

# District Review Report

Rockland 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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# Rockland 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 Rockland School District was conducted from May 22-May 24, 2013. The site visit included 25.25 hours of interviews and focus groups with approximately 49 stakeholders, including school committee members, district administrators, school staff, and teachers' association representatives. The review team conducted 3 focus groups with 27 elementary school teachers, 9 middle school teachers, and 9 high school teachers.

A list of review team members, information about review activities, and the site visit schedule are in Appendix A, and Appendix B provides information about enrollment, expenditures, and student performance. The team observed

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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.

classroom instructional practice in 55 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

Rockland has a town manager form of government and the chair of the school committee is elected. There are five members of the school committee and they meet once every two weeks.

The current superintendent has been in the position since 2008. The district leadership team includes superintendent, assistant superintendent, pupil personnel director, and five principals. Central office positions have been mostly stable in recent years. The district has five principals leading five schools. There are 3.1 other school administrators, including 2 assistant principals, one each at the high and middle schools, and 2 deans at the high school. There are 149.3 teachers in the district.

As of October 1, 2012, 2,199 students were enrolled in the district's 5 schools:

**Table 1: Rockland Public Schools  
Schools, Type, Grades Served, and Enrollment**

School Name	School Type	Grades Served	Enrollment
Memorial Park	Elementary	1-4	208
R. Stewart Esten	Elementary	1-4	301
Jefferson Elementary School	Elementary	K-4	309
John W. Rogers Middle	Middle School	5-8	748
Rockland Senior High	High School	PK, 9-12	633
<b>Totals</b>	<b>5 schools</b>	<b>PK-12</b>	<b>2,199</b>
*As of October 1, 2012			

Between 2008 and 2012 overall student enrollment decreased by 11 percent, from 2,483 in 2008 to 2,376 in 2009 to 2,278 in 2010 to 2,260 in 2011 to 2,199 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) as compared to the state are provided in Tables B1a and B1b in Appendix B.

Total in-district per-pupil expenditures were higher than the median for 48 districts of similar size (2,000-2,999 students) in fiscal year 2012: \$12,244 compared with the median of \$11,611.<sup>2</sup> Actual net school spending has been above what is required by the Chapter 70 state education aid program, as shown in Table B2 in Appendix B.

<sup>2</sup> See DART Detail: Staffing & Finance, PerPupilSummary and Median PP tabs, available at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/dart/default.html>.

## 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 the John W. Rogers Middle School is Level 3.<sup>3</sup>**

- A. The John W. Rogers Middle School is among the lowest performing 20 percent of elementary schools.<sup>4</sup>
- B. The district's five schools place between the 19<sup>th</sup> percentile and the 44<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: Memorial Park (36<sup>th</sup> percentile of elementary schools); R. Stewart Esten (44<sup>th</sup> percentile of elementary schools); Jefferson Elementary School (33<sup>rd</sup> percentile of elementary schools); John W. Rogers Middle (19<sup>th</sup> percentile of middle schools); and Rockland Senior High (29<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>5</sup> students is less than 75 for the

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<sup>3</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>4</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.

<sup>5</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).

district. The district's cumulative PPI<sup>6 7</sup> is 68 for all students and 65 for high needs students. The district's cumulative PPI for reportable subgroups are: 71 (low income students); 47 (students with disabilities); 56 (African-American/Black students); 62 (Hispanic/Latino students) and 67 (White students).

**3. The district's English language arts (ELA) performance is low<sup>8</sup> relative to other non-single-school Massachusetts districts and its growth<sup>9</sup> is moderate.<sup>10</sup>**

- A.** The district met its annual proficiency gap narrowing targets for all students and White students; the district did not meet its annual improvement targets for high needs students, low income students, students with disabilities, African-American/Black students, Hispanic/Latino students, and multi-race non-Hispanic/Latino students.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>6</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>7</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>8</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>9</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>10</sup>For ELA trends in the aggregate, see Table B4a in Appendix B; for selected subgroups, see Table B5a.

<sup>11</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.

- B. The district met its annual growth for African-American/Black students; the district did not meet its annual growth targets for all students, high needs students, low income students, students with disabilities, 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 African-American/Black students and Hispanic/Latino students. 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 low performance in grades 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, and overall and very low performance in grades 6 and 7 relative to other districts.
- E. In 2012 the district demonstrated moderate growth in grades 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, and overall.
- F. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the district demonstrated potentially meaningful<sup>12</sup> gains in grade 8. These gains were attributable to its performance over both periods.
- G. The 2012 performance of the Memorial Park School (1-5) 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 4, 5, and overall. Most of the declines in grades 5 and overall were attributable to its performance between 2009 and 2012 and most of the declines in grade 4 to its performance over both periods.
- H. The 2012 performance of the R. Stewart Esten School (K-5) 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 variable performance on percent of students scoring *Proficient* or *Advanced* and CPI).
- I. The 2012 performance of the Jefferson Elementary School (PK-5) is moderate relative to other elementary schools and its growth is high. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated potentially meaningful gains in grade 3, 4, 5 and overall. Most of the gains were attributable to its performance between both periods.

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<sup>12</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.

- J. The 2012 performance of the John W. Rogers Middle School (6-8) is low relative to other middle schools and its growth is moderate. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated variable performance on the percentage of students scoring Proficient or Higher and in growth.
- K. The 2012 performance of Rockland Senior High School (9-12) is low relative to other high schools and its growth is moderate. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated gains in grade 10 and overall in the percentage of students scoring Proficient or Higher and in CPI. Most of the gains were attributable to its performance between over both periods. The school demonstrated variable performance growth.

**4. The district's mathematics performance is low relative to other non-single-school Massachusetts districts and its growth is moderate.<sup>13</sup>**

- A. The district met its annual proficiency gap narrowing targets for all students, high needs students, low income students, and White students; the district did not meet its annual improvement targets for students with disabilities, African-American/Black students, Hispanic/Latino students, and multi-race non-Hispanic/Latino students.
- B. The district did not meet its annual growth targets for all students, high needs students, low income students, students with disabilities, 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 all students, high needs students, low income students, Hispanic/Latino students, and White students. It earned extra credit for decreasing the percentage of students scoring *Warning/Failing* 10 percent or more over this period for all students, high needs students, low income students, and White students.
- D. In 2012 the district demonstrated moderate performance in grades 4 and 10, low performance in grades 3, 5, 8, and overall, and very low performance in grades 6 and 7 relative to other districts.
- E. In 2012 the district demonstrated moderate growth in grades 4, 5, 8, 10, and overall, and low growth in grades 6 and 7.
- F. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the district demonstrated potentially meaningful gains in grades 4, 6, 8, and 10 and potentially meaningful declines in grade 7. These gains and declines were attributable to its performance over both periods.
- G. The 2012 performance of the Memorial Park School (1-5) 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 grades 3 and 4 and potentially meaningful declines in grades 5 and overall. Most of the gains and declines were attributable to its performance over both periods.

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<sup>13</sup> For mathematics trends in the aggregate, see Table B4b in Appendix B; for selected subgroups, see Table B5b.

- H. The 2012 performance of the R. Stewart Esten School (K-5) 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 4, 5 and overall. Most of the gains were attributable to its performance over both periods.
- I. The 2012 performance of the Jefferson Elementary School (PK-5) 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 3, 4, 5, and overall. Most of the gains were attributable to its performance over both periods.
- J. The 2012 performance of the John W. Rogers Middle School (6-8) is low relative to other middle schools and its growth is moderate. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated potentially meaningful gains in grades 6 and 8 and potentially meaningful declines in grades 7. Most of the gains and declines were attributable to its performance over both periods.
- K. The 2012 performance of Rockland Senior High School (9-12) is high relative to other high 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 10 in the percentage of students scoring Proficient or Higher and CPI. Most of the gains were attributable to its performance over both periods.

**5. The district's science and technology/engineering (STE) performance is low relative to other non-single-school Massachusetts districts.<sup>14</sup>**

- A. The district met its annual proficiency gap narrowing targets for all students, high needs students, low income students, and students with disabilities; the district did not meet its annual improvement targets for 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, high needs students, low income students, and White students. It earned extra credit for decreasing the percentage of students scoring *Warning/Failing* 10 percent or more over this period for high needs students, low income students, and students with disabilities.
- C. In 2012 the district demonstrated moderate performance in grades 5, low performance overall, and very low performance in grades 8 and 10 relative to other districts.
- D. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the district demonstrated potentially meaningful gains in grade 5 and overall and potentially meaningful declines in grade 8. These gains were attributable to its performance over both periods.

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<sup>14</sup> For STE trends in the aggregate, see Table B4c in Appendix B; for selected subgroups, see Table B5c.

- E. The 2012 performance of the Memorial Park School (1-5) is moderate relative to other elementary schools. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated gains in the percentage of students scoring *Proficient* or *Advanced*.
  - F. The 2012 performance of the R. Stewart Esten School (K-5) 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 grades 5 and overall. Most of the gains were attributable to its performance over both periods.
  - G. The 2012 performance of the Jefferson Elementary School (PK-5) 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 grades 5 and overall. Most of the gains were attributable to its performance between over both periods.
  - H. The 2012 performance of the John W. Rogers Middle School (6-8) is low relative to other middle schools. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated potentially meaningful declines in grades 8 and overall. Most of the gains were attributable to its performance over both periods.
  - I. The 2012 performance of Rockland Senior High School (9-12) is low relative to other high schools. Between 2009 and 2012 and more recently between 2011 and 2012, the school demonstrated gains in grade 10 and overall in the percentage of students scoring Proficient or Higher and in CPI. Most of the gains were attributable to its performance between 2009 and 2012.
- 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>15</sup> Over the most recent three-year period for which data is available<sup>16</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 increased, the five-year cohort graduation rate increased, and the annual grade 9-12 dropout rate declined.<sup>17</sup>**

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<sup>15</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>16</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>17</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.

