Certain key instructional characteristics were observed to be in low incidence in the 17 high school classes visited.
  1. For example, clear and consistent evidence of lessons requiring higher order thinking was observed in 35 percent of the classes
  2. Clear and consistent evidence of students articulating their thinking and reasoning verbally or in writing was observed in 18 percent of the classes.
  3. Clear and consistent evidence of students involved in productive learning routines and engaged in challenging academic tasks was observed in 29 percent of the classes.
  4. Clear and consistent evidence of teachers using varied strategies and questioning techniques designed to meet students' diverse learning needs was observed in 29 percent of the classes.
  5. Clear and consistent evidence of the display of outstanding student work as exemplars for other students was observed in 12 percent of the classes.
  6. Clear and consistent evidence of multiple resources available to meet students' diverse learning needs was observed in 6 percent of the classes.
  7. In 76 percent of the observed high school classes there was no evidence of teachers using technology to enhance learning and in 94 percent of the observed high school classes there was no evidence of students using technology as a tool for learning.
- B. Some examples of ineffective instructional practices in observed classrooms at Methuen High School follow:

1. In a mathematics class, the teacher focused exclusively on procedures rather than concepts. The teacher gave the students numbers to enter into their calculators without providing them the opportunity to evaluate or analyze the data prior to performing the calculations.
2. In a mathematics class, most students were observed to be “passive” as the teacher presented information and solved problems at the board with her back to them. Several students had their heads on their desks.
3. In an English class the teacher asked only literal comprehension questions requiring one word answers and limited her questions to the recall type.
4. In an algebra class the teacher’s questions were at the computational level and the content did not appear to be developmentally appropriate for the time of year.

**Impact:** Learning environments that do not have many characteristics of effective, standards based instruction are not likely to facilitate sustained growth in student achievement. Without more effective instructional methodologies, Methuen High School is unlikely to engage students more fully and improve student achievement.

### ***Assessment***

**11. While Methuen has infrastructure for data management and analysis, the current benchmark and formative assessments are not administered frequently enough for close progress monitoring. Teachers are at an early stage of translating assessment results into instructional plans, and the district does not have a central data team to help coordinate its data functions.**

- A. The DIBELS and DRA-2 are administered two to three times annually to all students. This administration schedule does not conform to the publishers’ recommendations, especially for progress monitoring of students not achieving benchmark standards.
  1. According to documentation and interviews, the DIBELS and DRA-2 are administered to all students subject to assessment in September/October and May/June. Kindergarten students and students not achieving benchmark standards are also assessed at mid-year in January/February. The district schedule does not conform to the publishers’ recommendations for administration of these instruments. According to the publisher’s recommendation, the DIBELS should be administered three times annually to all students. Students identified as Strategic (below benchmarks) should be assessed one to two times per month and students identified as Intensive (well below benchmarks) should be assessed two to four times per month in order to monitor their progress. According to the publisher’s recommendation, the DRA-2 should be administered two times annually to all students and at six week intervals for students identified as struggling readers.
- B. The review team was told that the district-developed benchmark assessments in ELA and mathematics did not address all of the Frameworks and Common Core standards. At the time of the site visit the district intended to revise the benchmark assessments continuously by selecting the items most highly correlated with the

Frameworks and Common Core from the extensive item bank provided by a new vendor. See the Assessment Strength finding above.

1. The district-developed benchmark assessments in ELA are administered to all students in the grades subject to assessment in September/October and May/June for a total of two times annually and the district-developed benchmark assessments in mathematics are administered to all students in the grades subject to assessment at the end of each trimester for a total of three times annually. The district does not monitor the progress of students not achieving standards with formative measures administered during the intervals between benchmark assessments. In 2013-2014, according to information provided by the district at the time of the review, the district was to increase the administration of the mathematics benchmark assessments to the beginning and end of each trimester for a total of six times annually.
  2. In a focus group, elementary teachers agreed that they had difficulty interpreting the results of the district benchmark assessments in ELA and mathematics. One said that because there was no item analysis teachers needed more guidance “to understand the meaning of the results.” Many said that the instructional implications of the data were unclear. High school teachers in a focus group questioned the validity and usefulness of the results of the benchmark tests for educational decision-making. They said that their grades 9 and 10 students did not take the benchmark assessments seriously because the tests “did not count.” One teacher said that he ignored the results and the others appeared to agree.
- C. When administrators were asked whether there had been a shift in the way teachers were teaching based on data, administrators told the review team that teachers were not consistently using the results of the benchmark assessments to plan and evaluate the effectiveness of their instruction and to form instructional groups. According to interviewees, the teachers in one of the four grammar schools were grouping students by strength and need in mathematics for one period each week, but this was not a common practice.
- D. In 58 observed classrooms, the review team found limited evidence of fluid grouping, defined as grouping and regrouping students based on common instructional needs. Students were broken into groups in many classrooms, but most were observed to be working on the same tasks using the same materials.
- E. Methuen does not currently have a district data team to help coordinate data functions and does not have any formal school-based data teams. Central office administrators told the review team there had been a central data team in 2011-2012, but they had found it necessary to disband it in 2012-2013 given the press of their other responsibilities. They went on to say that they hoped to restore the central data team in 2013-2014 because it had the potential to solidify and advance the district’s data initiatives.

**Impact:** Although Methuen has established some important structures and procedures, it is still at an early stage of using data systematically to improve teaching and learning. The district does not monitor student progress closely enough and its benchmark assessments are not being used by teachers to inform their teaching. Teachers do not have a reliable way of assessing student learning throughout the year and constructing re-teaching plans for students not achieving benchmark standards. The data available from current assessment program does not adequately inform

curriculum and instruction in Methuen. As a result, Methuen is limited in its ability to determine the effectiveness of its interventions and to make improvements to instruction and learning for all students.

### ***Human Resource Management & Professional Development***

- 12. Though the district's past evaluative practices did not focus on improving instruction and did not suggest opportunities for professional growth---and challenges remain---at the time of the review the district had recently negotiated an agreement with the Methuen Teachers' Association (MEA) to adopt the state's new educator evaluation system and was working on implementing the new system.**
- A.** In a review of all administrator and 42 randomly selected teacher personnel files, most teacher evaluations reviewed using the former evaluation model were current and informative, but there were few instructive comments intended to promote professional growth.
1. Only 11 of 42 evaluations reviewed were instructive with suggestions to improve instructional practices. In interviews, principals did not mention a common set of components of quality instruction that they looked for when conducting observations and walkthroughs. Expectations varied with the individual observer.
- B.** While all administrator evaluations were aligned with the Principles of Effective Leadership, almost all of the commentary was complimentary rather than informative or instructive.
1. Only 7 of 11 administrator evaluations reviewed were timely; 10 of 11 were signed.
  2. The administrator evaluations reviewed were not informative.
  3. Only 2 of 11 administrator evaluations reviewed were instructive, and the instruction in both instances was vague (e.g., improve communications).
- C.** The superintendent is evaluated on a rubric that contains multiple categories. Each school committee member rates the superintendent on each category. A subcommittee of three school committee members compiles the results and the evaluation is reviewed and discussed in open session and approved. The superintendent's evaluation reviewed for 2012-2013 (i.e., 7/01/2012 to 6/30/2013) was unsigned.
- D.** At the time of the review in May 2013, the district had negotiated an agreement with the teachers' association to adopt the new educator evaluation system (which must be implemented by all districts as of the 2013-2014 school year) and was beginning to train staff.
1. Interviewees told the review team that the required four-hour minimum prescribed training for teachers and specialized instructional support staff began with an orientation for the entire staff by the assistant superintendent and Methuen Education Association (MEA) representatives on April 5, 2013.

2. The review team was told that the professional development council would meet in June 2013 to make plans to focus the released-time days in September and October 2013 on the development of SMART goals.
  3. The required administrator training (11 hours minimum) on the newly adopted rubrics to determine the degrees of proficiency has been scheduled for the summer of 2013 during the Leadership Academy which consists of three full-days (21 hours). Research for Better Teaching (RBT) presenters and the assistant superintendent are to conduct the training. Plans for the administrator rubric and the four types of Educator Plans training will be made as part of this training.
  4. The 2013-2014 opening day professional development session is to focus on evaluation rubrics using the ESE models and assessment.
  5. The November 2013 released-time day is to be devoted to SMART goal development and review team members were told that that all SMART goals and plans should be completed and submitted by November 15, 2013.
  6. The plan moving forward was to have MEA representatives participate in the RBT training with the administrators in the summer of 2013. In the fall of 2013, training for teachers is to take place jointly led by the assistant superintendent and the MEA representatives. Support systems planned to enable teachers to meet expectations and goals that are aligned to the four Standards for Educator Practice include fall trainings and work with instructional coaches and administrators.
  7. In order to ensure that the superintendent's evaluation is based upon three to five district improvement goals (DIP), and that one of these goals is included to assist the school committee and superintendent to collaborate about determining a plan for addressing high priority district needs, the assistant superintendent said that the school committee would be invited to participate in the summer training with the administrators to become familiar with the process. Then, in September 2013, the assistant superintendent plans to train the committee on the process to enable them to develop their own goals. The review team is concerned that this process may be compromised because the current DIP has not been developed in a systematic and inclusive manner as described in the second Leadership and Governance Challenge finding.
- E. The district intends to exempt all high school teachers with professional status from the new evaluation system in 2013-2014.
1. At the time of the review, the district had recently completed adoption of the new educator evaluation system, and teachers had not yet been assigned to a particular plan.
  2. Interviewees told the review team that in order to reach the required 50 percent of the staff to be evaluated under the new educator evaluation system in the first year, the district intended to evaluate kindergarten through grade 8 teachers with professional teacher status, all teachers without professional teacher status,

and all administrators. According to central office administrators, all high school teachers with professional teacher status would continue to be evaluated under the former evaluation system in 2013-2014 because the high school was preparing for an NEASC review.