- A. Between 2009 and 2012 the four-year cohort graduation rate increased 1.8 percentage points, from 82.3% to 84.1%, an increase of 2.2 percent. Between 2011 and 2012 it increased 0.3 percentage points, from 83.8% to 84.1%, an increase of 0.4 percent.
  - B. Between 2008 and 2011 the five-year cohort graduation rate increased 3.2 percentage points, from 80.6% to 83.8%, an increase of 4 percent. Between 2010 and 2011 it increased 2.9 percentage points, from 80.9% to 83.8%, an increase of 3.6 percent.
  - C. Between 2009 and 2012 the annual grade 9-12 dropout rate declined 5.0 percentage points, from 6.0% to 1%, a decrease of 82.8 percent. Between 2011 and 2012 it declined 0.2 percentage points, from 1.2 to 1.0, a decrease of 14.2 percent.
- 7. Rockland Public Schools' rate of in-school suspensions in 2011-2012 was significantly lower than the statewide rate,<sup>18</sup> and the rate of out-of-school suspensions did not significantly differ from the state rate.**
- A. The rate of in-school suspensions for Rockland was 0.6 percent, a fifth of the state rate of 3.4 percent. The rate of out-of-school suspensions for Rockland was 5.5 percent, compared to the state rate of 5.4 percent.
  - B. There was a significant difference among racial/ethnic groups for out-of-school suspensions and the rates of in-school suspensions for reportable groups were all below 1.5%.<sup>19</sup> The out-of-school-suspension rate was 14.7 percent for African-American/Black students, 0.0 percent for Asian students, 8.1 percent for Hispanic/Latino students, 1.5 percent for Multi-race (not Hispanic or Latino) students, and 5.0 percent for White students.
  - C. There were no significant differences between the in-school suspension rates for special populations. There was a significant difference between the rates of out-of-school suspensions for high needs students and non high needs students (7.2 percent compared to 3.9 percent), and low income students and non low income students (8.0 percent compared to 3.8 percent).
  - D. On average students in the Rockland Public Schools missed 2.2 days per disciplinary action,<sup>20</sup> lower than the state average of 3.1.

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<sup>18</sup> Statistical significance based on one sample T test.  $P \leq .05$

<sup>19</sup> Statistical significance for racial/ethnic groups and other subgroups based on Chi Square.  $P \leq .05$

<sup>20</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.

# Rockland Public Schools District Review Findings

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## Strengths

### *Leadership and Governance*

1. **In 2009, the leadership in the district, school committee and superintendent, in collaboration with town officials and other stakeholder groups, successfully achieved the passage of an operational override and a debt exclusion override. The passage of each of the overrides was a significant event in Rockland, especially during difficult economic times. Collaboration between schools and town continues today.**
  - A. The school district leadership, superintendent and school committee, working collaboratively with the town administrator, board of selectmen, finance committee, school building planning committee, and other stakeholder groups, contributed to the efforts that led to the successful passage of a \$2.5 million operational override, of which \$1.8 million was for the school department.
    1. School district leadership working together with town officials, board members and other stakeholder groups such as the parent advisory councils and booster organizations informed the community of the need for an operational override, especially the \$1.8 million for the school department.
      - a. According to a document that the superintendent provided the review team, the school district's budget in 2000-2001 was \$17,991,587 and the district budget for 2008-2009 was \$17,889,488, or a decrease of \$102,099 over those 8 years. This document stated that "from August to September the school district worked closely with the finance committee and town government to develop level-funded, level-serviced, and restoration budgets."
      - b. This information confirmed the school district's need for 1.7 million additional dollars to provide level services in fiscal year 2010. The breakdown for the \$1.7 million was \$900,000 for special education out-of-district placements and transportation, \$600,000 for maintenance and utilities, and \$200,000 for busing. The implications of a level-funded budget with a \$1.7 million budget shortfall were: close the Jefferson School; lose 20-25 teaching positions; lose 15-20 administrative, specialist, and support positions; lose athletic programs; and lose programs for the arts.
    2. The following article was voted at a Special Town Election on May 30, 2009: "Question 1. Shall the Town of Rockland be allowed to assess an additional \$1,800,000.00 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purpose of funding the Town of Rockland Public Schools for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2009?" According to the town clerk, out of 4,188 votes cast, the vote on this question was Blank 10, Yes 2,924, and No 1,254.
  - B. Later in 2009, once again with the collaboration of school district leadership, town officials, board members, and other stakeholder groups, the voters of Rockland approved a debt exclusion override to construct a new middle school and renovate the high school.

1. The superintendent said that the district formed a building committee in 2005 and a year later had architects do a feasibility study. In 2007 it was determined that there was a need for a new middle school. Also, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) had placed the high school on probation because of its science labs. Furthermore, the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) informed the district that it would only approve a single Rockland school building project in 2007. The superintendent said that the architects studied some options and developed a shared space option for the high school and middle school that received the approval of the school and town officials. This was then presented to MSBA on April 9, 2009, and gained its acceptance subject to Rockland citizens voting the necessary debt exclusion override for the building projects.
  2. At a Special Town Election on Saturday, November 14, 2009, Rockland voters voted on the following article: "Question 1: Shall the Town of Rockland be allowed to exempt from the provisions of Proposition two-and-one-half, so called, the amounts required to pay for the bonds issued to fund the design, engineering, permitting, equipping and construction of a new John W. Rogers Middle School and a renovated Rockland High School, including all costs incidental and related thereto?" The result of the vote was Yes 2,092 and No 943.
  3. In addition, Article 8 of the 2009 Rockland Special Town Meeting Warrant states that the town "unanimously voted to appropriate the sum of \$86,201,449 for the renovation of Rockland High School ... and the construction of a new John W. Rogers Middle School ... said sum to be expended under the direction of the School Building Committee ... provided further that that any grant that the Town may receive from the MSBA for the project shall not exceed the lesser of 64.26% of eligible, approved project costs, as determined by the MSBA or the maximum grant amount of \$53,356,682 as determined by the MSBA." The difference between the sum appropriated by the town and the maximum grant amount was about \$32.8 million.
- C. Interviewees on both the town and the district side reported continuing collaboration between the district and the town.
1. Town officials spoke about the school committee and Board of Selectmen having common goals and good communication, and about how at Town Meeting one group was not being pitted against another.
  2. A school committee member said that the superintendent has promoted open communication with town officials and community members, that the district makes strong efforts to provide budget data and other information to the public, and that school committee members are often involved in a variety of other town activities and programs. The superintendent said that school committees are great advocates for the schools.

**Impact:**

- The result of the 2009 operational override is that the Jefferson Elementary School remains open today, a significant number of administrator, teacher, and support staff positions were not eliminated, and several athletic and arts programs were saved.

- The 2009 debt exclusion override means that the district is providing 21<sup>st</sup> Century school facilities for students in grades 5-12.
- In addition to bringing school, municipal, parent, and community groups together on behalf of the young people in the community, the two overrides and the resulting state of the schools have rekindled a sense of pride in Rockland.
- Ongoing collaboration and communication between schools and town means that the community knows about the achievements and challenges of the schools and is supportive of them.

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

**2. Although its adherence to the state’s former evaluation system was inconsistent, the district has collaboratively negotiated and successfully introduced new educator evaluation policies and practices, adopting Massachusetts’ new educator evaluation system exactly.**

- A.** A review of the personnel folders of 33 randomly selected faculty members, as well as those of all 7 of Rockland’s school and district administrators, showed that evaluations had for the most part not been completed when due. Evaluations did not contain much in the way of information or recommendations that could improve instructional practice or contribute to professional growth.
- B.** Although the district’s adherence to the state’s former evaluation system was inconsistent, the district has made a concerted effort to comply with its responsibility as a Race to the Top participant to fully implement the state’s new educator evaluation system during the 2012-2013 school year.
1. A joint “labor management” committee, composed of the superintendent, district administrators, teachers’ association officers, and faculty, was formed late in the 2011-2012 school year. The committee worked collaboratively during the spring and summer to develop a comprehensive evaluation program that was aligned with the requirements of the new state educator evaluation system. Agreement was reached between the teachers’ association and the district, and in September 2012 a new collective bargaining agreement (CBA) that incorporated the state model was signed. The labor management committee’s role now is to monitor implementation of the new system and to make revisions if needed.
  2. The new CBA was submitted to ESE for review on September 13, 2012.
  3. The district provided, and actually exceeded, the ESE-prescribed number of training hours for evaluators and teachers before implementing the new program in September 2012. The superintendent acknowledged that additional training was still needed and said it would be made available.
  4. In separate interviews with review team members, the superintendent, administrators, and teacher association leaders affirmed that with only very minor exceptions the district’s model is an adoption of the components of the new Massachusetts educator evaluation system. This was confirmed by review of the district’s CBA.

5. Interviewees agreed that the district has taken its responsibilities to implement the new evaluation system seriously. All faculty and administrators have developed educator plans which include self assessments, SMART goals related to student learning and professional practice, and specific actions to be taken to meet those goals. The superintendent explained that he was monitoring implementation carefully by communicating frequently with his administrators and regularly checking both electronic and hard copy documentation to ensure fidelity to the new system.
6. Appropriate tools have been developed, including forms for goal setting, educator plan development, formative and summative assessments, and evaluation tracking. Administrators said that in many cases the actual ESE model forms were adopted, at least for the first year of implementation. The evaluation system, including all relevant documentation and recordkeeping, is supported by the district's online X-2 Aspen system and is readily accessible to both teachers and administrators.
7. Administrators and teachers said in interviews that classroom observations, including formal written feedback, were being conducted more frequently, and that both formative and summative assessments were being completed and submitted according to the terms and timelines specified in the CBA. Sample documents provided to reviewers confirmed this.

**Impact:** The Rockland Public School district has taken its responsibility to implement Massachusetts' new educator evaluation system seriously. Staff have worked conscientiously and collaboratively to develop an evaluation system that conforms to state guidelines and expectations. During the first year of implementation the district has adhered to the principles, practices, and protocols articulated in its CBA. Most importantly, the new evaluation system is earning the trust, confidence, and support of all stakeholders. By promoting a culture of growth-oriented, reflective supervision and a comprehensive evaluation process that uses multiple criteria and actively involves participants, Rockland can significantly improve the quality of teaching and learning across the district. If the system is faithfully and fully implemented, the growth and development of the professional staff will result in substantially improved learning opportunities and outcomes for students.

### ***Student Support***

#### **3. School staff have adjusted some policies and practices to provide additional academic and non-academic supports and promote a climate conducive to learning.**

- A. High school attendance practices have been adjusted, continuously monitored, and acted upon as a result of a finding in the 2011 NEASC report that "there have not been effective policies put in place to ensure that students who are having difficulty meeting the school's behavioral expectations are actively recruited to participate in support or intervention programs (p. 37)."
  1. The high school restructured its tardiness practice, a practice that the 2011 NEASC report found punitive and high school staff saw as ineffectual.
    - a. The high school increased supports to chronically tardy students and their families.

- b. The high school staff, realizing that there might be barriers to the ability of these students to engage with school, provided them the support of the school social worker.
  - c. The high school is implementing a credit recovery process that interviewees say is working well.
  - d. There is a new homework assistance program at the high school. Also, academic supports such as Study Island, MCAS remediation, and tutoring are available.
- B.** Practices have been implemented to reduce the number of students who drop out .
- 1. The school has created a new evening program with a teacher assigned to work specifically with students at risk. High school staff said that the evening program was fully supported by counselors.
  - 2. The middle school is using the ESE dropout profile process to begin to be proactive in identifying students at risk of dropping out.
  - 3. The high school has implemented an advisory program for 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders.
- C.** Elementary and middle school personnel designed a program to support the grade 5 transition to the new 5-8 middle school in the fall of 2013.
- 1. All grade 5 teachers from the elementary schools were assigned to the middle school to ensure comfort for entering students.
  - 2. The decision was made to house grades 5 and 6 students in a wing separate from grades 7 and 8 to ease the transition and to better meet the developmental needs of the students. The elementary literacy program and the math curriculum for grade 5 remained consistent with those at the elementary schools.
- D.** There were structured meetings with special education staff and other pupil personnel providers for all students served within special education or in special behavioral and language-based classrooms.
- E.** There were structured meetings between counselors and support staff at the middle and elementary schools to discuss students who demonstrated social, emotional, and behavioral needs.
- F.** The middle school principal sent a letter to all entering grade 5 students inviting them to visit during the summer.

**Impact:** By adjusting some policies and practices the district has strengthened the climate of the schools and provided needed supports for students.

## 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***

- 4. The 2012-2013 School Improvement Plans were not aligned with the District Improvement Plan or with one another. The plans did not explain how the district planned to narrow proficiency gaps and to improve student achievement for all students K-12.**
- A.** The Rockland Public Schools District Improvement Plan 2012-2013 contained a mission statement, statement of belief, goals and objectives, and primarily, the ESE standards and indicators.
1. There were four goals in the DIP: Teaching and Learning, Climate and Culture, Leadership and Accountability, and Twenty First Century Learning Skills, each with three to six brief bullets underneath. The DIP did not include a template with action steps, person(s) responsible, resources needed, professional development required, measures/evaluations, or deadlines—in other words, a detailed explanation as to how to achieve the goals and objectives. The superintendent said that the DIP was developed in collaboration with administrators, department heads, and union leadership. He also said that he regarded this DIP as a first plan and a work in progress. The superintendent agreed that the DIP and SIP goals were not aligned.
- B.** The Rockland High School Improvement Plan 2012-2013 included the following General Goal Areas: Evaluation; NEASC Review; Technology; Mission and Expectations Now the Core Values, Beliefs, and Learning Expectations; and Standardized Testing Data. Each General Goal Area had an objective and a template that included: Strategy to Accomplish the Objective, Persons Responsible, Resources Required Constraints (no information included here), Timeline, and Evaluation of Success.
- C.** The Rogers Middle School Improvement Plan 2012-2013 is a 2-page document consisting of 3 areas with accompanying goals. The first area was Curriculum and Instruction; the second, School Culture and Climate/Transition; and the third, Communication. The SIP template for the middle school included: Goals, Responsibility, and Timeline. There were no objectives or action steps under the goals, and the SIP was not specific as to who had responsibility or what the timelines were.
- D.** The Esten School Improvement Plan 2012-2013 listed three goals along with objectives. Goal 1 was Curriculum Development, Assessment, and Enrichment; Goal 2, Technology; and Goal 3, Ensure a Safe, Healthy, and Enjoyable Environment for Students and Staff. The Esten SIP 2012-2013 did not have action steps, person(s) responsible, resources needed, professional development required, measures/evaluations, or deadlines.
- E.** The Jefferson Elementary School did not appear to have a SIP for 2012-2013. In its Teacher’s Manual It listed the goals and objectives for the Rockland Educational Program approved by the Rockland School Committee in 2007, in the areas of Curriculum, Facilities, Community, Technology, Staffing, and Achievement.
- F.** The Memorial Park School Improvement Plan 2012-2013, included in the staff manual, stated that the “overarching learning outcome school-wide would be full adoption of [16] Habits of the Mind.” Also, it listed three major areas for improvements: Curriculum & Assessment Upgrades and Teacher Evaluation; Improve Family Engagement; and School Culture and Community. Each area had multiple bullets with objectives/action steps, some general, some specific. There were no person(s) responsible, resources needed, professional development required, measures/evaluations, or deadlines.

**Impact:** Without a complete DIP to which the SIPs are aligned, there is no clear communication of how the district will improve student achievement, and the schools act independently rather than in concert as a school system. Where plans do not have specifics as to how their goals are to be accomplished or by whom, it is difficult to accomplish them or to hold staff members accountable for their accomplishment.

**5. As most administrators have not been evaluated in a timely way in recent years, an important opportunity has been missed to improve leadership.**

- A.** In an interview, the superintendent said that the school committee had evaluated his performance annually.
  - 1. The superintendent said that he submits his goals to the school committee in September, and then, near the end of the school year, he prepares a self-assessment and provides it to the school committee. Each member then individually submits an evaluation of the superintendent to the school committee chairperson, who prepares a composite evaluation. This composite evaluation is then given to the superintendent. The school committee chairperson also said that the superintendent had been evaluated annually and agreed with the superintendent's description of the process.
- B.** Principals said that they did not receive a written evaluation prepared by the superintendent in 2011-2012. Some principals said that they had received evaluations in previous years, while others could not recall whether they had received one every year.
  - 1. The superintendent said that he had not evaluated the principals in a timely manner; he described his evaluations of the administrators as "spotty."
  - 2. State law requires the superintendent to evaluate principals annually. In addition, the first sentence of Article 14 in the individual contracts of the principals reads: "The Principal will be evaluated by the Superintendent on an annual basis, based on an evaluation instrument developed jointly by the Superintendent and the Principal."
- C.** Review team members did not find evaluations of the superintendent and other administrators in their personnel files. The review team asked district staff whether these evaluations might be located elsewhere, but they were not provided to the review team during the site visit.

**Impact:** Without documentation of the school committee's evaluations of the superintendent and the superintendent's evaluations of other administrators in their personnel files, the value of the evaluations is diminished. By not evaluating each administrator annually, the superintendent has been losing an important opportunity to inform and instruct each administrator and hold each one accountable for his or her performance. Also, an opportunity has been missed to set an example for all the educators in the district and to emphasize the importance of the evaluation process.

## ***Curriculum and Instruction***

### **6. Without central leadership with specific responsibility for curriculum and sufficient time for curriculum development, the district is not adequately addressing its curricular needs**

- A.** The district does not have an individual with overall responsibility and accountability for providing oversight and direction to curriculum development. Without central leadership the district's ability to develop curriculum is hindered.
1. Horizontal alignment across grades is evident in curriculum documents; teachers told the review team that every grade has a curriculum map.
  2. However, the district does not have a common template for the construction of the curriculum documents, or provisions for addressing acceleration, the behavioral needs of students, or the needs of students with disabilities and English language learners. Some curriculum documents include assessments; many do not.
  3. Vertical alignment is a particular challenge. One formal vertical team began work in 2012-2013, working on the alignment of math between the elementary schools and the middle school. The district does not have vertical teams between the middle school and the high school to check for redundancies or gaps, something one administrator said the curriculum had.
- B.** Throughout the district, little common planning time is available for use on curriculum, its vertical alignment, and its alignment to the 2011 state frameworks.
1. Elementary teachers use their prep period to work on curriculum or work before and after school.
  2. Middle school teachers have one common prep time, sometimes used for team meetings, and high school teachers meet after school, as well as for one monthly department meeting.
  3. The teachers in grade 5 at the middle school have a common unassigned period during which it was reported that they "can choose how to use the time."
  4. Grades 6 through 8 have no common periods unassigned, only team meeting time, and teams are cross-disciplinary. One staff member mentioned how difficult it was to develop a common writing prompt without time to meet as a department with other English teachers.
  5. High school staff said that there is not enough time for discussion of data in many subject areas, and as one teacher told the review team, "We try to get together."
  6. Special education staff does not have regularly scheduled meetings with grade level teams.

**Impact:** There are many components to a robust curriculum, but most important is alignment. A critical overview of the vertical alignment of the curriculum can ensure that the curriculum does not have gaps or redundancies, thus making the most of the available instructional time, and that teachers know what to teach and when. Without adequate leadership and teacher time, achievement of a complete, aligned curriculum is difficult.

**7. In observations in district classes, the review team did not see a high incidence of clear and consistent evidence of strong instructional practices; the team saw the lowest incidence of such evidence at the high school.**

The team observed 55 classes throughout the district: 10 at the high school, 14 at the middle school, and 31 at the 3 elementary schools. The team observed 25 ELA classes, 20 mathematics classes, and 10 classes in other subject areas. 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. See Appendix C for data on the team’s classroom observations.

- A.** In the case of 16 of the 24 characteristics of effective teaching inventoried by the review team, the percentage of all observed district classes showing clear and consistent evidence of that characteristic was less than 60 percent; in the case of 10 of the 24 this overall percentage was less than 50 percent, and in 6 of the 24 it was less than 40 percent.
- B.** In the case of all but 1 of the 24 characteristics of effective teaching inventoried, the high school had the lowest incidence of the three school levels of clear and consistent evidence of that characteristic, with percentages of this evidence ranging from 0 percent to 60 percent, and for 14 of the 24 characteristics ranging from 0 to 20 percent.
- C.** In the first category of the inventory, learning environment, clear and consistent evidence:
  - 1. of positive and respectful interactions between teacher and students was observed in 94 percent of visited classes at the elementary level, in 85 percent at the middle school, and in 50 percent at the high school.
  - 2. that observed lessons reflected rigor and high expectations was found in 65 percent of the visited classrooms in elementary schools, 54 percent at the middle school, and 20 percent at the high school.
  - 3. that the physical arrangement of the classroom ensured a positive learning environment and provided all students with access to learning activities was found in 90 percent of observed elementary classrooms, 77 percent of observed middle school classrooms, and 20 percent of classrooms observed at the high school. In several high school classes the reviewer commented on the traditional arrangement of forward-facing rows of desks; in contrast, in one middle school class, the reviewer’s note was about “desks arranged for paired activity.”
- D.** In the second category of the instructional inventory, teaching:
  - 1. The review team saw limited use of varied questioning techniques that require/seek thoughtful responses and promote deeper understanding. There was clear and consistent evidence of this characteristic in 55 percent of observed classes at the elementary schools, 15 percent at the middle school, and 20 percent at the high school. A team member said that in one case, “The teacher was answering her own questions.” In one class at the high school, on the other hand, a team member commented , “Factual questions—then—what’s your hypothesis.”
  - 2. Clear and consistent evidence of teaching that elicits the demonstration of higher order thinking skills was found in 65 percent of observed classes at the elementary level and 58 percent at the middle level). At the

high school the review team did not find clear and consistent evidence in any of the classes observed of students using higher order thinking skills either individually or in small groups.