F. The district is in the planning stages of implementing the new educator evaluation system.

1. The district intends to continue to use administrative walkthroughs to monitor instruction in 2013-2014. Walkthroughs are currently conducted in each school by the principal, superintendent, assistant superintendent, and other district personnel. The observers choose a focus area and make mental notes of their observations which are discussed with teachers in a debriefing session afterwards. The plan moving forward is to conduct the walkthroughs described in the educator evaluation system as a supplement to the current walkthroughs.
2. The district 2013-2014 proposed budget allocates a dean of students to each grammar school to support the implementation of the new evaluation system. The deans would relieve the principals and associate principals of student discipline creating more time for walkthroughs and observations. Interviewees told the team, however, that it was very unlikely that these new positions would be funded in the final budget.
3. Interviewees told the review team that teachers had not yet engaged in self-assessment activities. These activities were planned for the fall of 2013 in grade level teams incorporating the goals from the SIPs. The review team is concerned that before beginning this process, the district will need to address problems associated with the sequential development of the DIP and SIPs. Because the SIPs were originated before the DIP as described in the second Leadership and Governance Challenge finding, the SIP goals do not necessarily correspond with DIP goals.
4. In interviews, review team members were told that student achievement data would be incorporated into the educator evaluation system along with any formative assessment results that might exist. The manner of incorporation would vary by grade level and subject based on student achievement as a starting point. The review team is concerned that the district will likely encounter limitations in this process because it has few valid and reliable district-determined measures of student progress, as described in the first Assessment Challenge finding.

**Impact:** The district has negotiated an agreement with the teachers' association to adopt the new educator evaluation system and planned and begun to conduct related trainings. In order to implement the educator evaluation system successfully, the district must address several foundational weaknesses including the sequential development and alignment of the DIP and SIPs, development of formative assessments that are both valid and reliable, creating more time for administrators to observe, and ensuring that high school teachers with professional status have benefit of the new system. The adoption of the new educator evaluation system will be jeopardized if these constraints are not addressed.

**13. The district professional development council (PDC) determines professional development topics through responses to a survey and feedback from grade level and department meetings. Professional development is not currently informed by DIP and SIP goals and instructional improvement needs from an analysis of teachers' evaluations. As a result, the program is not specifically targeted to needs in order to improve teaching and learning.**

- A.** Professional development activities are planned in a collaborative process conducted by the PDC which functions as an advisory group.
1. According to interviews and documentation, the PDC surveys the faculty; recommends topics for courses and workshops; helps to plan the full-day in-service in November; annually assesses the Methuen Public Schools professional development program; and revises the professional development program guide yearly.
  2. The PDC includes at least one member of each school's leadership council, two regular education teachers from each school, three members-at-large from the guidance and special education staffs, three members-at-large from among the specialist teachers, two members-at-large from among the faculty with five or fewer years of experience, one member-at-large from the executive board of the MEA, and the assistant superintendent. The PDC conducts a minimum of six meetings annually. Training is held each fall for new members. Feedback is solicited at faculty meetings and information is presented on PDC decisions.
  3. The district professional development program includes: graduate-level courses for PDPs provided onsite without expense or at a modest \$200 charge for credits from Salem State College; after-school workshops and seminars designed and presented by teachers for colleagues; off-site workshops and conferences; and summer sessions in curriculum design and lesson-planning. The district partners with Endicott College and the Northeast Consortium to provide courses for teachers. In a focus group teachers said that the Massachusetts Initiative for Math and Science Institute (MIMSI) with Insight had been "phenomenal" for AP teachers. Summer training has been provided by the Gates Foundation. Also, high school teachers were being trained in the use of iPads in sessions held after school and on weekends.
- B.** According to interviewees, professional development program topics have not been systematically based on DIP and SIP goals and teacher evaluation data, although changes were planned.
1. Interviewees told the review team that in 2013-2014 professional development topics would be based upon educator evaluation results, student performance data, survey data, and a variety of ad-hoc reports generated from software.
  2. District administrators added that they intended to align professional development topics directly with district (DIP), school (SIP), principals', and teachers' goals.

**Impact:** Unless the district bases professional development topics on DIP and SIP goals and uses the results of educator evaluations and student performance data to inform professional development in a focused way, the use of professional development to improve teaching and learning will be compromised.

**14. A problematic practice has been providing the school committee with the names of all candidates who interview for positions.**

- A. In interviews, district personnel said that the names of all candidates who are interviewed for positions in the district, including teachers, administrators, and secretaries, were provided to the school committee.
- B. In a school committee interview, it was confirmed that the committee received the names of all candidates interviewed for positions in the district.

**Impact:** It is not within the purview of the school committee or necessary in terms of the committee's functioning to be provided with the names of all candidates interviewed for every position vacancy. The practice provides an unnecessary diversion from the committee's primary responsibilities and might well diminish the size of applicant pools of available candidates who currently work outside of the district.

***Student Support***

**15. The district provides little differentiated instruction in regular education classrooms (Tier 1) and limited supplemental remediation within or outside of the regular education classroom (Tier 2). These limitations affect all Methuen students.**

- A. According to the MCAS tests results, overall proficiency in ELA is flat and there is a growing proficiency gap in math in Methuen. Also, the rate of proficiency for some student subgroups is flat or decreasing and the gaps between district subgroups and their state peers grew in many cases between 2008 and 2012.
  - 1. For example, 56 percent of students in Methuen achieved proficiency in ELA in 2008 and in 2012. In math 46 percent of students overall achieved proficiency in 2008 compared with 36 percent in 2012.
  - 2. In 2008, 37 percent of students from low-income families achieved proficiency in ELA compared with 41 percent of their statewide peers, while 28 percent achieved proficiency in math compared with 33 percent of their peers across the state. In 2012, 40 percent of students from low-income families achieved proficiency in ELA in 2011-2012 compared with 50 percent of their statewide peers, while 27 percent achieved proficiency in math compared with 38 percent of their peers across the state.
  - 3. Fewer students are reaching Advanced and more are at Warning, according to ESE data. The proficiency gap grew between 2008 and 2012 for some subgroups. In ELA, district schools have low growth and low achievement. In mathematics, district schools have moderate growth and low achievement.
    - a. In 2008, 62 percent of Asian students achieved proficiency in math while 59 percent achieved proficiency in 2012.
- B. A substantial percentage of Methuen's student population are in the high needs subgroup (51 percent in 2012-2013), but most do not receive supplementary services other than Title I in kindergarten through grade 2. These students usually receive all of their instruction in mainstream classrooms.

- C. Tier 1 support services for all students are hampered by an absence of reliable assessment data, staffing, materials, and training. The range and quality of the provisions are inconsistent in the schools.
1. As described in the Assessment challenge finding, the district is using benchmark assessments in ELA and math that do not address all of the standards in the frameworks ; teachers are not making sufficient use of the benchmark assessments; and the district is not ensuring that teachers monitor student progress with formative assessments in between benchmark assessments.
    - a. Interviewees told the review team that assessment data is used only informally at grade level teams when discussing interventions for students. More standardized and formal data such as DRA and DIBELS results are considered at the Student Support Team (SST) meetings. However, both of these assessments are only administered twice per year in October and May and in January for students at risk. This frequency is not useful for identifying students’ instructional needs and monitoring their progress.
    - b. The Title I program uses running records for assessment, but this tool relies heavily on teacher observation.
    - c. Students are placed in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills and ELA MCAS preparation at the high school, based on the recommendations of grade 9 teachers and guidance counselors. Interviewees did not cite more specific criteria, such as the MCAS tests or benchmark tests results, in the decision-making process.
  2. Needed modifications and interventions are difficult to deliver in the absence of sufficient trained staff.
    - a. The Marsh Grammar School, a non-Title I school, offers remedial reading services based on common formative assessments designed by teachers; however, in the other schools interventions are delivered by retired teachers through tutoring. The Comprehensive Grammar School has small group tutoring in the lower grades and individual tutoring in the upper grades, all delivered by retired teachers. The Timony upper school has mathematics tutors assisting students for one-half hour each day on three days per week each during an intervention block. While retired teachers are licensed, they are ancillary staff who do not always have time designated to consult with the classroom teachers of the students they serve. In addition, they do not always attend professional development trainings on program revisions and new practices.
    - b. Administrators said that they recognized that Tier 1 interventions were an area of “weakness” that needed to be solidified.
    - c. Administrators said that because the category training offered teachers was voluntary, few teachers took advantage of it. As a result, when English language learners (ELLs) made the transition to the regular classroom, they frequently did not have benefit of teachers trained in ways of making content more accessible.
    - d. In interviews, high school teachers said that although there were program assistants in the classrooms for students with disabilities, the classrooms did not have any co-teachers. Support staff may not be

provided for English language learners (ELLs), except for an occasional upper level class where the ELL teacher is present with the regular education teacher.

- e. The review team saw few lessons in observed classrooms where teachers differentiated instruction. Differentiation enables students with diverse needs and competencies to access appropriate instruction. It is an important Tier 1 strategy that accommodates students with disabilities and ELLs in the mainstream classroom and assists students who are at various levels of proficiency.

3. Instruction is impeded by an absence of technology and materials.

- a. Fast Forward, a software program purchased and used by the special education department, is also used by teachers at some schools to enhance literacy instruction. Lexia is another software program used for ELA enhancement by teachers at the Comprehensive Grammar School. These are the only software programs generally available in the district.
- b. High school teachers said that students did not have enough current texts in history and science. They added that there were not enough copies of novels for everyone in a class to take home and that in accordance with the new Common Core standards in ELA the district needed more non-fiction materials. Teachers also mentioned an absence of technology and materials to enhance presentations. Some of this will be corrected by the high school renovation.
- c. Although the high school has purchased iPads and trained teachers to use them, only those on the grade 9 campus have benefited. At the high school, teachers said that they could not use the iPads because there was nowhere to store them and the bandwidth was insufficient to support their use. In general, teachers spoke about an absence of technology for staff and limited access to the media center for students who did not have a computer at home.

4. Administrators said that the reliability of student referrals to the Student Support Team (SST) varied by school. Some teachers were on target in their referrals. In other cases there were too many referrals; teachers were not taking appropriate steps, such as consulting with coaches, before making a referral to the SST.

- C. Administrators acknowledged that there were few Tier 2 supports for students beyond grade 2. Even when students were identified as needing supplementary services, the district did not have the interventions or the staffing to deliver the services. Some students were referred for team evaluations under the special education law because of absence of other services.
- D. The review team found few Tier 2 supportive programs and given the district's limitations in measuring student progress with benchmark assessments, it is possible that some students should be receiving more services than are currently provided.
  - 1. A higher proportion of English language learners (ELLs) in Methuen are making progress in English language acquisition than their peers statewide (69 percent compared with 63 percent in 2012), according to ESE data. And ELLs have a lower chronic absence rate (12.2 percent compared with 17 percent in 2011); however, generally a lower proportion achieve proficiency on the MCAS tests than ELLs statewide. In 2012, 8 percent of

ELLs in Methuen achieved proficiency in ELA, compared with 23 percent of their statewide peers, and 8 percent of ELLs achieved proficiency in math, compared with 24 percent of ELLs statewide.