3. Overall, teachers were not observed consistently implementing appropriate and varied strategies to meet students' diverse learning needs. Clear and consistent evidence of this characteristic was found in 52 percent of the visited classes at the elementary schools, in 31 percent at the middle school, and in 20 percent at the high school. Comments by several review team members included, "all students doing the same work" and "all teacher-directed lecture." However, in one high school class a team member observed, "Student centered activities, strategies."

E. In the third category of the instructional inventory, learning, the team saw inconsistent evidence of the characteristics of engaged learning in observed classes.

1. Clear and consistent evidence of students being engaged in productive learning routines was seen in 74 percent of the classrooms in elementary schools, in 69 percent at the middle school, and in 40 percent at the high school.
2. Clear and consistent evidence of students being engaged in challenging academic tasks was found at low rates in observed classes at all levels: 55 percent at the elementary, 54 percent at the middle, and 44 percent at the high school.

**Impact:** Learning environments that do not consistently have characteristics conducive to effective instruction are not likely to facilitate sustained improvement in student achievement. And without a higher incidence of effective instruction it will be difficult for the district to engage students more fully and improve students' learning and achievement.

### ***Assessment***

**8. Though the district has a number of assessments, including some local common assessments, and does regular analysis of some of its available assessment data, there are limitations on its capacity to analyze the data to the extent necessary to improve student achievement substantially.**

A. The district administers a number of formal and informal assessments, particularly in the elementary schools.

1. At the elementary level, formal ELA assessments include the DIBELS (K-2), GRADE (grades 3 and 4), and DRA (K-4). Math is assessed in grades 3-8 using Galileo. Also, the district administers MCAS in grades 3-10 in ELA, math, and science.
2. The district is administering the unit assessments that accompany its new math program (K-5). The district is also in the beginning stages of developing local common assessments. The high school has had common final exams in numerous courses for several years. In school year 2012-2013, the high school developed and administered common mid-year exams in English and math. In addition, grades 7 and 8 have both common open-response writing prompts and rubrics as well as the common unit assessments in math that are available with its textbook series.

3. Summative assessments such as MCAS are administered once a year. Formative assessments such as DIBELS, GRADE, DRA, and Galileo are administered three times each year. The frequency of administration of common assessments depends upon the nature of the assessment, whether final, mid-year, or unit.

**B. Formal analysis of summative and formative assessments takes place after each administration.**

1. Analysis of the MCAS summative assessment takes place once a year, in department meetings at the high and middle schools and in grade level meetings at the elementary school. Schoolwide faculty meetings to review MCAS results are not consistently held in each school.
2. Discussion and analysis of DIBELS, Galileo, DRA, and GRADE results takes place once after each of the three administrations, most frequently at grade-level team meetings at the elementary school and at department meetings at the middle and high schools.
3. The math coach facilitates group analysis of MCAS and Galileo results in grades 3-8; the literacy specialist coordinates meetings for analysis of DIBELS, GRADE, DRA, and Galileo at the elementary level; the middle school English department chair facilitates MCAS and Galileo discussions; and English, math, and science department chairs at the high school coordinate the meetings at which MCAS results are analyzed. These meetings take place each time assessment results are available.
4. After these single data analysis meetings, responsibility rests with the teacher to implement instruction that addresses the student needs indicated by the assessments. Teachers said that data development had been a part of the culture over the four years before the onsite visit, and that SMART goals had played a positive role in data interpretation. However:
  - a. In the 2012 TELL Mass survey 53 percent of teachers who responded said that they needed professional development in using data to drive instructional decision making; 70 percent said that they needed professional development in using student assessments (benchmark or formative).
  - b. Teachers and principals reported the need for additional training in data analysis.

**C. Time for regular data analysis is limited.**

1. High school teachers and department heads reported that there were few opportunities at the high school to discuss results from common assessments. Discussions between and among teachers take place on the fly.
2. Team time at the middle school involves teachers from different content areas, so is not appropriate for discussion of content assessments. Time for data analysis is limited to a portion of the monthly department meeting time.
3. Common planning time at the elementary school is in fact teacher preparation time; teachers are reluctant to give up their prep time.

**D. There is little coordination of data analysis at either the district or the school level.**

1. The superintendent said that his response to 2012 MCAS results consisted of

- a. a meeting with middle school science teachers to indicate his expectations for their teaching in the new facility and to offer professional development should teachers feel they needed it, and
  - b. repeated communication to middle school staff about the need to move the school out of Level 3.
2. Principals said that little action is taken at their level to monitor data by working directly with grade level teams and departments.
  3. The review team found little evidence of school data walls or of principals working directly with teachers to address their students' assessment results.

**Impact:** The limitations on teachers' capacity to analyze data and make instructional decisions based on that data as well as the limitations on the time available for data analysis mean that the instruction students receive is not being modified sufficiently in response to the strengths and challenges shown by the data. Without district or school level coordination and support, the response to data is individualized and does not have adequate focus.

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

**9. The district does not have a collaboratively developed, coordinated professional development system with the capacity and resources to support professional growth as needed, to effectively promote the attainment of district priorities, and to significantly improve the academic achievement of all students.**

**A.** The district does not provide adequate supportive, collaborative structures for Professional development (PD). Teachers do not have the regular and frequent grade level or departmental common planning and meeting time necessary to improve academic programs and instructional practices. Consequently, PD opportunities are more often individually pursued than job-embedded.

1. Teachers said that because the PD time and opportunities currently embedded in the school calendar were inadequate, it was very difficult for them to engage with their colleagues in meaningful and productive grade level/departmental collaborations. Very little regularly scheduled common planning time was available to staff at both the elementary and secondary levels. Further, PD programming was primarily site based, under the direction of individual principals, or sometimes initiated by teachers, rather than unified and systematically coordinated across the district.
  - a. In the three years before the site visit, however, the district received a literacy grant from ESE and embedded Keys to Literacy in the elementary and middle schools.
2. Both teachers and administrators explained that the actual number of early release days differ at the elementary, middle, and high schools. Additionally, schools at the three levels generally do not have common release days, thus removing opportunities for vertical staff meetings and articulation.
3. Though professional development spending comparisons are difficult to make, ESE data showed that the amount of funding allocated by the district to support professional development was well below the

statewide amount. Professional development spending per pupil was \$60 in the district in 2010-2011 compared with \$150 statewide, and \$71 in 2011-2012 compared with \$144 statewide.<sup>21</sup>

- B. PD programming and services are not clearly and directly linked with the identified and differentiated needs of the professional staff.
  - 1. The district's PD programming has not been a collaborative endeavor. Teacher focus groups at all levels reported that faculty did not have a meaningful role or any formal input in planning, implementing, or evaluating PD programs. In the 2012 TELL Mass survey, 64 percent of elementary staff who responded said that they played either "no role at all" or only a "small role" in determining the content of PD in-service programs. In interviews, reviewers were told that the district's PD program is led solely by the superintendent and one of the elementary school principals, who serves as Professional Development Coordinator.
  - 2. In the 2012 TELL Mass survey 53 percent of elementary teachers who responded indicated that they needed additional PD training in "using data to drive decision making," 70 percent expressed the opinion that they needed additional PD training in "using student assessments (benchmark and formative)," and 78 percent said that they believed that more PD training in the "Common Core standards" was necessary.
- C. Reviewers were told that the district has not had a formal induction and mentoring program for new teachers, as required by 603 CMR 7.12. The superintendent said that he provided mentoring for new administrators himself. Administrators said that such a program was currently being introduced and that a fully operational, two year mentoring program would be in place in the 2013-2014 school year.
- D. An area in which the district has provided sustained PD opportunities for staff is in the applications of instructional technology. Over the two years before the site visit a variety of summer courses and after-school workshops, initiated and taught by district staff members, were offered to professional personnel.
  - 1. In interviews, both teachers and administrators affirmed the value, popularity, and accessibility of these technology courses and workshops.
  - 2. Review team members, through their classroom observations, noted extensive and appropriate applications of instructional hardware and software by teachers and, to a lesser extent, students at all levels and in all schools.

**Impact:** Not having a cohesive professional development system means that programs are uncoordinated. Because information about staff needs is not analyzed or systematically used, along with student achievement data and assessments of instructional programs and practices, to develop sustained professional development aligned with district priorities, opportunities are being missed to improve the competencies of professional staff, advance the district's educational goals and priorities, and improve academic achievement for all students.

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<sup>21</sup> See DART Detail: Staffing & Finance, PerPupilDetail tab, available at <http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/dart/default.html>.

## ***Student Support***

### **10. The district has not established effective systems of academic and behavioral supports and interventions for students.**

- A.** Interviewees said that there was an absence of tiered systems of support across the district.
  - 1. High school and middle school personnel said they did not have tiered instruction.
  - 2. A district administrator said that the district does not look at tiered instruction specifically: “We look at issues, set up programs.”
- B.** Middle school staff interviewed identified the need for professional development on student support. In the 2012 TELL Mass survey, elementary teachers who responded said that professional development was needed in the following areas: teaching students with disabilities (51 percent of respondents), English language learners (56 percent of respondents), closing achievement gap (60 percent of respondents), separating learning needs from a disability in culturally/linguistically diverse students (54 percent of respondents), student assessment (70 percent of respondents), data to drive decision making (53 percent of respondents), and differentiating instruction (49 percent of respondents).
- C.** Behavioral supports and programs are unevenly available in the district.
  - 1. The middle school has a behavioral support program for students. This program does not continue into the high school.
  - 2. The high school does not have an in-district alternative education program, although staff expressed the desire to reinstate a previous alternative program. Staff also described an earlier program for students with emotional needs.
  - 3. One district behavioral therapist consults to all five schools.
- D.** The district does not have an effective, consistent system for monitoring students’ progress and responding quickly to student needs.
  - 1. Student support teams are not uniform throughout the district.
    - a. The high school implemented a student support team (SST) in response to the 2011 NEASC report. Teachers submit a form to the SST; team members suggest possible strategies and return the form to the teacher.
    - b. The middle school has a support team that meets weekly. It consists of guidance, psychology, social work, and administration. Interviewees said that teachers complete a form and send it to the principal.
    - c. Esten Elementary School has a student support team and has established a Positive Behavior Support pre-referral form.
  - 2. Instructional programs and practices do not consistently provide the support that students need.

- a. Special education uses a mix of inclusion and pullout models across the district. Staff said that there were wide variations across schools as to how services were structured.
- b. Team members found partial or no evidence of varied strategies matched to learning objectives and content in 49 percent of classrooms visited. In addition, in 59 percent of classrooms visited there was partial or no evidence of appropriate use of varied strategies to meet diverse student needs.