2. The proficiency gap for Methuen students who have exited the ELL program is growing rather than narrowing and the gap between former ELLs and their state peers grew between 2008 and 2012. Both ELLs and former ELLs are affected by the absence of category or RETELL-trained instructors to support learning in the mainstream classroom, according to interviewees. According to the district exit protocol for the ELL program, students have usually been released at Level 4 of the MEPA and sometimes at Level 3. State guidelines have recommended releasing students at Level 5.
  - a. In 2008, 29 percent of former ELLs in Methuen achieved proficiency in ELA, compared with 44 percent of their peers across the state, while 25 percent achieved proficiency in math, compared with 42 percent of their statewide peers.

According to 2012 ESE data, 27 percent of former ELLs in Methuen achieved proficiency in ELA, compared with 59 percent of their statewide peers, while 21 percent achieved proficiency in math, compared with 50 percent of their peers across the state.

3. Administrators acknowledged that the proficiency gap for former ELLs was widening and explained that teachers may have believed that once ELLs were released from the program, there would no longer be a need to provide for their English language development in the regular classroom. The review team did not see language objectives displayed and word walls in most observed classes, indicating that these English language development tools were not in common use.

**Impact:** An absence of sufficient interventions to accommodate a wide range of student differences within the regular education program, of adequate materials, of adequate benchmark assessments, and of sufficient support staff to implement tier 2 interventions, is hindering many students in Methuen from achieving proficiency.

- When teachers are unable to monitor student progress and challenges with accuracy and definition, they not know where to begin to plan instruction.
- When the district has not ensured that its staff has the training necessary to implement modifications and accommodations, student needs cannot be addressed in a timely and cost-effective manner in the least restrictive environment. Absence of training results in a culture where teachers believe that any student not performing up to standard should be referred to specialists.
- When teachers do not have the texts, software, and other materials needed to implement differentiated instruction or Tier 2 interventions, students needing services are often referred to the SST team. This trend may result in unnecessary referrals to the special education department for team evaluations.

**16. While remedial services are expanding at the high school, some students are denied full access to the mainstream curriculum based on the Frameworks and Common Core curriculum and others are prevented from taking advantage of appropriately rigorous offerings.**

- A. The high school has added 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills and Math Enhancement courses to enhance remediation. These services provide extra preparation for the MCAS tests and both are expanding from semester to full year courses. Tutoring in science is offered during the school day.
- B. A six-week MCAS remediation program has been scheduled after school. While these services were originally intended for all students who did not achieve the competency determination on the MCAS tests, they are now focused on ELLs and students with disabilities, according to teachers and administrators.
- C. The district does not provide a late bus making it difficult for students to attend after-school programs, receive help from their teachers, use the computers in the media lab to complete assignments, and participate in extracurricular activities. In recognition of this problem administrators have scheduled an enhancement block at the grade 9 campus; however, it is of short duration and there are many students needing services.
- D. According to administrators, the Horizons program is a dropout prevention program for grade 9 students. Grammar school teachers and counselors recommend at-risk grade 8 students for the program based on academic performance, attendance, and behavior. In this self-contained, substantially separate program, instructors subordinate content to study skills instruction in all core content areas. This results in an absence of access for these students to a full curriculum based on the Frameworks and Common Core.
- E. Grade 9 ELLs have received their education at the main campus of the high school since 2011-2012. In 2013-2014, if a budget request is funded, they will join their peers on the grade 9 campus, a separate building. In order to accomplish this, the district will need to hire an additional ESL teacher. Two additional high school ELL teachers will travel to the grade 9 campus to teach blocks 1 and 2 in order to provide the needed services.
- F. While this initiative to have grade 9 ELLs join their peers depends on funding, the services of the ELL coaches at the four grammar schools will be reduced in order to staff a new grade 8 Spanish program, diminishing the time available to serve ELLs.
- G. The high school has attempted to provide programming for a range of students; however, in several respects it has reinforced a system that does not serve the student body as a whole.
  - 1. The high school offers AP, honors, level 3, and level 2 courses. Level 2 courses are being eliminated except in mathematics and English. Administrators said that all students do better when level 2 and 3 classes are combined.
  - 2. Interviewees told the review team that students were placed in courses according to teacher recommendation in order to ensure the appropriate level and that a formal process was firmly in place. This practice, however, has prevented some students from taking the rigorous courses that they might otherwise choose. Teachers provided instances when a recommendation prevented a student from taking a more rigorous course. They went on to say that students from another culture often had difficulty enlisting parent support for a course change because in their culture teachers' decisions are not questioned.

3. Most AP courses are scheduled with an additional period each day for enhancement. Students go to the cafeteria for a study period and teachers volunteer to help. In addition, there are Saturday sessions for students who wish to spend more time preparing for the AP examination. According to district data, during the 2011-2012 school year, while 647 AP examinations were administered, a majority of students received a minimum qualifying grade accepted by colleges and universities in only 4 classes: Psychology, Physics, Calculus BC, and Spanish language. Teachers told the review team that while AP courses were increasing, level 3 courses were diminishing. Level 3 courses are appropriate to the career goals of many students.

**Impact:** Ways of grouping and leveling students such as some of those being used in Methuen are contrary to educational best practices. Ultimately, some students are deprived of exposure to the full curriculum with the result that achievement levels are lowered. In addition, students receive the message that they are not expected to perform at high levels.

**17. Insufficiently strong attendance policies and enforcement have contributed to chronic absence at Methuen High School with implications for lost credit and graduation.**

- A. The attendance rates at the high school are substantially below the district attendance rate.
  1. The attendance rate in Methuen was 94.6 percent for the 2011-2012 school year while attendance rates at the high school ranged from 90.9 in grade 12 to 91.4 in grade 11 to 91.5 in grade 10 to 92.8 in grade 9, according to ESE data.
  2. Student attendance is recorded on iPass and regular reports are issued. Absences are reported to parents via ConnectEd; however, a letter to parents notifying them of excessive absence is usually not sent until the student has lost credit.
  3. The high school student handbook states that students may not exceed 6 absences per semester or 12 per year. Administrators said that they were considering changes to strengthen the policy; however, a recent measure under consideration to improve attendance would actually increase allowable absences to 6 per quarter, or 24 per year.
  4. According to documents and interviews, teachers are responsible for tracking attendance for the purposes of granting or denying credit.
  5. Although some interviewees said that attendance regulations were enforced, others said that denying credit for excessive absence was not enforced consistently and that only some students suffered any consequences for excessive absence.
- B. According to 2011-2012 ESE data, the percentage of chronically absent students rose incrementally in the district from 13.3 percent in grade 8 to 16.9 in grade 9 to 23.7 in grade 10 to 24.9 in grade 11 to a high of 28.3 percent in grade 12.
  1. ESE defines chronic absence as 10 percent or more of the days enrolled.

2. Interviewees said that many chronically absent students were absent well in excess of 18 days per year.
- C.** Because the attendance rates have not changed much since 2002-2003, fluctuating between 94.2 percent and 94.7 percent, it does not appear that the high school renovation project has had a negative impact on student attendance.
- D.** Graduation rates for some special populations in Methuen are lower than state rates.
1. For 2011-2012, the four-year cohort graduation rate for students with disabilities was 53.7 percent compared with 68.6 percent for their peers across the state.
  2. The four-year cohort graduation rate for English language learners (ELLs) in Methuen was 45.5 percent in 2011-2012 compared with 61.1 percent for their statewide peers. The four-year dropout rate for Methuen ELLs was approximately 5 percentage points higher than that of their peers statewide, 24.2 percent compared with 18.9 percent.
  3. Administrators said that they were unaware of the rates reported by the district for ELLs and students with disabilities and questioned their accuracy.
- E.** The district offers limited options for credit recovery.
1. Students may use NovaNET to make up lost credits either during the summer or in the night school program. NovaNET is a software program of instructionally relevant materials accompanied by formative and summative assessments. In the summer school program, students are scheduled into a 1.5 hour block over the course of 6 weeks.
  2. The ALPHA program allows juniors and seniors who have earned at least 10 credits to work during the day and take courses in the late afternoon. A school liaison monitors their performance on the job. The afternoon educational component runs for three hours on Mondays through Thursdays. ALPHA program students are enrolled at Methuen High School and instructed by day program and retired Methuen High School teachers.

**Impact:** When a school does not consistently enforce its attendance policy, there are several consequences:

- Students do not receive the education that they need to pass high stakes tests, earn credits for graduation, and prepare themselves for college and career.
- Parents are not well-informed and involved in finding solutions to excessive absence.
- Educational rigor is seriously affected by chronic absence. Teachers are in a dilemma for which there is not a good solution: Reviewing in order to bring students who have been absent up to date interferes with the pacing of the curriculum and diminishes instructional time for the other students; not reviewing leaves the returning students lost and disengaged.

- The district is further burdened by the need to provide programs for credit recovery to students who would not need them if the school were more proactive in addressing attendance problems and involving parents.
- Low student attendance limits the ability to raise student achievement.

### ***Finance and Asset Management***

**18. The city has not funded its schools at the required net school spending (NSS) level set by the Chapter 70 state educational aid program since fiscal year 2009, while receiving over \$35 million in annual state aid. The shortfall may make the city take a penalty cut in aid. The district is already spending almost 8 percent less than the median for 29 urban districts of similar size (5,000-7,999 students), \$10,846 per in-district pupil for fiscal 2012 compared with a median expenditure of \$11,815 per in-district pupil for this group.<sup>20</sup>**

- Shortfalls in required NSS in fiscal years 2010, 2011, and 2012 were carried over, increasing the required NSS level each following year. In fiscal year 2012, the district was 6.19 percent below required spending. The district's fiscal year 2013 End of Year Report, due on September 30, 2013, will indicate whether the district increased its spending level to the legally required amount. The fiscal year 2013 budget submitted with the 2012 End of Year Report suggested that the district would be 5.9 percent short, with the school committee appropriation reduced by \$1,865,595 from the year before. When a district is more the 5 percent below required net school spending, the state may penalize it with a cut in state aid the following year.
- The city asked to count its retired teachers' health insurance in NSS, although their 1993 baseline when the Chapter 70 program went into effect did not include this expenditure. In May 2012 the commissioner denied the city's request to include retired teachers' health insurance costs in a recalculation of NSS.
- In fiscal year 2013, the district level-funded out-of-district tuition in order to balance the budget. In past years it carried over a balance in its circuit breaker account to cover unexpected special education costs, but in fiscal year 2013 the carryover together with the circuit breaker balance and revenues will be inadequate to cover projected overruns in special education services and tuition or to provide for unexpected costs in fiscal year 2014. These mandated services have exceeded the budgeted amount by \$1.4 million.
- If the city provides an additional appropriation to cover the tuition deficit and a projected deficit in utility costs, this will increase the net school spending level for fiscal year 2013.
- The city had excess levy capacity in fiscal year 2013 of \$3,806,397 and therefore could increase its levy and spend close to the amount required to meet required net school spending without a Proposition 2 1/2 override.

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<sup>20</sup> See District Analysis and Review Tool Detail: Staffing & Finance, PerPupilSummary tab, available at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/dart/default.html>.

**Impact:** Although a respected leader is in place in the district, the city's underfunding of the schools results in cuts to staffing and programs, as well as ongoing pressure and distraction from improving the education of students.

**19. Net school spending includes expenditures by the municipality in direct support of education, effectively reducing the appropriation required for the school committee. There is some controversy about the city of Methuen's accounting of such expenditures.**

- A. Until February 2013 there was no detailed agreement between the district and the city on how city expenditures, beyond the school committee appropriation, are assigned to net school spending.
- B. When preparing the budget in the past city and school officials have debated and negotiated what city expenditures would be assigned to net school spending.
- C. The auditor questioned \$1,404,456 in chargebacks for health insurance in 2011.
- D. Fiscal year 2013 expenditures by the city on behalf of the district include plowing and repairing sidewalks, field maintenance, and DPW services, even though the school budget includes plowing school properties, the district maintains its own school grounds, and it is charged when DPW employees such as electricians and HVAC technicians do work at the schools.
- E. The city and the schools share the schools' maintenance director, paid by the school department. A transfer of \$92,000 was made from the fiscal year 2013 school budget to cover city custodial services.
- F. Proposed expenditures by the city to be allocated to net school spending in fiscal year 2014 are 6 percent higher than fiscal year 2013 and include expenditures that have typically increased substantially for municipal administration—trash pickup, DPW services, and school resource officers.

**Impact:** If the city is allocating costs to the schools beyond those that are justified, actual net school spending is inflated while the district is starved for funds.

# Methuen Public Schools District Review Recommendations

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## ***Leadership and Governance***

### **1. The leadership team should work together to develop a collaborative approach to creating among all administrators and teachers a common and accepted definition of the elements of effective instruction.**

- A.** Teachers and administrators should work together to develop a framework of what constitutes effective instruction.
  - 1. The district leadership team and school level personnel should build on what they have learned in *The Skillful Teacher* course to have conversations about what constitutes good instruction.
  - 2. A group of teachers and administrators should be tasked with the responsibility of prioritizing effective instructional techniques (see Curriculum and Instruction recommendation below), defining what those look like, and planning how teachers will be supported to use those techniques, then monitored, and finally evaluated.
  - 3. Administrators should collaborate to come to agreement about what they will look for in classroom observations and what kind of feedback they will provide in order to ensure effective instruction. This will necessitate professional development for administrators on how to observe teaching and provide effective feedback.
    - a. *Characteristics of Standards-Based Teaching and Learning: Continuum of Practice* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/dart/walk/04.0.pdf>) is a framework that provides a common language or reference point for looking at teaching and learning. It is part of ESE's *Learning Walkthrough Implementation Guide* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/dart/walk/ImplementationGuide.pdf>).

**Benefits** to the Methuen School District from implementing this recommendation will include collaborative discussion about researched techniques of effective instruction. This will lead to more consistency in the quality of classroom instruction and, consequently, higher student achievement.

### **2. Administrators should collaborate to develop a common and uniform approach to systematic decision-making that includes teachers.**

- A.** The superintendent should work with her leadership team to develop a DIP that will drive the increase of student achievement both in the aggregate and for all subgroups. This plan should then be shared with all constituency groups.
  - 1. All SIPs should directly follow from the DIP and should run from September to September.
    - a. A resource that might be helpful for SIP development is ESE's *Conditions for School Effectiveness Self-Assessment* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/ucd/CSESelf-Assessment.pdf>), a tool for conducting a scan of current practice, identifying areas of strength, and highlighting areas requiring greater focus. The

accompanying *Research Guide* provides a thorough description of research that supports the Essential Conditions. The *Guide* can be used to consider the impact of decisions made to improve schools (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/framework/level4/ConditionResearchGuide.pdf>).

- b. *Emerging Practices in Rapid Achievement Gain Schools* is another resource that can support the identification of school improvement strategies. It is a description of the distinguishing practices of rapid achievement gain schools as identified through a comparative analysis of Level 4 schools (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/sss/assistance/emergingpractices.pdf>).
2. As the district implements the new educator evaluation system in the fall of 2013, every teacher's student achievement goals should be consistent with the SIP.
  3. The superintendent should engage the school committee in renewing the DIP.
    - a. ESE's *District Self-Assessment* is a tool for districts to assess their systems and processes as part of an ongoing cycle of inquiry for continuous improvement (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/review/district/district-self-assessment.pdf>).
  4. The school committee should set goals consistent with the DIP. It should then ensure that all decisions that the school committee makes are in direct alignment with the DIP, including decisions about budget, budget allocations, and policies.

**Benefits** to the Methuen School District from implementing this recommendation will include setting clear educational priorities for embrace by all segments of the teaching and administrative staff as well as other stakeholders. This decision-making process and improvement planning will empower administrators and teachers to work together toward focused, shared goals that are consistent throughout the district. It will give teachers and administrators together the opportunity to focus discussions on each individual's role in raising student achievement.

### ***Curriculum and Instruction***

3. **In order to successfully address the substantial challenges that a diverse population of learners presents, Methuen's educators should agree on a set of effective instructional techniques and the district's instructional leadership team should work together to advance their implementation.**
  - A. It is important that teachers change their instruction to produce greater student success. Changes will come about through professional development, support provided by the instructional coaches, and accountability.
    1. In particular, teachers should provide lessons that reflect rigor and high expectations; address students' diverse learning styles and needs so that all students are appropriately challenged; engage students in challenging tasks; and encourage students to articulate and extend their thinking.
    2. The district should carefully analyze student performance data to identify instructional practices that will address the diverse needs of Methuen's student learners. This might be best accomplished by the district data team (see the Assessment recommendation below).

3. The district should determine the specific practices that should be evident in all classrooms, communicate these widely, and provide support for effective implementation.
  4. The intent to acquire or develop requisite instructional skills should be evident in the goal setting phase of the new educator evaluation system. This process should link to and inform the Professional Development Council's work for the purpose of increasing instructional capacity.
  5. Examples of rigorous, effective instruction should be identified so that teachers have the opportunity to learn from each other and to play a leadership role with colleagues.
- B.** Methuen's instructional leadership team should play a critical role in transforming teaching and learning in the district's classrooms.
1. The efforts to improve student achievement should be focused and well-coordinated. Promising supervisory and instructional practices should be implemented with fidelity and evaluated for effectiveness.
    - a. The assistant superintendent, supervising principals, associate principals, instructional coaches, coordinators, and department heads should concentrate and coordinate their efforts to support teachers in using effective instructional strategies. Even hard-working, talented educators will not attain the desired results acting independently of one another.
    - b. The instructional coaches are in a position to substantially support increased instructional capacity and improved student performance. Their efforts to make greater use of performance data, model instructional methods, facilitate greater understanding of the needs of English language learners, support the district's transition to standards based report cards, develop and align curriculum, provide job embedded professional development, and act as a resource to supervisors and teachers in the new educator evaluation process are all important contributions. However, coaches and their supervisors should work together to ensure that coaches' limited time is directed to the initiatives most likely to produce teacher growth and student achievement. The instructional coaches' efforts should not be spread too thin as a result of too broad a focus.
  2. Methuen has implemented the walkthrough as a method of supporting curriculum implementation and instructional quality. The *Learning Walkthrough Implementation Guide* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/dart/walk/ImplementationGuide.pdf>) might be a useful resource in this effort. It is designed to provide guidance to those working in an established culture of collaboration as well as those who are just beginning to observe classrooms and discuss teaching and learning in a focused and actionable manner.

**Benefits:** When Methuen's educators act as a team that collectively focuses its attention and talent on strategically improving instruction, the district's schools and students will be more likely to make substantial progress.

## **Assessment**

- 4. The district should re-institute its data team; increase the quality of its benchmark and formative assessments and ensure that they are administered with sufficient frequency; and provide training for teachers on using student achievement data to plan and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction.**
- A.** Methuen should re-institute its district data team to help manage data functions, including dissemination and analysis of student performance data and support for teachers' use of data. This team might be composed of the assistant superintendent of curriculum, instruction, and assessment and representatives from the following groups: principals, instructional coaches, coordinators, department heads, program directors, and teachers from each of the three levels.
1. ESE's *District Data Team Toolkit* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/ucd/ddtt/toolkit.pdf>) provides information to help districts to establish, grow, and maintain a culture of inquiry and data use through a district data team. In particular, Module 1 elaborates the functions of a data team and provides guidance on organizing the team, including team composition and activities.
- B.** The district should ensure that assessments are administered with sufficient frequency that teachers have access to current data that can inform instruction and interventions (see the Assessment Challenge finding above). ESE recommends that benchmark assessments be given four to eight times per year.
- C.** The district should also ensure that its locally developed benchmark assessments in ELA, writing, and mathematics are valid, reliable, and include standards that are correlated with the current Massachusetts Frameworks.
- D.** The district should ensure that teachers use frequent formative assessments and checks for understanding as part of their regular instruction (see Leadership and Governance Recommendation 1 and Curriculum and Instruction Recommendation 3 above) in order to continually target and modify their instruction based on students' needs.
- E.** Concurrent with efforts to improve the quality and frequency of assessment, the district should provide professional development and active supervision to help teachers use assessment results to plan and evaluate the effectiveness of their instruction. It is critical that teachers have the skills, support, and accountability necessary to use data effectively at the classroom level. The District and School Assistance Center and instructional coaches should continue to have primary roles in this area. The data team can also help to train grade level and departmental teachers to use data with greater independence, increasing their self-reliance and sense of ownership.

### **Benefits:**

- A data team will help the district broaden the responsibility for data interpretation and use beyond the small number of staff who are currently responsible, decreasing their burden.