**Impact:** The result of reliance on the efforts of individual staff members rather than fully articulated support programs PK–12 is that staff and school leaders rely on sometimes less than effective practices. Students in Rockland who are not at proficiency for their grade level because of academic or non-academic challenges are not assured that their needs will be diagnosed and addressed early and appropriately. Students ultimately disengage when approaches are not appropriate, and over time staff tend to feel discouraged and overwhelmed by their individual efforts.

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

**11. The district’s enrollment decreased from fiscal year 2008 to fiscal year 2012, with a corresponding increase in per-pupil spending within the district. Over the same period out-of-district expenses and employee insurance costs increased, at higher rates than statewide.**

- A. Rockland’s expenditure per in-district pupil (from all funding sources) was \$12,244 in fiscal year 2012, 5 percent higher than the median of \$11,611 among 48 similar size K-12 districts (2,000-2,999 students). Actual net school spending in fiscal year 2012 was 20.8 percent above required.
- B. From fiscal year 2008 to fiscal year 2012, the district’s enrollment decreased by 10.9 percent. Spending per in-district pupil increased by 17.3 percent in this period, from \$10,441 to \$12,244; state in-district per-pupil spending increased 9.5 percent, from \$11,979 to \$13,121. Actual dollars expended for in-district pupils increased by only 5.2 percent while the rest of the increase in the per-pupil amount was because of having fewer pupils. A gain made in this period was the reduction of the student to teacher ratio from 16.9:1 in fiscal year 2008 to 14.8:1 in fiscal year 2012, still higher than the state student to teacher ratio of 13.7:1.
- C. Rockland’s expenditure per in-district pupil in fiscal year 2012 was \$12,244, 6.7 percent lower than the state’s (of \$13,121), but expenditure on teachers was \$4,356 per in-district pupil, 15.0 percent lower than the state in-district per-pupil expenditure of \$5,125.
- D. There has been a high rate of increase in employee insurance costs, which creates pressure to reduce positions to fund benefits. From fiscal year 2008 to fiscal year 2012, insurance for active employees increased from \$1,331 to \$1,908 per pupil (an increase of 43.3 percent) while the state increased from \$1,218 to \$1,442 per pupil (an increase of 18.4 percent.)
- E. Although foundation enrollment *decreased* by 13 percent from 2007 to 2013, chapter 70 aid *increased* by 9.5 percent in that period, helping to support the district’s budget. This was partly because of an increase in low-income enrollment, from 21 percent to 39 percent between 2008 and 2012, which increased the foundation budget.

- F. Out-of-district expenditures increased steadily between 2008 and 2012, at a faster rate than these expenditures increased statewide. District leaders believe that expanded in-district services for high-needs students with disabilities will improve their education and reduce costs.
1. The number of out-of-district pupils increased from 104.2 to 125.6 (21 percent) from fiscal year 2008 to fiscal year 2012.
  2. Out-of-district tuition and transportation expenditures increased from \$1,878,050 to \$3,505,898 over this period (87 percent) with particularly large increases in fiscal years 2009 (41.4 percent) and 2011 (22.5 percent). Statewide, these expenditures increased 15 percent over this period (fiscal years 2008 to 2012).
  3. Expenditures for different kinds of tuition changed over time. The 41.4 percent increase from fiscal year 2008 to fiscal year 2009 was driven by nearly doubling expenditure for private schools from \$533,315 to \$1,042,394, and for collaboratives from \$399,037 to \$780,842; both private schools and collaboratives serve students with disabilities. Since then, private school tuition has stayed at roughly the same level, while collaboratives' tuition dropped in 2010 and increased to \$1,124,854 in 2011.
  4. Interviewees said that there is not adequate in-district programming to educate students with certain disabilities, and that recently the district had made a concerted effort to create in-district programming for these students.

**Impact:** Declining enrollment and the changing demographics and educational needs of Rockland students has put pressure on the district's budget and allocation of resources. Two issues—a high rate of increase in insurance and out-of-district placement costs—have put further pressure on the budget and made options for re-deployment of resources because of declining enrollment more difficult to evaluate.

# Rockland Public Schools District Review Recommendations

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## *Leadership and Governance*

1. **The review team recommends that the superintendent, with input from the leadership team and representatives from other stakeholder groups, develop a detailed, actionable District Improvement Plan (DIP) that provides future direction for the district. Similarly, principals, with input from their school councils, should develop School Improvement Plans (SIPs) with SMART goals aligned with the DIP SMART goals.**
  - A. The superintendent should seek input from members of his leadership team and from other stakeholder groups to develop a DIP that gives direction for the school system as it moves forward, particularly with regard to improving student achievement.
    1. The goals in the DIP should be SMART goals: S= specific and strategic; M=measurable; A=action-oriented; R= rigorous, realistic, and results-oriented; and T=timed and tracked.
    2. A DIP template should be developed that includes the key components needed to achieve each of the goals. These include: (a) action steps, (b) person(s) responsible, (c) resources needed, (d) measurable outcomes, and (e) deadlines.
    3. The superintendent should provide the school committee and district staff with periodic reports on progress being made toward attaining each DIP goal.
    4. The superintendent and school committee should consider aligning some goals in the Superintendent's Annual Plan (as part of the district's new educator evaluation system) with DIP goals.
  - B. Similarly, the principals should work with their school councils to develop SIPs that provide direction for their schools with a primary focus on improving achievement for all students.
    1. The SIPs should be based on SMART goals that are aligned with the DIP SMART goals.
    2. Principals should periodically update staff members, parents, and the community on the progress being made on SIP goals.
    3. The superintendent should incorporate into each principal's annual evaluation the progress made toward SIP goal attainment.

### Recommended resources:

- *What Makes a Goal Smarter?* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/eeval/resources/presentations/SMARTGoals/Handout5.pdf>) is a description of SMART goals with accompanying examples. The handout was designed to support educators in developing goals as part of the educator evaluation system, but would also be a useful reference as the district develops a more focused DIP and SIPs.

- *District Accelerated Improvement Planning - Guiding Principles for Effective Benchmarks* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/sss/turnaround/level4/AIP-GuidingPrinciples.pdf>) provides information about different types of benchmarks to guide and measure district improvement efforts.

**Benefits:** In order to move forward, it is essential that the district establish clear goals and communicate regularly about progress toward them. In addition, all stakeholders must understand their roles in helping to achieve the goals. When SIP goals are aligned with DIP goals, the plans will reinforce each other and maximize progress.

**2. The superintendent should prepare an annual evaluation of all central office administrators and school principals. All written evaluations should be organized and placed in the appropriate personnel file.**

- A. All administrators in the school district should be evaluated annually on their job performance by their supervisors.
  1. As it is the responsibility of the school committee to annually evaluate the job performance of the superintendent, it is likewise the responsibility of the superintendent to evaluate each central office administrator and principal every year.
  2. All evaluators should use the newly adopted educator evaluation system to guide their evaluations.
  3. At the conclusion of the meeting where the written evaluation is shared and discussed with the administrator, both parties should sign and date two copies of the evaluation document, one for the administrator evaluated and the other for placement in the district's official personnel file.

**Benefits:** The annual evaluation will hold administrators accountable for their job performance based upon items such as: standards and indicators; DIP, any applicable SIP, and personal goals; and the duties and responsibilities of their specific jobs. The evaluation process will provide the opportunity for evaluatees to receive commendations for work well done and to continually improve their practice based on targeted feedback. The evaluation of central office administrators and principals as well as the superintendent will set the standard for educator evaluation throughout the district. By maintaining records of evaluations in personnel files in a central location, the superintendent can more easily review and monitor the status and quality of each evaluation.

***Curriculum and Instruction***

**3. The district should develop a system to ensure curriculum consistency, alignment, and delivery. Prerequisite for the establishment of this system is the assignment to a senior administrator of overall responsibility for curriculum oversight and accountability, and the designation of sufficient teacher common planning time.**

- A. The district should assign to a senior administrator overall responsibility for providing direction and oversight to curriculum development. This individual should be responsible for ensuring that the curriculum is horizontally and vertically aligned, that the district curriculum is implemented with fidelity across grades, and that curricula are aligned with the 2011 state frameworks.

To accomplish this, the senior administrator with curriculum oversight responsibilities should, with input from district and school administrators and from teachers, establish a system for curriculum review and monitoring. The system should include clear plans, timelines, and expectations for those involved.

- B.** To systematically sustain a viable curriculum, communication is vital. The district should designate sufficient common planning time to enable teachers to collaborate across subject areas and grade level teams as well as to stay abreast of current ESE initiatives.

Recommended resources:

- ESE's *Model Curriculum Units* provide exemplars that can be useful as the district develops its systematic approach to curriculum. (The units can be accessed by request at [http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/model/download\\_form.aspx](http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/model/download_form.aspx).) Supplemental presentations (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/model/resources/>) provide more information about the units.
- ESE's *Quality Review Rubrics* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/model/rubrics/>) can support the analysis and improvement of the district's curriculum.
- *How to Develop Curriculum Maps to Support a Guaranteed and Viable Curriculum that Guides Instruction* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/candi/model/maps/CurriculumMaps.pdf>) is a presentation that provides definitions and high-quality examples of curriculum maps.
- The resource guide, *2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Framework for Students with Disabilities* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/alt/resources.html>), is designed for use by educators to align and develop instruction based on the 2011 Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks for students with disabilities who cannot, in the judgment of their IEP or 504 team, participate in standard MCAS tests even with the use of test accommodations.
- ESE's *Common Planning Time Self-Assessment Toolkit* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/ucd/CPTtoolkit.pdf>) is a guide to help districts raise student achievement by building districts' capacity to support effective teacher instructional teams.

**Benefits:** By implementing this recommendation, the Rockland Public Schools will produce an aligned and usable set of curriculum materials that will specify what teachers are to teach and what students are to learn. The administrator responsible for providing direction and oversight to curriculum development will design a system that ensures that the curriculum is regularly reviewed and revised. Also, designated common planning time will enable teachers to share best practices, develop and revise curriculum, and create effective lessons that meet current requirements.

**4. The district should significantly increase its use of effective instructional practices. Both the DIP and the SIPs should contain goals that prioritize professional development focused on implementing effective instruction.**

- A.** Effective instructional practices are research-based teaching methods that have been shown to have a positive impact on student achievement.

1. Professional development should be focused on improving instructional practices in the district. When possible, this should be embedded into the school day, with the use of in-class coaching, demonstration lessons, lab classes, and other formats such as those already in place in the district.
2. Instruction at all schools should be rigorous and should meet the needs of all learners. Common instructional practices should include:
  - Questioning techniques that require thoughtful responses and deepen students' understanding;
  - Lessons and assignments that require students to demonstrate higher-order thinking skills;
  - The provision to students of challenging academic tasks; and
  - The use of appropriate and varied teaching strategies to meet students' diverse learning needs.