- The effectiveness of the assessment program is contingent upon the ability of teachers to fully understand and use the results. With ongoing time and support throughout the year, teachers will be able to take their understanding to a deeper level and be accountable for using data effectively to identify student needs and adjust instruction.
- An aligned battery of high-quality assessments from summative to formative will provide the district with the means to identify students at risk, provide timely interventions, and evaluate the effectiveness of these interventions. These tools will enable the district to move forward at a more rapid rate in improving student achievement.

### ***Human Resources and Professional Development***

**5. The district should use information from the educator evaluation system and student performance assessment data along with aligned DIP and SIP goals to create a professional development plan. An emphasis on embedded professional development provided by instructional coaches could be most beneficial.**

- A.** Professional development should be informed by aligned DIP and SIP goals and analyses of teacher evaluation and student performance data.
1. By establishing a process (see second Leadership and Governance recommendation above) in which the DIP is developed first and then the SIPs, enabling their alignment to the DIP, principals' and teachers' goals will be able to be aligned with the district's priorities. This alignment will help to focus the newly implemented educator evaluation system on improved instructional practice and serve as a solid basis for using the educator evaluation system and student performance data to inform the district's professional development program.
- B.** The district should identify patterns in educators' goals and professional development needs, as well as in student performance data, to provide focused professional development for teachers in order to help them to improve instruction. To build on a strength of the district (see Curriculum and Instruction Strength finding), the instructional coaches should play a primary role in providing the professional development and giving feedback to teachers as they work on improving their instruction.

*ESE's Quick Reference Guide: Educator Evaluation & Professional Development* describes how educator evaluation and professional development can be used as mutually reinforcing systems to improve educator practice and student outcomes (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/eval/resources/QRG-ProfessionalDevelopment.pdf>).

**Benefits:** The district will increase the effectiveness of its professional development program by purposefully basing the topics on aligned DIP and SIP goals, on analyses of student performance data, and on trends from the educator evaluation system. This approach will focus the program on district needs and the accomplishment of district and school goals.

**6. Methuen should discontinue its practice of providing the school committee with the names of all candidates interviewed for positions within the district.**

- A. The human resource department should revise its policies and practices so as to discontinue the current practice of releasing names of all candidates interviewed for district positions to the school committee.
- B. The human resource department should ensure that all administrators and school committee members understand the revised policy.

**Benefits:** If the district changes its current practice of providing the names of all candidates interviewed for every position to the school committee, it will prevent the possibility of committee members being diverted from their primary responsibilities and might increase the available pool of candidates for vacancies in the district.

***Student Support***

**7. The district should train all administrators and teachers in instructional practices that reach all learners and should provide sufficient resources and materials to support effective instruction.**

- A. The district should provide more and better training, support, and oversight for differentiated instruction for administrators and teachers. This should be provided in a way that ensures that teachers are not only exposed to the concepts, but also demonstrate competency in their practice. The training should include strategies that will help teachers to use small group instruction and engaging tasks as well as non-traditional methods for displaying mastery. It should also include ways to scaffold instruction and to manage behavioral and physical challenges.
- B. All teachers – including regular classroom teachers – should be equipped with strategies for teaching English language learners and former English language learners. Administrators should also develop knowledge in this area in order to effectively observe and provide feedback based on teachers’ use of these strategies.
- C. As part of the process of improving instruction, the district should ensure that all students have access to sufficient technology resources and other educational materials, including those that support differentiated instruction. The district should also identify and address logistical challenges so that existing resources (such as iPads) can be used to support teaching and learning.
- D. Administrators should establish structures and routines for monitoring the use of differentiated instruction. For example, the walkthrough process could provide a way for administrators to provide feedback based on trends observed in classrooms related to these practices.

**Benefits:** Helping teachers to develop the skills to teach heterogeneous classes and providing feedback based on strategies to address individual differences will ensure wider access to the curriculum and will enable the district to serve students in the least restrictive environment. Increased access to technology and materials will help teachers to address students’ diverse learning styles and needs.

**8. The district should establish and strengthen systems of support in order to address the academic and emotional needs of all students.**

- A.** A system of high-quality Tier 2 interventions should be established. This will require analyzing data, identifying specific interventions to be implemented, and ensuring that staff is trained and deployed to deliver those interventions.
1. The district should review relevant data to identify a set of Tier 2 interventions that would benefit students in Methuen.
  2. The district should establish and communicate clear, data-based criteria that indicate when particular students would benefit from Tier 2 interventions (and when they are ready to exit an intervention). This will require grade level teams and the Student Support Team to establish a protocol for making recommendations for specific students and to draw on a wider range of assessment data to develop recommendations (see the Assessment recommendation above).
  3. Not only should teachers be trained in the effective delivery of the Tier 1 core instructional program, those teachers responsible for delivering Tier 2 interventions should be appropriately trained to do so.
  4. The *Massachusetts Tiered System of Support (MTSS)* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/mtss/jis>) is a blueprint for school improvement that focuses on systems, structures and supports across the district, school, and classroom to meet the academic and non-academic needs of all students. In particular, the MTSS Self-Assessment (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/mtss/sa/>) might be useful as the district assesses its current status and establishes priorities related to a tiered system of support.
  5. ESE's *Early Warning Indicator System* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/edwin/analytics/ewis.html>) is a tool to provide information to districts about the likelihood that their students will reach key academic goals. Districts can use the tool in conjunction with other data and sources of information to better target student supports and interventions and to examine school-level patterns over time in order to address systemic issues that may impede students' ability to meet academic goals.
- B.** Data should also be used more systematically to determine when students should exit the ELL program.
1. Generally, students with an overall score of Level 5 on the ACCESS for ELLs assessment are considered to be proficient in English. However, other relevant data must also be considered when determining whether a particular student is ready to be reclassified into the regular education classroom.
  2. *Transitional Guidance on Identification, Assessment, Placement, and Reclassification of English Language Learners* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/ell/TransitionalGuidance.pdf>) provides guidelines for using the results of the ACCESS for ELLs assessment to make instructional decisions to support ELLs.

**Benefits:** A robust system of effectively delivered interventions and the strategic use of data to assign students to targeted programming will help to ensure that all students receive the specific support they need in order to achieve at higher levels.

**9. At the high school, the district should review and revise its placement practices and programs to ensure that all students are provided appropriately rigorous educational opportunities.**

- A.** The district should evaluate the effectiveness of its placement practices and programs to ensure that all students are allowed to challenge themselves and are receiving appropriately rigorous educational experiences.
- B.** The district should make sure that program evaluations include analysis of data and that decisions it makes based on the evaluations are data driven.
- C.** In particular, the district should discontinue its remaining Level 2 classes if data shows that students do better when Level 2 and 3 classes are combined, and also if evaluation shows that Level 2 classes do not prepare students well for higher education or for career options after high school.
- D.** The district should conduct an analysis of the Horizons program to determine whether it improves student performance and graduation rates or puts students at a disadvantage in succeeding years. While the program continues, the district should consider revising the curriculum to allow greater access for the students in the program to a curriculum based on the current Massachusetts frameworks. Since the basis for recommending students for the program may vary from teacher to teacher, the district should also make sure that placement in the program is based on consistent criteria, including assessment and other data.
- E.** Any changes in courses and programs should be followed up by data-driven evaluation of the effects of the changes.

**Benefits:** Implementing this recommendation will reduce unnecessary leveling within and separation from the regular education program by forming more encompassing heterogeneous groups in order to raise the achievement levels of all students.

**10. The high school should develop a comprehensive plan to improve student attendance. This plan should include teacher, administrator, and community components.**

- A.** The high school should encourage students to improve their attendance. Its policies should set stringent limits on unexcused absences, especially chronic absences. The policies should promote parental involvement and collaboration between teachers and administrators to create an atmosphere focused on student learning. Tracking attendance and enforcement of the attendance policy should be a joint effort between teachers and administrators.
  - 1. The school should determine the root causes of student attendance problems in order to develop an effective plan for addressing them.
  - 2. The school should take steps based on the relationship between attendance and instructional quality.
    - a. Increasing the effectiveness of instruction will challenge and engage students and motivate them to attend school.

- b. The school should examine ways to attract students to the educational component of the program in addition to the many popular extracurricular activities that already engage them.
3. The school should involve parents in their children’s education and attendance by making a consistent effort to communicate with them in a timely manner and engaging them in conversations about their children.
    - a. The district may want to consult the following resources:

*Family and Community Engagement Standards*

(<http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/framework/level4/PCEIstandards.pdf>): Developed by the Parent and Community Education and Involvement Advisory Council, this document defines each of the six Family and Community Engagement Standards and includes a rubric for each.

*Title I Family Engagement materials* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/titlei/parta/family-engagement/?section=FE>): Policies, toolkits, research, presentations, and other resources.

4. The school should examine the role that the Student Support Team, guidance counselors, psychologists, and other school resources can play in addressing student problems resulting in low attendance.
5. The school should develop an attendance policy that administrators can enforce consistently, with reasonable exception only. It should track attendance, inform parents, and ensure that consistent, logical consequences and/or necessary supports are given when students are frequently absent. Teachers should collaborate with administrators to track attendance in their classrooms and enforce the attendance policy.

**Benefits** from implementing this recommendation will include communicating to students the importance of attending school, developing better habits for college and career, creating collaborative relationships between teachers, parents, and administrators, and improving student learning.

### ***Finance and Asset Management***

11. **In order to meet its obligations under the Chapter 70 state aid to education program, the city should fund the schools at the required NSS level every year, and come to a fair arrangement as to what municipal expenditures should be counted toward NSS.**
  - A. When the Department receives the district’s fiscal year 2013 End of Year Financial Report, it will make a determination about the penalty for not meeting net school spending. In the regrettable event of a penalty reducing this year’s Chapter 70 aid, the district and city must adjust this year’s budget, and should enter into a budgeting process for next year that assures there will be no further diminution of aid. It is students who are hurt by the loss of funds.
    1. The district and city should review the allocation of resources with fresh eyes to maximize their effectiveness, with a focus on district and school goals for improving student performance results (see second Leadership and Governance recommendation above).

- B. While negotiating next year's budget, city and district officials should closely review expenditures by the city attributed to education and counted in net school spending, and write a clear and fair agreement about what expenditures will be included in the future.

**The benefits** of implementing this recommendation will be to put the district on a stable financial footing and to make available sufficient funds for the education of the district's students.

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

### **Review Team Members**

The review was conducted from May 22-24, 2013, by the following team of independent ESE consultants.

1. Dr. Nadine Bonda, leadership and governance
2. Dr. Peter McGinn, curriculum and instruction
3. Dr. James McAuliffe, assessment, review team coordinator
4. Dr. William Contreras, human resources and professional development
5. Dr. Kathleen Lopez-Natale, student support
6. Dr. George Gearhart, financial and asset management

### **District Review Activities**

The following activities were conducted during the review:

The team conducted interviews with the following financial personnel: business administrator, city auditor and bookkeeper.

The team conducted interviews with the following members of the school committee: one member.

The review team conducted interviews with the following representatives of the teachers' association: president, executive board member, and union representative.

The team conducted interviews/focus groups with the following central office administrators: superintendent, assistant superintendent, and director of special education.

The team visited the following schools: Comprehensive Grammar School (K-8); Marsh Grammar School (K-8); Tenney Grammar School (K-8); Timony Grammar School (K-8); and Methuen High School (grades 9-12).

During school visits, the team conducted interviews with 5 principals and focus groups with 11 elementary school teachers, 1 middle school teacher, and 15 high school teachers. There were no student or parent interviews on the three-day schedule.

The team observed 58 classes in the district: 17 at the high school, 17 at the middle or upper school level (grades 5 through 8), and 24 at the elementary or lower school level (kindergarten through grade 4) in the four grammar schools.

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

- Student and school performance data, including achievement and growth, enrollment, graduation, dropout, retention, suspension, and attendance rates.

- Data on the district’s staffing and finances.
- Published educational reports on the district by ESE, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), and the former Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA).
- District documents such as district and school improvement plans, school committee policies, curriculum documents, summaries of student assessments, job descriptions, collective bargaining agreements, evaluation tools for staff, handbooks, school schedules, and the district’s end-of-year financial reports.
- All completed program and administrator evaluations, and a random selection of completed teacher evaluations.

**Site Visit Schedule (Three-Day)**

<b>Wednesday</b> 05-22-2013	<b>Thursday</b> 05-23-2013	<b>Friday</b> 05-24-2013
Orientation with district leaders and principals; interviews with district staff and principals; document reviews; interview with teachers’ association; Interviews with town or city personnel	Interviews with district staff and principals; review of personnel files; teacher focus groups; interviews with school committee members; and visits to Methuen High School and the Tenney and Timony grammar schools for classroom observations.	Interviews with school leaders; visits to Comprehensive and Marsh grammar schools for classroom observations.; follow-up interviews; district review team meeting; emerging themes meeting with district leaders and principals.

## Appendix B: Enrollment, Expenditures, Performance

**Table B1a: Methuen**  
**2012-2013 Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity**

Student Group	District	Percent of Total	State	Percent of Total
Asian	275	3.9%	56,517	5.9%
Afr. Amer./Black	194	2.7%	81,806	8.6%
Hispanic/ Latino	2,097	29.7%	156,976	16.4%
Multi-race, Non-Hisp. /Lat.	124	1.8%	26,012	2.7%
Nat. Haw. Or Pacif. Isl.	2	0.0%	1,020	0.1%
White	4,345	61.6%	630,150	66.0%
<b>All students</b>	<b>7,055</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>954,773</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Note: As of October 1, 2012

**Table B1b: Methuen**  
**2012-2013 Student Enrollment by High Needs Populations**

Student Group	District			State		
	N	Percent of High Needs	Percent of District	N	Percent of High Needs	Percent of State
Students w/ disabilities	1,045	28.4%	14.6%	163,921	35.5%	17.0%
Low income	3,029	82.2%	42.9%	353,420	76.5%	37.0%
ELL and Former ELL	787	21.4%	11.2%	95,865	20.7%	10.0%
<b>All high needs students</b>	<b>3,684</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>51.5%</b>	<b>462,272</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>47.9%</b>

Notes: As of October 1, 2012. District and state numbers and percentages for students with disabilities and high needs students are calculated including students in out-of-district placements. Total district enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 7,150; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 965,602.

**Table B2a: Methuen  
Expenditures, Chapter 70 State Aid, and Net School Spending Fiscal Years 2011–2013**

	FY11		FY12		FY13
	Estimated	Actual	Estimated	Actual	Estimated
<b>Expenditures</b>					
From local appropriations for schools:					
By school committee	61,198,112	61,198,119	61,754,193	61,892,231	59,888,598
By municipality	19,977,450	21,340,470	19,855,131	20,293,678	23,800,054
Total from local appropriations	---	82,538,589	81,609,324	82,185,909	83,688,652
From revolving funds and grants	---	12,855,331	---	12,217,544	---
Total expenditures	---	95,393,920	---	94,403,453	---
<b>Chapter 70 aid to education program</b>					
Chapter 70 state aid*	---	38,616,511	---	38,823,822	39,110,902
Required local contribution	---	32,148,754	---	33,629,358	31,301,841
Required net school spending**	---	70,765,265	---	72,453,180	70,412,743
Actual net school spending	---	67,693,209	---	67,748,595	na
Over/under required (\$)	---	-3,072,056	---	-4,704,585	na
Over/under required (%)	---	-4.3	---	-6.5	na

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

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

Sources: FY11, FY12 District End-of-Year Reports, Chapter 70 Program information on ESE website

Data retrieved June 6, 2013

**Table B3: Methuen  
Expenditures Per In-District Pupil  
Fiscal Years 2010–2012**

<b>Expenditure Category</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
Administration	\$356.85	\$317.78	\$376.70
Instructional leadership (district and school)	\$708.66	\$724.08	\$761.87
Teachers	\$4,659.98	\$4,686.10	\$4,788.63
Other teaching services	\$796.52	\$782.83	\$849.76
Professional development	\$44.69	\$38.54	\$25.22
Instructional materials, equipment and technology	\$227.90	\$204.73	\$169.75
Guidance, counseling and testing services	\$344.91	\$351.32	\$354.02
Pupil services	\$1,004.45	\$1,083.70	\$1,066.05
Operations and maintenance	\$830.89	\$1,052.42	\$946.50
Insurance, retirement and other fixed costs	\$1,307.56	\$1,949.48	\$1,507.40
<b>Total expenditures per in-district pupil</b>	<b>\$10,282.41</b>	<b>\$11,190.98</b>	<b>\$10,846</b>

Sources: Per-pupil expenditure reports on ESE website

**Table B4a: Methuen  
English Language Arts Performance, 2009-2012**

Grade and Measure		Number Included (2012)	Spring MCAS Year				Gains and Declines			2012 Performance (CPI, SGP)
			2009	2010	2011	2012	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend	Potentially Meaningful?	
3	CPI	576	81.4	81.3	80.6	78.9	-2.5	-1.7	Yes	Very Low
	P+	576	54%	54%	54%	49%	-5	-5		--
4	CPI	548	74.5	75.3	70.9	66.7	-7.8	-4.2	Yes	Very Low
	P+	548	43%	43%	37%	34%	-9	-3		--
	SGP	500	44.0	39.0	39.5	31.0	-13.0	-8.5		Low
5	CPI	582	80.5	76.6	81.4	73.4	-7.1	-8.0	Yes	Very Low
	P+	582	50%	48%	57%	44%	-6	-13		--
	SGP	530	37.5	39.0	38.0	43.5	6.0	5.5		Moderate
6	CPI	571	83.3	83.5	82.3	81.7	-1.6	-0.6	--	Very Low
	P+	571	62%	61%	59%	59%	-3	0		--
	SGP	528	52.0	49.0	47.0	52.0	0.0	5.0		Moderate
7	CPI	587	86.0	85.9	87.0	82.4	-3.6	-4.6	Yes	Very Low
	P+	587	63%	67%	67%	58%	-5	-9		--
	SGP	543	52.5	44.0	45.0	41.0	-11.5	-4.0		Moderate
8	CPI	625	88.3	87.9	87.5	87.6	-0.7	0.1	--	Very Low
	P+	625	72%	71%	72%	71%	-1	-1		--
	SGP	577	38.0	43.0	36.0	36.0	-2.0	0.0		Low
10	CPI	455	91.2	90.9	92.2	91.8	0.6	-0.4	--	Very Low
	P+	455	75%	75%	76%	79%	4	3		--
	SGP	385	41.0	38.0	40.0	39.0	-2.0	-1.0		Low
All	CPI	<b>3,944</b>	<b>83.4</b>	<b>82.9</b>	<b>82.9</b>	<b>80.2</b>	<b>-3.2</b>	<b>-2.7</b>	Yes	Very Low
	P+	<b>3,944</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>-4</b>		--
	SGP	<b>3,063</b>	<b>44.0</b>	<b>42.0</b>	<b>40.0</b>	<b>40.0</b>	<b>-4.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>		Low

Notes: The number of students included in CPI and percent *Proficient* or *Advanced* (P+) calculations may differ from the number of students included in median SGP calculations. A median SGP is not calculated for students in grade 3 because they are participating in MCAS tests for the first time. The “2012 Performance” column shows the quintile into which the CPI for the grade (or all grades) falls in a ranking of all Massachusetts districts’ CPIs for that grade (or all grades). See footnote 7 in the Student Performance section above. The “2012 Performance” column also gives the level of the median SGP. Median SGPs from 0 to 20 are considered to be Very Low; from 21 to 40, Low; from 41 to 60, Moderate; from 61 to 80, High; and from 81 to 100, Very High.

**Table B4b: Methuen  
Mathematics Performance, 2009-2012**

Grade and Measure		Number Included (2012)	Spring MCAS Year				Gains and Declines			2012 Performance (CPI, SGP)
			2009	2010	2011	2012	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend	Potentially Meaningful?	
3	CPI	577	78.4	78.4	78.6	72.6	-5.8	-6	Yes	Very Low
	P+	577	56%	55%	53%	47%	-9	-6		--
4	CPI	551	76.5	76.1	71.8	69.6	-6.9	-2.2	--	Very Low
	P+	551	44%	44%	35%	36%	-8	1		--
	SGP	499	46.0	47.0	46.0	40.0	-6.0	-6.0		Low
5	CPI	583	68.5	68.5	71.1	70.1	1.6	-1.0	--	Very Low
	P+	583	41%	41%	45%	43%	2	-2		--
	SGP	536	27.0	33.0	32.0	42.0	15.0	10.0		Moderate
6	CPI	573	76.4	74.4	74.6	73.5	-2.9	-1.1	Yes	Very Low
	P+	573	51%	49%	50%	47%	-4	-3		--
	SGP	528	50.0	48.5	48.0	48.0	-2.0	0.0		Moderate
7	CPI	586	66.6	71.4	65.3	66.6	0.0	1.3	--	Very Low
	P+	586	38%	46%	37%	37%	-1	0		--
	SGP	544	48.0	39.0	44.5	41.0	-7.0	-3.5		Moderate
8	CPI	621	64.0	68.6	68.7	68.6	4.6	-0.1	--	Very Low
	P+	621	35%	41%	44%	41%	6	-3		--
	SGP	576	49.0	44.0	40.0	46.0	-3.0	6.0		Moderate
10	CPI	456	83.9	84.4	81.0	80.5	-3.4	-0.5	--	Very Low
	P+	456	65%	66%	59%	59%	-6	0		--
	SGP	387	38.5	44.0	38.5	33.0	-5.5	-5.5		Low
All	CPI	3,947	73.0	74.1	72.6	71.3	-1.7	-1.3	--	Very Low
	P+	3,947	46%	48%	46%	44%	-2	-2		--
	SGP	3,070	42.0	42.0	41.0	42.0	0.0	1.0		Moderate

Notes: The number of students included in CPI and percent *Proficient* or *Advanced* (P+) calculations may differ from the number of students included in median SGP calculations. A median SGP is not calculated for students in grade 3 because they are participating in MCAS tests for the first time. The “2012 Performance” column shows the quintile into which the CPI for the grade (or all grades) falls in a ranking of all Massachusetts districts’ CPIs for that grade (or all grades). See footnote 7 in the Student Performance section above. The “2012 Performance” column also gives the level of the median SGP. Median SGPs from 0 to 20 are considered to be Very Low; from 21 to 40, Low; from 41 to 60, Moderate; from 61 to 80, High; and from 81 to 100, Very High.