Recommended resources:

- *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. This resource might be a useful reference as the district identifies and provides professional development focused on specific instructional elements. It is part of ESE's *Learning Walkthrough Implementation Guide* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/dart/walk/ImplementationGuide.pdf>).
- *Characteristics of a Standards-Based Mathematics Classroom* ([http://www.doe.mass.edu/omste/news07/mathclass\\_char.doc](http://www.doe.mass.edu/omste/news07/mathclass_char.doc)) and *An Effective Standards-Based Science and Technology/Engineering Classroom* ([http://www.doe.mass.edu/omste/news07/scitechclass\\_char.pdf](http://www.doe.mass.edu/omste/news07/scitechclass_char.pdf)) are references for mathematics and science and technology/engineering instructional planning and observation. They are intended to support activities that advance standards-based educational practice, including formal study, dialogue and discussion, classroom observations, and other professional development activities.

**Benefits** of implementing this recommendation will include the widespread use of high-quality instructional strategies throughout the district, which will address the needs of all students, provide a rigorous learning experience, and promote higher levels of student achievement.

### **Assessment**

5. **The district should make more effective use of its assessment data by providing teachers with the time and support they need for analyzing and using data and by establishing systems for data analysis at the district and school levels.**
  - A. The district should expand the meeting time available for teachers at all levels beyond the currently scheduled single meeting for MCAS analysis and three-times-a-year meetings for analysis of other data.
  - B. School administrators should support and guide teachers in this effort by focusing staff attention on schoolwide results and by working directly with teachers on analyzing results in their own classrooms.

1. Professional development should enable teachers to bridge the gap between what they know about their students' instructional needs and what they need to know to design instruction that addresses those needs.
  2. Principals, as instructional leaders, should establish systems and routines for analyzing data and for working with teacher teams and departments to identify ways to use data analysis to inform instruction.
- C.** Data analysis at the school and classroom levels must be part of a districtwide approach to data. The superintendent, with input from district and school leaders, should develop a district-level structure and process for monitoring and analyzing student performance and other data regularly and frequently and communicating with principals about steps that will be taken in response to the data.
1. To this end, the district should consider establishing a district data team – a group of staff that is responsible for leading and coordinating the use of data throughout the district.

Recommended resources:

- *Edwin Analytics* (accessible through the ESE security portal, <https://gateway.edu.state.ma.us/>) is a powerful reporting and data analysis tool that gives authorized districts and state level users access to new information, reports and perspectives on education and programs that specifically support improvements in teaching and learning.
- ESE's *District Data Team Toolkit* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/ucd/ddtt/toolkit.pdf>) is a compendium of resources to help a district establish, grow, and maintain a culture of inquiry and data use through a District Data Team.

**Benefit:** By implementing this recommendation, the district will establish clear expectations, processes, and support to ensure that staff at all levels regularly and frequently analyze data to inform decision-making and to guide instruction. This will continually increase staff members' capacity to use data. In particular, teachers will have the guidance and support needed to design instruction that is targeted to students' specific needs, which will lead to increased student achievement. And teachers will have time to analyze assessment results more frequently and in greater depth and to develop and implement more local common assessments.

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

- 6. The district is encouraged to develop a coordinated and collaborative professional development system that has the resources and structures necessary to support and sustain the professional growth of all staff, effectively promote well-defined district priorities, and significantly improve the academic achievement of students.**
  - A.** The district should make and carry through on a clear commitment to sustained PD structures, supports, and opportunities. The development of a broad knowledge base and deep understanding of educational practices, as well as the capacity of staff to employ them effectively, requires a long-term prioritization of resources.

- B.** Professional development (PD) programs and services should be built around prioritized district goals and should be systematically informed by carefully identified staff needs, student achievement data, and comprehensive assessments of instructional programs and practices.
1. PD programming should be fully integrated with and directly supportive of well-defined district priorities. Therefore, the District Improvement Plan and individual School Improvement Plans must be carefully aligned and fully articulated to enable PD programming to advance core district goals and objectives.
  2. A joint committee of administrators and teacher representatives should direct the district's PD program so that teachers and administrators can work together in formal collaboration to plan and implement programs and services. Teachers should be directly involved in systematically identifying specific needs for PD, determining how these needs might best be met, and designing and evaluating PD activities and support systems.
  3. In addition to being clearly focused on well-defined district goals, PD programs should also be sufficiently flexible and differentiated to allow for the varied needs, responsibilities, expertise, and experience of the professional staff. The district's technology PD strand serves as a good example of sustained PD programming designed to support a clearly identified district priority, provided through an appropriately differentiated delivery model.
  4. Significantly more time for ongoing PD programs and activities should be embedded within the school calendar and master schedules. Current impediments to regularly scheduled and frequent common planning and meeting times in all grade levels, subject areas, and schools should be addressed. For example, every school should have an approximately equal number of early release PD days and these in-service days should, when possible, take place on the same day in each school in the district. This will enable collaboration across schools to address vertical as well as horizontal alignment.
  5. The district should support teacher growth by creating or expanding opportunities for educators rated as exemplary<sup>22</sup> to be assigned responsibility for instructional leadership. Possibilities include serving as trainers to support the new evaluation system, as data coaches, as peer advisors, and as models of best classroom practice.
  6. The district should continue to provide both teachers and administrators with ongoing PD to properly support the implementation of the new educator evaluation system. This should include the development of high-quality district-determined measures necessary to accurately measure educator impact and students' academic growth and achievement.
  7. The district should continue with its plans to establish and maintain an effective mentoring program for new educators.

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<sup>22</sup> "Educators whose summative performance rating is exemplary and whose impact on student learning is rated moderate or high shall be recognized and rewarded with leadership roles, promotion, additional compensation, public commendation or other acknowledgement." 603 CMR 35.08(7).

#### Recommended resources:

- The regional District and School Assistance Center (DSAC) offers a wide range of professional resources, services, and assistance to support PD programming.
- The Massachusetts Standards for Professional Development (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/pd/standards.pdf>) describe, identify, and characterize what high quality learning experiences should look like for educators.
- ESE's *Quick Reference Guide: Educator Evaluation & Professional Development* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/eval/resources/QRG-ProfessionalDevelopment.pdf>) illustrates how educator evaluation and professional development can be used as mutually reinforcing systems to improve educator practice and student outcomes.
- ESE's *Induction of Beginning Educators* web page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/educators/mentor/>) provides links to teacher and administrator induction program information; induction resources; and ESE's *Guidelines for Induction Programs*.
- *PBS LearningMedia* (<http://www.pbslearningmedia.org/>) is a free digital media content library that provides relevant educational resources for PreK-12 teachers. The flexible platform includes high-quality content tied to national curriculum standards, as well as professional development courses.
- ESE's Professional Learning Communities *Guidance* and *Stages at a Glance* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/ucd/PLCGuidance.pdf>; <http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/ucd/PLCStages.pdf>) are reference tools to frame the work of developing and strengthening instructional teams at the school level.
- ESE's District-Determined Measures (DDMs) support page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/eval/ddm/>) provides links to resources designed to support districts in the identification, piloting, and implementation of DDMs.

#### Benefits:

- Alignment with specific district goals will help to ensure that professional development throughout the district is focused, coordinated, and efficient, and that all educators perceive the rationale for the specific professional development opportunities in which they engage.
- The active involvement and formal collaboration of teachers in the professional development (PD) process will promote opportunities for professional growth that are aligned with teachers' specific needs.
- Establishment of common planning time will provide greatly increased opportunities for faculty to address curriculum needs and to work in sustained collaborations to achieve significant improvements in their own professional competencies and in the academic outcomes of the district's students.

## ***Student Support***

- 7. The district should use data about students' needs in order to establish a districtwide tiered system of academic and non-academic supports to meet the needs of all students, including those struggling and those ready for accelerated work.**
  - A.** The district should analyze and expand its existing programs and supports in order to establish a coherent, consistent, effective tiered system of support that provides seamless transitions as students move from grade to grade.
    1. The district should ensure that students with disabilities throughout the district are educated in the least restrictive environment in which they can be successful, and that students at all schools have equitable access to educational environments that best meet their specific needs.
    2. The district should document and evaluate all existing tiered intervention opportunities that are intended to meet the range of needs in each school, including students who are struggling and those who are ready for accelerated work.
    3. Existing interventions should be improved, and new programs should be added as necessary, to ensure that the district is equipped to address all students' diverse needs and that appropriate interventions are available at all schools.
      - a. As part of this effort, the district should explore resources and practices that support high school students who exhibit behavioral health issues.
  - B.** The district should establish and communicate clear expectations for how students' progress should be monitored and supported.
    1. Building on the strengths of the existing school-based student support teams, the district should identify best practices and, as appropriate, require those practices to be implemented at all schools.
    2. The district should clearly communicate the key elements of its tiered system to all stakeholders to promote a shared understanding of the system and to ensure that programs and practices are consistent across schools and grade levels.

### Recommended resources:

- The *Massachusetts Tiered System of Support (MTSS)* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/mtss/blueprint/mtss-blueprint.pdf>) might be a useful resource as the district seeks to identify ways to strengthen its tiered system of support. The district may wish to use the MTSS Self-Assessment (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/mtss/sa/>) to determine priorities.
- The *Behavioral Health and Public Schools Framework* (<http://bhps321.org/viewframework.asp>) is a guidance document to help schools establish supportive environments with collaborative services that will enable all students – including those with behavioral health needs – to achieve at their highest potential.

- *Addressing Students' Social, Emotional, and Health Needs* (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/apa/framework/level4/StudentsNeeds.pdf>) is a resource with guidance and promising practices to help schools create a safe school environment and make effective use of a system for addressing the social, emotional, and health needs of its students that reflects the behavioral health and public schools framework.
- The ESE website provides several links to information about alternative education (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/alted/resources.html>).

**Benefits** from implementing this recommendation include prioritizing high quality core educational experiences in a supportive and appropriate learning environment. A carefully designed tiered system of student support will increase the likelihood that all students are provided with instruction and support that meet their needs and promote learning. By ensuring that the system extends through all schools, the district will provide all of its students with equitable opportunities to receive the instruction and interventions they need to achieve at high levels.

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

- 8. The district is encouraged to analyze budget allocations and, if possible, to reallocate resources in order to maximize their impact on student achievement.**
  - A.** As part of its planning process (see first Leadership and Governance recommendation above), the district should analyze its current budget allocations and reallocate resources to support the goals outlined in the DIP.
  - B.** The district should scrutinize the amount it spends on employee insurance to identify possible cost-saving measures.
  - C.** The district should continue in its effort to create high-quality in-district programming for students who are currently placed in out-of-district settings.
    1. The district should examine out-of-district placements and determine whether these can be replicated in-district.
    2. A thorough review of staffing could enable the administration to reallocate some resources to programs that could bring some students back into the district.