**Table B4c: Methuen  
Science and Technology/Engineering Performance, 2009-2012**

Grade and Measure		Number Included (2012)	Spring MCAS Year				Gains and Declines			2012 Performance (CPI)
			2009	2010	2011	2012	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend	Potentially Meaningful?	
5	CPI	581	67.0	66.9	70.9	67.6	0.6	-3.3	--	Very Low
	P+	581	27%	29%	38%	33%	6	-5	--	--
8	CPI	622	57.2	64.3	62.6	62.2	5	-0.4	--	Very Low
	P+	622	19%	27%	26%	24%	5	-2	--	--
10	CPI	414	83.0	81.0	80.0	79.7	-3.3	-0.3	--	Very Low
	P+	414	60%	59%	56%	59%	-1	3	--	--
<b>All</b>	<b>CPI</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>67.5</b>	<b>69.5</b>	<b>70.0</b>	<b>68.6</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>-1.4</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>Very Low</b>
	<b>P+</b>	<b>1,617</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>--</b>

Notes: P+ = percent *Proficient* or *Advanced*. Students participate in STE MCAS tests in grades 5, 8, and 10 only. Median SGPs are not calculated for STE. The "2012 Performance" column shows the quintile into which the CPI for the grade (or all grades) falls in a ranking of all Massachusetts districts' CPIs for that grade (or all grades). See footnote 7 in the Student Performance section above. The "2012 Performance" column also gives the level of the median SGP. Median SGPs from 0 to 20 are considered to be Very Low; from 21 to 40, Low; from 41 to 60, Moderate; from 61 to 80, High; and from 81 to 100, Very High.

**Table B5a: Methuen**  
**English Language Arts (All Grades)**  
**Performance for Selected Subgroups Compared to State, 2009-2012**

Group and Measure			Number Included (2012)	Spring MCAS Year				Gains and Declines	
				2009	2010	2011	2012	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend
High needs	District	CPI	1,907	73.0	71.9	71.7	69.7	-3.3	-2
		P+	1,907	39%	38%	38%	37%	-2	-1
		SGP	1,347	43.0	41.0	39.0	37.0	-6	-2
	State	CPI	235,216	75.3	76.1	77.0	76.5	1.2	-0.5
		P+	235,216	44%	45%	48%	48%	4	0
		SGP	177,719	45.0	45.0	46.0	46.0	1	0
Low income	District	CPI	1,562	75.3	73.9	74.4	71.1	-4.2	-3.3
		P+	1,562	44%	42%	43%	40%	-4	-3
		SGP	1,142	44.0	41.0	39.0	37.0	-7.0	-2.0
	State	CPI	180,261	75.5	76.5	77.1	76.7	1.2	-0.4
		P+	180,261	45%	47%	49%	50%	5	1
		SGP	137,185	45.0	46.0	46.0	45.0	0.0	-1.0
Students w/ disabilities	District	CPI	607	62.0	59.6	61.9	57.3	-4.7	-4.6
		P+	607	16%	16%	19%	18%	2	-1
		SGP	387	37.0	36.0	36.0	34.0	-3.0	-2.0
	State	CPI	91,757	67.8	67.3	68.3	67.3	-0.5	-1.0
		P+	91,757	28%	28%	30%	31%	3	1
		SGP	66,785	40.0	41.0	42.0	43.0	3.0	1.0
English language learners or Former ELL	District	CPI	360	58.5	55.9	55.2	51.8	-6.7	-3.4
		P+	360	21%	21%	18%	16%	-5	-2
		SGP	195	47.0	43.0	44.0	44.0	-3.0	0.0
	State	CPI	45,367	64.8	66.1	66.2	66.2	1.4	0.0
		P+	45,367	30%	32%	33%	34%	4	1
		SGP	29,933	51.0	51.0	50.0	51.0	0.0	1.0
All students	District	CPI	3,944	83.4	82.9	82.9	80.2	-3.2	-2.7
		P+	3,944	59%	59%	60%	56%	-3	-4
		SGP	3,063	44.0	42.0	40.0	40.0	-4.0	0.0
	State	CPI	497,549	86.5	86.9	87.2	86.7	0.2	-0.5
		P+	497,549	67%	68%	69%	69%	2	0
		SGP	395,772	50.0	50.0	50.0	50.0	0.0	0.0

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

**Table B5b: Methuen  
Mathematics (All Grades)  
Performance for Selected Subgroups Compared to State, 2009-2012**

Group and Measure			Number Included (2012)	Spring MCAS Year				Gains and Declines	
				2009	2010	2011	2012	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend
High needs	District	CPI	1,911	59.9	60.5	59.6	58.3	-1.6	-1.3
		P+	1,911	26%	26%	26%	25%	-1	-1
		SGP	1,357	39.0	40.0	39.0	38.0	-1.0	-1.0
	State	CPI	235,552	64.5	66.7	67.1	67.0	2.5	-0.1
		P+	235,552	32%	36%	37%	37%	5	0
		SGP	178,144	45.0	46.0	46.0	46.0	1.0	0.0
Low income	District	CPI	1,563	61.4	62.3	62.0	59.6	-1.8	-2.4
		P+	1,563	29%	29%	29%	27%	-2	-2
		SGP	1,149	40.0	40.5	40.0	39.0	-1.0	-1.0
	State	CPI	180,433	64.5	67.1	67.3	67.3	2.8	0.0
		P+	180,433	33%	37%	38%	38%	5	0
		SGP	137,529	44.0	47.0	46.0	45.0	1.0	-1.0
Students w/ disabilities	District	CPI	611	49.6	48.5	49.7	44.6	-5.0	-5.1
		P+	611	9%	10%	12%	9%	0	-3
		SGP	391	33.0	37.0	36.5	32.0	-1.0	-4.5
	State	CPI	91,876	56.9	57.5	57.7	56.9	0.0	-0.8
		P+	91,876	20%	21%	22%	21%	1	-1
		SGP	66,876	43.0	43.0	43.0	43.0	0.0	0.0
English language learners or Former ELL	District	CPI	364	48.7	48.3	46.6	44.4	-4.3	-2.2
		P+	364	16%	17%	12%	13%	-3	1
		SGP	198	40.0	43.0	46.0	45.0	5.0	-1.0
	State	CPI	45,695	59.2	61.5	62.0	61.6	2.4	-0.4
		P+	45,695	29%	31%	32%	32%	3	0
		SGP	30,189	49.0	54.0	52.0	52.0	3.0	0.0
All students	District	CPI	<b>3,947</b>	<b>73.0</b>	<b>74.1</b>	<b>72.6</b>	<b>71.3</b>	<b>-1.7</b>	<b>-1.3</b>
		P+	<b>3,947</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>-2</b>
		SGP	<b>3,070</b>	<b>42.0</b>	<b>42.0</b>	<b>41.0</b>	<b>42.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>1.0</b>
	State	CPI	<b>497,984</b>	<b>78.5</b>	<b>79.9</b>	<b>79.9</b>	<b>79.9</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>0.0</b>
		P+	<b>497,984</b>	<b>56%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>58%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>
		SGP	<b>396,357</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>50.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

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

**Table B5c: Methuen  
Science and Technology/Engineering (All Grades)  
Performance for Selected Subgroups Compared to State, 2009-2012**

Group and Measure			Number Included (2012)	Spring MCAS Year				Gains and Declines	
				2009	2010	2011	2012	4-Year Trend	2-Year Trend
High needs	District	CPI	743	56.6	56.9	57.3	55.6	-1	-1.7
		P+	743	18%	17%	19%	18%	0	-1
	State	CPI	96,996	62.1	64.3	63.8	65.0	2.9	1.2
		P+	96,996	25%	28%	28%	31%	6	3
Low income	District	CPI	630	57.3	58.2	58.6	56.2	-1.1	-2.4
		P+	630	19%	20%	21%	19%	0	-2
	State	CPI	74,300	61.1	63.6	62.8	64.5	3.4	1.7
		P+	74,300	25%	28%	28%	31%	6	3
Students w/ disabilities	District	CPI	222	51.7	49.0	50.0	45.7	-6	-4.3
		P+	222	8%	3%	9%	5%	-3	-4
	State	CPI	38,590	58.1	59.0	59.2	58.7	0.6	-0.5
		P+	38,590	18%	19%	20%	20%	2	0
English language learners or Former ELL	District	CPI	131	41.9	38.7	41.0	39.5	-2.4	-1.5
		P+	131	8%	5%	12%	3%	-5	-9
	State	CPI	15,271	50.8	51.8	50.3	51.4	0.6	1.1
		P+	15,271	15%	16%	15%	17%	2	2
All students	District	CPI	<b>1,617</b>	<b>67.5</b>	<b>69.5</b>	<b>70.0</b>	<b>68.6</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>-1.4</b>
		P+	<b>1,617</b>	<b>32%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>38%</b>	<b>36%</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>-2</b>
	State	CPI	<b>211,464</b>	<b>76.8</b>	<b>78.3</b>	<b>77.6</b>	<b>78.6</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>1.0</b>
		P+	<b>211,464</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>52%</b>	<b>54%</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>