Recommended resources:

- ESE's School Finance web page (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/finance/statistics/>) provides comparisons of per-pupil expenditure, long-term enrollment, teacher salaries, and special education direct expenditure trends.
- The Rennie Center's *Smart School Budgeting* (<http://www.renniecenter.org/research/SmartSchoolBudgeting.pdf>) is a summary of existing resources on school finance, budgeting, and reallocation.

**Benefits:** Although it is challenging to reallocate resources in the context of decreasing enrollment, this is an opportunity for the district to maximize its resources in order to provide high-quality education and promote increased student achievement. The district is commended for reducing its student-teacher ratio; implementing this recommendation could enable the district to allocate resources even more effectively. With additional resources available, the district can develop programs that will provide some of its students with disabilities with appropriate in-district services, thereby expanding their educational options and reducing costs for out-of-district placements.

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

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## **Review Team Members**

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

1. Dr. John Kulevich, leadership and governance
2. Mary Eirich, curriculum and instruction
3. Patricia Williams, assessment, review team coordinator
4. Dr. Frank Sambuceti, human resources and professional development
5. Dr. Marilynne Quarcoo, student support
6. Dr. John Moretti, financial and asset management

## **District Review Activities**

The following activities were conducted during the review:

The team conducted interviews with the following financial personnel: assistant superintendent for business/finance, business assistant, and payroll clerk.

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

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

The team conducted interviews/focus groups with the following central office administrators: superintendent, assistant superintendent for business/finance, and pupil personnel director.

The team visited the following schools: Memorial Park Elementary (grades 1-4), Esten Elementary (grades 1-4), Jefferson Elementary (K-4), Rogers Middle School (grades 5-8), and Rockland Senior High School (PK, grades 9-12).

During school visits, the team conducted interviews with focus groups with 27 elementary school teachers, 9 middle school teachers, and 9 high school teachers.

The team observed 55 classes in the district: 11 at the one high school, 13 at the one middle school, and 31 at the 3 elementary schools.

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

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

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

**Site Visit Schedule**

<b>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 district staff and principals; review of personnel files; teacher focus groups; school committee interviews, visits to Esten, Jefferson, and Memorial Park elementary schools, and Rockland High School.	Interviews with town or city personnel; interviews with school leaders; interviews with school committee members; visits to Rogers Middle School and Memorial Park Elementary School for classroom observations; district review team meeting; emerging themes meeting with district leaders and principals.

## Appendix B: Enrollment, Expenditures, Performance

**Table B1a: Rockland Public Schools  
2012-2013 Student Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity**

Student Group	District	Percent of Total	State	Percent of Total
Asian	13	0.6%	56,517	5.9%
Afr. Amer./Black	116	5.3%	81,806	8.6%
Hispanic/ Latino	155	7.0%	156,976	16.4%
Multi-race, Non-Hisp. /Lat.	79	3.6%	26,012	2.7%
Nat. Haw. Or Pacif. Isl.	0	0.0%	1,020	0.1%
White	1,836	83.5%	630,150	66.0%
<b>All students</b>	<b>2,199</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>954,773</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Note: As of October 1, 2012

**Table B1b: Rockland Public Schools  
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	355	33.0%	15.9%	163,921	35.5%	17.0%
Low income	878	81.6%	39.9%	353,420	76.5%	37.0%
ELL and Former ELL	67	6.2%	3.0%	95,865	20.7%	10.0%
<b>All high needs students</b>	<b>1,076</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>48.2%</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 2,232; total state enrollment including students in out-of-district placement is 965,602.

**Table B2: Rockland Public Schools  
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	18,983,086	18,868,200	19,153,086	19,304,891	19,718,359
By municipality	8,990,133	9,474,142	9,450,427	10,305,367	11,957,640
Total from local appropriations	27,973,219	28,342,342	28,603,513	29,610,258	31,675,999
From revolving funds and grants	---	4,971,660	---	4,506,541	---
Total expenditures	---	33,314,002	---	34,116,799	---
<b>Chapter 70 aid to education program</b>					
Chapter 70 state aid*	---	9,925,552	---	10,022,160	10,325,640
Required local contribution	---	11,539,567	---	11,752,002	12,117,742
Required net school spending**	---	21,465,119	---	21,774,162	22,443,382
Actual net school spending	---	25,658,907	---	26,299,298	27,178,780
Over/under required (\$)	---	4,193,788	---	4,525,136	4,735,398
Over/under required (%)	---	19.5	---	20.8	21.1

\*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 May 24, 2013

**Table B3: Rockland Public Schools  
Expenditures Per In-District Pupil  
Fiscal Years 2010–2012**

<b>Expenditure Category</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
Administration	\$431.49	\$463.76	\$469.17
Instructional leadership (district and school)	\$679.16	\$838.61	\$880.81
Teachers	\$4,093.17	\$4,192.20	\$4,355.57
Other teaching services	\$646.43	\$757.56	\$747.66
Professional development	\$68.04	\$120.22	\$149.72
Instructional materials, equipment and technology	\$485.80	\$266.72	\$179.20
Guidance, counseling and testing services	\$263.37	\$249.31	\$319.61
Pupil services	\$1,074.34	\$1,076.07	\$1,131.37
Operations and maintenance	\$1,063.98	\$1,215.35	\$1,013.12
Insurance, retirement and other fixed costs	\$2,685.23	\$2,891.40	\$2,997.49
<b>Total expenditures per in-district pupil</b>	<b>\$11,491</b>	<b>\$12,071</b>	<b>\$12,244</b>

Sources: Per-pupil expenditure reports on ESE website

**Table B4a: Rockland Public Schools  
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	158	81.3	87.2	81.6	82.9	1.6	1.3	--	Low
	P+	158	48%	58%	50%	56%	8	6	--	--
4	CPI	191	80.8	75.3	76.8	79.1	-1.7	2.3	--	Low
	P+	191	46%	37%	42%	51%	5	9		--
	SGP	170	65.5	36.0	44.5	43.0	-22.5	-1.5		Moderate
5	CPI	167	84.7	83.9	85.2	83.4	-1.3	-1.8	--	Low
	P+	167	54%	58%	61%	57%	3	-4		--
	SGP	156	50.0	53.0	57.5	48.0	-2.0	-9.5		Moderate
6	CPI	200	80.6	76.9	85.9	81.6	1.0	-4.3	--	Very Low
	P+	200	51%	49%	67%	58%	7	-9		--
	SGP	176	37.0	29.5	52.5	51.5	14.5	-1.0		Moderate
7	CPI	180	87.8	87.4	85.8	84.9	-2.9	-0.9	--	Very Low
	P+	180	64%	66%	64%	64%	0	0		--
	SGP	166	63.5	50.0	48.0	46.0	-17.5	-2.0		Moderate
8	CPI	174	89.7	91.6	88.5	90.4	0.7	1.9	Yes	Low
	P+	174	71%	76%	71%	76%	5	5		--
	SGP	162	38.0	50.0	47.5	48.5	10.5	1.0		Moderate
10	CPI	134	93.3	88.6	91.6	96.6	3.3	5.0	--	Low
	P+	134	84%	71%	80%	90%	6	10		--
	SGP	117	24.0	48.0	55.5	44.0	20.0	-11.5		Moderate
All	CPI	1,204	85.2	84.3	84.9	85.0	-0.2	0.1	--	Low
	P+	1,204	59%	59%	62%	64%	5	2		--
	SGP	947	48.0	45.0	51.0	47.0	-1.0	-4.0		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 8 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: Rockland Public Schools  
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	158	75.4	85.7	85.9	83.1	7.7	-2.8	--	Low
	P+	158	48%	65%	62%	61%	13	-1	--	--
4	CPI	191	76.9	74.5	75.4	81.7	4.8	6.3	Yes	Moderate
	P+	191	34%	32%	43%	52%	18	9		--
	SGP	172	48.5	47.0	45.0	57.5	9.0	12.5		Moderate
5	CPI	166	69.6	75.3	80.2	75.6	6.0	-4.6	--	Low
	P+	166	39%	42%	54%	46%	7	-8		--
	SGP	156	45.0	54.0	65.5	42.5	-2.5	-23.0		Moderate
6	CPI	200	68.5	68.2	71.4	72.8	4.3	1.4	Yes	Very Low
	P+	200	38%	36%	41%	47%	9	6		--
	SGP	175	23.0	35.5	27.0	37.0	14.0	10.0		Low
7	CPI	179	71.7	70.3	65.9	66.1	-5.6	0.2	Yes	Very Low
	P+	179	41%	39%	38%	33%	-8	-5		--
	SGP	165	50.0	54.0	47.0	38.0	-12.0	-9.0		Low
8	CPI	173	68.0	68.1	68.1	71.4	3.4	3.3	Yes	Low
	P+	173	39%	39%	41%	44%	5	3		--
	SGP	160	48.0	30.0	53.0	57.5	9.5	4.5		Moderate
10	CPI	133	88.5	86.3	87.0	92.9	4.4	5.9	Yes	Moderate
	P+	133	72%	70%	71%	83%	11	12		--
	SGP	116	51.0	52.0	46.5	51.5	0.5	5.0		Moderate
All	CPI	1,200	73.7	74.9	76.0	77.0	3.3	1.0	--	Low
	P+	1,200	44%	45%	49%	51%	7	2		--
	SGP	944	44.0	46.0	49.0	47.0	3.0	-2.0		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 8 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: Rockland Public Schools  
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	166	74.7	78.0	76.4	81.6	6.9	5.2	Yes	Moderate
	P+	166	36%	39%	41%	54%	18	13		--
8	CPI	172	65.1	66.0	64.9	61.9	-3.2	-3	Yes	Very Low
	P+	172	28%	25%	29%	25%	-3	-4		--
10	CPI	125	76.1	73.8	80.0	82.0	5.9	2	--	Very Low
	P+	125	47%	43%	54%	52%	5	-2		--
All	CPI	<b>463</b>	<b>71.9</b>	<b>72.3</b>	<b>73.0</b>	<b>74.4</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>1.4</b>	Yes	<b>Low</b>
	P+	<b>463</b>	<b>37%</b>	<b>35%</b>	<b>40%</b>	<b>43%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</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 8 in the Student Performance section above.

**Table B5a: Rockland Public Schools  
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	574	76.9	76.5	77.7	76.9	0	-0.8
		P+	574	39%	42%	45%	47%	8	2
		SGP	398	45.0	39.0	46.5	42.0	-3	-4.5
	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	475	79.0	78.3	78.9	79.3	0.3	0.4
		P+	475	47%	47%	49%	54%	7	5
		SGP	337	42.0	42.5	47.0	43.0	1.0	-4.0
	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	220	70.0	64.6	64.3	60.9	-9.1	-3.4
		P+	220	22%	13%	14%	14%	-8	0
		SGP	133	42.0	28.5	40.5	31.0	-11.0	-9.5
	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	22	70.7	70.7	70.5	55.7	-15.0	-14.8
		P+	22	31%	29%	30%	18%	-13	-12
		SGP	11	0.0	38.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	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	<b>1,204</b>	<b>85.2</b>	<b>84.3</b>	<b>84.9</b>	<b>85.0</b>	<b>-0.2</b>	<b>0.1</b>
		P+	<b>1,204</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>64%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>
		SGP	<b>947</b>	<b>48.0</b>	<b>45.0</b>	<b>51.0</b>	<b>47.0</b>	<b>-1.0</b>	<b>-4.0</b>
	State	CPI	<b>497,549</b>	<b>86.5</b>	<b>86.9</b>	<b>87.2</b>	<b>86.7</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>-0.5</b>
		P+	<b>497,549</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>69%</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>
		SGP	<b>395,772</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 B5b: Rockland Public Schools  
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	567	64.3	65.9	67.3	69.0	4.7	1.7
		P+	567	28%	29%	35%	38%	10	3
		SGP	394	39.5	42.0	44.0	43.0	3.5	-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	466	66.3	66.7	69.0	72.0	5.7	3.0
		P+	466	34%	33%	39%	43%	9	4
		SGP	331	39.0	42.0	44.0	43.0	4.0	-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	218	57.6	55.7	54.4	53.4	-4.2	-1.0
		P+	218	13%	9%	13%	13%	0	0
		SGP	134	37.0	34.0	35.5	36.0	-1.0	0.5
	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	23	59.8	56.6	62.1	56.5	-3.3	-5.6
		P+	23	21%	21%	24%	17%	-4	-7
		SGP	11	0.0	39.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	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>1,200</b>	<b>73.7</b>	<b>74.9</b>	<b>76.0</b>	<b>77.0</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>1.0</b>
		P+	<b>1,200</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>45%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>2</b>
		SGP	<b>944</b>	<b>44.0</b>	<b>46.0</b>	<b>49.0</b>	<b>47.0</b>	<b>3.0</b>	<b>-2.0</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: Rockland Public Schools  
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	198	61.1	64.3	64.7	67.0	5.9	2.3
		P+	198	22%	22%	27%	29%	7	2
	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	159	64.3	64.6	64.3	68.6	4.3	4.3
		P+	159	28%	25%	29%	31%	3	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	75	57.2	56.5	55.6	62.0	4.8	6.4
		P+	75	13%	6%	13%	20%	7	7
	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	5	--	--	--	--	--	--
		P+	5	--	--	--	--	--	--
	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	463	71.9	72.3	73.0	74.4	2.5	1.4
		P+	463	37%	35%	40%	43%	6	3
	State	CPI	211,464	76.8	78.3	77.6	78.6	1.8	1.0
		P+	211,464	50%	52%	52%	54%	4	2

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: Rockland Public Schools  
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>	<b>6.0%</b>	<b>7.8%</b>	<b>1.2%</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>-5.0</b>	<b>-82.8%</b>	<b>-0.2</b>	<b>-14.2%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>

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: Rockland Public Schools  
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	85	75.0%	72.5%	71.9%	75.3%	0.3	0.4%	3.4	4.7%	74.1%
Low income	71	81.5%	74.6%	73.2%	74.6%	-6.9	-8.5%	1.4	1.9%	72.4%
Students w/ disabilities	28	57.9%	55.0%	61.9%	64.3%	6.4	11.1%	2.4	3.9%	68.6%
English language learners (ELL) or Former ELL	--	--	85.7%	--	--	--	--	--	--	61.1%
<b>All students</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>82.3%</b>	<b>79.6%</b>	<b>83.8%</b>	<b>84.1%</b>	<b>1.8</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.4%</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: Rockland Public Schools  
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	57	59.0%	77.9%	73.8%	71.9%	12.9	21.9%	-1.9	-2.6%	76.5%
Low income	41	66.7%	85.2%	76.1%	73.2%	6.5	9.7%	-2.9	-3.8%	75.0%
Students w/ disabilities	21	50.0%	57.9%	55.0%	61.9%	11.9	23.8%	6.9	12.5%	70.8%
English language learners (ELL) or Former ELL	--	--	--	85.7%	--	--	--	--	--	64.2%
<b>All students</b>	<b>160</b>	<b>80.6%</b>	<b>84.4%</b>	<b>80.9%</b>	<b>83.8%</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>4.0%</b>	<b>2.9</b>	<b>3.6%</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: Rockland Public Schools  
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>94.4%</b>	<b>94.4%</b>	<b>94.6%</b>	<b>94.7%</b>	<b>0.3</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>0.1</b>	<b>0.1%</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: Rockland Public Schools  
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	0.9%	0.7%	1.0%	0.6%	-0.3	-33.3%	-0.4	-40%	3.4%
Out-of-School Suspension Rate	6.8%	7.1%	6.7%	5.5%	-1.3	-19.1%	-1.2	-17.9%	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	3%	3%	94%	(0)	2	4%
	MS	8%	8%	85%	(1)	7	13%
	HS	0%	50%	50%	(2)	45	83%
2. Behavioral standards are clearly communicated. Disruptions, if present, are managed effectively & equitably.	ES	10%	0%	90%	(0)	4	7%
	MS	8%	15%	77%	(1)	6	11%
	HS	0%	40%	60%	(2)	44	81%
3. Classroom procedures are established & maintained to create a safe physical environment & promote smooth transitions among all classroom activities.	ES	3%	0%	97%	(0)	2	4%
	MS	8%	8%	85%	(1)	6	11%
	HS	0%	50%	50%	(2)	46	85%
4. Lesson reflects rigor & high expectations.	ES	13%	23%	65%	(0)	10	19%
	MS	31%	15%	54%	(1)	15	28%
	HS	20%	60%	20%	(2)	29	54%
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	3%	10%	87%	(0)	4	7%
	MS	8%	23%	69%	(1)	10	19%
	HS	20%	40%	40%	(2)	40	74%
6. Multiple resources are available to meet students' diverse learning needs.	ES	16%	19%	65%	(0)	14	27%
	MS	36%	18%	45%	(1)	12	23%
	HS	50%	40%	10%	(2)	26	50%
7. The physical arrangement of the classroom ensures a positive learning environment & provides all students with access to learning activities.	ES	0%	10%	90%	(0)	2	4%
	MS	8%	15%	77%	(1)	12	22%
	HS	10%	70%	20%	(2)	40	74%

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Teaching	By Grade Span	Evidence					
		None	Partial	Clear & Consistent	Overall		
		(0)	(1)	(2)	#	%	
8. Demonstrates knowledge of subject & content.	ES	10%	6%	84%	(0)	5	9%
	MS	8%	17%	75%	(1)	8	15%
	HS	10%	40%	50%	(2)	40	75%
9. Communicates clear grade-appropriate learning objectives aligned to state standards. Applicable ELL language objectives are evident.	ES	42%	6%	52%	(0)	21	40%
	MS	27%	18%	55%	(1)	8	15%
	HS	50%	40%	10%	(2)	23	44%
10. Uses appropriate & varied strategies matched to learning objectives & content.	ES	32%	10%	58%	(0)	20	38%
	MS	42%	8%	50%	(1)	6	11%
	HS	50%	20%	30%	(2)	27	51%
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	19%	16%	65%	(0)	12	23%
	MS	17%	25%	58%	(1)	14	26%
	HS	40%	60%	0%	(2)	27	51%
12. Uses varied questioning techniques that require/seek thoughtful responses & promote deeper understanding.	ES	29%	16%	55%	(0)	21	39%
	MS	69%	15%	15%	(1)	12	22%
	HS	30%	50%	20%	(2)	21	39%
13. Implements appropriate & varied strategies that meet students' diverse learning needs.	ES	23%	26%	52%	(0)	17	31%
	MS	54%	15%	31%	(1)	15	28%
	HS	30%	50%	20%	(2)	22	41%
14. Paces lesson to engage all students & promote understanding.	ES	10%	19%	71%	(0)	7	13%
	MS	17%	25%	58%	(1)	15	28%
	HS	20%	60%	20%	(2)	31	58%
15. Conducts frequent formative assessments to check for understanding & inform instruction.	ES	35%	19%	45%	(0)	17	32%
	MS	33%	25%	42%	(1)	16	30%
	HS	20%	70%	10%	(2)	20	38%
16. Makes use of technology to enhance learning.	ES	37%	23%	40%	(0)	18	34%
	MS	15%	15%	69%	(1)	11	21%
	HS	50%	20%	30%	(2)	24	45%

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Learning	By Grade Span	Evidence					
		None	Partial	Clear & Consistent	Overall		
		(0)	(1)	(2)	#	%	
17. Students are engaged in productive learning routines.	ES	10%	16%	74%	(0)	11	20%
	MS	23%	8%	69%	(1)	7	13%
	HS	50%	10%	40%	(2)	36	67%
18. Students are engaged in challenging academic tasks.	ES	26%	19%	55%	(0)	14	26%
	MS	23%	23%	54%	(1)	11	21%
	HS	33%	22%	44%	(2)	28	53%
19. Students assume responsibility for their own learning.	ES	10%	13%	77%	(0)	9	17%
	MS	23%	15%	62%	(1)	10	19%
	HS	30%	40%	30%	(2)	35	65%
20. Students articulate their thinking or reasoning verbally or in writing either individually, in pairs or in groups.	ES	26%	23%	52%	(0)	16	31%
	MS	25%	8%	67%	(1)	11	21%
	HS	56%	33%	11%	(2)	25	48%
21. Students' responses to questions elaborate about content & ideas (not expected for all responses).	ES	27%	27%	47%	(0)	21	43%
	MS	67%	11%	22%	(1)	12	24%
	HS	70%	30%	0%	(2)	16	33%
22. Students make connections to prior knowledge, real world experiences & other subject matter.	ES	31%	28%	41%	(0)	13	25%
	MS	25%	25%	50%	(1)	18	35%
	HS	10%	70%	20%	(2)	20	39%
23. Students use technology as a tool for learning &/or understanding.	ES	57%	20%	23%	(0)	27	53%
	MS	36%	9%	55%	(1)	10	20%
	HS	60%	30%	10%	(2)	14	27%
24. Student work demonstrates high quality & can serve as exemplars.	ES	34%	28%	38%	(0)	19	37%
	MS	33%	25%	42%	(1)	15	29%
	HS	50%	40%	10%	(2)	17	33%