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

**Table B6: Methuen  
Annual Grade 9-12 Dropout Rates, 2009-2012**

	School Year Ending				Change 2009-2012		Change 2011-2012		State (2012)
	2009	2010	2011	2012	Percentage Points	Percent	Percentage Points	Percent	
<b>All students</b>	3.4%	3.8%	2.2%	2.8%	-0.6	-17.6%	0.6	27.3%	2.5%

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

**Table B7a: Methuen  
Four-Year Cohort Graduation Rates, 2009-2012**

Group	Number Included (2012)	School Year Ending				Change 2009-2012		Change 2011-2012		State (2012)
		2009	2010	2011	2012	Percentage Points	Percent	Percentage Points	Percent	
High needs	239	65.1%	70.4%	68.4%	67.4%	2.3	3.5%	-1.0	-1.5%	74.1%
Low income	205	66.4%	71.8%	71.9%	68.8%	2.4	3.6%	-3.1	-4.3%	72.4%
Students w/ disabilities	67	51.9%	58.8%	48.5%	53.7%	1.8	3.5%	5.2	10.7%	68.6%
English language learners (ELL) or Former ELL	33	56.8%	72.5%	58.3%	45.5%	-11.3	-19.9%	-12.8	-22.0%	61.1%
<b>All students</b>	<b>469</b>	<b>77.0%</b>	<b>79.2%</b>	<b>80.6%</b>	<b>78.7%</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>-1.9</b>	<b>-2.4%</b>	<b>84.7%</b>

Notes: The four-year cohort graduation rate is calculated by dividing the number of students in a particular cohort who graduate in four years or less by the number of students in the cohort entering their freshman year four years earlier, minus transfers out and plus transfers in. Non-graduates include students still enrolled in high school, students who earned a GED or received a certificate of attainment rather than a diploma, and students who dropped out. Graduation rates have been rounded; percent change is based on unrounded numbers.

**Table B7b: Methuen  
Five-Year Cohort Graduation Rates, 2008-2011**

Group	Number Included (2011)	School Year Ending				Change 2008-2011		Change 2010-2011		State (2011)
		2008	2009	2010	2011	Percentage Points	Percent	Percentage Points	Percent	
High needs	237	67.5%	68.8%	72.8%	74.3%	6.8	10.1%	1.5	2.1%	76.5%
Low income	192	65.9%	70.4%	73.8%	75.5%	9.6	14.6%	1.7	2.3%	75.0%
Students w/ disabilities	68	60.0%	55.7%	63.2%	58.8%	-1.2	-2.0%	-4.4	-7.0%	70.8%
English language learners (ELL) or Former ELL	24	68.8%	62.2%	72.5%	70.8%	2.0	2.9%	-1.7	-2.3%	64.2%
<b>All students</b>	<b>479</b>	<b>80.4%</b>	<b>79.8%</b>	<b>81.5%</b>	<b>83.7%</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>4.1%</b>	<b>2.2</b>	<b>2.7%</b>	<b>86.3%</b>

Notes: The five-year cohort graduation rate is calculated by dividing the number of students in a particular cohort who graduate in five years or less by the number of students in the cohort entering their freshman year five years earlier, minus transfers out and plus transfers in. Non-graduates include students still enrolled in high school, students who earned a GED or received a certificate of attainment rather than a diploma, and students who dropped out. Graduation rates have been rounded; percent change is based on unrounded numbers. Graduation rates have been rounded; percent change is based on unrounded numbers.

**Table B8: Methuen  
Attendance Rates, 2009-2012**

	School Year Ending				Change 2009-2012		Change 2011-2012		State (2012)
	2009	2010	2011	2012	Percentage Points	Percent	Percentage Points	Percent	
<b>All Students</b>	<b>94.7%</b>	<b>94.4%</b>	<b>94.3%</b>	<b>94.5%</b>	<b>-0.2</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>94.9%</b>

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

**Table B9: Methuen  
Suspension Rates, 2009-2012**

Group	School Year Ending				Change 2009-2012		Change 2011-2012		State (2012)
	2009	2010	2011	2012	Percentage Points	Percent	Percentage Points	Percent	
In-School Suspension Rate	6.0	0.8	0.0	6.0	0.0	0%	6.0	---	3.4%
Out-of-School Suspension Rate	5.8	7.2	6.6	10.3	4.5	77.6%	3.7	56.1%	5.4%

Note: This table reflects information reported by school districts at the end of the school year indicated. Suspension rates have been rounded; percent change is based on unrounded numbers.

## Appendix C: Instructional Inventory

Learning Environment	By Grade Span	Evidence					
		None	Partial	Clear & Consistent	Overall		
		(0)	(1)	(2)	#	%	
1. Interactions between teacher & students & among students are positive & respectful.	ES	0%	0%	100%	(0)	0	0%
	MS	0%	0%	100%	(1)	3	5%
	HS	0%	18%	82%	(2)	55	95%
2. Behavioral standards are clearly communicated. Disruptions, if present, are managed effectively & equitably.	ES	0%	8%	92%	(0)	4	7%
	MS	6%	0%	94%	(1)	2	3%
	HS	18%	0%	82%	(2)	52	90%
3. Classroom procedures are established & maintained to create a safe physical environment & promote smooth transitions among all classroom activities.	ES	0%	0%	100%	(0)	2	3%
	MS	0%	0%	100%	(1)	1	2%
	HS	12%	6%	82%	(2)	55	95%
4. Lesson reflects rigor & high expectations.	ES	33%	8%	58%	(0)	18	31%
	MS	29%	24%	47%	(1)	9	16%
	HS	29%	18%	53%	(2)	31	53%
5. Classroom rituals, routines & appropriate interactions create a safe intellectual environment in which students take academic risks & most behaviors that interfere with learning are prevented.	ES	0%	0%	100%	(0)	4	7%
	MS	0%	12%	88%	(1)	2	3%
	HS	24%	0%	76%	(2)	52	90%
6. Multiple resources are available to meet students' diverse learning needs.	ES	58%	0%	42%	(0)	29	50%
	MS	29%	24%	47%	(1)	10	17%
	HS	59%	35%	6%	(2)	19	33%
7. The physical arrangement of the classroom ensures a positive learning environment & provides all students with access to learning activities.	ES	0%	4%	96%	(0)	1	2%
	MS	0%	12%	88%	(1)	8	14%
	HS	6%	29%	65%	(2)	49	84%

Teaching	By Grade Span	Evidence					
		None	Partial	Clear & Consistent	Overall		
		(0)	(1)	(2)	#	%	
8. Demonstrates knowledge of subject & content.	ES	4%	8%	88%	(0)	2	3%
	MS	0%	18%	82%	(1)	5	9%
	HS	6%	0%	94%	(2)	51	88%
9. Communicates clear grade-appropriate learning objectives aligned to state standards. Applicable ELL language objectives are evident.	ES	29%	0%	71%	(0)	19	33%
	MS	35%	12%	53%	(1)	7	12%
	HS	35%	29%	35%	(2)	32	55%
10. Uses appropriate & varied strategies matched to learning objectives & content.	ES	8%	4%	88%	(0)	14	24%
	MS	18%	29%	53%	(1)	10	17%
	HS	53%	24%	24%	(2)	34	59%
11. Requires inquiry, exploration, application, analysis, synthesis, &/or evaluation of concepts individually, in pairs or in groups to demonstrate higher-order thinking. (circle observed skills)	ES	39%	22%	39%	(0)	18	35%
	MS	24%	12%	65%	(1)	10	19%
	HS	41%	24%	35%	(2)	24	46%
12. Uses varied questioning techniques that require/seek thoughtful responses & promote deeper understanding.	ES	29%	8%	63%	(0)	21	36%
	MS	41%	24%	35%	(1)	11	19%
	HS	41%	29%	29%	(2)	26	45%
13. Implements appropriate & varied strategies that meet students' diverse learning needs.	ES	25%	8%	67%	(0)	21	36%
	MS	35%	41%	24%	(1)	12	21%
	HS	53%	18%	29%	(2)	25	43%
14. Paces lesson to engage all students & promote understanding.	ES	4%	4%	92%	(0)	6	10%
	MS	0%	6%	94%	(1)	4	7%
	HS	29%	12%	59%	(2)	48	83%
15. Conducts frequent formative assessments to check for understanding & inform instruction.	ES	33%	4%	63%	(0)	14	24%
	MS	12%	35%	53%	(1)	11	19%
	HS	24%	24%	53%	(2)	33	57%
16. Makes use of technology to enhance learning.	ES	71%	8%	21%	(0)	40	69%
	MS	59%	18%	24%	(1)	9	16%
	HS	76%	24%	0%	(2)	9	16%

Learning	By Grade Span	Evidence					
		None	Partial	Clear & Consistent	Overall		
		(0)	(1)	(2)	#	%	
17. Students are engaged in productive learning routines.	ES	4%	8%	88%	(0)	7	12%
	MS	0%	18%	82%	(1)	11	19%
	HS	35%	35%	29%	(2)	40	69%
18. Students are engaged in challenging academic tasks.	ES	25%	17%	58%	(0)	15	26%
	MS	24%	6%	71%	(1)	12	21%
	HS	29%	41%	29%	(2)	31	53%
19. Students assume responsibility for their own learning.	ES	21%	8%	71%	(0)	18	31%
	MS	12%	24%	65%	(1)	9	16%
	HS	65%	18%	18%	(2)	31	53%
20. Students articulate their thinking or reasoning verbally or in writing either individually, in pairs or in groups.	ES	25%	17%	58%	(0)	23	40%
	MS	47%	12%	41%	(1)	11	19%
	HS	53%	29%	18%	(2)	24	41%
21. Students' responses to questions elaborate about content & ideas (not expected for all responses).	ES	58%	17%	25%	(0)	37	64%
	MS	76%	12%	12%	(1)	10	17%
	HS	59%	24%	18%	(2)	11	19%
22. Students make connections to prior knowledge, real world experiences & other subject matter.	ES	29%	0%	71%	(0)	22	38%
	MS	35%	12%	53%	(1)	6	10%
	HS	53%	24%	24%	(2)	30	52%
23. Students use technology as a tool for learning &/or understanding.	ES	92%	4%	4%	(0)	54	93%
	MS	92%	0%	6%	(1)	2	3%
	HS	94%	6%	0%	(2)	2	3%
24. Student work demonstrates high quality & can serve as exemplars.	ES	92%	0%	8%	(0)	48	83%
	MS	82%	0%	18%	(1)	3	5%
	HS	71%	18%	12%	(2)	7	12%